

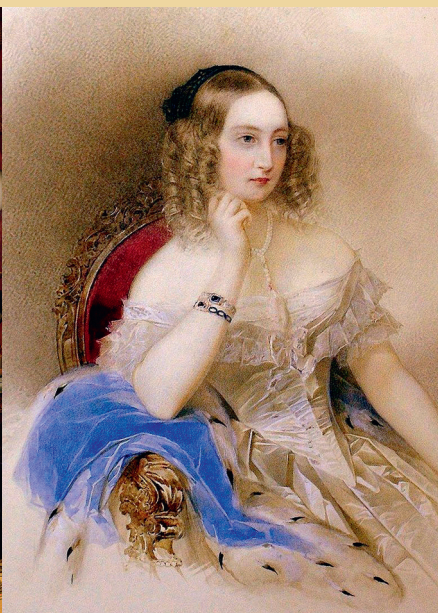
RUSSIAN MIND

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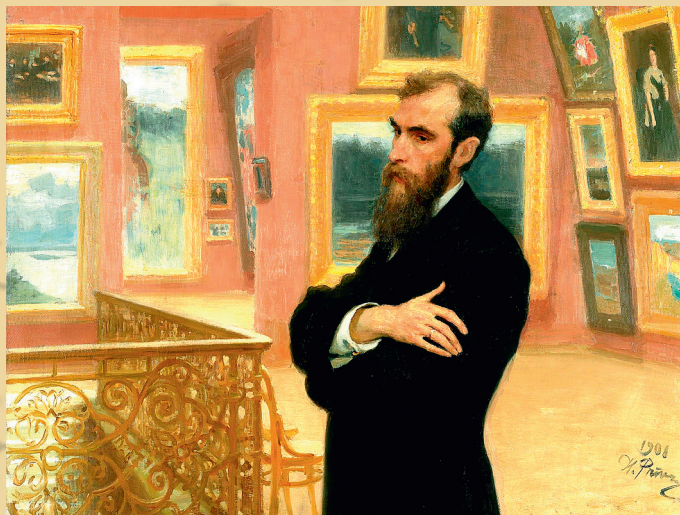
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PATRONS OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA



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EDITORIAL “WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY, WILL REAP BOUNTIFULLY...”



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo: *Maecenas Presenting the Liberal Arts to Emperor Augustus*. 1743

Traditionally, on the eve of Christmas, special attention is paid to charity, and we decided to cover this topic in the December issue of *Russian Mind*.

The common word “Maecenas” is associated with the name of a wealthy Roman patrician, patron of fine arts and science, Gaius Cilnius Maecenas. Being close to the emperor Octavian Augustus, he more than once stood up for disgraced poets and artists. Thus, the Maecenas helped Virgil, who fell into disgrace, to avoid death.

Patronage has existed in Russia since the adoption of Christianity: it was at the monasteries that the first hospitals and shelters for the poor

and orphans were built, but it began to develop most actively in the 18th century. Many entrepreneurs considered it their duty to do charity work, and often entire dynasties became patrons of the arts.

“My idea came at a very young age to make money so that what was acquired from society would return to society through some useful institutions...” These words belong to Russian businessman and philanthropist Pavel Tretyakov, who gave the world his unique art gallery.

The traditions of charity, interrupted by the revolution of 1917, revived again in Russia and today they continue to develop, bringing goodness and enlightenment to people.

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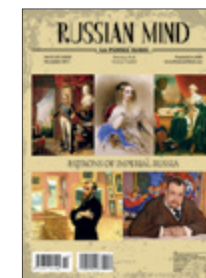
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MAIN TOPIC

PATRONS OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA

Charitable activity reached its peak in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th century

By KARINA ENFENJYAN

In the Russian Empire, patronage began to grow actively in the 18th century, during the reign of Empress Catherine the Great, and at first it was exclusively the prerogative of the nobility. Aristocrats were fond of collecting works of art and, like the Roman patrician Gaius Maecenas, patronised talented artists, poets and musicians.

Charitable activity was a duty of honour for the nobility: members of noble families donated vast amounts of money to support education, science, culture, arts, and literature.

A large historical footprint was left in Russia by patrons and collectors descending from the noble Stroganov family. Already in the 16th and 17th century, they patronised the most skilled icon painters and talented architects, entrusting them with the construction of churches. Count Alexander Sergeyevich Stroganov (1733–1811) was an outstanding patron of the arts. He was appointed President of the Imperial Academy of Arts and director of the Imperial Public Library by decree of Paul I. Artists, composers, poets, and among them Derzhavin and Krylov, enjoyed his support.

A rich collection of books, manuscripts, coins and historical documents amassed by the prominent statesman and philanthropist, Count Nikolay Petrovich Rumyantsev (1754–1826), who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia during the war against Napoleon, laid the foundation for the Rumyantsev

Museum, on which basis the public library (currently the Russian State Library) was established.

Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna (née Princess Friedericke Charlotte Marie of Württemberg, 1806–1873), wife of the Grand Duke Mikhail Pavlovich, patronised such outstanding artists as Ivan Aivazovsky, Karl Bryullov, Alexander Ivanov, as well as talented actors and scientists. She financed the establishment of the Russian Musical Society and conservatory, participated in the organisation of the world's first sodality of sisters of

mercy to help the wounded during the war (before the creation of the Red Cross!) and was a supporter of the abolition of serfdom.

Count Nikolai Petrovich Sheremetev (1751–1809), a highly educated representative of one of the most noble Russian families, a favourite of Paul I, went down in history as a patron of the arts, a collector, patron and philanthropist, as well as an outstanding theatrical figure and founder of the Hospice in Moscow, where the N. V. Sklifosovsky Research Institute for Emergency Medicine is now located.

Imperial Russia saw many noble philanthropists, and it's close to impossible to list them all... With the establishment of capitalist relations in the country, the merchants began to establish themselves more and more confidently, striving to be equal to the nobility.

Over time, not only the aristocracy and the clergy, but also representatives of the bureaucracy and merchants began to take part in the creation of charitable institutions; as far as possible, artisans and peasants also contributed to them.



Portrait of N.P. Rumyantsev by George Dow. 1826–1828



Portrait of Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna by Vladimir Hau. 1840

The abolition of serfdom in 1861, the rapid development of industry and trade promoted the emergence of talented entrepreneurs among ordinary people.

Charitable activity reached its peak in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th century, where merchants played a huge role.

In addition to the fact that many successful entrepreneurs sincerely considered charity as their moral duty and strove to live like a Christian, philanthropy and patronage were also an indicator of their social position, their way to express themselves.

In addition, the owners of large industrial enterprises needed qualified personnel capable of working on the state-of-the-art equipment, which was important in an increasingly competitive environment.

Great opportunities opened up for philanthropists, such as support for education and educational institutions, to which special attention was then paid, assistance to talents in science, culture, arts, literature, regardless of their estates origin.

Among the most generous patrons in pre-revolutionary Russia, whose contribution to the development of Russian science, arts and education can hardly be overestimated, were Pavel Tretyakov, who amassed an invaluable collection of Russian art and discovered the Itinerants for the world; Savva Mamontov, patron of Vasnetsov, Polenov, Korovin, Serov; Savva Morozov, who made a great contribution to the development of theatrical art in Russia; Ivan Moro-

zov and Sergei Shchukin with their unique collections of French Impressionists; Alexey Bakhrushin, founder of the first Moscow Literature and Theatre Museum.

We will delve into the lives and charitable activities of these prominent representatives of pre-revolutionary Russia in this issue of our magazine, but first we would like to recall the wise saying of Leo Tolstoy: "I became convinced that one cannot be a philanthropist without living the good life, moreover, one cannot – while living the bad life, while taking advantage of the conditions of that bad life – decorate his bad life, just visiting the field of charity. I became convinced

that charity can only satisfy both personal and external requirements, when it unavoidably arises from the good life; and that the requirements of such good life are very far from the conditions in which I live. I became convinced that the opportunity to do good to people is the crown and the highest reward of the good life, and that in order to achieve this goal there is a long ladder, on the first step of which I did not even dream to enter. You can do good to people only in such a way that not only others, but also yourself would not know that you are doing good, so that the right hand does not know what the left is doing; only as it is said in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles: so that your alms sweats out of your hands, so that you do not know to whom you give. You can do charity only when your whole life is serving the good. Charity cannot be the goal itself – charity is the inevitable consequence and fruit of the good life."



Portrait of Count N.P. Sheremetev by Vladimir Borovikovsky. 1819

190TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF PAVEL TRETYAKOV

History has preserved the names of thousands of people for whom patronage of the arts, charity and selflessness were not alien, and one of them was Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov

By ALEXANDER KHODORENKO,
a writer, author of the book, *Ten Geniuses of Business*

The Tretyakovs came from an old but not wealthy merchant family dating back to 1646. Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov's great-grandfather – Yelisey Martynovich – moved to Moscow from the town of Maly Yaroslavets [now Maloyaroslavets] in 1774. His grandfather – Zakhar Yeliseyevich – was a Moscow merchant of the 3rd Guild. In 1828, he opened an establishment in Moscow for dyeing and starching canvas and sailcloth. His father – Mikhail Zakharovich, a Moscow merchant of the 2nd Guild – managed to expand the family business. But the Tretyakovs' business did not reach a truly great scale until the next generation. Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov inherited his father's business in the first half of the 1850s. The 'Brothers P. and S. Tretyakov and V. Konshin' trading company appeared in Moscow in 1860. Tretyakov's sons continued trading and industrial business. In 1864, they founded the New Kostroma Linen Mill, built several flax-processing factories in Kostroma, and two years later established the famous Association of the Large Kostroma Linen Mill with a capital of 270,000 gold roubles.

It should be noted that Pavel Mikhailovich spent about 1.5 million roubles on organising an art gallery in Moscow. He received over a third of this amount in the form of

profit from the New Kostroma Linen Mill. Thus, the Kostroma textile workers contributed to the creation of a national treasury – the famous Tretyakov Gallery.

The Tretyakov factory was considered one of the most advanced and best equipped in Russia. Pavel Mikhailovich also tried to improve the living conditions of its workers. A school, a hospital, a maternity hospital, a nursing home and a nursery were built for them.

Expanding their father's business, the Tretyakov brothers also built cotton factories, which employed about 5,000 people.

When creating his famous gallery, Pavel Mikhailovich spent enormous amounts of money, perhaps to the detriment of his own family's well-being. And he had a large family. In 1865, Pavel Mikhailovich married Vera Nikolaevna, nee Mamontova, a cousin of Savva Ivanovich Mamontov, a famous Russian entrepreneur, industrialist and philanthropist, the founder of the Moscow Private Opera, and the great-aunt of another Vera Mamontova, who was the model for the painting 'Girl with Peaches' (1887) by V.A. Serov. They had six children – two boys and four girls.

I.S. Turgenev, the composers N.G. Rubinstein and P.I. Tchaikovsky, the artists I.E. Repin, V.I. Surikov, V.D. Polenov, V.M. Vas-

netsov, V.G. Perov and I.N. Kramskoy would visit the Tretyakovs. The family was related to some of them: P.I. Tchaikovsky's brother Anatoly was married to Pavel Mikhailovich's niece; the artist V.D. Polenov's wife, N.V. Yakunchikova, was Vera Nikolaevna's niece.

Pavel Mikhailovich, a fourth-generation merchant, wanted his daughters to marry only merchants. But it so happened that his eldest daughter, Vera, fell in love with the talented pianist Alexander Siloti, the composer S.V. Rachmaninoff's cousin. Knowing that her father might not give her his blessing to marry a musician, Vera was very nervous and even fell ill. When Pavel Mikhailovich saw his daughter's suffering, all his theories regarding his daughters' life partners failed.

The wedding of Vera Tretyakova and Alexander Siloti took place in February 1887. Alexandra (another daughter) married the doctor and collector Sergey Botkin. His brother Alexander, a doctor, later a hydrographer and an explorer of the North, married Masha. In May 1894, Lyuba married the painter Nikolay Gritsenko. Widowed in 1900, she remarried – her second husband was the famous Leon Bakst, a painter and a designer who created costumes and scenery for Diaghilev's ballet in Paris. Pavel Mikhailovich had enough



'Portrait of Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov' by Ilya Repin. 1883

breadth of vision to appreciate all these young men.

The following fact can testify to the way Tretyakov brought up his daughters. In 1893, Pavel Mikhailovich wrote a very large and serious letter to his daughter Alexandra, in which he explained his idea of parental duties: 'Money is not a good thing which causes unhealthy relations. Parents must bring up their children and give them education, but they are not at all obliged to provide for them.' There were the following words in the same letter: 'My idea was to make money from a very young age so that what was received from society would also return to society (the people)

in some useful institutions; This idea has never left me all my life.'

Fascinated by art, in 1854 Tretyakov began to collect pieces of national Russian works of art. His first acquisitions – about ten graphic sheets of old Dutch painters – were bought at a flea market near the Sukharev Tower. These drawings adorned his living-rooms until his death.

At first lacking experience and multifaceted knowledge in the sphere of art and guided by a deep patriotic feeling, Tretyakov decided to focus on collecting works by contemporary Russian artists. It is known that Pavel Mikhailovich had no special art education. Nevertheless, he bought

works by his still little-known yet talented contemporaries. As a rule, he acquired the most significant works from this or that artist.

'A Clash with Finnish Smugglers' (1853) by V.G. Khudyakov was one of the first paintings acquired by Tretyakov in 1856. That year marked the birth of the Tretyakov Gallery. This was followed by the purchase of works by I.P. Trutnev, A.K. Savrasov, K.A. Trutovsky, F.A. Bruni, L.F. Lagorio and others. Knowing about works by K.P. Bryullov in Italy, Tretyakov asked permission from the archaeologist M. Lanci's children to purchase his (Lanci's) portrait. Thus, in 1860, the



V.G. Khudyakov. 'A Clash with Finnish Smugglers' (1853); canvas that laid the foundation of the future Tretyakov Gallery

first work by the 'great Karl' (Bryullov) – 'Portrait of the Archaeologist M. Lanci' (1851) – appeared in the collection. So Tretyakov began selfless collecting work that lasted for many years. It was modest and not designed for advertising and praise. We can say that from the very beginning he had a clear idea of the purpose of his undertaking.

Pavel Mikhailovich pursued no selfish goals. He came up with the idea of creating a museum of national paintings. In his will, drawn up in 1860, just four years after the purchase of the first paintings, he wrote: 'For me, who genuinely and ardently loves art, the greatest wish is to lay the foundations for a public repository of fine art, accessible to all, to the benefit of many and pleasure for all.'

Tretyakov's confidence and faith in his cause seem surprising if we remember that he laid the foundations of the gallery at a time when the school of Russian art as an original and significant phenomenon loomed only faintly in the shadow of the great tradition of the West; mighty ancient

Russian art had been half-forgotten, works by Russian artists were in private collections in Russia and abroad; when there were still no Repin, no Surikov, no Serov, no Levitan and their paintings, without which it is impossible to imagine Russian art today. It was the time of the formation of democratic art and the birth of a new school of Russian art.

'...Without his help Russian art would never have entered an open and free phase, since Tretyakov was the only (or almost the only) one who supported everything that was new, fresh and practical in Russian art' (A. Benois).

There were few real enthusiasts in old Moscow who took an active part in the lives of young artists. They mostly just bought paintings for their galleries, and sought to pay less for them. Unlike them, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov was a real patron of arts. His visits to artists were always considered as exciting events, and all of them, masters and beginner artists, with awe waited for his quiet words: 'I am going to buy your painting.'

In 1877, Repin wrote to Tretyakov about his painting 'Protodeacon': 'I confess to you that if I sell it, then only to you, to your gallery, because, I say without flattery, I consider it a great honour to see my works there.' Artists often made concessions to Tretyakov (he never bought paintings without bargaining) and lowered their prices for him, thereby providing all possible support to his undertaking. And the benefits were mutual. Pavel Mikhailovich not only bought paintings, but also ordered them, thus supporting artists both morally and financially, which allowed them not to de-

pend on the tastes of the market.

In the activities of Tretyakov the collector's attention was primarily focused on works by contemporary realist painters of the mid and second half of the nineteenth century – the Wanderers (the Itinerants), representatives of the democratic wing of the national school, which defined the originality of the gallery's collection, the influence of this collection on the development of realist art, and its progressive, revolutionary and educational impact. But in the 1860s, when the Society for Travelling Art Exhibitions still did not exist, Tretyakov bought paintings in the official 'academic' style, and from the late 1880s – works by M.V. Nesterov, K.A. Korovin, V.A. Serov and others. Then Tretyakov began to collect drawings, and in the 1890s – icons.

Tretyakov had unmistakable taste. He was not afraid to buy works by young, still unknown artists. The specifics of the way Pavel Mikhailovich collected paintings are seen in the fact that many works for the gallery were done at his request. And neither then

nor today do these works disappoint the most demanding connoisseurs of Russian art with their problems or artistic merits. He bought works even when figures of high authority like L.N. Tolstoy, who did not recognise V.M. Vasnetsov's religious paintings, opposed it. He even bought paintings that were banned by the imperial authorities for public viewing.

Pavel Mikhailovich acquired paintings at exhibitions and right in the studios of artists. Sometimes he bought entire collections: in 1874 he acquired the Turkestan series by V.V. Vereshchagin (thirteen paintings, 133 drawings and eighty-one

sketches), and in 1880 – his Indian series (seventy-eight sketches). There were also over eighty sketches by A.A. Ivanov in Tretyakov's collection. In 1885, Tretyakov bought 102 sketches by V.D. Polenov, done by the artist during a trip to Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Palestine. From V.M. Vasnetsov Pavel Mikhailovich acquired a collection of sketches that he had done while working on murals in St Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev. V.G. Perov, I.N. Kramskoy, I.E. Repin, V.I. Surikov, I.I. Levitan and V.A. Serov were represented in his collection most fully and by their best works. The gallery was replen-

ished with works by artists of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries and monuments of ancient Russian art. This heroic period of Russian art can be understood, felt keenly and explored in Moscow, in the Tretyakov Gallery, more than anywhere else.

All artists, young and famous, dreamed of having their paintings hung at the Tretyakov Gallery because the very fact of buying a painting by Pavel Mikhailovich was an act of public recognition of an artist's talent. So one marvellous man managed to influence all Russian pictorial art and become a spokesman for Russian public opinion.



The painting by Nikolai Ge 'Peter I Interrogates Tsarevich Alexei Petrovich at Peterhof' (1871) was acquired by P.M. Tretyakov in the year it was done

Tretyakov's great merit is his unshakeable faith in the triumph of the Russian national school of painting – a faith that arose in the late 1850s and was carried by him through his life, through all the trials and tribulations. We can say with confidence that in the late nineteenth century Tretyakov's personal contribution to the triumph of Russian pictorial art was exceptional and invaluable.

Evidence of his ardent faith has been preserved in Pavel Mikhailovich's letters. Here is one of them. In a letter to the artist Rizzoni dated 18 February 1865, he wrote: 'In the last letter to you my expression might seem incomprehensible: "Then we would talk with skeptics." I will explain: many positively do not want to believe in the good future of Russian art and argue that if some Russian artist sometimes does a good painting, it is allegedly by accident and he will increase the number of mediocrities. I have a different opinion, otherwise I would not have collected Russian paintings; but sometimes I could not but agree with the facts presented; and every success, every step forward is very dear to me, and I will be very happy if I live to see when our day comes.' And about a month later, returning to the same thought, Tretyakov wrote: 'I involuntarily believe in my hope: our Russian school will not be the worst – it was indeed a clouded time, and for quite a long time, but now the fog is lifting.'

His faith was not a blind intuitive feeling: it was based on careful observation of the development of Russian pictorial art, on a deep, subtle understanding of national ideals that were being formed on a democratic basis.

So, back in 1857, Pavel Mikhailovich wrote to the landscape painter A. G. Goravsky: 'Concerning my landscape, I humbly ask you to leave it, and instead paint me a new one someday. I need neither rich nature, nor a great composition, nor spectacular light, nor miracles.' Instead, Tretyakov asked him to depict

simple nature, even if unprepossessing, 'but there must be truth and poetry in it. And poetry can be in everything – this is the artist's work.'

This note expresses the very aesthetic principle of the formation of the gallery, which emerged as a result of reflecting on the development of Russian national pictorial art. P. M. Tretyakov had guessed its progressive tendencies long before the appearance of Savrasov's painting 'The Rooks Have Come Back', the landscapes by Vasiliev, Levitan, Serov, Ostroukhov and Nesterov – the artists who managed to create a truthful depiction of Russian nature, conveying the poetry and charm inherent in it.

Pavel Mikhailovich first entrusted the idea of creating a national or folk art gallery to the artist V. G. Khudyakov and outlined it with the utmost accuracy in a testament written in Warsaw on 17 (29) May, 1860, during his first trip abroad.

His relatives did not have to execute this will. Pavel Mikhailovich himself fulfilled his dream – he set up a folk-art gallery.

Interesting statements by P. M. Tretyakov can also be found in his correspondence with Vereshchagin regarding the depiction of the contemporary Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878 for the liberation of Bulgaria – a war in which Russia took Bulgaria's side. On learning that Vereshchagin was going to the front to do a series of paintings about the war, Tretyakov wrote to the critic of music and art V. V. Stasov: 'Perhaps only in the distant future will the sacrifice made by the Russian people be appreciated.'

Tretyakov suggested that Vereshchagin pay a large sum in advance for his work: 'However strange acquiring a collection without knowing its contents may be, Vereshchagin is a kind of artist you can rely on, especially since giving paintings over to private hands, he will not be bound by choosing subjects and, probably, will be imbued with the spirit of the

sacrifice of people and the brilliant heroic deeds of Russian soldiers and some individuals.'

Vereshchagin had a different opinion: 'As for your letter to V. V. Stasov on my painting you saw, you and I obviously disagree a little in the assessment of my works and a lot in their trends. There is war before me as before an artist, and I strike at it with all my might; whether my blows are strong or real – this is a question of my talent, but I fight with all my strength and mercilessly...'

In addition to collecting, Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov was actively involved in charity work. He was an honorary member of the Russian Society of Art Lovers and the Russian Musical Society from the day they were founded and contributed substantial sums, supporting all educational initiatives. He provided material assistance to individual artists and the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture; from 1869 he was a member of the Council of the Moscow Trust for the Poor. He was also a member of the councils of the Moscow Commercial College and the Alexander Commercial College. Pavel Mikhailovich bequeathed half of his funds to charitable purposes: to set up a shelter for widows, young children and unmarried daughters of deceased artists (it was built in 1909–1912 by the architect N. S. Kurdyukov in Lavrushinsky Lane); for distribution among workers and employees of his enterprises; and for funding the gallery. He gave donations to help the families of soldiers who had fallen in the Crimean War and the Russo-Turkish (1877–1878) War. P. M. Tretyakov scholarships were established at the Moscow Commercial College and the Alexander Commercial College.

Pavel Mikhailovich never refused to render financial aid to artists and other applicants. He took good care of the money affairs of painters who entrusted their savings to him with confidence. He repeatedly lent money to his good adviser I. N. Kram-

skoy, selflessly helped V. G. Khudyakov, K. A. Trutovsky, M. K. Klodt and many others.

Brothers Pavel and Sergey Tretyakov founded the Arnold-Tretyakov Deaf-and-Dumb School in Moscow. Pavel Mikhailovich took his establishment very seriously. At first classes with deaf-mute children in live speech were rather primitive, and Pavel Mikhailovich sent the headmaster D. K. Organov abroad at his own expense so he could familiarize himself with the teaching process in similar schools.

In addition to general subjects, children were taught crafts. The school, or the 'institution for the deaf-mute', obtained a large stone house with a huge garden, where 156 pupils of both sexes studied and lived, and in the early 1890s Pavel Mikhailovich built a hospital with thirty-three beds at his own expense.

Patronage of the school, which began in the 1860s, continued throughout Pavel Mikhailovich's life and after his death. In his will Pavel Mikhailovich left very generous funds for the school for the deaf and dumb. Boys and girls would be brought up till the age of sixteen and receive a profession. Tretyakov selected the best teachers, got acquainted with the teaching methods, and made sure that the pupils were well fed and clothed. On each visit to the school he went round the classes and workshops during class hours and was always present at exams.

In 1871, on the initiative of Pavel and Sergei Tretyakov, a passage was built between Nikolskaya Street and Teatralny Passage on the site of an earlier one that had been built up in the eighteenth century.

In 1870–1871 the architect A. S. Kaminsky constructed two buildings with passage arches facing Nikolskaya Street and Teatralny Passage on the site purchased by the Tretyakovs especially for the arrangement of the passage; the facade of the building from the side of Teatralny Passage was built into the



P. M. Tretyakov acquired the painting 'Horsewoman' (1832) by Karl Bryullov in 1893

Kitay-Gorod Wall next to the tower (1534–1538) and designed in a romantic-medieval style. There were shops inside the passage. Such urban planning solution is unique for Moscow. The new structure was called Tretyakov Drive.

The Explanatory Dictionary defines charity as 'gratuitous actions and deeds whose aim is the public good.' With reference to the life of Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov we can add: 'and which will never be forgotten.'

IN THE WORLD

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

A decrease in the number of available energy providers is becoming a serious factor in reducing both production and consumption in the UK

By VLADISLAV PEREVALOV

British Petroleum has admitted that it will bring the UK Treasury £2.1bn in taxes this year. As a result of rising gas and oil prices, the company made £7.1 billion in just three months (July, August, September). However, the amount of taxes includes £700 million under the new 25% energy tax introduced by the UK Government in May. And today there are talks about extending the tax on excess profits of oil and gas companies for a period even after 2025.

The fact is that the new Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt are faced with a huge black hole in the public finances: it is now about £40 billion. Hunt's plan is to raise taxes and cut Government expenditure. However, many politicians in the opposition Labour Party doubt that these measures will be effective enough.

Rishi Sunak, a multimillionaire and son-in-law of a multimillionaire, became the leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister of Great Britain on 25 October this year. He is the first Prime Minister of Indian origin in the UK history and the youngest Prime Minister for 210 years. Sunak was born in 1980 in Southampton (Hampshire, England) and spent a significant part of his life in America, where he received a master's degree from Stanford University and worked for Goldman Sachs.

The Indian President Narendra Modi has expressed his hope that Rishi Sunak will become some kind of bridge between the two countries and will be able to expand trade ties between them. As for British citizens, they hope that under Sunak the UK will return to the path of stable development and prosperity.

The new Prime Minister and his Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to deal with large-scale and very complex problems. In the first place, of course, there is the problem of a possible shortage of energy in the country in the winter. John Petti-grew, the Chief Executive of the UK's National Grid, had to admit in an interview with the BBC that though he assumed the UK would have enough energy to meet winter needs, short power outages were still possible. He also added that it would be wise for the Government to start a campaign to reduce energy consumption this winter. Most consumers, however, do not need such calls: electricity prices are so high that many are already saving as much as they can.

So, in order to reduce the black hole in public finances the country's Government intends to raise taxes. The wealthiest will bear the brunt of future tax increases, but this measure will inevitably affect everybody. The combination of rising taxes, energy bills and mortgage and rent payments will raise fears of the worst fall

in living standards in a decade. One of the employees of the Exchequer put it this way: 'We will have a hard time. The truth is that everyone will have to pay more taxes if we are to maintain public services. We can't close the financial black hole just by cutting expenditure.'

Economic problems are growing. Inflation reached 10.1%, the highest rate in forty years. Clearly, it affects every family that does not have millionaires. Mr. Sunak is unlikely to succeed in stopping the drop in manufacturing and the overall fall in GDP, which may reach a critical point by April next year. To achieve any success here, the Prime Minister will need to closely monitor the state of the financial markets and look for difficult solutions in the raw material markets.

The rising cost of living has naturally led to public discontent, and further deterioration in living conditions will inevitably give rise to this discontent. A wave of strikes has already swept through the country at manufacturing plants and in transport services. Experts predict a new wave of strikes in the public sector: they will seriously affect the Tube, the buses and commuter trains. The National Health Service has not yet recovered from the crisis caused by Covid-19, and the number of people waiting for inpatient treatment and operations has increased significantly. Emergency care is overloaded.



A decrease in the number of available energy providers is becoming a serious factor in reducing both production and consumption. Mr. Sunak will obviously have to get serious about nuclear power plants, which will cause a negative reaction in the country and require huge funds. It is possible that he will have to agree to the extraction of oil by fracking (hydraulic fracturing), which will also lead to strong opposition from the majority of the UK population.

The growth of migration is an increasing burden on the country's budget. This year alone 38,000 migrants have crossed the Channel to the UK. In comparison, last year there were just 10,000 of them. Meanwhile, industrialists and entrepreneurs want to see an influx of new migrants in the country: they need cheap labour.

Lastly, the new Prime Minister will have to make tough decisions in foreign policy, on which success in all the other areas of the country's life largely depends. It is generally known that the UK has so far supported NATO's course of confrontation with Russia in every possible way, and this requires the constant allocation of large sums to support Ukraine and participate in NATO plans in connection with the situation in Eastern Europe.

Significant efforts will also be required to create a mechanism for balanced trade with China, and here the UK, being in the same boat with the USA, has to accept Washington's position on Taiwan. Under these conditions relations with China are becoming ever more problematic, and this naturally affects trade relations. Before and just after Brexit the UK could

count on help from other European countries, but now they themselves are having serious problems, especially in energy and financial areas, due to continuous military assistance to Ukraine.

Economists within the Labour Party believe that Rishi Sunak may be able to solve one or even two of the above-mentioned problems, but in general they have the force to strike.

Independent experts in the UK believe that the country will not be able to solve its problems until its government stops acting with an eye on such politicians as Macron, Scholz and Biden, and pursues a policy that meets the interests of all its citizens.

However, so far all the leaders of the Conservative Party have not lagged behind the United States in almost all international political actions, and this situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

TO OUR COMPATRIOTS

THE FATE OF THE DESCENDANTS OF THE GREAT FAMILY

Interview with Xenia Kulikovsky, the granddaughter of the Grand Duchess of Russia and great-granddaughter of the Russian Tsar

By NADIA KNUDSEN,
journalist, International Press Centre, Denmark

Xenia Kulikovsky, the granddaughter of the Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna and great-granddaughter of Alexander III and Empress Maria Feodorovna, lives in Denmark, on the outskirts of Copenhagen, where she was born on 19 June 1941 and where, by the will of fate, she returned 20 years later with her baby son in her arms. We are talking about the vicissitudes of Xenia's fate, whose life was closely intertwined with the life of her grandmother Olga Romanova, the younger sister of Nicholas II, sitting over a cup of fragrant tea in the living room of her villa.

Xenia, tell me, is it true that the musicians of a Russian orchestra in Denmark call you their talisman?

This is a virtuoso ensemble of Russian folk music, our balalaikas. Every year, except two pandemic ones, my husband and I go to Copenhagen for their solo concerts and enjoy it beyond words! The orchestra is 85 years old, and, you know, it feels like they are not getting old – such a prowess in their songs, such a refined mastery of performance, the heart just fills with joy. And they really call me their talisman and they always book the best places in the front row for us with pleasure. But it was my grandmother Olga Alexandrovna, the last Grand Duchess of Russia,

who helped them take their very first steps towards success.

Could you, please, tell us more about how it all happened?

I remember from childhood that the Knudsminde estate was crowded, life, as they say, was in full swing. There were a farm, a stable, vast land tracts where mostly young people from the Russian immigrant families worked, and after work they liked to relax on the lawn and sing songs. Olga Alexandrovna consulted with her husband Nikolai Kulikovsky, and they shared boards, logs, window frames, roofing materials, and the musicians quickly built a summer house, where many young people gathered – some of them even came from Copenhagen. Among them was Evgeny Pavlovsky, a musician, the son of a Russian officer in the tsarist army, a Siberian. He was thinking of organising an ensemble of Russian folk songs with balalaikas, and he immediately succeeded with ease. They took root here, learned new songs in that summer house on weekends, joked, fell in love, sat by the fire until dawn.

It was back in 1936, so it can be said that my grandmother facilitated the birth of the orchestra, for a start giving them roof and shelter in the full sense of the word. And by the time when in 1948 the Kulikovskys had

to sell the Knudsminde estate and emigrate to Canada with the whole large family, Evgeny Pavlovsky's orchestra had already grown stronger and moved to Copenhagen. Such is the story.

I know that you are an Orthodox person. Do you visit the Russian church?

No, I don't speak Russian, it just so happened, but I try to live like a Christian and follow the commandments. And I named both of my sons in honour of the Orthodox saints Peter and Paul. They baptised me at the insistence of my grandmother Olga Alexandrovna in July 1941 (I had just turned a month old) in the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Alexander Nevsky, in the very one that was built in 1883 in the centre of Copenhagen and presented by Tsar Alexander III to his wife Maria Feodorovna, nee Princess Dagmar of Denmark.

Moreover, I was baptised by the Russian priest Leonid Kolchev, who once was the confessor of Maria Feodorovna. Naturally, I could not remember how I was baptised, but it remained in my memory that when I was already four years old, my grandmother Olga often took me with her to visit this church for Sunday services. I remember how I was dressed up in the morning in a wonderful dress, patent leather shoes, because

it was a festive occasion for me to come to church, like for all parishioners, Russian emigrants. I remember that beautifully dressed ladies sat on chairs to the right and left of the church altar during the service, and we as children were always given sweets and delicious cookies, so that we would not make noise during the service.

Were you named Xenia, also at the insistence of your grandmother Olga, in honour of her older sister Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna, who was famous for her beauty and grace in the royal family of Alexander III? Did you meet her as a child?

Yes, this is true, my name is very Russian, and most likely I owe it to my grandmother.

Firstly, because my mother was Danish and it was hardly her idea. And secondly, in the large Kulikovsky family, the grandmother was always the leader. In addition, I was her first granddaughter and her most beloved one, she spoiled me and, when I grew up, she often took me to sketches in the forest and to the city running some errands, where she bought me sweets and ice cream.

And I met the Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna, but in London, I was then seven years old. My grandmother's older sister, being married to Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, cousin of Alexander III, chose to stay with her children in England when they, along with the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, her retinue and Romanov family members, were rescued from Crimea in April 1919 on the British Battleship HMS Marlborough.

In the spring of 1920, Olga Alexandrovna, with her husband Nikolai Kulikovsky and two babies in her arms, reached Denmark. They settled with the Dowager Empress, in the royal residence of Amalienborg, and then moved with her to Villa Hvidøre. According to my grandmother, her sister, Grand Duchess

Xenia Alexandrovna, came here more than once with her children to see her mother. But that was all long before I was born.

They say that the Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna was, as it were, disinherited, moreover, it happened through the fault of her sister.

That is not entirely true, they were connected by good relations. I remember that in 1948, due to forced emigration to Canada, we stopped on our way in London and spent six weeks at the Frogmore residence, where we were hospitably looked after by the family, including the Grand Duchess Xenia Alexandrovna. Although, to tell the truth, I remember her as a kind of capricious and always dissatisfied aristocrat. Which was in sharp contrast to my grandmother Olga, who was always optimistic, kind and very caring person.

Inheritance... I don't presume to judge here, but the fact is that 155 thousand Danish crowns (a lot of money at that time) received in 1929 from the sale at four Danish royal auctions of the personal property of the Empress Maria Feodorovna were deposited by Xenia Alexandrovna on her sister Olga's account, with the so-called investment account of the Bank of England.

You spent your childhood in the family circle at the Knudsminde estate, where you were born. Do you remember what you dreamed about when you were a child?

I remember that as a child I wanted to be a rider, I had a passion for horses. My grandmother Olga bought me



Xenia Kulikovsky in the living room of her villa
Photo: Nadia Knudsen

a pony, and my grandfather Nikolai, with the assistance of artisans, made a cart for me, and I rode around the estate in it. I was then six years old.

And my grandfather had his own chaise drawn by an Icelandic horse. He could no longer go around his possessions on horseback – age affected him. He brought all the workers from the field and the farms for lunch in this chaise, and they all sat down at the table together: that was the tradition of the Kulikovsky couple.

There were always a lot of people on the estate, there were nurses, maids, cooks, I remember we had a large kitchen with a real stove. It was located downstairs, where we also had food pantries. And there was a special elevator cabin for lifting prepared food. And I remember how once I enjoyed bread with my favourite raspberry jam, which kind Russian cooks often treated me to, and they suddenly, jokingly, put me in this elevator cabin and lifted me up – the maids gasped in surprise. I was



Xenia Kulikovskaya with her husband Aage Nielsen. Photo: Nadia Knudsen

about five then, probably not older.

My life was closely intertwined with the fate of my grandmother Olga Alexandrovna. I was born on her estate in Denmark to the family of her youngest son Guri and his Danish wife Ruth Schwartz. By the way, the eldest son Tikhon was also married to a Dane, and all three families lived in peace under the same roof in a spacious three-story mansion of the Knudsmine estate, which was bought on the outskirts of Copenhagen in 1930 against a part of the inheritance received after the death of my great-grandmother Maria Feodorovna.

The estate had marvellous meadows, fields, a dairy farm, stables, a garden and greenhouses; they kept cows, piglets, rabbits, chickens, geese, planted sugar beets and oats. The farm and workers were managed by my grandfather, cavalry colonel Nikolai Kulikovskiy, and the house and domestic staff were supervised by my grandmother. In addition, she spoke Danish and conducted all the affairs, so that she was, as it were, "the staff of life".

Everything went well, the sons, having received an excellent educa-

tion, having served in the royal guard, chose the career of military officers, started their families, got children – that were me and my brother Leonid who was born in 1943. It has always been Olga Alexandrovna's dream to live as a big family, surrounded by her children and grandchildren.

But in 1948, everyone had to leave the family nest, lovingly organised by Olga Alexandrovna, overnight and, without waiting for the consequences of the "Kremlin note" about the extradition of the Grand Duchess to them, with the active assistance of the Danish King Frederick IX, all three families were forced to emigrate to Canada, where they early bought a land parcel located 80 km from Toronto, near the beautiful Lake Ontario. And soon they built a house where the Kulikovskys lived all together. We didn't live in poverty, we adapted ourselves to the new country, my grandfather Nikolai began to breed racehorses, I went to school, the first grade, and my father taught at the university.

However, not everyone had successfully passed the emigration test, and the marriages of Olga Alexandrovna's sons came apart at the

seams. And despite the birth of the third son Alexander in 1948, my father, like Tikhon, left the family. In December 1956, taking two youngest children, Leonid and Alexander, with her my mother returned to Denmark. I stayed with my father, and after entering college, I moved in with my grandmother.

And how did Olga Alexandrovna's life turn out in Canada?

The Canadian period of life was as comfortable as in Denmark. My grandmother was still active as an artist, her

paintings were exhibited and successfully sold, and being a parishioner of the Orthodox Church in Toronto, in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, she painted several icons for the iconostasis, and even stamps were issued in Canada based on her sketches. They tried not to showcase their status and did not declare loud that they were directly related to the last Russian Tsar Nicholas II, but the authorities, of course, knew about it.

I remember that in 1952, during an official visit paid to Canada by the English Princess Marina of Kent, my grandmother Olga was invited to a reception held on the ship *Britannia*, and in 1959 she was also invited, along with her son Tikhon, to a reception on the occasion of the official visit to Canada of the Princess Elisabeth of Denmark, a first cousin of the present Danish monarch, Queen Margrethe II.

I had a funny episode connected with Olga Alexandrovna's special status. I fell in love with my classmate, he drove me one late evening to my grandmother's house, and the car had already slowed down at the house, the last kiss, when suddenly out of nowhere a policeman with a flash-

light appeared right there and shined into the windshield! The embarrassment was terrible, but as it turned out, he just wanted to make sure who was at the Grand Duchess's house at such a late hour, friend or foe. He apologized for the trouble and disappeared, but I realised then that she was guarded behind the scenes.

You got married early and became the mother of your first child at 19.

Yes, but love doesn't choose whether it's due time or not. My Canadian husband Ralph Jones was three years older than me and soon we became the parents of our son Paul Edward. Shortly before that, in November 1960, my grandmother Olga passed away; by that time she had been a widow for two years, as my grandfather died in 1958.

I was unable to cope with such trials, so I agreed with my father to live with him at the first after the birth of my baby. His second wife Elena was not happy with this, we didn't get along with her, so one day when dad was not at home, she just sent me out of the room! I lived with my friends for several weeks, then I made a reasonable decision and, leaving Canada forever, flew to Denmark with my son.

How did you manage to find a job there without speaking Danish and with a baby in your arms?

As they say, hunger breaks stone walls. When you are young, full of energy and the brightest hopes, everything comes easily, if you are not lazy. I diligently learned Danish, the skills of which I still had, and speaking English and French perfectly after Canada, I was able to get a job as an executive assistant at a large shipyard in Copenhagen, Burmeister & Wain.

Was it the one where at the end of the last century the luxurious yacht *Standart* was built by order of the Emperor Alexander III, your great-grandfather?

That's right, but the ship was launched by Nicholas II, who by that time succeeded to the throne after his father. Together with his wife, the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, and little Olga, they left the harbour of Copenhagen for the Scottish port of Lys, first on a test sail, and then at full steam went to Paris, where the ceremony of consecrating the Alexander III bridge, generously donated to France by Russia in connection with the conclusion of important agreements, took place.

And what changes then happened in your life?

In 1962 I met my second husband Finn Larsen, a Dane. We have a daughter, Vivian, and a son, Peter. At first, I was a housewife, then I studied as a jeweller and got a job in a large women's clothing boutique Fønsbek as a seller in the imitation jewellery department, and later, in January 1964, I passed a competition and was hired as a telephone operator for an international line in the large metropolitan telephone company KTAS.

But the happiness in my second marriage was short-lived, because my husband eventually became interested in both wine and ladies. And someday, with three children in my arms, I had to part with him. I moved to Albertslund, not far from the capital city, where I got a job at the Post kontor & Telegraf postal office.

And there you met your future husband Aage Nielsen, with whom you have been living happily for over 40 years, right?

Yes, you are right. After my divorce in 1973, I had never dreamed of meeting such an intelligent, charming knight that fate had given me. And although Aage is much younger than me, he won my heart with a storm of feelings! Love is manifested by deeds, and Aage, without hesitation, moved in with me, helped raise three children. Love works wonders! In 1978 we bought this villa, and in 1981 our daughter Vibeke was born,

and we got married. Since then we have been living in happiness.

I noticed that you have two birch trees in your garden, and in the kitchen there is a green oilcloth with chamomile flowers on the table, at which the whole family must like to drink tea in a very Russian manner with apple jam, which you make from apples that you pick in your garden. Which is no longer Danish. Did you get these genes from your grandmother?

Yes, these are my Russian roots, and I am proud of them. Birch trees were the first thing we planted when we bought a house. And this is in memory of my grandmother, who loved her homeland very much, yearned for it and even emigrated from Denmark to Canada, because that country, due to its nature, very much reminded her of Russia. The same endless expanses, birch trees, harsh winters, wolves, which, as I remember, sometimes howled at night near our first estate at Toronto. She dived into nostalgia, and it can be seen from the pictures. And her last painting finished in 1959 is called *Russian Easter Table*.

What does lineal relation with the Russian royal Romanov dynasty mean to you?

Good question. What is important is not the external, but what values you carry inside: moral, family, spiritual values, and what you pass on to your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. Can you instill in them respect for their roots, for the history of the great family, love for Russia? At least, they are interested in it.

If a good wizard could fulfil your three cherished dreams, what would you wish for?

I would ask for some health and to see again the beauty of the palaces near St. Petersburg, especially Gatchina, where my grandmother Olga grew up. And to hear the Kremlin chimes on the Red Square. These are my deepest desires!

CHRISTMAS TIME SIGNS

In the Orthodox tradition the celebration of the Nativity of Christ is preceded by fasting

By AUGUSTINE SOKOLOVSKI,
Doctor of Theology, priest

The Russian Church lives by the Julian calendar, so Christmas is celebrated in it on 7 January and the Nativity Fast begins on 28 November. Thus, December is a month of fasting.

On 27 November, the day before the beginning of the Nativity Fast, the Church commemorates several remarkable saints: among them are Emperor Justinian (+565), his wife Theodora (+548), St Gregory Palamas (+1359) and the Apostle Philip. So in Russian tradition this Fast is also known as Philip's Fast. However, this name of the fast was widespread before the Russian Revolution of 1917 and today it has almost fallen out of use.

Practising Orthodox Christians usually observe the Nativity Fast. But those who do not keep it should remember that in December, according to a centuries-old tradition, the Orthodox Church, wandering in history, has the Nativity Fast.

It lasts exactly forty days. Forty is a Biblical number. Among other things, it is a Symbol of the deadening, irresistible, abolishing time, which in Christ Jesus the Church and the world hasten to overcome. Paraphrasing the words of the Apocalypse: 'And the Angel... lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever... that there should be time no longer' (Rev. 10:5–6). Interestingly, this English translation of the Revelation is most likely inaccurate. In the original the Angel announces that the world's days are numbered.

The forty-day period of fasting precedes the celebration of Christ-

mas. It should be understood that the ancient tradition of preparing for the Birth of the incarnate God is still preserved not only in Orthodoxy, but also in Catholicism, Protestantism, and even, paradoxically, in agnostic secular society. However, in Western Christianity the period of Advent has a more festive character. In the Orthodox East the period preceding Christmas is devoted to ascetic labours and fasting, reminding us of silence and the preparation for the Nativity.

Meanwhile, using the word 'fasting' in relation to the season before Christmas, you should not mislead yourselves and your neighbours, to say nothing of condemning those who do not fast. The Apostle Paul in his Epistles directly says that the Lord is indifferent to the question of 'eating' or 'not eating' (cf. Rom. 14:6). For all righteousness is in keeping God's commandments. Initially the Biblical fasting meant the total abstention from food and drink all day long till sunset. Keeping in mind this basic rule of fasting warns any faster against pride.

In the Gospel the Lord very often addresses His contemporaries. He speaks about keeping the commandments and warns people about important things. In chapter 11 of the Gospel of Luke He speaks of keeping the little things. 'Woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass over judgment and the love of God' (Lk. 11:42).

By the Gospel of Christ and the apostolic preaching Christians were freed from the Law, which the people

of the Old Testament were obliged to observe. Since the time of the Apostolic Council, described in the Acts (Acts 15:1–35), Christians have been liberated from observing legal prescriptions. Circumcision, complete rest on the Sabbath and many other duties are no longer required. 'A man is not justified by the works of the law', the Apostle Paul writes (Gal. 2:16). In his Epistles he warns people that God does not bless Christians to observe the Law.

So, we do not give tithes from crops and other offerings in a specific visible way. However, the very image of the Lord's words is important, topical, and relevant. This applies primarily to where our spiritual life is performed: the life-giving Church sacraments, specifically the sacrament of confession.

At confession we tend to list our sins. Instead of mentioning one single specific grave sin before God so He can forgive it, we simply list many petty sins or just mistakes.

So, a husband or a wife who has cheated on his or her spouse says this at confession, but then immediately continues and repents of inattentiveness during prayer in the evening. This creates a mess of venial sins in which the true sin is invisible. Other examples: a person stole something and just 'broke the fast' or beat someone and 'missed the Vigil'.

Thus, it may seem that the 'danger' for someone who repents does not come from the sin he committed, but from the priest. Enumerations become distractions. In fact, the priest by virtue of the grace of his ordina-

tion hears everything. However, such 'dissolved confession' is not heard by God.

The God of the Bible is not the God of philosophers and theologians. He has hearing, ears, eyes, hands and feet. He gets angry and hates sin. 'Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine', the Psalms say (Ps. 77:65). The God of the Bible appears in the garb of human words.

Tombs that lie hidden, tithes of 'confessional idle talk', and neglect of the Last Judgement and the love of God. These are simple images that God uses in His speech, a constant and place of gravity that are necessary in Christ.

The Gospel was written almost 2,000 years ago. Many of the images present in the Gospel text are now beyond our direct comprehension. Sadly, for us they do not match the reality and the world we live in.

However, the same Gospel text contains images that on careful consideration match our reality more than ever. They are of great spiritual benefit, if approached responsibly.

Moscow, Paris, Prague, Berlin and London – these great cities are steeped in history. Ancient history is that of people. And the history of people is that of death and cemeteries.

Many cemeteries that existed earlier were destroyed, whether consciously or simply wiped off the face

of the earth by time, oblivion and the weakness of human memory.

It is no coincidence that one of the most important petitions of the Orthodox Church on the Saturdays of the commemoration of the dead is a prayer for those whom there is no one to remember and no one to pray for. Memory is the opposition of oblivion; oblivion is memory's younger sister.

Houses stand on the site of former cemeteries; people live and we walk over them. In chapter 11 of the Gospel of Luke the Lord, denouncing the scribes and the Pharisees, says: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them' (Lk. 11:44). These are cemeteries



Paintings at the dome of the holy Archangel Michael's Cathedral in Novocherkassk



Domes of the Rostov Kremlin's Dormition Cathedral

wiped off the face of the earth and graves forgotten by people.

This image was given by the Lord to help us in everyday life as we daily wander through the streets of ancient and new cities. Earth conceals former cemeteries, the earth to which we must return; it is our cradle and sister.

The Lord's words were meant to become through the Holy Spirit a reminder, the question of whether we, the living, are becoming like the tombs that we involuntarily and imperceptibly trample underfoot, and in which, albeit in different places, we will find ourselves sooner or later.

The Nativity Fast is a time that brings us closer to the Coming of the Lord. The God of the Bible is not a proud God. He appeared in our history once and for all to deliver us from spiritual 'tombs'.

In the Creed the Church as the community of the faithful professes its faith in the One God and Maker of Heaven and earth. By Heaven the Church Fathers meant the angelic powers, whose memory the Orthodox Church honours every Monday and especially on 21 November, exactly a week before the beginning of the Nativity Fast.

According to the Gospel of Luke, the appearance of angels accompa-

nied the Birth of Christ. They sang the song that became a worldwide hymn of joy: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Lk. 2:14). The Gospel of Matthew says that the Birth of Jesus was preceded by the appearance of a star (Mt. 2:6). Some Church Fathers believed that this star was not an astronomical phenomenon, but the appearance of an Angel.

'Earth' in the Creed means our visible world – the place of wandering and salvation of man. A world in which, to the amazement of the angels, God Himself lived among us in the Person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, there is no salvation outside the world.

In the Greek original the word 'Maker' from the Creed literally means an artist and a poet. Created in the image of God, man is called to cultivate in himself the likeness of God, to be a poet, a creator and an artist like his Creator.

Everyone is called and supposed to create a work of art. And this work of art is our human life, which is supposed to be beautiful and unique, spiritual and in everything similar to the most beautiful of the sons of men – the Lord Jesus Christ and His Angels.

This is what life should be like. A Christian has no right to stand still: he must create daily, in the language of modernity, an improved copy of himself.

The ability to improve yourself by the power of God is one of the dimensions of God's image, in which according to the Scriptures the Lord created man.

Angelic nature has no ability to be creative. For the Angels are the 'bureaucrats' of God. They do His will. Or they oppose it, as demonic forces do. The angels are unable to fall away from God, just as the demons cannot repent and return to the Creator. For repentance is creativity. The bodiless powers have no creative ability.

Unless this happens, the path of perdition is very close. 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth' (Rev. 3:15–16). Thus, the curse of the Biblical word can be fulfilled. May the Lord of the Heavenly Hosts, the Lord of Sabaoth, keep us from this.

The Nativity Fast is the time of preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, for the festivity, for the triumph of the spirit, the soul and the body. The image of a supper, a wedding feast and a festivity is very dear to the Lord. He speaks of it in His parables more than once. So, in chapter 14 of the Gospel of Luke (Lk.14:16–24) the

Saviour speaks about a man who made a great supper.

When the time came – that is, the Supper time – he commanded his servant to call those who had been invited. But 'they all with one consent began to make excuse' (14:18). 'I bought land, I bought oxen, I've got married...' These are simple, human, real and undoubtedly pardonable excuses.

But, learning about this, the master of the house got angry and said to his servant: 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind' (21). 'It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room' (22). Then the master said to the servant: 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper' (23–24).

His anger came in response to real, fully justified excuses of those who couldn't come. Then the Lord sovereignly invited those who had previously had nothing to do with the supper. His predestination determined 'to compel to come in.'

The words, 'for I say unto you' – that is, in fact, 'Amen' – in response to His own words, in the Gospel and in the Scriptures in general, are typical exclusively to the Lord Jesus, and speak of the Lord's Divinity. They also demonstrate the eschatological character of this parable. Eschatology is what theology calls the word about the end times.

There is another image of supper in the Scriptures – at the end of the Apocalypse: 'An angel standing in the sun... cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond,

both small and great' (Rev. 19:17–18). It is the Supper to which the Lord calls the fowls of the air...

'The poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind' are all of us, or, rather, the entire Church as the community of the faithful and the assembly of spiritual and moral cripples, sanctified by God for Himself from all peoples. Those who had not been called became guests at the Gospel Supper. Those called, who had previously seemed to be chosen – the mighty of this world – were rejected by the Biblical word and, at the same time, became guests, or, rather, participants in a terrible apocalyptic supper.

The combination of these two images of the supper, from the Gospel and from the Apocalypse, is extremely important in our evil time. It is so important at this moment of anticipation of the New Year and Christmas. Today we live in a time that is somewhat reminiscent of an invitation – an invitation by the powers that be who knows where. We can hear it from all directions. May it not drown the Voice of the Lord, Who calls His Church and His world to the true Supper, which is, above all, His Life – the life of God. From the Gospel pages God gives us a new, the New Testament definition of Himself as the Future of every human being.

'According as His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust', the Apostle Peter writes (2 Pet. 1:3–4). The approach to the Holy of Holies of the Divine life here on earth in the Eucharist must become the realisation of an unconditional determination to participate in God's Supper – the only way to avoid the supper of judgement that begins here and now from the Divine words of the Apocalypse.

GOLDEN PAGES OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

A huge number of wonderful books have been written about Russian patrons and philanthropists. We present only some of them to the attention of our readers.

The most famous philanthropists of Russia

Yelena Lopukhina

Patronage has a long tradition in Russia. Tsars, princes and nobles patronised icon painters, annals and chronicles compilers, temple and palace builders, book printers, poets and scientists.

The rise of patronage in Russia came with the accession of Catherine the Great, and its truly “golden age” fell on the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century. The nobility gradually lost its leading role, and entrepreneurs entered the historical stage, who began to “play

first violin” in patronage of cultural figures and scientists too.

This book is dedicated to the most prominent patrons of Russia in the 17th–20th centuries, from Fyodor Rtishchev to Baron Eduard von Falz-Fein.

Patrons of Russia: Stories of bright lives

I. Kononova, A. Garin, O. Goncharenko, R. Rakityanskaya, T. Shpankova

On the pages of this book the reader will find a description of the noble, selfless causes to which the heart, soul and considerable funds were contributed by the Russian patrons.

Collecting art objects can be considered as one of the areas of phil-

anthropic activity. Thanks to a fashionable hobby being popular among eminent noble families in the middle of the 17th century, unique collections that once belonged to the Rumyantsev, Yusupov, Sheremetev and many other famous dynasties have come down to us.

Merchants and industrialists of the mid-19th century and early 20th century contributed, on the one hand, to the industrial and economic upsurge, but on the other hand, to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of society. They gathered private collections, contributed to the creation of national schools and the development of new trends in the arts.

Philanthropists and patrons of the past and present

Marina Makalskaya, Natalya Bobrovskaya

This book presents unique materials on the history of philanthropy in Russia. For the first time, more than 100 names of well-

known and little-known philanthropists and patrons of the 18th, 19th centuries and early 20th century have been put together, many of which have been undeservedly forgotten.

The Morozovs. Patrons Dynasty

Lira Mukhovitskaya

The Morozovs are a long-standing Russian Old Believer family of merchants and industrialists. Representatives of this family included major textile manufacturers, rich merchants, founders of enterprises and educational institutions. At the same time,

this family brought us highly educated people, patrons who collected museum-worthy pieces of art, and historians.

Golden Age of Russian Patronage

Arkady Aronov



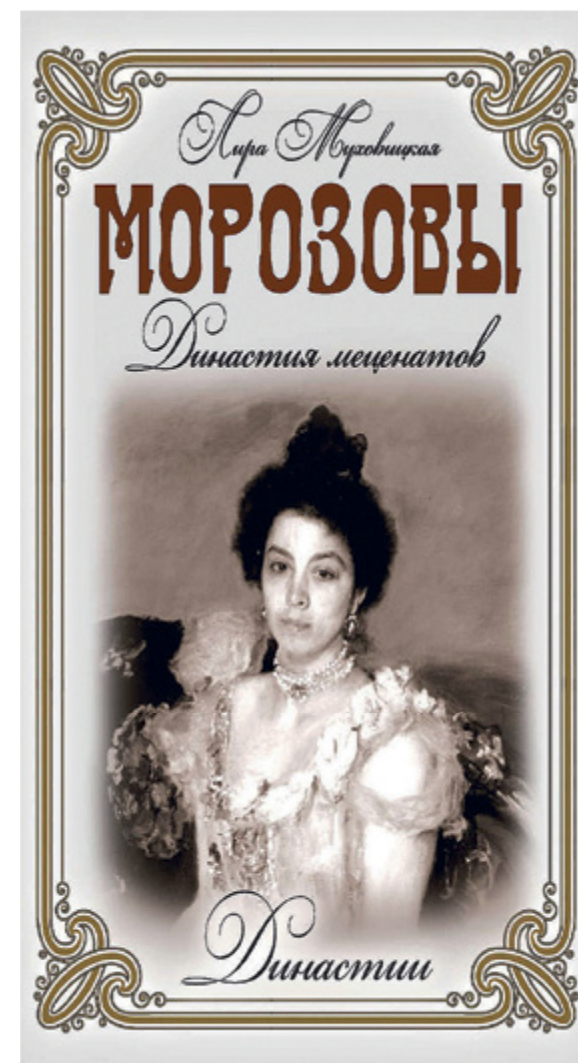
The book describes the traditions of mercy and charity in Russia in the 19th century and early 20th century, as well as Russian patronage as a unique phenomenon in the history of civilisation. It tells about the hereditary dynasties of Russian benefactors and their specific con-

tribution to the development of national culture.

Moscow Patrons

Natalya Dumova

The author tells about the activities of Moscow patrons and their contribution to the development of Russian culture of the Silver Age, traces their complex, often dramatic fates at home and in exile. You will learn about such names as Pavel Mikhaylovich Tret'yakov, who amassed an extensive and unique collection of paintings, Savva Ivanovich Mamontov, who became famous for his support to the theatre, Margarita Kirillovna Morozova, a patron of various arts. You will also read about the Bakhrushins, Morozovs, Tarasovs, Shchukins and many others.



TRADITIONS

CHRISTMAS TREES AROUND THE WORLD

Many Christmas traditions practiced around the world today started in Germany.

Germany

It has long been thought that Martin Luther began the tradition of bringing a fir tree into the home. According to one legend, late one evening, Martin Luther was walking home through the woods and noticed how beautifully the stars shone through the trees. He wanted to share the beauty with his wife, so he cut down a fir tree and took it home. Once inside, he placed small, lighted candles on the branches and said that it would be a symbol of the beautiful Christmas sky. The Christmas tree was born.

Another legend says that in the early 16th century, people in Germany combined two customs that had been practiced in different countries around the globe. The Paradise tree (a fir tree decorated with apples) represented the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. The Christmas Light, a small, pyramid-like frame, usually decorated with glass balls, tinsel and a candle on top, was a symbol of the birth of Christ as the Light of the World. Changing the tree's apples to tinsel balls and cookies and combining this new tree with the light placed on top, the Germans created the tree that many of us know today.

Canada

German settlers migrated to Canada from the United States in the

1700s. They brought with them many of the things associated with Christmas we cherish today – Advent calendars, gingerbread houses, cookies – and Christmas trees. When Queen Victoria's German husband, Prince Albert, put up a Christmas tree at Windsor Castle in 1848, the Christmas tree became a tradition throughout England, the United States, and Canada.

Great Britain

The Norway spruce is the traditional species used to decorate homes in Britain. The Norway spruce was a native species in the British Isles before the last Ice Age and was reintroduced here before the 1500s.

Ireland

Christmas trees are bought anytime in December and decorated with coloured lights, tinsel, and baubles. Some people favour the angel on top of the tree, others the star. The house is decorated with garlands, candles, holly, and ivy. Wreaths and mistletoe are hung on the door.

USA

Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850. Thomas Edison's assistants came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees. The tallest living Christmas tree is believed to be the 122-foot, 91-year-old Douglas fir in the town of Woodinville, Washington.

Italy

In Italy, the presepio (manger or crib) represents in miniature the Holy Family in the stable and is the centre of Christmas for families. Guests kneel before it and musicians sing before it. The presepio figures are usually hand-carved and very detailed in features and dress. The scene is often set out in the shape of a triangle. It provides the base of a pyramid-like structure called the ceppo. This is a wooden frame arranged to make a pyramid several feet high. Several tiers of thin shelves are supported by this frame. It is entirely decorated with coloured paper, gilt pinecones, and miniature-coloured pennants. Small candles are fastened to the tapering sides. A star or small doll is hung at the apex of the triangular sides. The shelves above the manger scene have small gifts of fruit, candy, and presents. The ceppo is in the old Tree of Light tradition which became the Christmas tree in other countries. Some houses even have a ceppo for each child in the family.

Spain

A popular Christmas custom is Catalonia, a lucky strike game. A tree trunk is filled with goodies and children hit at the trunk trying to knock out the hazel nuts, almonds, toffee, and other treats.

Norway

The Christmas tree was not introduced into Norway from Germany until the latter half of the 19th cen-

tury; to the country districts it came even later. When Christmas Eve arrives, there is the decorating of the tree, usually done by the parents behind the closed doors of the living room, while the children wait with excitement outside. A Norwegian ritual known as "circling the Christmas tree" follows, where they all join hands to form a ring around the tree and then walk around it and sing carols. Afterwards, gifts are distributed.

Sweden

Most people buy Christmas trees well before Christmas Eve, but it's not common to take the tree inside and decorate it until just a few days before. Evergreen trees are decorated with stars, sunbursts, and snowflakes made from straw. Other decorations include colourful wooden animals and straw centrepieces.

Mexico

In most Mexican homes the principal holiday adornment is el Nacimiento (Nativity scene). However, a decorated Christmas tree may be incorporated in the Nacimiento or set up elsewhere in the home.

Guatemala

The Christmas tree has joined the "Nacimiento" (Nativity scene) as a popular ornament because of the large German population in Guatemala. Gifts are left under the tree on Christmas morning for the children. Parents and adults do not exchange gifts until New Year's Day.

Brazil

Although Christmas falls during the summer in Brazil, sometimes pine trees are decorated with little pieces of cotton that represent falling snow.



Photo: Alsu Vershinina

Christmas trees generally take six to eight years to mature. Ninety-eight percent of all Christmas trees are grown on farms. You should never burn your Christmas tree in the fireplace. It can contribute to creosote build-up.

FESTIVE SEASON

FAIRY TALE CHRISTMAS AT THE CHÂTEAUX

By CONSTANCE DIVE

For the festive season, the chateaux of the Loire Valley don their most resplendent finery. Christmas trees in all their guises, wonderful wreaths, fantastic beasts, and plenty of delicious treats all fill the chateaux with the magic of a Christmas fit for a king!

The Chambord Castle

The most majestic of the castles of the Loire Valley is offering a programme of events tailored to the end of the year. The magic of Christmas is present from the moment you enter the castle, with Christmas trees illuminating the alleys just before nightfall and glittering garlands adorning the French gardens. The Château de Chambord benefits from a rational lighting of its facades with LED bulbs. Throughout the tour, the atmosphere is festive and warm, starting with the double revolution staircase and the chapel, which are decorated for Christmas. Several activities are organised to enhance the visit: public readings of Christmas tales, meetings with Father Christmas, trumpet concerts, costumed parades, medieval and Renaissance dances, artistic fencing, period games such as the popular trou-madame, a derivative of bil-

liards... not forgetting the Christmas show recounting the reign of François I with humour.

Leonardo da Vinci's last home

Christmas decorations in Leonardo da Vinci's last home, a carriage ride in the park with explanations from a guide dressed as Leonardo da Vinci followed by hot chocolate, painting workshops on Christmas ornaments, creation of a perfume with the scent



Christmas decorations in Leonardo da Vinci's last home. Photo: Leonard de Serres



Christmas at Château de Chambord. Photo: Leonard de Serres

of Christmas, the end of the year promises to be magical at the Château du Clos Lucé.

The festivities will culminate on 27 December with a performance of a musical comedy dedicated to children with improvisations and visual arts.

The Chenonceau Castle

The Château de Chenonceau has rarely lived up to its nickname of Château des Dames! Elegance, grace and fra-



At Christmas, floral art is invited to the Château de Chenonceau. Photo: Jean-Christophe Coutand

grance are the order of the day for the Christmas festivities with a parade of queens in dresses, each more surprising than the last, just a few days before Christmas Eve. To celebrate the end of the year as it should be, the know-how of the Chenonceau floral workshop is on display in the residence of Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Médicis. From room to room, the floral compositions created by the designer Jean François Boucher, Meilleur Ouvrier de France, are revealed. The visitor discovers tables decorated with moss, mushrooms and foliage, garnished with chocolate and decorated with candleholders.

Workshops on floral art and French savoir-vivre are also offered to give ideas for decorating and avoid



A gourmet Christmas at Azay-le-Rideau. Photo: Leonard de Serres

any false notes during the Christmas meal.

The Azay-le-Rideau Castle

What's Christmas without its traditional sweet treats? At Azay-le-Rideau, your sweet tooth is the guest of honour! In addition to the treats laid out in every room, you can also discover the chateau's collections from a gourmet perspective, with guided tours on the themes of chocolate's introduction to France and Renaissance feasts. Don't forget your goodie bag of spices and treats!

The Royal City of Loches

For the festive season, the Royal City of Loches plunges visitors into the world of Grinch,

a grumpy character inspired by the Christmas tale *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* by Theodor Seuss, written in 1957. Visit the ground floor of the royal dwelling to discover a spectacular setting. The exhibition room in the dungeon is also dressed in Christmas clothes for the pleasure of children (and adults). Several activities are offered during the festive period, including storytelling in public, a night visit with Christmas concerts by the Tours symphony orchestra and a visit on the theme of winter in medieval times.

The Castle of Langeais

In Langeais, you can discover the treasures of a Medieval Christmas. Extraordinary



Christmas in the royal city of Loches, in the Loire Valley. Photo: Jean-Christophe Coutand



Christmas at the Château de Langeais, in the Loire Valley. Photo: Jean-Christophe Coutand

dishes like pheasant and peacock – feathers and all! – will adorn the banquet table, while luxurious garments await their wearers in the chateau's bedrooms. You can also admire the floral displays made especially for Christmas, including the opulently decorated Christmas tree in the feasting hall. A number of activities are on the Christmas agenda: learn calligraphy in the scribe class as you make your own Christmas card, or enjoy a storytelling walk with a guide in character.



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