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EDITOR'S LETTER SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES



This November, two significant dates are celebrated: the 300th anniversary of the proclamation of Russia as an empire and the 200th anniversary of the genius of Russian classic literature Fyodor Dostoevsky. Peter the Great accepted a new title of the Emperor on November 2 (October 22, old style), 1721. Russia became an empire that lasted until the February Revolution and the proclamation of the Republic in September 1917.

By the beginning of the 20th century, Russia stretched from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea and from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. From a culturological point of view, imperial consciousness is essentially opposite to nationalism, because the empire is initially supranational,

multi-ethnic and has a civilisational rather than cultural basis. Similar to the USSR, the Russian language in the Russian Empire did not only play a role of a carrier of Russian civilisation, it was also a vector for entering the global civilisational space.

Imperial consciousness should not be correlated with the modern political concept of "imperialism". The word itself appeared only in 1902 in the book of the same name written by John Hobson, an English economist, who dubbed the new stage in the development of capitalism. Imperialism contributes to the erasure of national and territorial boundaries, affects the economies, politics, culture, lifestyle and, of course, ideology, forming a kind of basis for globalisation.

There was nothing like this in the Russian Empire. Based on this, we can say that in terms of civilisation, modern Russia is more likely to be the successor of the Russian Empire, rather than the over-ideologised Soviet Union.

Victor Loupan

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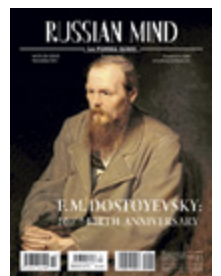
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COVER
Vasily Perov: Portrait of Fyodor Dostoevsky



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HIGHLIGHTS

RUSSIAN DANTE

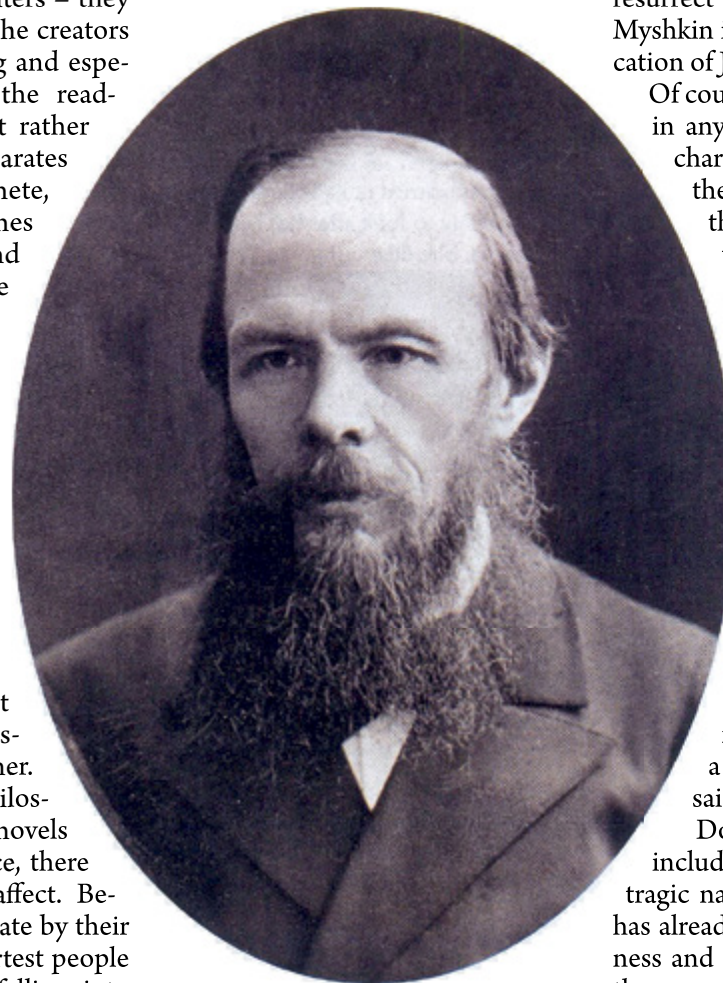
*Russian literature is the mainland,
and Dostoevsky is an unattainable peak on this mainland*

VICTOR LOUPAN,
Head of the Editorial Board

Brodsky said that Russian readers are divided into “Tolstoy’s people” and “Dostoevsky’s people”. There is a great truth in this. Because these two authors are not just novelists, writers, fiction writers – they are demiurges, they are the creators of worlds. When reading and especially rereading them, the reader not only realises, but rather feels everything that separates them. Tolstoy is an esthete, a great artist who imagines himself to be a thinker and keeps somehow separate and inappropriate. An example of this is the last part of *War and Peace* and the ending of *Anna Karenina*. Innocence, maybe even childishness as shown by Tolstoy, are simply striking.

With Dostoevsky, the opposite is true. Today many Western intellectuals consider him almost the most important Russian spiritual philosopher. Although there is no “philosophy” in Dostoevsky’s novels and stories. At first glance, there are only passions and affect. Because a human is passionate by their nature. Many of the smartest people destroy themselves by falling into love networks. Among them is the unforgettable Rogozhin, the richest, smartest, but a very passionate Russian man, whose unbridled attraction to fallen Nastasya Filippovna leads him to the loss of everything. While

she, the principal heroine of *The Idiot*, rejects Prince Myshkin’s proposal to marry him and leaves with Rogozhin intoxicated by attraction, because she feels defiled, desecrated,



and therefore unworthy of the love of a noble man.

And Myshkin himself is so noble and pure that his behaviour seems to everyone to be eccentric, almost foolish. For, as an adult, he managed

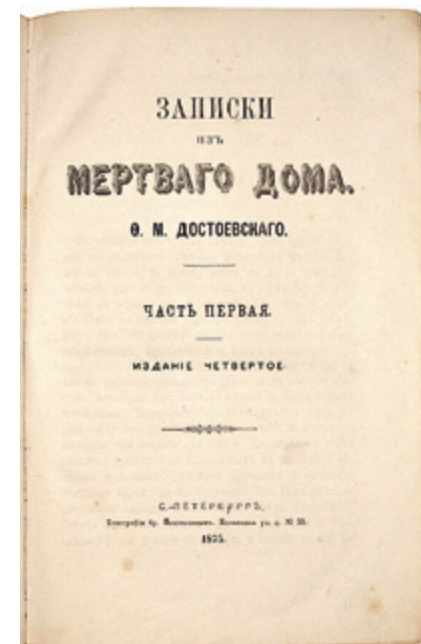
to preserve the attitude of a child. Unlike other characters of the novel, Myshkin embodies Christian virtue. According to Dostoevsky, the prince’s life purpose is “to restore and resurrect a person”. To some extent, Myshkin is a metaphorical personification of Jesus Christ.

Of course, all this does not appear in any way in the novel. All the characters live their own lives, there is nothing far-fetched in them, of course, there is no theoretical mess there. But Dostoevsky’s experience of suffering is so huge and so tangible, that he does not need any theoretical deviations in Tolstoy’s way. By the way, Myshkin’s name and patronymic are Lev Nikolaevich...

Just a few days ago, the famous French writer Patrick Besson sent me a message with the following content: “I am rereading *The Idiot*. What a miracle!” I could not have said it better myself.

Dostoevsky’s “philosophy” includes a deep awareness of the tragic nature of life. As if a person has already committed all the meanness and crimes, and simply repeats them endlessly, moreover, without realising the fact or understanding their behaviour.

Raskolnikov decides to hack to death the hated old woman, who, in his opinion, personifies evil. Rodion himself, a former law student, is ex-



*According to Herzen, Dostoevsky appeared in *The House of the Dead* as Russian Dante who descended into hell*

tremely poor. He is angry with the world, wants to fight for the truth and expresses his thoughts in writing, thereby joining “theoreticians”. But for a long time he does not dare to commit a crime. He is pushed by the letter received from his mother, in which she writes about the upcoming marriage of Raskolnikov’s younger sister with an unloved middle-aged man. He understands that this terrible act is happening because of money, including a desire to help him.

The future victim is an old lady, a collegiate registrar’s widow who loans money for interest. In particular, to him. Rodion decides that “nobody needs her”, that “she is not useful to anyone”. Having hacked the old woman with an axe and

robbed her, Raskolnikov also kills an unexpected witness to the crime – the sister of the subject of his hatred, innocent and devout Lizaveta.

Being influenced by the ideas of nihilism and being, in fact, a semi-educated semi-intellectual who imagines himself a numen, Raskolnikov divided people into two categories: ordinary people who float with the flow and exceptional people, like Napoleon, for whom everything is permitted. Before the murder, he ranks himself in the second category. But, having committed it, he suddenly realises that he fully applies to the first one.

Like *Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment* is an indescribable miracle! That cannot be understood with a mind. Raskolnikov personifies the dark essence of our consciousness, but its light essence is unforgettable Sonechka Marmeladova. Sonya and Rodion are united by the fact that they have violated the Gospel precepts. The purest and kindest, Sonechka is forced to engage in prostitution in order to

save her family that has fallen into the darkest poverty after the death of her excessively drinking father.

Having met Raskolnikov, Sonya realises how similar they are, how their souls are related. And when, after the trial, he is sentenced to hard labor, she voluntarily follows him to Siberia, like the wives of the Decembrists.

The “soul mate” concept is figurative and profound. It is associated with love, but not carnal love, but platonic love. In a spiritual sense, a “soul mate” is the most powerful bond one person can form with another.

There is no other writer in the world who, like Dostoevsky, would penetrate into the depths of human existence, into the tragic essence of our earthly life, into what we most often do not know what we are doing.

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky was born in 1821 in Moscow. The Dostoevsky family is a fairly ancient boyar family. The writer’s grandfather, Andrei, was a priest, and his father Mikhail Andreevich first studied in seminary at the St. Nicholas Orthodox Monastery of



F.M. Dostoevsky’s desk

Shargorod. But he did not become a priest but entered the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy and became a doctor. In this capacity he participated in the Patriotic War of 1812, was awarded the title of regimental surgeon, and was appointed resident physician of the Moscow military hospital. There he met Maria Nechaeva and married her.

But in 1820, a year before the birth of Fyodor, Mikhail Andreevich voluntarily leaves a well-paid military post and transfers to the Mariinsky Hospital for poor patients. He does it ideologically, knowing that the salaries are low there, and the working conditions are far from satisfactory. The main rule of the institution was that “poverty is the primary right” to receive aid at the hospital at any time of the day. This alone suggests that the future writer was born into a “special” family.

Fyodor Mikhailovich recalled, “They gave me being only four years old, a book and kept repeating: study! At ten I had already learned almost all the main episodes of Russian history”.

In the spring of 1827 Mikhail Andreevich was granted the right to hereditary nobility. So, the Dostoevskys became a noble family and were recorded in the third part of the genealogy book of the Moscow hereditary nobility. It allowed them to purchase their own estate, where a large family could spend the summer months.

In the summer of 1831, having paid about 30 thousand rubles in banknotes, accumulated and borrowed, Mikhail Andreevich

acquired the village of Darovoe in the province of Tula: it included 11 poor peasant households and the “manor house” which was, in fact, a small three-room outbuilding made of wickers tied with clay. Because of the six households remaining in the village but belonging to a neighbor, Gogol-style strife immediately began which turned into a legal procedure. Then in the spring of 1832 a fire broke out through the fault of one of the peasants, the total losses from which amounted to almost 10 thousand rubles. The writer recalled, “It turned out, that everything had burned down, everything had gone to ashes. <...> Due to initial fear, they thought that they were completely ruined”. The distribution of money to the affected peasants con-

tributed to the fact that by the end of the summer “the village <...> was rebuilt again”. But they made it possible to acquire the disputed Chermoshnya only in 1833, against mortgage of Darovoe.

So, in the summer of 1832, Fyodor gets acquainted with rural Russia for the first time. Impressions of his trips to the village will be reflected later in the novels *Poor Folk*, *Demons*, and especially in the fascinating *A Writer's Diary*.

Dostoevsky began writing while still a student, mostly stories. His first novel, *Poor Folk*, was highly appreciated by Nekrasov and Belinsky already in a handwritten form. Belinsky warmly accepted him into his circle, and 24-year-old Fyodor became a literary celebrity even before the publication of the work.

“The truth is open to you and is announced to you as an artist, you got it as a gift, so, appreciate your gift and remain faithful, then you will be a great writer!”, Belinsky wrote to him.

“It was the most delightful moment in my whole life,” Dostoevsky wrote in *A Writer's Diary*. “When I was in hard labor, remembering it strengthened my spirit”.

In the spring of 1846, Dostoevsky met Petrashevsky, the revolutionary thinker, and began attending the Petrashevsky “Fridays”, where they discussed the fight against censorship and the liberation of the peasants. There he met Speshnev, who called himself a “communist”, around whom the most radical wing of the Petrashevists soon rallied. It was no longer a circle, but a secret society, the purpose of



The first monument to F.M. Dostoevsky executed by S.D. Merkurov and installed in 1918 in Moscow



which was to create an illegal printing house, carry out a coup d'état, and overthrow the autocracy. Soon after the publication of *White Nights*, Dostoevsky was arrested along with a group of Petrashevists and imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress.

The court recognized him as “one of the most important criminals”, the military court commission sentenced Dostoevsky to corruption in blood and “execution by shooting”. Literally a week later, Emperor Nicholas I canceled the sentence and replaced it with four years of hard labor followed by military service as a private. But neither Dostoevsky nor any other Petrashevist sentenced to death was informed of this decision.

On December 22, 1849, on the Semyonovsky parade ground, they were read a sentence of “execution by shooting” with a sword refracted over their heads. This was followed by a suspension of the execution and a pardon. In the sadistic staging of the execution, pardon and punishment in the form of hard labor were announced at the very last moment. One of the condemned, Nikolai Grigoriev, went mad.

The feelings that Dostoevsky might have experienced before his execution, were reflected in one of Prince Myshkin's monologues.

Dostoevsky returned from his Siberian exile as a different person. He became deeply religious and politically conservative. Most likely, the writer's views began to change even

in the Peter and Paul Fortress. Petrashevist Lvov remembered the words of Dostoevsky spoken before the demonstration execution on the Semenovsky parade ground: “Nous serons avec le Christ” (We will be with Christ).

Dostoevsky returned to Saint Petersburg in 1859, but police surveillance continued until 1875.

Due to a long absence, Fyodor Mikhailovich needed a new literary debut. It was the publication of *The House of the Dead*. This groundbreaking essay stunned readers. Previously, no one has described lives of convicts. According to Herzen, Dostoevsky appeared in *The House of the Dead* as Russian Dante who descended into hell, and so Herzen compared the literary work with Michelangelo's fresco *The Last Judgment*.

The next important stage in the work of Dostoevsky included the publication of *Notes from Underground*. But the most significant works of the writer will fall on a later period. This is the famous “Great Pentateuch”, which includes his last novels: *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1868), *Demons* (1871–1872), *The Adolescent* (1875), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879–1880). And also unique, as a phenomenon in world literature, the philosophical and literary *A Writer's Diary*.

In connection with the *Diary*, I cannot ignore the complicated political views of the writer. He was – and remained – a Russian man, but

he also recognised the achievements of Western culture and civilisation. Over time, the former member of the circle of socialists-utopians became a religious conservative, and then a staunch monarchist. He later called his views of the times of the Petrashevists “theoretical socialism”. Dostoevsky filled Herzen's concept of “Russian socialism” with Christian content. He denied the class struggle, arguing that atheistic socialism cannot replace bourgeoisness, since it does not differ in principle from it. From this alone it is clear that Dostoevsky's ideas still retain amazing relevance.

Despite the fame he gained during his life in Russia, Dostoevsky's world-wide fame came to him after his death.

Friedrich Nietzsche himself, who never praised anyone but Wagner, considered Dostoevsky the only writer from whom he could learn, especially in the field of psychology. He wrote about it in his classic work, *Twilight of the Idols*.

Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, once said in an interview with the BBC Russian Service: “Dostoevsky is a terribly inconvenient author for any politician, even for the left, even for the right: he invariably strips off any arrogance. And, in my opinion, this is important”.

I would like to end this small excursion with the words of Joseph Brodsky: Along with earth, water, air and fire, money is the essence of the fifth element, with which a person most often has to be considered. This is one of many reasons – perhaps, even the main of them, – of what today, many years after Dostoevsky's death, his works are still relevant. Taking into account the vector of economic evolution of the modern world, i. e. towards general impoverishment and harmonisation of living standards, Dostoevsky can be regarded as a phenomenon of prophecy. As the best way to avoid mistakes in future forecasts is to look at it through the prism of poverty and guilt. It is the optics used by Dostoevsky”.

HISTORY

PETER THE GREAT – REFORMING RUSSIA’S ECONOMICS

By ELLA LARINA

During his reign, Peter the Great brought numerous reforms with the ultimate goal to open the window to Europe. Economic reforms played an important role in the transformation of the whole country. As a result, Russia was able to achieve a good standing among the European countries in areas such as manufacturing, trade, and military. This was not the case before his rule.

Economics in development

The multicultural presence became noticeable not only because of Asia but also because of Europe. At that time, Russia was trying to become closer with Europe, but it also had interests in the East. That resulted in the duality of Russian economic and political development. Many western European countries such as the Netherlands, England and France made a significant progress in the area of a market economy. For Russia, it was important to overcome slow social development as compared to Europe. The Russian economy was quite weak, with poorly developed industry. One of the major weaknesses was the national economy management system.

An important factor of Russia's economic development was the education system. It was at the very early stages. At schools, only grammar and Holy writings were taught. So, there were no specializations in engineering, manufacturing, medicine, and many other important fields that play

a crucial role in countries economic development. It is said that Russia's education system was behind for approximately five centuries. It is also important to note that the printed materials were mostly of spiritual content. Due to the education system falling behind, it was hard to train specialists. For, example there were no Russian doctors in the country. There were only foreign doctors, and they mostly served the members of the royal families.

There was a strong necessity to solve many problems with the economy, army, education, and culture, as Russia has exhausted all of the possibilities to develop separately, outside of the European civilization. Moreover, in the middle of the 17th century, there were civilian uprisings in several major cities such as Moscow and Novgorod. In the years 1670–1671 there was a peasant war. The war spread across significant territories in the south of Russia. As a result, the unity of the society was weakened. Russia was in need of radical changes.

In the year 1682, Peter the Great became the new Tsar of Russia. His name is tightly associated with the beginning of the fundamental reforms in the country. For eighteen months Peter the Great traveled throughout Europe with the goal of studying the economic and political structures of the countries he visited. Moreover, Peter the Great personally studied several professions related to the shipbuilding in the Netherlands and England. The knowledge he ob-

tained during those years would later assist him with the upcoming reforms in Russia.

Starting from January 1, 1700, Russia made a switch to a new calendar. That switch symbolized the beginning of the reforms throughout the whole country.

Almost the entire period under the rule of Peter the Great consisted of military campaigns and conquests. His military activity was a big part of the reforms. In fact, the first reforms were the military reforms, which were very significant for Russia. The fundamental reorganization of the country's armed forces led to the establishment of the new army, and a powerful fleet. This led to the expansion and strengthening of the country. As a result, Russia won the Great Northern War against Sweden, and acquired the path to the Baltic Sea and returned its land.

The Russian economy also needed some innovative solutions. When Peter the Great became the Tsar, the state treasury was in a bad condition. Peter the Great needed more money in order to realize his personal projects. Therefore, the first major task for the state was to find new sources of income. Peter knew that in order to improve the financial condition of the country, there was a necessity to increase the national economy. The economic policy was directed towards the development of the industries and trade. Peter supported the development in those areas in many ways.

The first 10 years of the 18th century can be seen as the period of active state involvement in supporting private enterprises and the economy as a whole. The practice of transferring of state enterprises to private owners, foreigners or industrial companies became widespread. The state also sponsored the training of the workforce, transport of the equipment to the factories, and hiring of the specialists. For some very important industries, more privileges were provided. For example, those industries would get free land for building their factories.

From the start of the 18th century, began the manufacturing period in the national economy. The manufacturing system became more prominent than the handcrafted production. In the first quarter of the 18th century, there was a significant growth in manufacturing in the country. For example, at the end of 17th century there

were around 20 fabrics, and in the years 1720–1725 there were 205 fabrics, from which 90 belonged to the treasury and 115 to the private equity. There were around 69 metallurgical enterprises. There were also enterprises specializing in woodwork, gunpowder, leather, glass production, paper, porcelain and other areas. The mining industry was also under active development. Many expeditions were made in the search of natural resources. When silver was found, a new silver melting factory was built. Overall, there was a great



Jean-Marc Nattier "Portrait of Tsar Peter"

success in the metallurgical industry. Between the years 1700–1725 the amount of cast iron produced increased by 5 times, and by the year 1750 it reached 2 million pounds. Half of that amount was exported. The import of weapons stopped in the year 1712 since the quality of the produced weapons within the country was the same as abroad. The fast growth of the metallurgical industry allowed for the production of several thousands of cannons.

The quality of metallurgical products became high, and it became

used for export extensively. Eventually, Russia became the first in producing Cast Iron in Europe. Apart from extensive manufacturing in Russian economy, there was also a large artisan sector in the cities, and home craft in villages. They mostly produced fabrics, leather, shoes, pottery, saddles and other products. There was also growth in production of sails and clothes, that were used for the fleet and the army. Sugar factories were built for the first time. Foreign technicians were given special rights, and Russian citizens were sent

to Europe in order to improve their skills. Russian entrepreneurs were also given more rights, such as using peasants as a workforce, and owning land. Having granted entrepreneurs with benefits, Peter the Great established strict control over them. He was aware of all industrial affairs, and personally overlooked their quality and performance.

Peter the Great was aiming to perform the internal reforms in Russia, in order to bring it to the European level. Apart from military and diplomatic problems, he was also concerned with the management structure of the state. Between the years 1700–1725, he confirmed around 3 thousand laws, related to economics, civil life, and management structure of the state. Only in the last 7 years under the rule of Peter the Great, did the various institutions achieve the normative. Radical management reforms were made in order to strengthen the absolute monarchy. The goal was to create the vertical administrative structure, completely ruled by the supreme power.

A decree of unified heritage

Peter's reforms were undoubtedly directed against the old Boyar aristocracy. There was no wish to change and to strengthen the centralized power. Peter relied on the local nobility, which supported the strengthening of the absolute monarchy. In the year 1714, Peter issued a decree of unified heritage, by which there was a final merger of two forms of feudal land ownership in the uniform legal concept known as the "immovable property". Both types were made equal in all aspects.

Estates were inherited by only one of the sons, usually the eldest. The rest of the children would inherit money and other property.



Coin of Peter the Great era

They were also obliged to enter the military or civilian service. The introduction of rankings in 1722 was closely connected to the new decree. All positions of the state and military services were divided into 14 ranks, where 14 was the lowest rank, and 1 was the highest rank. People had to go up the ranks in order to get promoted. Nobles were most interested in the introduction of this order since they got the ability to reach the highest state ranks and join the authorities.

Trade – internal and external

To maintain and improve the internal market, the commerce collegium was created in the year 1719. Trade and entrepreneurship are the major pillars supporting the economy of a country. Peter the Great tried to protect the Russian economy in any way. He aimed that the amount of exported goods would overcome the amount of imported goods from the abroad. At the end of his rule, he achieved that goal. The amount of exported goods was double the amount of imported goods. The import rate was maintained smaller by introducing higher customs prices. There were also special conditions

for the internal trade. The traders were encouraged to unite in the western manner. To expand the trade borders of Russia, Peter the Great created the trade fleet.

In order to improve the trading routes, the state, for the first time in history, began the building of channels. The land roads were very bad, and it slowed down the development of the regular trade connections.

In the year 1704, Peter the Great initiated the monetary reform. The silver rubles, also referred to just rubles, were produced. Before Peter the Great rubles were used as a counting unit.

There were significant changes in the structure of the external trade. At the beginning of the 18th century, it was common to export agricultural products and raw materials. In the year 1725, it was much more common to export manufactured products such as iron, linen canvas, and sails. As for the import, it was mostly luxury items for the rich families, and also colonial products such as tea, coffee, sugar, and wine. Starting from the year 1712, Russia completely stopped buying weapons from Europe.

The development of the internal trade was largely slowed down by the lack of metals necessary to produce coins. The majority of money turnover consisted of small copper coins. The silver coins were quite large and were often cut into several parts, each part having its own turnover.

As part of the monetary reform in the year 1704, a new, simple decimal system was introduced. Instead of the weight, each coin was valued by its decimal number. Eventually, Europe also started using this system, but it was much later. Minting of coins became the unconditional monopoly of the state.

There were also gold coins, but they were mostly used for ceremonial purposes, as a reward to the soldiers. The ban on export of precious metals was introduced. It became more common to search for the precious metals such as silver within the country. The monetary system was further

strengthened by the increase in export, and a positive balance in the internal trade.

In the first ten years of the 18th century, there was a geographical change in trade centers. In the 17th century Arkhangelsk played the major role in the trade with the west. Later it was replaced by St. Petersburg, and then by Riga. The trading routes with Persia and India were carried through the Volga river, Astrakhan and the Caspian Sea.

Agricultural changes

The agriculture during Peter the Great did not face any major reforms. In the year 1721, there was a new decree that forbid the use of sickle during the harvest period. Instead, the braids and rake had to be used. This switch resulted in an improved efficiency during the field works. The harvesting periods became shorter, and the losses during collection were minimized. Mulberry and fruit trees made an appearance in Russian agriculture for the first time. Medical plants, potatoes, grapes, and tobacco also started to be grown. New types of cattle were also introduced.

Financial system

Due to the war with Sweden, building the fleet, factories, chan-



The Tsar Carpenter' Peter I in St Petersburg

nels, and cities, there was a large spending. The Russian budget was at a critical stage. There was a task to find all possible revenue from the taxes. Special groups of people, known as the tax collectors, were formed. Their goal was to find the new objects of taxation. Starting from the year 1704 there was a great amount of new taxes introduced.

Taxes for the mills, bees, pipes, making of hats and shoes, and many others. Those were so-called small taxes. There were monopolies on several goods such as resin, rhubarb, glue, salt, tobacco, chalk, and fish fat. Those monopolies also had to pay taxes. After the rule of Peter the Great, a lot of those small taxes were eventually canceled.

HISTORY

WHERE PETER THE GREAT FOUND A BOAT: STORIES FROM IZMAILOVO

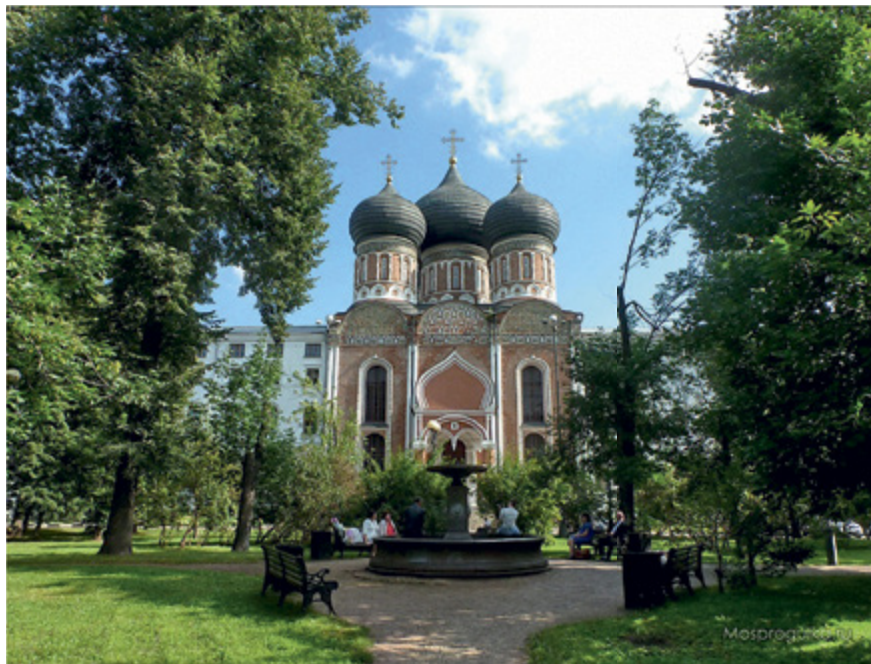
By OLEG VASILIK,
mos.ru

Moscow's Izmailovo District shares some right insights into Russian capital's history. Here is a collection of curious facts about the history of the Izmailovo District – from the 16th century to the present day.

Intercession of the Theotokos Church

The Intercession of the Theotokos Church in Izmailovo was built from 1671 to 1679 by the Medvedev brothers from the Volga area under supervision of “mason journeyman” Ivan Kuznetchik on the site of an old wooden church that stood at the estate of nobleman, Nikita Romanov. The church featured a spectacular porcelain-tile pattern called ‘peacock’s eye’ by legendary craftsman Stepan Polubes. The iconostasis was fashioned at Simon Ushakov’s shop.

In November 1837, Nikolas I, the Emperor of Russia, decreed that the largest almshouse for veterans be established on the island. It was closed in 1918, and the buildings were repurposed as communal flats in 1924–1926 for the workers of the Salyut Aviation Plant. The former almshouse then housed 2,500 people, the church became a warehouse, and the frame of the iconostasis was destroyed. Only the large icons survived. They had been used for shelves until discovered by local history expert Alexander Kuznetsov



in the 1960s, who took his find to the Old Russian Art Museum. The church was a warehouse for the In-formelektro Research Institute in the 1970s and 80s. Religious services resumed in the 1990s. In 2001–2002, the church received its new iconostasis that featured several of the extant icons by Simon Ushakov.

Bridge Tower on Izmailovskiy Island

Built from 1671 to 1679, this three-level tower served as a parade entrance to the Izmailovo Estate. An arched stone bridge led to it across the Silver Pond from the south.

The first story featured the gates and streltsy guardhouses. The third served as the bell tower of the adjacent Intercession Church. The second story was a heated guest chambers. The furnace pipes are still there and can be seen in the corner of the tower’s covered gallery.

From 1696 the estate was home to Tsarina Praskovia Fyodorovna, the widow of Peter the Great’s brother, Ivan V, and her three daughters, tsarevnas Yekaterina, Anna and Praskovia. The women lived there permanently until 1713, after which they would visit the place only once in a while. After Anna’s enthronement as Russian Empress, Anna Ioannovna she chose Izmailovo as her residence.



sign, opened on 12 June 1951 at Izmailovskaya Square. It was later renamed as the Builders’ House of Culture.

Soviet neo-classicism, characteristic of Stalin-era low-building districts, dominated post-war Izmailovo. It still has rows of 1940s buildings, for instance, the group of buildings on the even side of 6th Parkovaya Street. This ensemble has a very cozy look with gated arches, vases, high ceilings and stucco on the facades. The facade of the house of culture still features ‘embellish-

It is believed that the second floor of the tower then hosted meetings of the Russian government, the senate.

In the 1920s, the Bridge Tower was refashioned to house communes. The commune of the Salyut Aviation Plant, one of the first in Moscow, occupied all of Izmailovskiy Island, which became a worker townlet and was named after Nikolai Bauman. The builders of the new state resided in what were once chambers. The tower later housed communal flats and various institutions. Today it is the Moscow Tile Museum, which opened in 2008.

Builders' House of Culture

One of the more recent buildings is the Builders’ House of Culture in Izmailovskaya Square. The urban development of Izmailovo began after WWII under the leadership of the chief district architect, Georgy Chaltykyan, and in accordance with a new design plan. The project was to build a residential quarter for oil workers beyond 13th Parkovaya Street. The Cinema Club of the Oil Industry Ministry, built to Chaltykyan’s de-



ments' such as bas-reliefs depicting a football player, a tennis player, a dancer and a worker. In the 1990s, the building housed a prominent rock-club entitled Ne Bei Kopytom (Don't Hoof-Strike), a mountaineering equipment store and several cafes. Today it is once again a house of culture or civic centre with several clubs and hobby groups and classed for children.

Prosyanskaya Dam at Izmailovsky Park

Izmailovsky Park has several unique buildings that have survived from Czar Alexei Mikhailovich's (1629–1676) "research farm". This include the Olnyanoi, now Oleny 'Deer' Pond and Prosyanskaya Dam. The pond and the dam are places to go sled-riding, but in the 17th century they served nascent Russian industry and the Russian fleet. It was in an Olnyanoi Pond storage house that young Peter the Great found a little boat that was later to be called "the grandfather of the Russian fleet." The repaired boat had to be tested and the closest water was behind Prosyanskaya Dam. The dam blocked the Serebryanka River,

thus creating the widest and longest pond in Izmailovo.

A large water mill stood where the Serebryanka River now flows through the dam. The plans survive in the Russian State Archive of Old Documents as "The map of the island between the swamps near the berry grounds and near the Prosyanskaya Dam." The drawing puts the mill at over 12 metre high, a real skyscraper in the 17th century. In the 18th century, the Izmailovo Estate no longer had any industrial use, and the dam was gradually washed away.

Izmailovo Maintenance Facility

Pervomaiskaya was a temporary metro station that opened on 24 September 1954 under a project to extend the metro's Arbat-sko-Pokrovskaya Line further east from the Izmailovskaya, now Partizanskaya, station. The station was closed when a new section of the line opened in October 1961. It was situ-

ated in the fifth nave of the Izmailovo Maintenance Facility (the station then was closed when new works started to continue the metro line till Shchyolkovskaya metro station.) It had one entrance hall, still used today, that leads to Pervomaiskaya and 1st Parkovaya streets.

The entrance to the station can still be found behind the garages near Out-patient Clinic No 52. It was possible until a few years ago to read what remained of the L. M. Kaganovich Metropolitan. Pervomayskaya Station inscription on the entrance arches.

The entrance hall now functions as an assembly shop, and the platform is used in the maintenance shop. Tile and stucco are reminders of the years that the station welcomed passenger trains.



CULTURE

HOLBEIN AND DOSTOEVSKY – THE DEAD CHRIST AND ITS EFFECT

By EMMA TAYLOR

500 years ago, Hans Holbein the Younger created the Dead Christ in the Tomb, which is now one of the icons in the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel. 300 years later, in 1821, the Russian writer Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky was born.

In his novel *The Idiot*, Holbein's painting makes a memorable appearance, dating back to a visit by the writer to the Kunstmuseum Basel. To mark this double anniversary, the Kunstmuseum Basel is setting up a special presentation centred on the Dead Christ in the Tomb, supplemented by passages from Dostoevsky's novel and scientific findings.

The Dead Christ in the Tomb by Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/98–1543) was probably commissioned by Bonifacius Amerbach. The painted inscription on the picture, a trompe l'oeil simulating stone engraving on the side wall, proclaims: "M D XXI", i.e. 1521, followed by the master's initials. But of all things, what seems to be carved in stone poses a riddle: According to an infrared reflectography and the



The Dead Christ in the tomb © Kunstmuseum Basel

X-ray image of the painting, the date originally read 1522.

Holbein painted over the last Roman numeral "I" with the same pigment he used for the surrounding surface, i.e. while the work was still being completed. The reason for this backdating is not known. Perhaps the client's serious requests for changes played a role, which are explained in the presentation at the Kunstmuseum Basel.

What is more, the backdating is apparently the last step in the course of a major reworking of the almost finished painting, which is also recognizable in the technical images: The tomb niche originally enclosed the corpse more scantily featuring a half-barrel vault that abutted the side wall with a quarter circle. In this first state Holbein had already dated the picture at the feet of the dead Christ:

“D [half-visible] XXI”. Only with the extension to a right-angled box-shaped niche the painter overpainted this first date and signature and placed another inscription at the top consisting of six or finally five digits for the year and a more elaborate form of his monogram.

This perhaps most unusual of all sacred Old Master paintings not only demands a lot from us; even contemporary viewers must have been confronted with features that were almost unique for them: the complete absence of living biblical personae, for instance (occurring also in a second version in private hands of Mantegna’s Lamentation in the Brera in Milan) and the elongation of the corpse strictly parallel to the picture plane (comparable to Italian paintings with the Anointing of Christ on the stone).

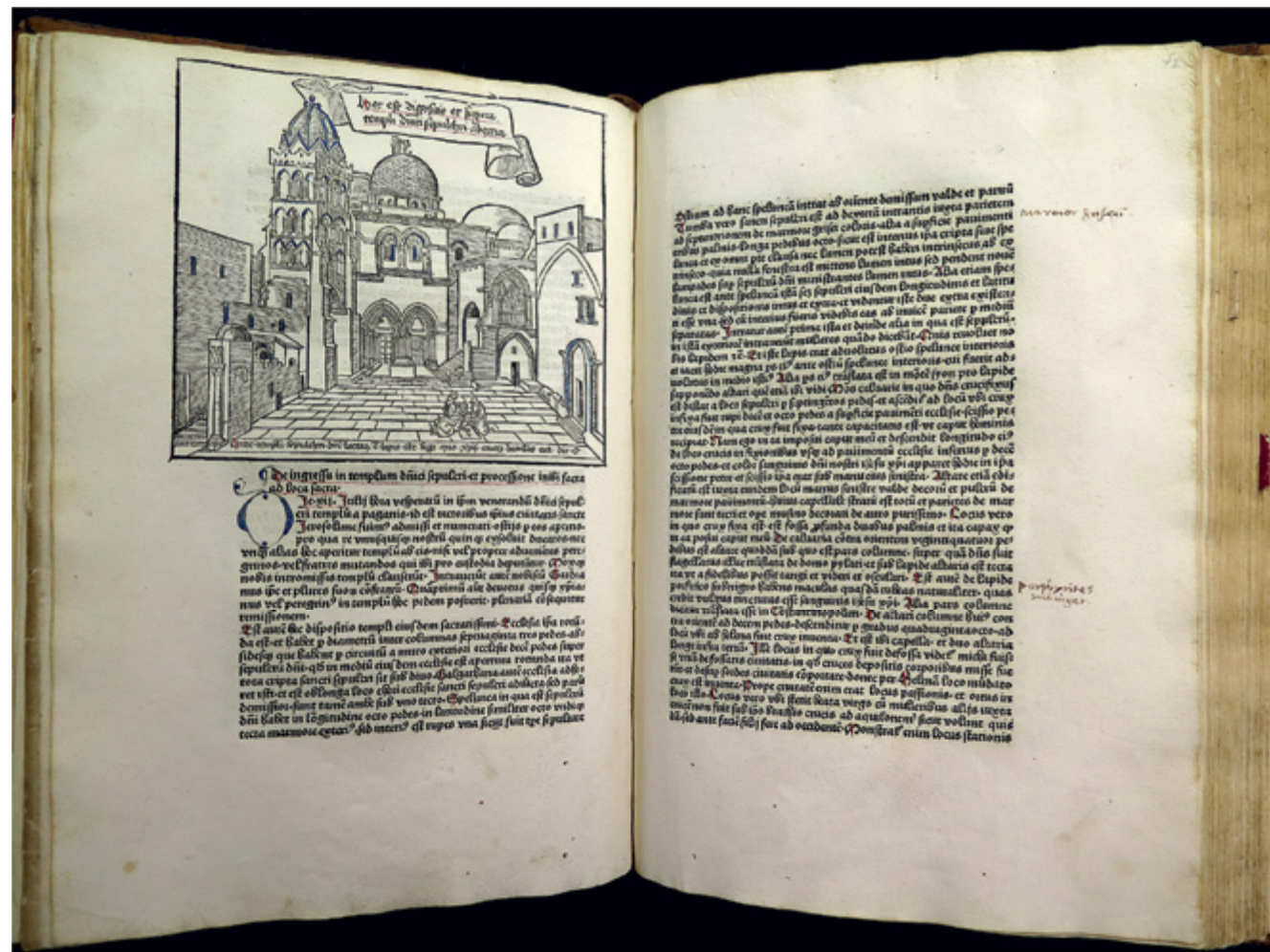
The depiction of Christ’s tomb as a wall niche, however, is completely unique: it seems absent from both the occidental and the eastern church’s pictorial traditions until then.

In Holbein’s days, no artist could justify such a radical departure from tradition without the approval of his client: Amerbach and his friend Erasmus of Rotterdam are therefore most likely to have discussed the exact appearance of the Lord’s tomb. There was every reason to do so; for contemporary pilgrims already doubted the authenticity of the so-called Aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre in the Jerusalem Church of the same name, and quite rightly so. Erasmus had been to Rome and Naples and could have seen ancient and early Christian catacombs with wall tombs there corresponding to the

one in Holbein’s painting. And there is evidence that the subject occupied Amerbach precisely at the turn of the year in question: on December 16, 1521, he borrowed the classic among the descriptions of the Holy Land and its monuments from the library of the Charterhouse in Basel, the “Peregrinatio in terram sanctam” by Bernhard von Breydenbach, published in 1486. The volume he held in his hands while the Dead Christ stood on Holbein’s easel is now in the Basel University Library (cf. reproduction).

The Dostoevsky connection

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821–1881) was born in Moscow 200 years ago.



Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam*, Mainz 1486. © Universitätsbibliothek Basel

A visit in 1867 connects him with the Kunstmuseum Basel and in particular with Holbein’s Dead Christ in the Tomb. His second wife Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaya reports in her memoirs:

“On our way to Geneva, we stopped for a day in Basel to see a painting in the museum there that my husband had heard about. This painting by Hans Holbein depicts Christ who has endured inhuman torment, already taken down from the cross and decaying. His bloated face is covered with bloody wounds and his appearance is terrible. The painting had a crushing impact

on Fyodor Mikhailovich. He stood before it as if stunned. And I did not have the strength to look at it – it was too painful for me, particularly in my sickly [pregnant] condition – and I went into the other rooms. When I came back after fifteen or twenty minutes, I found him still riveted to the same spot in front of the painting. His agitated face had a kind of dread in it, something I had noticed more than once during the first moments of an epileptic seizure. Quietly I took my husband by the arm, led him into another room and sat him down on a bench, expecting the attack from one minute to the next. Luckily this did not happen. He calmed down little by little and left the museum, but insisted on returning once again to view this painting which had struck him so powerfully.”

His second wife Anna Grigoryevna reports in her memoirs: “The picture made a shattering impression on Fyodor Mikhailovich and he stood frozen before it. [...] It was as if his agitated face showed traces of that horror which I usually perceived in



Holbein Hall in the Augustinergasse Museum, condition before 1907. Did Dostoyevsky climb onto one of these chairs or one of the predecessors of this furniture? © Kunstmuseum Basel, Archive

him in the first moments of an epileptic seizure.”

Still under the impression of some bizarre details of the visit, she had noted in her diary on August 24 (12 according to the Julian calendar), 1867:

“The lady invited us to enter and showed us the paintings of Holbein the Younger. In the whole museum there are only two masterpieces, namely the Dead Saviour, a marvellous work, which almost terrified me and made such an impression on Fedya [short for Fyodor] that he declared Holbein to be an outstanding artist and poet. Usually Jesus Christ is depicted after his death with a distorted face full of suffering, while the body does not look in the least martyred and tortured; but this must have been actually the case. Here, however, the body is gaunt, the ribs and bones are visible, hands and feet are torn by wounds, swollen and blue, as in the case of a corpse that is already in the process of decomposition. The face is also terribly tormented, the eyes are half open, but with-

out expression and already without sight. The nose, mouth and chin are blue; the whole is so eerily similar to a real corpse that I would not like to be alone in a room with this image. I admit that it is true to nature, but I cannot find it at all aesthetic, and in me it aroused only disgust and horror. Fedya, however, was enraptured by it and, wishing to see it more closely, he climbed on a chair, so that I was in great fear that he would have to pay a fine, because here one has to pay a fine all the time. The second painting worth seeing, which used to belong to a private gallery, is “Sea View” by Calame. It is a magnificent painting, the like of which I have never seen.”

At that time, Dostoevsky was preparing his third great novel *The Idiot*, which he subsequently wrote down in Geneva, Vevey, Milan and Florence (published as a feuilleton novel in 1868/69). Throughout the book, the Basel museum visit has left traces in five places, and three paintings of the Kunstmuseum are evoked: Hans Fries’ *Beheading of John the Baptist*, the *Dead Christ* by Hans Holbein



Hans Fries, *Die Enthauptung Johannes des Täufers*, 1514, Kunstmuseum Basel.

the Younger in three separate passages, and the Dresden Madonna, then still considered an autograph work by Holbein. The Dostoevskys had indeed studied the original of the latter in Dresden a few months earlier; but the copy by Julius Grüber, which had recently entered the Basel Museum

at the time, may have brought this encounter back to their minds.

Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*

The Dead Christ by Hans Holbein the Younger is mentioned three

times (cf. excerpts on the wall) in “The Idiot”: First, the painting – or, to be more precise, a copy of it of identical size – is the subject of a short dialogue between Prince Myshkin and Rogozhin which the Prince reviews soon after on his way through St. Petersburg. The canvas hangs amid other paintings in Rogozhin’s apartment. Many hundreds of pages later, the 18-year-old Ippolit Terentyev, terminally ill, dedicates a long paraphrase to Rogozhin’s copy in his “Necessary Declaration” (cf. the opened copy of the novel here), an intellectual legacy that he reads with the intention of committing suicide immediately afterwards.

When Dostoevsky mentions works of visual art here, he is concerned last of all with their correct description. Rather, he uses them to bring out the attitudes and points of view of his characters as they reflect on the subject and style. The first and last passages devoted to the Dead Christ are therefore very different: The first is succinctly formulated, the last exceedingly lengthy. In the first, the prince authenticates the painting at first glance as an excellent copy after Holbein; in the last, Ippolit just as quickly attests to the same work no artistic significance at all. In the first, the painting is once briefly and succinctly titled as a depiction of the Saviour taken down from the cross, in the last, it is repeatedly referred to as just the corpse of a human being.

The dualism between the sacrificial body of the Lord to be worshipped on the one hand and the realistically depicted corpse causing shudder and pity on the other leads to the atheistic core thesis, which the two protagonists in turn interpret quite differently. For the prince, the painting has the potential in the presence of the narrative to cause a believing viewer to apostatize; the spontaneously flashing thought deeply dismays him.

On the other hand, starting from the unconditional truth in the image, Ippolit extrapolates that the historical corpse of Christ must have

looked exactly so terrible, and links this to the doubt whether the disciples and women at the tomb (who, as he correctly notes, are absent from the painting) could have believed in a resurrection of the Lord at all. The sight of the painting would have prevented even Christ himself from enduring his Passion – which, however, would ultimately have deprived the artwork of its subject and thus prevented its creation.

Like a concave mirror, Ippolit’s personal reception of the painting brings into focus the radical and aporetic thinking of the nihilistic youth. Prince Myshkin’s reaction to the same work of art, on the other hand, springs from the intuitive humanity with which Dostoevsky grounds his main character. And the terse reply of the self-tormenting Rogozhin foreshadows the latter’s doomed fate as a murderer, whom the prince will nevertheless accompany with altruistic empathy to the bitter end.

Quotes from “The Idiot”:

“You too, Alexandra Ivanovna, have a very lovely face; but I think you may have some secret sorrow. Your heart is undoubtedly a kind, good one, but you are not merry. There is a certain suspicion of ‘shadow’ in your face, like in that of Holbein’s Madonna in Dresden.

“Just now, I confess,” began the prince, [...] “when you asked me for a subject for a picture, I confess I had serious thoughts of giving you one. I thought of asking you to draw the face of a criminal, one minute before the fall of the guillotine, while the wretched man is still standing on the scaffold, preparatory to placing his neck on the block.”

“What, his face? only his face?” asked Adelaida. “That would be a strange subject indeed. And what sort of a picture would that make?”

“Oh, why not?” the prince insisted, with some warmth. “When I was in Basle I saw a picture very much in

that style – I should like to tell you about it; I will some time or other; it struck me very forcibly.”

[...] there were pictures on the walls, portraits and landscapes of little interest. Over the door, however, there was one of strange and rather striking shape; it was six or seven feet in length, and not more than a foot in height. It represented the Saviour just taken from the cross. [...]

“Yes – that’s a copy of a Holbein,” said the prince, looking at it again, “and a good copy, too, so far as I am able to judge. I saw the picture abroad, and could not forget it [...]

“Lef Nicolaievitch,” said Rogojin, after a pause, during which the two walked along a little further, “[...] do you believe in God?”

“How strangely you speak, and how odd you look!” said the other, involuntarily.

“I like looking at that picture,” muttered Rogojin, not noticing, apparently, that the prince had not answered his question.

“That picture! That picture!” cried Muishkin, struck by a sudden idea. “Why, a man’s faith might be ruined by looking at that picture!”

“So it is!” said Rogojin, unexpectedly.

That gloomy Parfen [Rogojin] had implied that his faith was waning; he must suffer dreadfully. He said he liked to look at that picture; it was not that he liked it, but he felt the need of looking at it. [...] He was fighting for the restoration of his dying faith. He must have something to hold on to and believe, and someone to believe in. What a strange picture that of Holbein’s is!

“There was nothing artistic about it, but the picture made me feel strangely uncomfortable. [...] This was the presentment of a poor mangled body which had evidently suffered unbearable anguish

even before its crucifixion, full of wounds and bruises, marks of the violence of soldiers and people, [...]

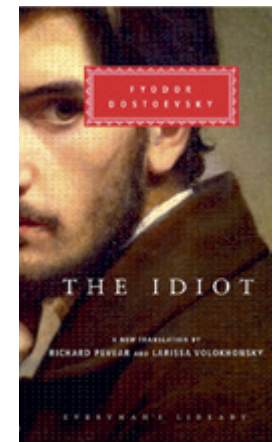
“The face was depicted as though still suffering; as though the body, only just dead, was still almost quivering with agony. The picture was one of pure nature, for the face was not beautified by the artist, but was left as it would naturally be, whosoever the sufferer, after such anguish.

“It is strange to look on this dreadful picture of the mangled corpse of the Saviour, and to put this question to oneself: ‘Supposing that the disciples, the future apostles, the women who had followed Him and stood by the cross, all of whom believed in and worshipped Him – supposing that they saw this tortured body, this face so mangled and bleeding and bruised (and they must have so seen it) – how could they have gazed upon the dreadful sight and yet have believed that He would rise again? [...]

“This blind, dumb, implacable, eternal, unreasoning force is well shown in the picture, and the absolute subordination of all men and things to it is so well expressed that the idea unconsciously arises in the mind of anyone who looks at it. All those faithful people who were gazing at the cross and its mutilated occupant must have suffered agony of mind that evening;

for they must have felt that all their hopes and almost all their faith had been shattered at a blow. They must have separated in terror and dread that night, though each perhaps carried away with him one great thought which was never eradicated from his mind for ever afterwards. If this great Teacher of theirs could have seen Himself after

the Crucifixion, how could He have consented to mount the Cross and to die as He did? This thought also comes into the mind of the man who gazes at this picture.”



WESTERN WRITERS INFLUENCED BY FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

The great 19th century Russian writer influenced many writers from Nietzsche to Hemingway, and even entire genres and philosophical movements

By ALEXANDRA GUZEVA
Russia Beyond

What can be more valuable to a writer than recognition from someone more authoritative and famous? Can you imagine that Sigmund Freud, who pioneered psychoanalysis, admitted that his method was not applicable to the characters in Dostoyevsky's books.

Kafka felt a deep connection to Dostoyevsky, and delightfully read excerpts from *The Adolescent* to his friend Max Brod, who later wrote that the novel's fifth chapter greatly influenced Kafka's style.

James Joyce praised Dostoyevsky: "... he is the man more than any other who has created modern prose, and intensified it to its present-day pitch."

Virginia Woolf wrote that Dostoyevsky's novels are "seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts that hiss and boil and suck us in. They are composed purely and wholly of the stuff of the soul. Against our wills we are drawn in, whirled round, blinded, suffocated, and at the same time filled with a giddy rapture."

Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami were Dostoyevsky's fans in youth. Probably the only writer who didn't recognize the giant was Vladimir Nabokov.

We know for sure that Charles Dickens had a great influence on Dostoyevsky. In turn, Russia's darkest

writer impacted the worldview of many subsequent authors. Let's take a look at this list.

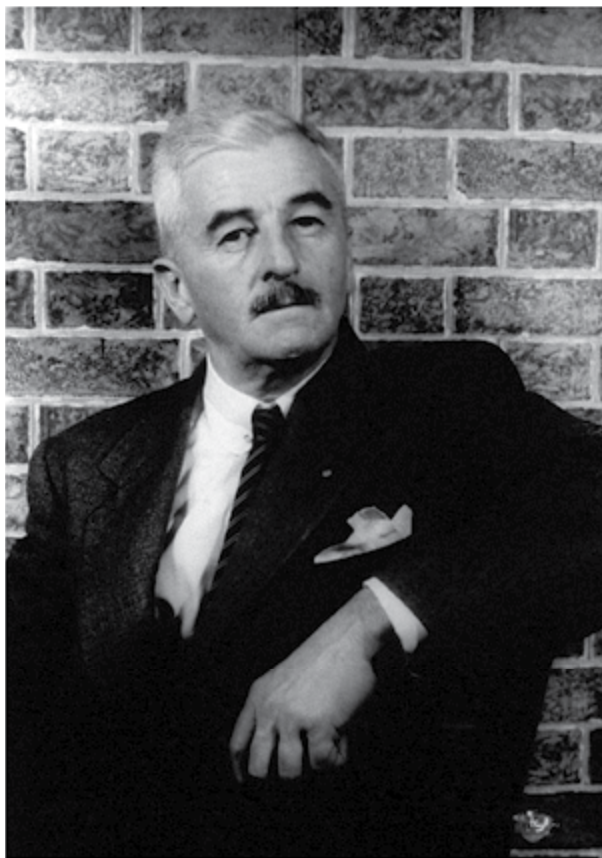
William Faulkner

Several books have researched Faulkner's fascination with Dostoyevsky. The American novelist mentioned the Russian writer as one of his main literary inspirations, alongside the Bible and Shakespeare. *The Brothers Karamazov* influenced him most of all, and he reread it frequently. He even wrote to poet Hart Crane that American literature has nothing similar to this novel.

"Like Dostoyevsky, Faulkner was interested in studying the crisis of a personality who found himself amidst crisis in society," wrote Faulkner expert Dr. Robert Hamblin. A random family that Faulkner describes symbolizes the moods and conditions of the entire nation (of the

American South to be more precise), which is the same as Dostoyevsky characters who are at a crossroads of morality, faith and emotions.

Experts consider Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground* to be the



Friedrich Nietzsche

There is evidence that Nietzsche was also familiar with *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* (basing his Antichrist theory as opposite to Prince Myshkin), and *The House of the Dead* (wasn't satisfied with Russian pessimism).



diary of a mad man and one of the first examples of existentialism. And even though Søren Kierkegaard is the father of modern philosophy, the Russian novelist had a great influence on most of its brightest minds, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Friedrich Nietzsche, who called *Notes from the Underground* a masterful psychological work.

Nietzsche had great interest in Russian literature, and he read Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol. He mentioned Dostoyevsky as one of the happiest discoveries of his life. "Do you know Dostoyevsky? Except Stendhal no one was such a nice surprise for me and no one delivered me so much pleasure. He is a psychologist with whom I find common ground."

There is a legend that Nietzsche even read Dostoyevsky's novel *Humiliated and Insulted* with tears in his eyes, but what we know for sure is that the German philosopher expressed the deepest respect for Dostoyevsky after reading this book.



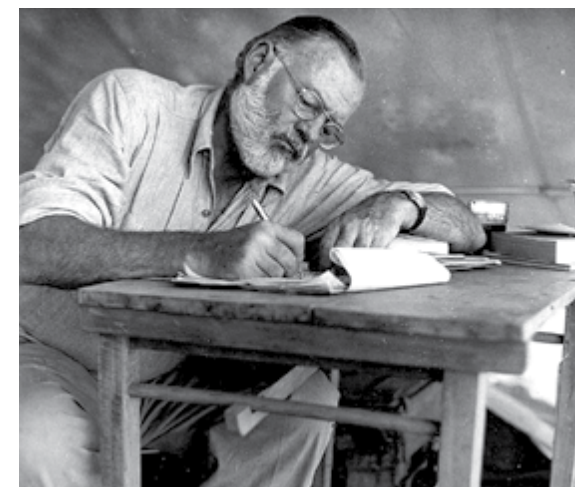
for meaning at the forefront, and tried to resolve the mystery of responsibility, one's self and God in the example of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, Stavrogin in *The Devils*, and Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

To simplify, however, it should be added that faith is Dostoyevsky's main answer to all

the questions, which is in contrast to Western existentialism.

Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway's attitude to Dostoyevsky is reflected in *A Moveable Feast*. "In Dostoyevsky there were things believable and not to be believed, but some so true they changed you as you read them; frailty and madness, wickedness and saintliness, and the insanity of gambling were there to know as you knew the landscape and the roads in Turgenev, and the movement of troops, the terrain and the officers and the men and the fighting in Tolstoy."



Jean-Paul Sartre

"Dostoyevsky once wrote: 'If God didn't exist, then everything would be permitted;' and that for existentialism is the starting point," reads Sartre's iconic philosophic work, *Existentialism is Humanism*. This phrase is a summary of Ivan Karamazov's anticlerical views. In Sartre's interpretation it means that if God didn't exist, then humans would be in charge of everything, with no chance to ask for the highest forgiveness.

Russian literature was looking for the key to understanding humans long before existentialism appeared. Dostoyevsky put that search

A MASTERPIECE OF RUSSIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT

The portrait of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky created by Vasily Perov in 1872 is rightfully considered one of artist's greatest achievements

OKSANA KOPENKINA,
art analyst, founder of the Arts Diary & Pad website

Thinking about Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, we first of all remember his portrait created by Vasily Perov. Many photographs of the writer have survived. However we remember exactly that pictorial image. What is the artist's secret? How did he manage to paint such a unique portrait?

Perov's characters were surprisingly memorable and vivid. The artist, like a true Itinerant, valued the truth. If we were to show human vices, then it should be done with merciless honesty. And if you portray how children suffer, then do not soften the blow to the kind heart of the viewer.

Then it is not surprising that Pavel Tretyakov, patron of art, collector, and philanthropist who gave his name to the Tretyakov Gallery, chose Perov as an inveterate lover of truth, to paint Dostoevsky's portrait.

The patron attached great importance to truthfulness in painting. He said that he would buy even a painting depicting an ordinary puddle, if only it was true.

Tretyakov highly appreciated the work of Perov and often bought his paintings. In the early 1870s Tretyakov sent him a request to paint several portraits of the great peo-

ple of Russia. Including Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky.

Working on the portrait of Dostoevsky

Dostoevsky was working on his novel *Demons*, while Perov was painting his portrait. Of course, the artist avoided to flatter Dostoevsky or embellish his appearance.

The face was the main focus. All adversity and illness affected it – uneven color, swollen eyelids, pronounced cheekbones...

The writer was wearing a baggy, worn jacket made of cheap dark fabric. It could not hide the sunken chest and stooped shoulders of a person worn out by disease.

The look of the writer, who is completely immersed in his thoughts, conveys the special state of his soul. And the main thing that the artist manages to grasp is that the whole world of Dostoevsky is concentrated in himself. He is detached from everything external, he cares little about it.

Fyodor Mikhailovich's arms being crossed on his knees, strengthen such isolation and concentration.

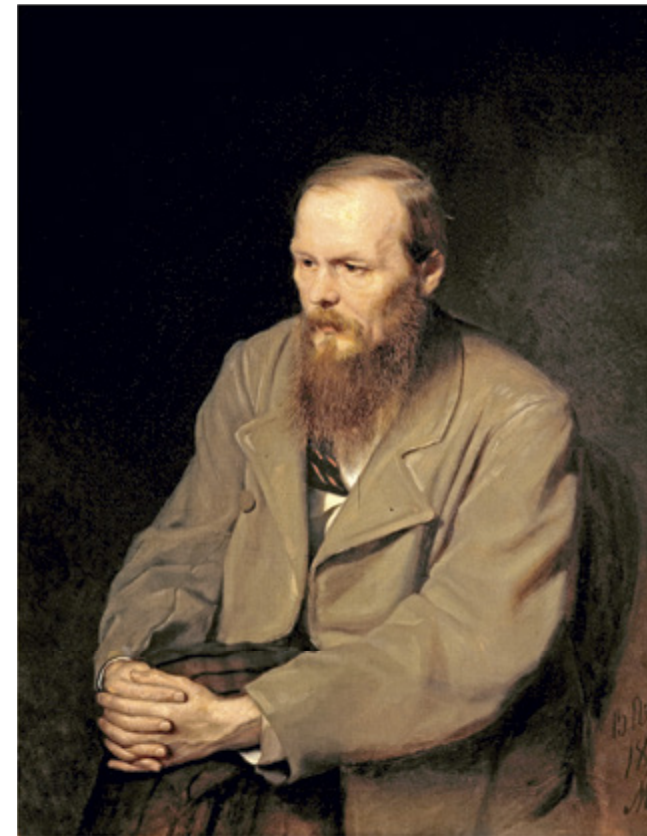
Swollen veins tell us about internal stress. Yes, *Demons* were not easy for the writer.

The writer's wife Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaya (née Snitkina) recalled:

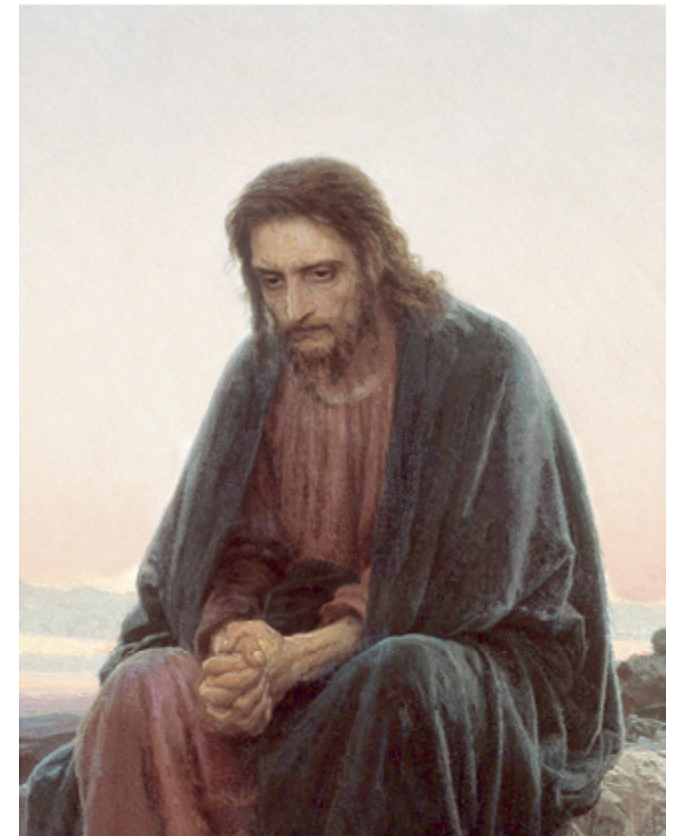
"In the same winter, Pavel Tretyakov, the owner of the famous Moscow Art Gallery, asked my husband to give him the opportunity to paint his portrait for the gallery. For this purpose, the famous artist Vasily Perov came from Moscow.

Before starting work, Perov visited us every day during a week finding Fyodor Mikhailovich in the most varied moods, talked to him, provoked disputes and managed to notice the most characteristic expression on the face of my husband, exactly the one that Fyodor Mikhailovich had when he was immersed in artistic thoughts. One could say that Perov captured "a moment of Dostoevsky's creativity" in the portrait. I noticed such an expression many times on the face of Fyodor Mikhailovich, when I used to walk in, notice that he seemed to be "looking inward" and leave him without saying anything.

Then I learned that Fyodor Mikhailovich was so busy with his thoughts that he did not even no-



Vasily Perov. "The portrait of F.M. Dostoevsky". 1872



Ivan Kramskoi. "Christ in the Desert". 1872

tice my arrival and did not believe that I visited him.

Perov was an intelligent and nice person, and my husband loved to talk to him. I have always been present at the painting sessions and have retained the kindest memories of Perov".

"About the portrait of F.M. Dostoevsky"

A month after the death of Dostoevsky, Ivan Kramskoi wrote in the article "About the portrait of F.M. Dostoevsky":

"This portrait is not only the best portrait of Perov, but also one of the best portraits of the Russian art school in general. In it, all the artist's strengths are evident: his character, power of expression, huge profile and, which is especially rare and even, one might say, the only time that Perov met – this is colour. His colours have always been fresh and strong, all

his works are distinguished by that, but strong colours are not yet colour.

The decisiveness of the shadows and some kind of sharpness and energy of the contours being always inherent in his paintings, are softened in this portrait by an amazing colour and harmony of tones; looking at it, positively, you do not know what to be more surprised at, but as the main advantage remains, of course, the expression of the character of the famous writer and person. He is so happily seated, the head position is taken so boldly, there is so much expression in his eyes and lips and there is such a complete likeness that one can only rejoice.

One thing that can be said by us, his contemporaries, is that a single portrait of Dostoevsky is not enough. He had lived a lot more after the portrait – not in the sense of time, but in the sense of his creative life.

Over the recent years, his face became even more significant, even deeper and more tragic, and it is a

pity that there is no portrait of the last time equal to Perov's one compared in artistic merit".

"Christ in the Desert" by Ivan Kramskoi

It is easy to notice the similarities between Perov's work and Kramskoi's painting "Christ in the Desert".

Both paintings were created in 1872 and shown to the public during same touring exhibition.

Was it by chance that Perov portrayed the writer so similar to Kramskoi's Christ?..

In any case, such a coincidence of images is very eloquent.

The portrait of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky created by Vasily Perov is rightfully considered one of artist's greatest achievements. The portrait is true.

This is how Perov loved it. And how Tretyakov wished. And with which Dostoevsky agreed.

SAINTS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

*Imperial Russia has always been a land of pious people,
devotional traditions, and many saints*

By AUGUSTINE SOKOLOVSKI,
Doctor of Theology, priest

This year marks exactly 300 years since the proclamation of the Russian Empire. This truly momentous and hugely influential historical event was undoubtedly already subject of discussion in the writings of many scholars. The Russian Empire, as the heir of Constantinople, the Orthodox State par excellence, as the continuation of a great, more than a thousand-year long history of Christian Statehood.

"Moscow is the Third Rome" – this once largely naive and previously seemingly unrealisable theory of the Russian Middle Ages became reality at the same time as Russia became an empire. *"Moscow is the Third Rome and there will be no fourth"* – this axiom has been refuted by reality itself, because the first, decisive, valid, universal, and global, and therefore a real and realistic embodiment of this eternal Russian dream became Saint Petersburg.

In this perspective it is no accident that the abolition of the Empire, as a consequence of the February Revolution of 1917, is referred to by Church historians and theologians as the end of the Constantinian period of Church history. The time from Constantine the Great (+337) to Nicholas II (+1918), when the Orthodox Church, first in Constantinople, then in Kiev, Vladimir, Moscow and finally in Saint Petersburg

enjoyed the special patronage and care of the State, found in the Orthodox Empire constant support and backing, and felt itself invincible. The time of Imperial Russia is a period of state churchliness. Often criticised by many, but truly unique, in many ways glorious and special time, equal to which, more, will never be. State Churchhood as a blessing, as an attempt, naive and daring, to realise here and now, *once and for all*, in a visible way that which the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer proclaims: *"For Yours is the Kingdom, and Power, and Glory"*.

The time of Imperial Russia was also a time of glory for the Russian Church, or as its name was then officially used: the Greek Eastern Russian Church. For this period of its history was marked by an incredible Mission which reached even the North American Continent, China, and Japan; by the highest quality of higher spiritual education; by a fruitful dialogue with the Anglican and Old-Catholic Churches; and by many other factors. It also became a time of saints. It was in this, the Synodal Period of the history of the Russian Church, that such great saints lived, worked, served people and prayed, as: Saint Joasaph of Belgorod (+1754), Tikhon of Zadonsk (+1783), Seraphim of Sarov (+1833), the Holy Elders of Optina, who so deeply influenced

Fyodor Dostoevsky, to whose personality is also dedicated this edition of the Russian Mind, and John of Kronstadt (+1909), a priest and a prophet of the last time of the Empire, who performed miracles and also entered into a tragic confrontation with Leo Tolstoy.

There is a very ancient tradition in Orthodoxy to celebrate the All-Saints Day on the Sunday after the Pentecost, to underline the work of the Holy Spirit in the human holiness. By the same logic the saints who belonged to nations, countries or regions on the Sunday immediately following the All-Saints.

Thus, All Russian Saints are commemorated by the Church on the second Sunday after Pentecost. It is noteworthy that this feast was finally established in 1918. In this way it became a kind of farewell to previous eras, an important moment of thanksgiving, including, if I may say so, to 'imperial holiness'.

The peculiarity of the remembrance of the saints who shone forth in the Russian Empire, as our country was called from 1721 to 1917, is that the memory of the 'Saints of the Russian Empire' is not commemorated separately. This is, of course, very regrettable, for it contributes to the distortion, above all, by the secular world and the western people, of the special and unique face of our country. Thus,

not many people know that, in addition to the prosperity, constant willingness to reform and perform country, the aspiration to make changes, the unique and often harsh climate, and the amazing nature, Imperial Russia has always been a land of pious people, devotional traditions, and many saints. Even the old anthem of pre-revolutionary Russia, *"God Save the Tsar"*, is a prayerful and audacious appeal to God. A prayer, a hymn, a church psalm.

As we remember and thereby celebrate the honor of the great host of saints of the Russian Empire, we remember all of them, whose presence, preaching, and labours blessed our blessed country. The innumerable saints who enlightened and interceded for 'the native land so kept by God', as it is already sung in today's Russian Hymn, and for our entire planet, are now, especially to the outside world, to be forgotten. In oblivion by modernity, but not only. For oblivion is the fate of our God and our Faith. Christianity as the union of the visible and the invisible, the great and the small, the tangible and the inaccessible, the invisible and the present identifies itself with reflection on the tragic nature of the Journey of the Universe towards Redemption. To the tragical wandering of



Saint Joasaph of Belgorod



Saint Seraphim of Sarov

the Church towards the Heavenly Homeland correspond the unpredictable roads of life of every man in Christ.

Our perception of the great Commemorations of Saints is almost always unwittingly aimed at singling out, setting apart, glorifying before God those who, in this or that country, land or nation are commemorated as saints.

Looking at them, God's people as if to exclaim: "Not we, not we, Lord, but they: they embody all that is righteous, upright, faithful and holy, they embody and bear in themselves that which is so lacking in all others, including us". This was the case in antiquity, in centuries gone by, and it is also the case in modern times, for example, in the veneration of the New Martyrs.

What does the word holiness mean? In my understanding, it is the becoming reality of the Work of God for the Redemption of every man in Christ Jesus. But by venerating saints,

one gets the impression that human ordinariness, profanity, and everyday life and, in more recent times, secularism leave us unattached to holiness. As if blocked the way for every human soul to enter the communion of saints.

However, this perception is wrong. For today, like any other celebration in honour of the saints glorified by the Church, the Church, the Society of the Faithful, the Wandering Body of Christ, is in fact celebrating its own holiday – the day of the Christian vocation. It is the vocation of which

the texts of the ancient liturgies speak. It is the

predestination to holiness, to stand before God, to find – or better – to see oneself before God, with God and in God in Jesus Christ. Faith is believing God, believing in God, walking together with God – as St Augustine wrote and preached about it.

To look at the saints is a duty to investigate Him who, according to the authentic biblical word, once and for all, forever became the authentic image, the first image of all holiness.

"One holy, one Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father", as it says during the Divine Liturgy before communion.

The Lord Jesus is indeed holy. By His holiness we are sanctified. Generations of biblical men and women, Christians of the New Testament era, people of

all times that have passed, have gazed upon the Lord Jesus, and always turned their eyes to Him anew: He who is to come, who has come, who must come (cf. Rev. 1:8).

Often, when we read the name of a saint in the liturgical calendar, we find no knowledge or remembrance of him or her and we seem to pass him or her by. It is as if there is nothing in common between us and them, the saints of God, at that moment. There is a sense of non-attachment of the righteous to the sinfulness and profanity of the common people.

Biblically spoken, the saints were nothing but sinners. But the power of grace lifted them by the power of grace the way of the righteous to holiness in a very infallible way.

Let us proceed to a much greater because much greater analogy. The people of ancient Israel looked upon the Lord Jesus exclusively as the Messiah. But seeing much in Him that they were convinced did not correspond to their ideas of Messianism, and they turned away.

The generations at the time of the Ecumenical Councils saw Jesus as God. Those who saw man, in time, founded a new religion without Him.

The Modernity, who believed with Luther and Calvin, defined Jesus as unmistakably calling man from damnation and death by a predestination to salvation. Some later saw Him as a Teacher, some simply as a Friend, others, in the last century, tried to approach Him or, better yet, to bring Him closer to themselves in the image of a liberator of the oppressed,



The Holy Elders of Optina

kind of a "Palestinian Che Guevara" or even a "rock star"... But contrary to all these human, too human expectations, there was too much in the Lord Jesus, for in Him was everything!

It is important to remember that God truly became human. God did not become "Messiah", neither did he become "Priest" or "Teacher of righteousness". So here we are forced to invent things to express the essence of the misunderstanding of things. Surprisingly we are to denote a way of perceiving the Lord that is not real, not realistic, not consistent with the truth, the fullness of the truth or even part of the truth, which is tragically characteristic of everyone or almost everyone. Perhaps everyone tends to simplify the mystery, to see the Lord as a tool with which God could redeem history from the snare of its wrong course.

The mystery, the paradox and, in a way, the very essence of the Christian faith is that in Christ Jesus God himself became incarnate in human flesh, soul, body, and blood, breath and skin. God is like the skin in which I live.

The language of the Bible is almost always poetry.

"But the word of God is alive and effective, and sharper than any sword: it penetrates to the division of soul and spirit, compounds and brains; it judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from Him, but everything before His eyes is open and naked" (Hebrews 4:12–13).

God is an infinite self-addressing. Infinitely addressed in history. And

therefore, no infinite and more complete way has been found for this infinity to address, give, transfer, and bestow itself, except in the human self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The human being, the being of man, the Story of the One Living, whose



Saint John of Kronstadt

name is Christ Jesus. The fullness of God was revealed in Him precisely because in Him, and only in Him, the fullness of a human being became visible. Tangible, visible, received by the Church in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

In the Eucharist, this simple sacrament containing bread, wine, and very little water, but infinitely much of the Word of God, Prayer and Blessing, the capacity of the infinite God to become infinitely finite is visible. Tangible. But at the same time to remain infinite. As the ancient Church

Fathers, Teachers, writers, and theologians said about it: He has taken upon Himself all our things. He has given us all that is His.

In the union of all that is human with all that is divine, the essence of the celebration in honor of the saints

is revealed. For no one, never saw God. God and the Father was revealed and is revealed by the Son of God (John 1:18). No one can call Jesus Lord unless moved by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). This reveals the Biblical Truth about the Revelation of God. About the very essence of His Being. And just as Jesus is only revealed by the Spirit and in the Spirit, so the Spirit Himself – will be revealed in the saints. "He will come to be glorified in His saints, to appear wondrous on that day in all who believe" (cf. 2 Thess. 1:10). In man's ability to manifest the Lord and express His Essence is revealed the great biblical meaning of holiness as looking at us through the eyes of God. This is also the essence of the Church's constant request and need before

God for the prayerful intercession of the saints.

"O land of Russia, holy city, adorn your house, in which the divine great hosts of saints are glorified. O Russian Church, be decorated and exult; behold, behold, your children rejoice in the glory that reigns before the throne of the Lord. O, choir of the Russian saints, divine regiment, pray to the Lord for your earthly fatherland and for those who honor you with love. The new House of Bethlehem, the promised land, Holy Russia, keep the Orthodox faith, in it to you the statement".



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SOCIETY

SPECIAL BANK OF RUSSIA TO MARK FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY'S ANNIVERSARY



The year of 2021 marks the 200th anniversary of the great Russian novelist and classic of world literature Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Commemorating this important date, the Bank of Russia has issued a special edition silver 2-ruble coin.

The coin is part of Outstanding Personalities of Russia series – a special collection by the Bank of Russia.

The silver 2-ruble coin has a round shape and is 33.0 mm in diameter. The obverse and the reverse of the coin have a relief rim along the circumference.

The obverse of the coin features a relief image of the National Coat of Arms of the Russian Federation and the inscriptions “Russian Federation” and “Bank of Russia”, as well as the coin denomination of 2 rubles, the year of issue (2021).

Another element is a chemical symbol of the metal according to Mendeleev’s Periodic Table of Elements, fineness, the St. Petersburg Mint trademark, and fine metal content.

The reverse of the coin bears relief images of the portrait of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, candles and a book against the background of Saint Petersburg sights and manuscript laser treated for matte finishing; there are inscriptions at the bottom: a facsimile of the writer’s signature and his life years ‘1821’ and ‘1881’ in two lines.

The new coin is legal tender of the Russian Federation and is mandatory for acceptance for all kinds of payments without any restrictions at its face value.