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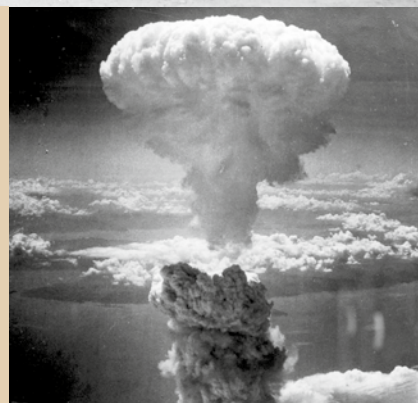
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anniversary
of the end
of World War II



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EDITOR'S LETTER

SUMMER OF OUR MEMORY

“There is only a moment between the past and the future. It is it what is called life,” says a song from a popular Soviet film. The author of the words of this hit suggests that we all “hold on” to the moment – that is, cherish the present. He’s probably right. For the present is a continuation of yesterday, so it comes that there can be no future without the past.

This summer issue of our magazine chronologically falls between two important dates for Russia: the eightieth anniversary of the Victory over Nazism in the Great Patriotic War and the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War II. Therefore, the first part of the *Russian Mind* is dedicated to the results of the most terrible of the wars. And above all – the decisive contribution of the Red Army to the Allied victory over militaristic Japan.

We will tell readers about the Potsdam Conference, the defeat of the Kwantung Army (it had about forty divisions – significantly more than in the entire Pacific zone), and the intrigues of the Tokyo authorities around the signing of the unconditional surrender aboard the US Navy battleship Missouri...

All this is complemented by extracts from a book by our author, the famous writer Valery Povolayev, on the work in the Japanese Empire of An international intelligence network headed by the journalist and diplomat Richard Sorge.

The historical part of our issue surprisingly resonates with the date that it is our duty to mark: the 180th anniversary of the birth of the Russian Emperor Alexander III. It was to him (who earned the moniker of the “Tsar

Peacemaker” by his contemporaries) that the words that could be an epigraph to our magazine’s historical part belonged: “Russia has only two allies – its Army and Navy.”

However, enough with war reminiscences! This summer is also rich in significant anniversaries from the cultural life of Russia. Isaac Levitan, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Yuri Trifonov, Vladimir Vysotsky...

There is also a review of a new book by Alice Danchokh in this issue. We are very sorry to announce that Maria Kopieva, who wrote under this pen name, is no longer with us. Just before the new issue of the *Russian Mind* magazine was sent to print, this talented and beautiful woman passed away.

Of course, we will pay tribute to Yuri Grigorovich. After the recent death of this great Russian choreographer the world ballet seems to be orphaned. His long and glorious life – he started performing with Sergei Diaghilev himself! – illuminated the entire twentieth century theatre with special colours...

The holy feasts of the Transfiguration of the Lord and the Dormition of the Mother of God fall in the summer too. Not to mention that 28 July is the Day of the Baptism of Rus’, our national celebration for all ages. And, of course, the crown of summer, its apogee, is 7 July – Ivan Kupala Day (a Slavic folk festival coinciding with the Nativity of St John the Baptist). It is believed that days get progressively shorter after it.

Enjoy reading the new issue of the *Russian Mind* magazine, dear readers!

By Kirill Privalov

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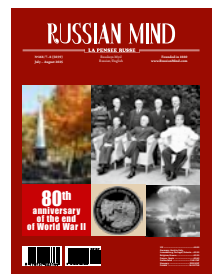
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Collage on the theme of the end of World War II



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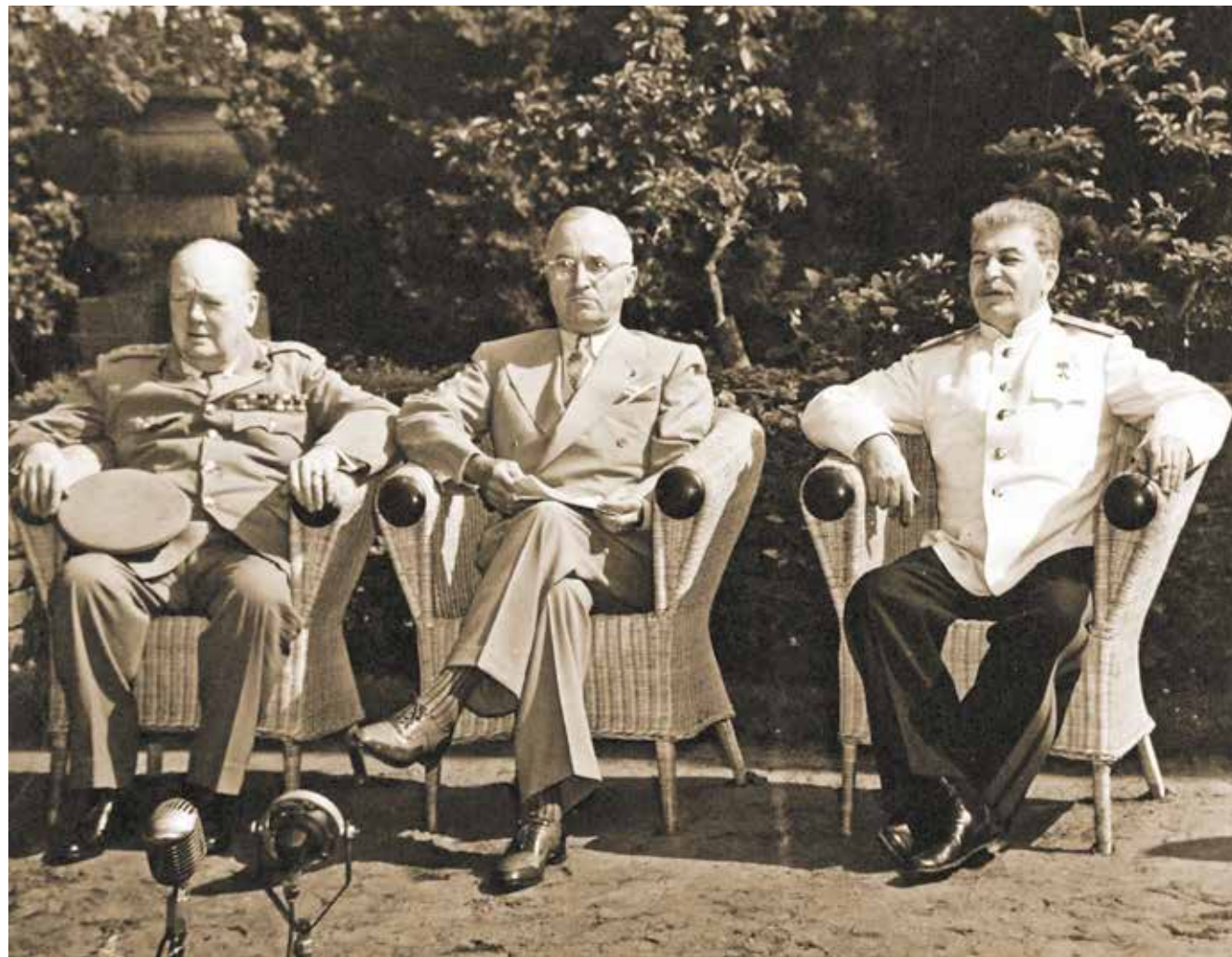
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THE LAST CHORD IN THE MOST TERRIBLE OF WARS

The strategic decisions of the Soviet generals who had defeated the most powerful army in the world in four years ensured victory over the Kwantung Army, but in just a week and a half!

By VYACHESLAV KATAMIDZE



Winston Churchill (he will be replaced by Clement Attlee on 28 July), Harry Truman and Joseph Stalin at the Potsdam Conference, 25 July 1945

Before we start talking about how the United States fought against the Japanese military machine after Pearl Harbour, and the Soviet troops after joining the war against Japan in 1945, let's say a few words about

what the "Land of the Rising Sun" was like at that time.

In Japan there was a regime called "Japanese militarism". Its ideological basis was the increasing role of the military in society and

the worship of military force. In essence, the military had become a special privileged class in the country in the late nineteenth century, and from the early twentieth century till the end of the Second World

War it dominated socio-political life, determining the principal directions of development not only of the Armed Forces, but also of a whole Japanese society.

At the same time, Japanese militarism was of a special kind. It was a mixture of the policy of Japan-centric development throughout Southeast Asia and the exaltation of the fighting spirit of the Japanese with the basic requirements of the samurai code (bushido). Our readers will easily guess that it was aggressive chauvinism. Accordingly, historians believe that the foreign policy of the Japanese State was parafascist.

It should be added that from the last quarter of the nineteenth century the role of Shinto clergy had been increasing. Shinto, or the "way of the gods", is a traditional Japanese religion rooted in the ancient animistic beliefs of the Japanese, centred on the veneration of numerous deities called kami, as well as nature spirits. Shinto was declared the State cult, obligatory for all Japanese, and the central deity of the cult was the Emperor.

Taking into account that Shinto was connected and to some extent intertwined with the culture of the samurai moral and ethical code, where the main virtues were discipline and subordination to superiors, no wonder that this fusion of views eventually resulted in an ideological and political concept that no Japanese could dispute: "The Japanese nation and its culture are unique, and Japan stands far higher than the countries that have not reached this level of development. So, Japan has the right to exercise its dominion – and not only in its region!"

Historians note that Japanese militarism was not formed as a result of a coup d'état and was not accompanied by a significant restructuring of the State apparatus;

it was a consequence of the evolution of the country's political culture. But there is no doubt that it was strengthened especially rapidly in the 1920s and the 1930s under the influence of the nationalist and fascist ideology of European countries, primarily Germany and Italy.

According to expert estimates on the history of the Second World War, by the eightieth anniversary of the historic victory of the Allies over Germany and its satellites over 12,000 articles on the last stage of the war and its results had appeared in the leading media of twenty major countries of the world. And in each of them the events of this period of the war, including the surrender of Japan, were discussed in detail.

Regarding the surrender, the opinions of the authors of all these articles were divided into three groups: the authors of the first group believe that the US Air Force's nuclear strikes on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki sealed the fate of the Japanese Empire: further resistance was pointless.

The second group mainly consists of the Russian and Chinese historians who believe that the defeat of the 850,000-strong Japanese Kwantung Army by Soviet troops was the powerful and final chord of the Second World War, which practically destroyed the strategic reserve of the Japanese Armed Forces and deprived the Japanese islands of effective coastal defence forces.

The largest group of historians are those who, considering both of these factors, come to the conclusion that Japan had no chance of success in this war in the first place because its main opponent was America, which at that time possessed a formidable military-industrial capacity, a huge aircraft-carrier fleet and shipbuilding capabilities which all the Asian countries were inferior to.

From the very first days the experience of combat operations in the Pacific Theatre showed that, despite the heavy losses suffered by the US Navy during the attack of Japanese Forces on Pearl Harbour, the American military equipment was obviously better than the Japanese.

For the USA the Pacific Ocean was a zone of not only strategic, but also State interests, and in this regard the fight against Japan was a priority in the US military and political actions throughout the Second World War.

The efforts of the United States throughout the Pacific War were aimed at bringing militaristic Japan to its final defeat. And it's clear why: Japan was their sole rival in the entire Pacific basin, and the most dangerous one, since it had had experience of armed struggle in China, Korea and other Southeast Asian countries.

If we evaluate Japan's chances of winning this single combat, it did not have them even after Pearl Harbour. The US Navy could operate near and around the Japanese islands, disrupting Japanese sea communications, and striking at the Pacific islands where Japanese bases and garrisons were located; as for the mainland USA, after Pearl Harbour it became virtually inaccessible to the Japanese Navy and Air Force.

But the tragedy of Pearl Harbour had a silver lining too: it triggered a powerful wave of patriotism in the United States and hatred of the insidious, treacherous enemy. Those in the camp of Hitler's allies shrugged their shoulders: they reckoned that the losses of the American Navy were not so great. The Japanese sank five of the seventeen battleships (three were later returned to service), and eighteen of the ninety ships in the harbour were sunk or damaged. 2,402 Navy officers and men were killed, and almost all the aircraft



Pacific Fleet marines are hoisting the flag in Port Arthur. 25 August 1945

of the military base, all the hangars and weapons stores and fuel were destroyed.

However, the Americans quickly made up for their losses in the fleet. By the middle of the Second World War America had such shipbuilding capacity that it could launch two or even three warships of the main classes – from aircraft carriers to submarines – every day!

Ironically, it comes that by their strike at Pearl Harbour the Japanese ensured the birth of a naval superpower with unparalleled combat power. These ships may not have immediately engaged in battles with the Japanese Navy, but in effect Japan had already lost the war.

By the end of 1942 it was clear to the whole globe.

The overall balance between the US and Japanese Air Force and Navy was increasing in favour of the Americans: if by the beginning of 1942 it ranged from 1:4 to 1:5, then in the final stage of the war it was already 1:11!

In 1944 the Americans drove Japanese troops out of the Philippines. It meant that Japan was left without oil supplies and, therefore, was doomed to a crushing defeat.

Cities of Japan were being reduced to ashes every day: Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Kobe were practically razed. The worst was the bombing

of Tokyo, committed on the night of 9–10 March 1945. Over 300 B-29 aircraft dropped 1,700 incendiary bombs on Tokyo. The fire engulfed over ca. 15,5 square miles of the city, killing over 100,000 people.

By 1945 the losses in the Japanese Armed Forces were about ten times higher than those of their adversaries. By that time Japan had lost about 2 million of its troops at sea and on land in the armed struggle, and the losses continued to grow.

The situation in Manchuria was no easier for Japan, with Soviet divisions advancing there to crush the Japanese Kwantung Army.

Before the war with Nazi Germany, in April 1941, the Soviet-Japanese

Neutrality Pact was concluded, which somewhat reduced the tension between Japan and the USSR that had existed since the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and the Japanese intervention in the Far East during the Civil War.

Simultaneously to the preparation of a strike against the Anglo-American forces in the Pacific Ocean, the Japanese command was plotting a combat plan against the Soviet Union, codenamed “Kantokuen” (special manoeuvres of the Kwantung Army), in case after the Japanese attack on the American Navy the USSR immediately agreed to an alliance with the USA against Japan. Then Berlin gave Tokyo to understand that it was preparing for a massive attack on the western territories of the Soviet Union, so Japan had nothing to fear.

However, Soviet intelligence reported that with the expansion of hostilities in the Pacific Theatre and in the event of successful actions against the American Navy in the south and southeast of the Pacific Ocean the Japanese forces in Manchuria would be significantly increased and Japan would be ready to help Germany defeat the Soviet Union. Messages of this kind would arrive in Moscow till the end of 1942, which meant that the danger of Japan entering the war against the USSR on its Far Eastern frontiers remained. This made the Soviet Government keep significant forces in the Far East. However, the Red Army’s victorious offensive in Europe was developing so rapidly that the situation in the Far East worried the Kremlin less and less.

For the USA and the UK, the allies of the USSR in the anti-Hitler coalition, the most important and urgent task was the final defeat of Japan. At the Yalta meeting of the leaders of the three great powers in February 1945 Joseph Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston



The Mother Hiroshima sculpture by Anselm Treeese (1958). Dortmund, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, Platz von Hiroshima

Churchill signed the following secret agreement on the Far East.

The Yalta secret agreement of the three great Powers on the issues of the Far East. 11 February 1945

The leaders of the Three Great Powers – the Soviet Union, the USA,

and the UK – agreed that two to three months after Germany’s surrender and the end of the war in Europe the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan on the side of the Allies, provided:

- 1. Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People’s Republic) maintains the status quo;*
- 2. The restoration of the rights of Russia, violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904, namely:*



Monument to Soviet soldiers in Harbin

a) the return of the southern part of Sakhalin and all its surrounding islands to the Soviet Union;

b) the internationalisation of the trade port of Dairen (now Dalian), ensuring the preferential interests of the Soviet Union in this port, and the restoration of the lease for Port Arthur as the USSR Naval base;

c) the joint operation of the Chinese Eastern Railway and the South Manchurian Railway, which provides access to Dairen, on the basis of the organisation of a mixed Sino-Soviet Society with the primary interests of the Soviet Union, with China retaining full sovereignty over Manchuria;

3. The Kuril Islands be transferred to the Soviet Union.

The agreement on Outer Mongolia and the aforementioned ports and railways is supposed to require the consent of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. On the advice of Marshal I. V. Stalin, the President will take measures to ensure that such consent is obtained.

The heads of the Governments of the three great Powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union should be unconditionally satisfied after the victory over Japan.

For its part, the Soviet Union expresses its willingness to conclude a Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship, alliance, and mutual assistance with

the National Government of China to support it with its armed forces to liberate China from the Japanese yoke.

11 February 1945

**Joseph Stalin
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Winston Churchill**

True to its allied duty, on 5 April 1945 the USSR Government denounced the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact. On 8 August 1945 in Moscow the Soviet Government handed over a statement to the Japanese ambassador saying that on account of Japan's refusal to cease military operations against the USA, the UK and China, the Soviet Union

would consider itself at war with Japan from 9 August 1945.

Let's be frank: the Soviet troops took on a difficult task. By the summer of 1945 the Japanese had seventeen fortified areas in Manchuria, 4,500 pillboxes and earth-and-timber bunkers, numerous airfields and landing sites. The Kwantung Army had about a million personnel, 1,150 tanks, over 1,500 aircraft, and about 6,500 guns of various calibres. Brave and well-trained warriors were needed to overcome their resistance and break through the massive fortifications. And there were many of them in the Red Army after the capture of Berlin.

By the beginning of the war in the Far East the Soviet command had transferred forces there that had become available in the West after the victory over Nazi Germany. By early August 1945 the Soviet forces set up in the Far Eastern Theatre had 1.7 million people, 30,000 guns and mortars, 5,200 tanks, over 5,000 aircraft, and ninety-three ships. In July 1945 the Main Command of the Soviet Forces in the Far East was established, headed by Marshal of the Soviet Union Alexander Vasilevsky, former Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The Manchurian Operation commenced on 9 August 1945 at 00:00 Trans-Baikal time. The Red Army's offensive in Manchuria was conducted in all directions almost simultaneously.

A few words on the Theatre of Military Operations. The area of Manchuria is one and a half times larger than that of the whole of Western Europe. But the Red Army of 1945 was miles stronger than the Kwantung Army. Both Hitler's allies and those of the USSR knew that in 1945 there was no more efficient and more experienced army in the world. Both the tactics of the units and the strategic decisions of the Soviet generals, who had defeated the most powerful army in the world in four years, ensured victory over the Kwantung Army, but in just a week and a half! Everything possible was used in this war: the rapid breakthroughs of tank and mechanised units through mountainous terrain and deserts, paratroop landing onto enemy airfields, deep envelopment of the enemy positions and the advance of reconnaissance units deep into the enemy's rear, which shocked the Japanese soldiers.

However, let's be objective: the Japanese Army had expected Russian soldiers going into bayonet

attacks, as in 1904, but it was confronted with an indomitable and well-armed force. And Kwantung Army's infantry did not have submachine guns, anti-tank rifles, there were not enough medium tanks or heavy-calibre artillery: their heaviest cannon was 75 millimetres. The Red Army had absolute superiority in the air and at sea. But there was strong resistance! The irretrievable losses in the operation amounted to 12,000 Soviet soldiers. There were many wounded, as well as sick people. The Soviet offensive ruined even the timid hopes of Japan for a continuation of the war and an acceptable peace treaty.

Let's recall that on 9 August, when the Soviet troops went into the offensive, the Americans dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki. For readers' information, many residents of modern Japan are convinced that Russians dropped atomic bombs on them...

The Southern Sakhalin and Kuril Operations were conducted in an equally organised and precise manner. It took Soviet marines only five days to take Shumshu Island. And the island of Iwo Jima was recaptured by 100,000 Americans from the Japanese in a month, losing almost 7,000 soldiers!

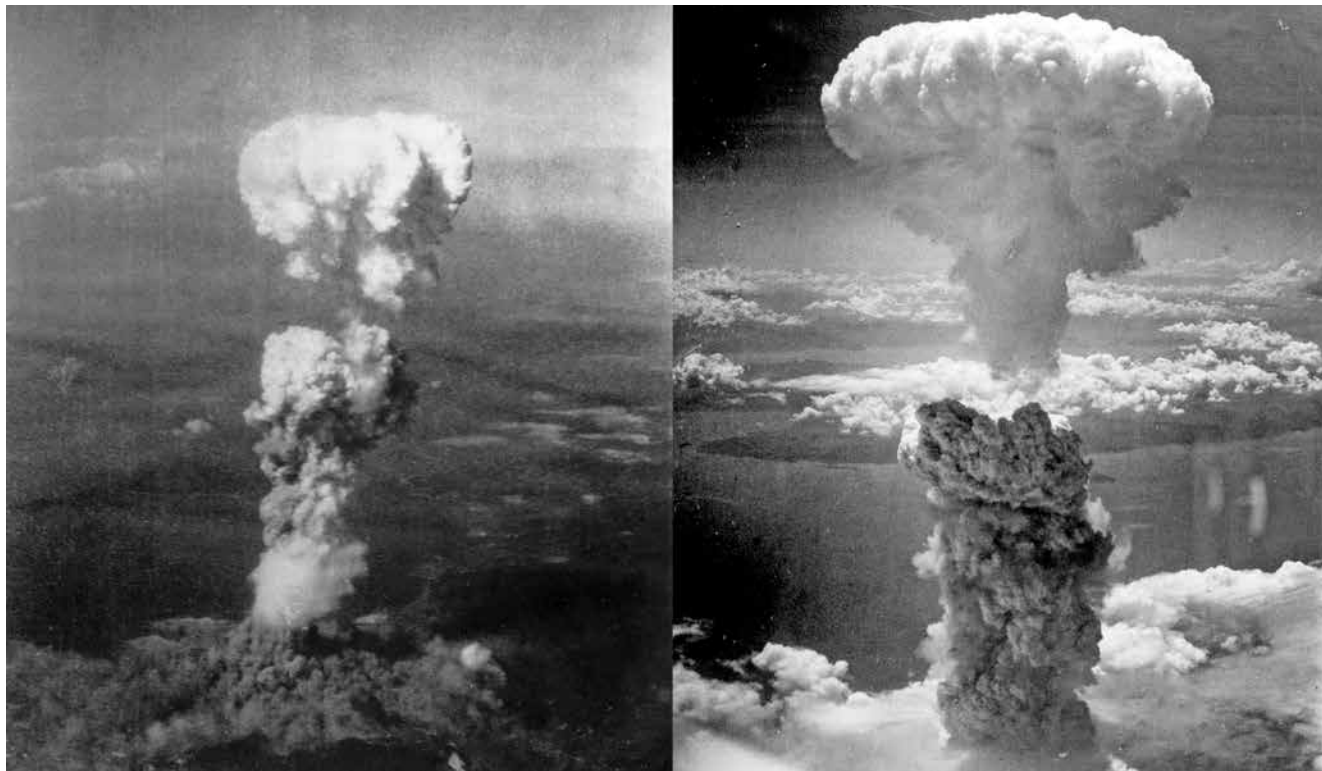
According to the American General MacArthur, the events of August 1945 were "the same emotional shock for Japan as a roller coaster ride for a provincial nun."

On August 10 Japan officially announced its readiness to accept the Potsdam terms of surrender, albeit with a reservation regarding the maintaining of the imperial power structure in the country. On 11 August the USA rejected it, insisting on the formula of the Potsdam Conference. On 2 September Japan signed the Act of Unconditional Surrender. This Act, which became the last chord in the heroic struggle against militaristic Japan, ended the Second World War.

BLACK RAIN OVER HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Eight decades ago humanity first saw the terrible power of nuclear weapons

By ALEXANDER ALEXANDROV



Mushroom cloud over Hiroshima (left) and Nagasaki (right)

The eightieth anniversary of the Great Victory has been celebrated, and the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War II and the victory over Japan is approaching. However, a tragic date is the wedge in between these anniversaries: eight decades ago humanity first saw the terrible power of nuclear weapons: on 6 August Hiroshima was destroyed by a superbomb, and on 9 August Nagasaki fell victim to the second nuclear attack.

The author of these lines heard about the accidents and coincidences

that accompanied the infernal deed and what the victims of the “combat atom” released by America experienced from Anatoly Ivanko, an orientalist and translator who spent a lot of time in Japan.

– During my assignments in Japan I repeatedly came across reminders of those terrible pages from the country’s history, – Anatoly Grigorievich emphasised. – I especially remember the story of an old man who owned a small restaurant in Nagasaki.

We met him by chance in the spring of 1992. My companion and I quickly

finished our assignment, and since it was lunchtime, we decided to have a snack somewhere. There was the Russian Maxim restaurant nearby. Its manager suddenly came up to our table, apologized and asked for permission to be joined by the restaurant owner who wanted to express his respect to the Russian guests.

A man aged about eighty appeared and introduced himself as Mr Kato. The Japanese confessed that he had dreamed of visiting Russia all his life, but his old age and illness had prevented his dream from coming

true. He hoped that his daughter would be able to visit Russia.

When asked how long he had been living in Nagasaki, he replied, “All my life.”

“But what about the atomic bombing?” my companion couldn’t refrain from asking him. Then we heard the memories of a man who had gone through atomic hell.

The Last Confession of “Hibakusha”

During the war Mr Kato worked as a driver at a large enterprise that produced chemical components, which were sent for military needs to the continent, to Manchuria.

On 9 August 1945 he was driving his van back to Nagasaki when, about twenty miles away from the city, he saw a huge cloud of smoke, and, as it seemed to him, it was rising over the city stadium surroundings. A thought flashed through his mind: “Why is there so much smoke? What can be burning so intensively there?”

Pressing the gas pedal, Kato hurried towards the city. The closer he got, the more anxious he felt: “How are my old parents, my wife and two young children?” Soon an unbearable burning smell penetrated the cab, and it was getting hotter and hotter. When he reached the outskirts of Nagasaki, he noticed numerous fires, and there were absolutely no people around – the city seemed to have died out.

The first people he came across were a mother and a child lying on the ground, holding each other’s hand. Kato stopped the van and rushed to help them, but what he saw up close horrified him: these were the burned-out bodies of two people who had not yet died but were no longer alive. Their mouths, stretched into a grimace of charred flesh, were trying to scream, but in vain.

Seeing that it was too late to save those two, Kato dashed towards

his house. However, only pieces of smouldering wood were burning on the site of his home, and the same was with the neighbouring buildings and the entire street. The horror of what was going on was aggravated by silence: no screams, no fire, or police sirens... Only the crackling sound of burning wood and buildings breaking in the fire.

Mr Kato did not remember how long he had sat in a daze in the cab of his van. He only came to his senses when it started raining, which looked more like a misty drizzle. It lasted for two or three hours, and all this time he did not leave the cab, which saved his life. As it turned out later, it was a “black” radioactive rain of death.

Not knowing what he should do, Kato drove to his enterprise, which was situated on the opposite side of the city and remained undamaged. The frightened guards couldn’t explain anything and only kept saying that something huge had been dropped from the sky. By the evening, a rescue team arrived in Nagasaki and all the surviving vehicles were used to transport the injured people outside the city. Kato was doing this job with the secret hope of seeing someone close to him.

Almost all who were evacuated had suffered from the fire and extreme temperatures. Some had their skin burned and “peeled off” their bodies like the peel of new potatoes, others had gaping bleeding wounds. Some of the victims had no open wounds, but their whole body was a continuous blister: the fiery flash of the monstrous explosion had burned the poor people evenly from all sides, leaving neither charred nor barely singed areas on them. Their eyes, noses and lips – everything had turned into a single bubble mask, under a thin film of which the accumulated cloudy-white liquid was seen. Many people had no arms, no legs, and no eyes: Nagasaki had become a city of the disabled...

Mr Kato paused for a while and then added, “It seems that the ‘God-chosen’ American nation conducted an experiment on living people using various methods of burning them. But those who survived in the midst of that horror could often envy the dead. My whole family was killed in the atomic strike, and I later remarried, but I have been suffering from leukaemia for many years owing to radiation exposure.”

Realising how hard it was for the old man to recollect the events of August 1945, I decided to change the subject and wondered why Mr Kato had wanted to meet with us in the first place.

“The Russians are reliable people,” the old Japanese replied. “They wouldn’t have done this. I am surprised at our leaders in choosing friends. How can you trust the Americans after what they committed in 1945?”

We said goodbye to the hospitable owner, and on returning to Russia we sent an invitation for his daughter to visit our country. However, there was no response. Then I dialled the phone number in Nagasaki.

The voice of Mr Kato’s daughter was heard. Barely able to hold back her sobs, she told us that her father had died two days after meeting with us: he had radiation sickness, which he struggled with all the post-war years. Thus, to the 264,000 “hibakusha” (victims of the atomic bombings of Japan) who had already died by that time, another human life was added, taken by the “combat atom”.

There Are Already Half a Million of Them

– Thanks to the Japanese bent of my work, I have been searching for facts relating to the atomic tragedy for many years. To better understand what happened in early August 1945, let’s turn to the background, – Anatoly

Ivanko suggested. – On the eve of the American nuclear bombing, Japan was in a difficult situation of economic and military blockade. The Imperial Navy was no longer able to withstand the much stronger and larger Navies of the USA and the UK. This is why the Japanese Naval Command focused on the mass production of special combat vehicles operated by suicide bombers: exploding boats, midget submarines and man-torpedoes, which were ordered from above to carry out suicide attacks against enemy ships. However, this tactic ultimately did not pay off. The country was blocked by the Allied fleet and cut off from the import of strategic materials.

Back in early March 1945 several hundred American B-29 bombers dropped incendiary bombs on Tokyo, resulting in the deaths of over 100,000. In total, by the time of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki American aircraft had destroyed over ninety Japanese cities.

The US Interim Committee on the Use of Atomic Weapons was guided by the following criteria when choosing cities for nuclear air strikes:

- The presence of civilian facilities round the military target;
- The importance of the city for the Japanese not only economically and strategically, but also psychologically;
- The high degree of significance of the place, whose destruction would cause a worldwide resonance.
- And lastly, another essential condition: the target must not be damaged by previous bombing so that the military could assess the true power of the new weapons.

– *Why did Hiroshima and Nagasaki have such a terrible lot?*

– In addition to these two, several other Japanese cities were among the candidates for a nuclear strike.

Kokura was the location of Japan’s major military arsenal.

Yokohama, the centre of the military industry.

Niigata, the concentration of machine-building enterprises, a large port on Hokkaido and very convenient for the landing of Soviet troops (the Americans wanted to prevent it in every possible way).

Kyoto, the most important industrial and cultural centre and the ancient capital of Japan.

Experts identified Kyoto as the most convenient target for an atomic strike. However, according to the surviving memories of the participants in the events, the then US Secretary of War H. Stimson insisted on sparing this city, as he was personally familiar with its sights and realised their cultural significance. The fact is that Mr Stimson had spent his honeymoon in Kyoto in his youth and considered this city his wedding mascot.

As for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, strictly speaking, neither of them was a “hub of Japanese militarism”, but they were peaceful cities with “elements of military purpose”. Hiroshima, for example, had a point for the assembly and subsequent departure of recruits and reservists. And Nagasaki was used as an additional shipyard for ship repairs.

Interestingly, initially both cities were mentioned in the American “blacklist” as backup targets, and bombing them was not seriously considered. This is evidenced by the fact that even before 9 August there had been a “classic” air raid on Nagasaki, using conventional bombs. It alarmed the city residents and made them evacuate most of the local schoolchildren to the surrounding villages. It saved hundreds of children’s lives.

But in the end, after much discussion, the American command chose two main targets for atomic bombing and two backup ones in case

of unforeseen situations. These were: for the first bombing – Hiroshima (the backup target: Niigata); for the second – Kokura (the backup target: Nagasaki).

According to information from American sources, the nuclear attack on Hiroshima took place without problems. The weather was more than favourable for dropping the bomb, which was affectionately nicknamed the “Little Boy” by nuclear scientists. When the Japanese air defence units spotted several single objects rushing towards Hiroshima (the main bomber and its accompanying pathfinders), they took them for a reconnaissance raid by American aviation, which did not pose any threat to the city.

The operation to drop the second atomic bomb, nicknamed the “Fat Man”, did not go smoothly. It should be noted that the Americans prepared the first nuclear bombings in history very carefully. The only obstacle could be the weather. And so it happened. In the early morning of 9 August, a plane under the command of Major Charles Sweeney with the “Fat Man” on board took off from the airfield on Tinian Island, with its target being the Japanese city of Kokura. At 8:10 in the morning, the bomber arrived at the place where it was supposed to meet the second B-29 but did not find it.

After forty minutes of waiting in the air, it was decided to carry out the bombing without an accompanying observation plane. However, it emerged that during the unexpected delay, seventy percent cloud cover had gathered over Kokura, which could have prevented the bomber from reaching the target accurately. There was another, purely technical “trifle”: just before the departure of Major Sweeney’s plane a malfunction of its fuel pump was detected, and the situation was aggravated by the forty extra minutes in the air. And now, with the final

choice between the main and backup targets, it became obvious that it was risky to fly to Kokura, so the only way to apply the “Fat Man” was to do it while flying over Nagasaki, which was closer.

However, even there the vagaries of the weather awaited the bomber. Clouds began to cover the city, hiding it from the American pilots. At one point, it even seemed that Major Sweeney would have to turn the plane round and return to the base without completing the combat mission. But suddenly a “window” appeared in the clouds, through which a characteristic “marker” on the ground became visible below – the stadium in Nagasaki. Guided by it, the crew of the B-29 dropped the bomb. Fortunately, if such words are appropriate in such cases, the bomb fell rather far from the densely populated areas, which somewhat reduced the number of victims.

The effect of using the “combat atom” proved overwhelming. According to eyewitnesses, all who were within 800 yards of the epicentres of the explosions died. Very high temperatures at the sites where the “Little Boy” and the “Fat Man” fell caused massive fires, and in Hiroshima they soon turned into a fire tornado because of the wind, which was about thirty to forty miles per hour. Of the 245,000 inhabitants of Hiroshima, 70,000 or 80,000 perished immediately. Several days later, the number of victims increased due to those who died from wounds and burns, and then...

The nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki gave mankind radiation sickness. The doctors were the first to detect it. They were surprised that at first the condition of the survivors improved, and then they died from a disease whose symptoms in many cases resembled diarrhea. After the atomic raid few could have imagined that those who survived

it would suffer from various serious diseases and even have sick children.

– *How can we evaluate the purely military results of the American use of superbombs?*

– On 9 August, after the news of the bombing of Nagasaki and the declaration of war by the USSR, Emperor Hirohito called for immediate surrender on condition they maintain his power in the country. In the text of his statement spread by the Japanese media His Majesty mentioned that one of the causes of his decision was the enemy’s possession of “terrible weapons”, the use of which could lead to the annihilation of the nation.

It would seem that it confirmed the assurances of the American leadership that the main purpose of their use of atomic weapons was to end the war swiftly. However, this statement does not stand up to serious criticism. Firstly, as mentioned above, before the bombing Japan had already ceased to pose a real military threat. And secondly, in the summer of 1945, two weeks before the Potsdam Conference, Stalin informed his allies Truman and Churchill that Japan was ready to enter into negotiations on surrender. Unfortunately, this information was not perceived by the US and UK leaders as a signal for the end of hostilities.

The United States wanted to surprise the whole globe with a new type of weapon of mass destruction. And most importantly, to demonstrate it in action to the Soviet Union and thereby prove that the days when all the three powers of the anti-Hitler coalition decided the destiny of the world on equal terms were gone forever and now the USA would decide the fate of humanity single-handedly.

Another objective of the atomic bombing was to prevent the Soviet Army’s invasion of Japan and

thereby ensure its occupation by America. It is confirmed by the date of the bombing of Nagasaki: 9 August is the day when the USSR entered the war with Japan and our troops had already begun to successfully crack into the defences of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, which meant the imminent military defeat of Emperor Hirohito’s Army.

Finally, it should be taken into account that the USA pursued goals not only of a military and political nature, but also a commercial one: to justify to taxpayers the \$2 billion spent on the development of the nuclear project.

– *Is the total number of those whose lives were cut short by the “Little Boy” and “Fat Man” known?*

– According to various estimates, by late 1945 the number of victims of the nuclear bombing had reached between 90,000 and 160,000 in Hiroshima and between 60,000 and 80,000 in Nagasaki. But even after that people continued to die. For eight decades now, the Japanese have had the word “hibakusha”, which refers to the victims of the American atomic bombings.

According to available statistics, in August 2013, sixty-eight years after the tragedy, the total number of deaths as a result of the nuclear attacks exceeded 450,000. But the list continues to grow even now.

These thousands of dead and sick people have served as “subjects” to test the effects of the new weapons on human-beings. Remarkably, the US leadership had no qualms about such a cynical approach to solving the “Japanese issue”. The words of President Harry Truman proved this very eloquently. On the second day after the bombing of Nagasaki he said, “The only language they (the Japanese) understand is the language of bombing. When you have to deal with an animal, you have to treat it as an animal. It’s sad, but it’s true...”

PROCESSION AND TRANSFIGURATION

On the Church Feasts of the End of Summer

AUGUSTIN SOKOLOVSKI,
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“You, Orthodox Christians, have a holiday every day,” people far from the Church sometimes say to believers. This is how they usually react when they hear congratulations on a holiday from church people. Often, especially in the recent Soviet past, when atheism was officially promoted, believers were offended by this. They probably thought that the phrase “every day is a holiday in your Church” was nothing more than a reproach for laziness and idleness. But, in fact, there is truth in these words. They were said by those who look at Christians from the outside. And from the outside it is often better to see. And, in this case, regarding holidays, you couldn’t say it better.

How many holidays are there in the Church? The main holiday of all Christians on earth is Easter. In Orthodoxy, Easter is solemnly called “The Bright Resurrection of Christ”.

In Western Christianity, the Nativity of Jesus is celebrated very solemnly. That is why Orthodox Christians sometimes think that for Catholics and Protestants, Christmas is more important than Easter. Some polemicists even highlight this point and criticize, for example, Catholics, saying: “They celebrate Christmas more than Easter, because for the Catholic Church this world, the earthly world, and not the heavenly world, is much more important. But Orthodoxy is

an exalted and heavenly faith.” In fact, the impression that Christmas is more important for Western Christians than Easter is not true. And this is a rare case when an outside view is deceptive. Easter, and for all Christians, is “the Feast of all Feasts and the Triumph of all Triumphs.” This is what the Church Father Saint John of Damascus (675–749) wrote about Easter. He was a great liturgical poet, hymnographer. Poets are rarely wrong.

Easter is the main Christian holiday. In this statement all the Churches of the world agree. In the early Church, there were several different principles for calculating the date of Easter. Christians in different parts of the world celebrated Easter differently. In 325, at the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, a single principle for celebrating Easter was formulated, which is still in effect today. This year, 2025, marks exactly 1700 years since the Council of Nicaea.

Easter is the main Christian holiday. In this statement, all the Churches of the world agree. Apart from Easter, the other holidays of the Christian world, in Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism, are often different. Here, in this essay we will talk about Orthodoxy.

After Easter, there are 12 greatest holidays in Orthodoxy, and they are called the great feasts of the Orthodox Church.

The great theologian and thinker of the fifth century, known

as Dionysius the Areopagite, spoke much about church life and spiritual reality in terms of heavenly hierarchies. Perhaps, if we try to translate this speech about the twelve main holidays of Orthodoxy into the language of his texts, we could call them “twelve-story holidays.” At least, this way it is easier to remember this principle and the name itself.

“Grant that with our entrance there may be an entrance of the Holy Angels serving with us and glorifying Your goodness,” says one of the prayers of the Orthodox liturgy. Divine service in the Orthodox understanding is the joy of angels. Orthodox Christians are convinced of this.

Twelve is a biblical symbolic number. It is the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, the number of assistants of the prophet Moses, and finally, the Assembly of the Apostles. In this sense, the concept of “the twelve main Orthodox holidays” is quite easy to remember.

Of the twelve holidays, seven are dedicated to the Lord Jesus, and three holidays are the holidays of the Virgin Mary. These are the so-called “Lord’s” holidays and “Mariological” holidays. Two of the twelve holidays, the Annunciation and the Presentation, are dedicated to Mary and Jesus equally.

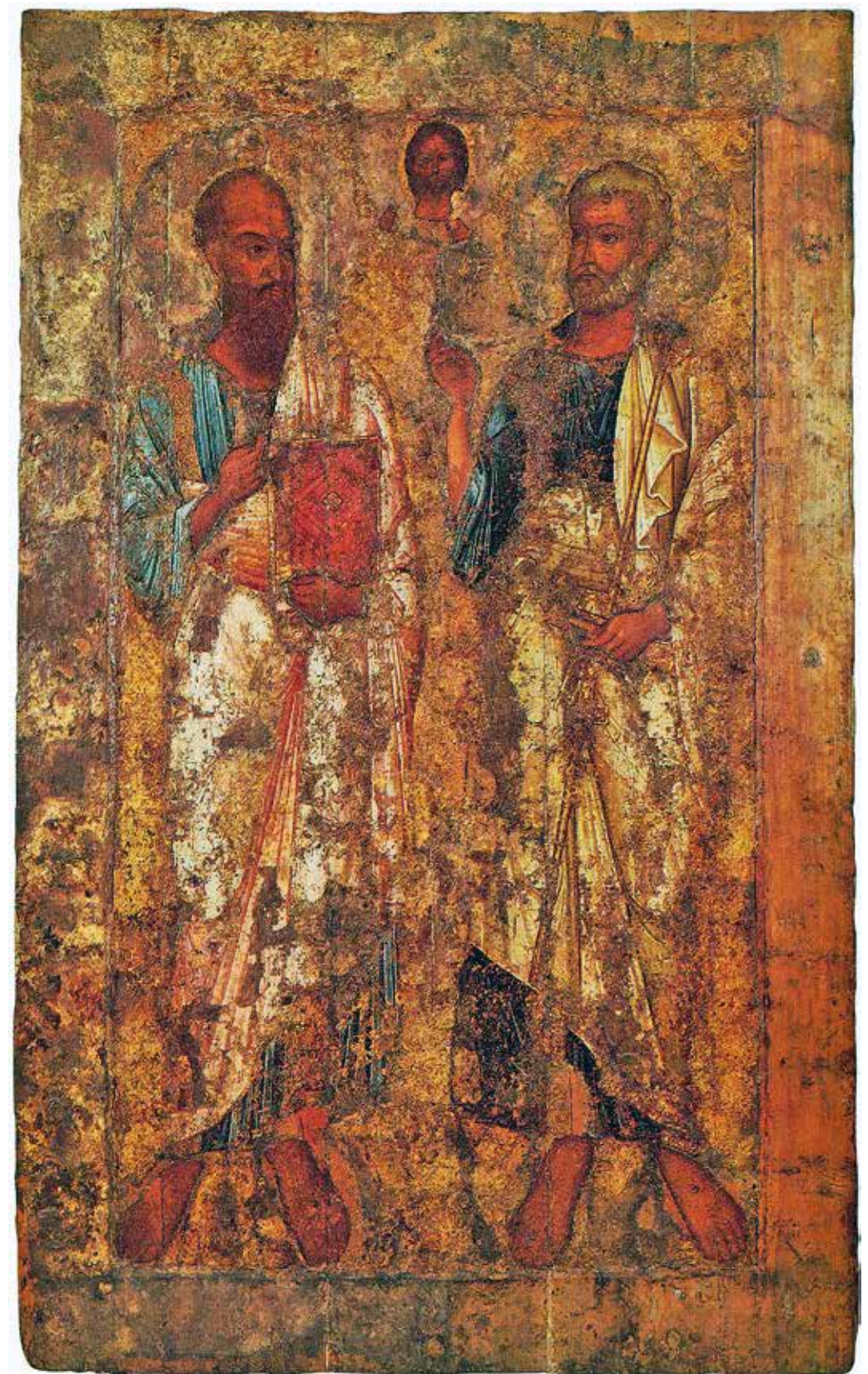
After the twelve major holidays there are four holidays, which in Orthodoxy are also called great. Two of them are dedicated to John

the Baptist, one to the Apostles Peter and Paul, and one to the Circumcision of Jesus, according to the customs of the Israeli people in the Bible.

In the Russian Church, the Orthodox Churches, connected with it by common origin and tradition, a fifth holiday is added to these four. This is the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos.

Let us not forget that every Sunday in the Orthodox Church is also a great holiday. Traditionally, it is called “Little Easter”. This name is probably connected with the fact that in ancient times, before the Council of Nicaea, some Christian Churches celebrated Easter not once a year, but every week. Sunday is the first day of the week. Thus, the ancient Christians celebrated Easter every week, because they were convinced that Jesus would soon return, and they simply would not have time to wait until the next year to celebrate the Great Easter again.

The ancient Christians could receive communion every day but celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy once a week. Thus, every time the Eucharist was Little Easter and the Feast



Icon of Sts. Peter and Paul from Saint Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod



Procession of the Honourable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord

of the Resurrection of the Lord. How can one not recall the writer Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), who said: “Never close a door completely, for the Messiah may enter through it.” Perhaps few people remember that this Jewish philosopher also translated into German the great Orthodox prophet and mystic, Simeon the New Theologian (949–1022)!

Since we have mentioned Jewish thought and tradition, let us also say that in the Orthodox Church every Saturday is also a holiday. Contrary to the generally accepted opinion that in Christianity Sunday has completely supplanted or replaced Saturday, Saturday has not lost its significance at all. Saturday services in Orthodoxy differ from everyday services, and some Saturdays during the year are specially dedicated to special prayer for the departed. These are the so-called universal parental Saturdays of remembrance, like the day, November 2, when the Catholic Church commemorates the departed on the feast of All Souls. “All Souls Day” is how our contemporary, the Dutch writer Cees Noteboom (born 1933), called his sad novel, filled with touching hopelessness.

What a pity that theology has become simply an academic science. Because of this, its most important and most interesting part, reflection in regret, had to “move” to literary creativity. A grandiose example of this is Russian literature! But let’s return to liturgy...

Easter, the twelve most important holidays, the four (or five) great holidays, every Sunday and every Saturday – all these are holidays in Orthodoxy. Are there other holidays? Yes, there are, and there are many. No matter how paradoxical it may sound.

After all, every day of the year there is a celebration in honour of one or another saint. Almost every day there are quite a few such saints whose

memory is celebrated. Every day there is a celebration in honour of one or another icon of the Theotokos, or an icon of the Saviour. Finally, every day when the Eucharist is celebrated for Orthodoxy is a holiday. Therefore, on weekdays of Lent, unlike Catholicism, in the Orthodox Church, the Eucharistic liturgy is not celebrated. After all, Lent is not a holiday, but a time of repentance.

Let us add to these historical memories in gratitude for the consecration of the greatest churches of historical Christianity, in praise of God for deliverance from those other disasters or misfortunes. For example, there are still many holidays of thanksgiving for the deliverance of Constantinople from enemy invasions and natural disasters in Russian Orthodoxy.

This is, for example, the historical origin of the Feast of the Intercession, which was preserved in the Russian, and not in the Greek tradition, in which it seems to have appeared originally.

Some saints must be remembered especially solemnly according to the liturgical charter. The same applies to historical memories of gratitude. Some of them, for unknown reasons, were forgotten. Others, on the contrary, despite their calendar insignificance, are celebrated solemnly.

The combination of the great and the small, the prescribed and the forgotten, the rules and spontaneity, the popular piety and dogma gives the Orthodox calendar a stunning charismatic spontaneity. Indeed, it seems as if the Orthodox have their own holiday every day.

What are the main holidays of August? There are four such August celebrations. The Procession of the Holy Cross, the Transfiguration, the Dormition, and the Holy Image “Note-Made-By-Hands” of Jesus. One of them, the Dormition, is the Feast of Mary.

The other three relate to Christ the Saviour.

Procession of the Honourable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord

The Procession of the Holy Cross is one of the “Constantinopolitan feasts” of the Russian Church. That’s what we call liturgical memories that owe their origin to historical events in the city of Constantinople. Ancient Rus’ received baptism from the Constantinople. In 1439, at one of the significant Councils, the Church of Constantinople restored its unity with the Roman Church. This event went down in history under the name of the “Ferraro-Florence Union between the Orthodox and Catholics”.

By the will of the Moscow Grand Duke Basil II the Blind (1625–1652), the Russian Church did not recognize this and separated. But until that moment it was “only” a huge metropolitanate of Constantinople. Therefore, the Constantinople church holidays were recorded in the Russian liturgical calendar. Historians still argue about whether all of them were celebrated in Constantinople itself. But the Russian Church was an obedient daughter of its Mother Church and therefore celebrated them. Most of them have remained to this day. Each of these holidays is a precious pearl of historical information and spiritual life from ancient times. It is noteworthy that it is the Russian Church that celebrates events and “restores meanings” that the Orthodox Greeks who once founded them have forgotten. In church language, this feast of the Procession of the Cross is also called the “the Bringing Forth of the Honourable Wood”.



The Transfiguration of Jesus by Andrey Ivanov. 1807

The Feast of the Procession of the Cross is not one of the twelve or great feasts. But it has an forefeast, which, however, lasts only one day. In the language of the writer Andrei Platonov, this feast has a little brother. It is March 19, when the Church remembers how in 326 in Jerusalem, Empress Helena found the Holy Cross, on which Jesus was once crucified. Since that time, parts of that historical Cross have been scattered throughout the world. One of them was kept in Constantinople.

The second half of the summer was a time of epidemics in the Byzantine capital. To protect against all harmful things, the Holy Cross was carried through the streets of the city. It was obvious to the believers that it was not they who carried the Cross in the sacred procession, but the Cross that went ahead and led others. Orthodox worship often addresses the Cross of Christ as a person. The reason for this is not only the special

poetic form of liturgical addresses, but also the obvious truth that in the deep dogmatic understanding the Holy Cross is one of the names of the Lord Jesus.

The Russian Church adheres to the Julian calendar in worship. Therefore, the first day of August, on which the Holy Cross was carried out in Constantinople, falls on the 14th day of the month. The Dormition Fast also begins on this day. Finally, in the past it was considered the historical day of the baptism of Rus. Nowadays, the Baptism of Russian people is symbolically celebrated on the day of memory of St Vladimir, July 28.

In true remembrance of this former meaning of the Feast, on this day in all Orthodox churches it is customary to perform the blessing of water. The blessing of the new honey harvest is also celebrated. Therefore, in popular piety, the Feast of the Holy Cross bears the wonderful name of «Honey Saviour».

Transfiguration of The Lord

If the feast of the Procession of the Honourable Trees owes its origin to the history of the city of Constantinople, then the Transfiguration of the Lord has its basis in the New Testament biblical history. This event is from the earthly life of Jesus, and therefore, as a feast of the Church, it is one of the twelve greatest Orthodox feasts.

Just as the Procession has a “brother holiday” in March, when the Church remembers the discovery of the Cross by Empress Helena in Jerusalem, the Transfiguration is directly related to the Exaltation of the Cross. This is an exceptional case, because an event from the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, the Transfiguration, and two historical episodes from the history of Christianity, namely: the solemn hoisting of the historical Cross of the Lord under Constantine the Great, and then the return

of the Cross to Jerusalem from Persian captivity under Heraclius, in the 4th and 7th centuries respectively: are located in a single semantic liturgical link. Let us recall that a single Feast of the Exaltation is dedicated to these two events.

The Transfiguration is always celebrated on August 19. According to the Gospel, the Lord Jesus ascended the Mountain with the Apostles Peter, James and John, and was transfigured before them. The prophets Moses and Elijah conversed with Him. The voice of God and the Father testified that the “Good Will of God” rested on Jesus. The subsequent revelation of the redemptive mystery showed that God’s Good Will to people is also Jesus Himself. The event of the Transfiguration is described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (Matt. 17:1–6; Mark 9:1–8; Luke 9:28–36), as well as in the Epistle of Peter (2 Pet. 1:17–18).

In the earthly life of Christ there were manifestations of glory. These included walking on water, healings and miracles, and, of course, the resurrection of the dead. However, Jesus Himself was somehow not entirely noticeable. “I am meek and humble of heart,” He says about Himself in the Gospel (Matthew 11:29). Sent by the Father, Jesus demonstrated the great creative art of God, in which He created this world in such a way that this world itself exists so independently that it seems not to need Him, its Creator! “My humble God,” exclaimed Simeon the New Theologian in his mystical reflections.

The Holy Scripture and the Faith of the Church testify that the Son of God, who became man in Jesus Christ, completely, finally and irrevocably reveals God the Father. The Holy Spirit in the same way and in the same final and irrevocable fullness reveals the Son of God. This is one of the main dogmatic meanings

of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. This is the Christian understanding of divine being in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. “God loves the Trinity,” says the Russian proverb. Despite its seemingly harmless sonority, its content is not only absurd, but also sinful. After all, the Trinity is not about arithmetic or numbers. “Baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” – this is the last commandment of the Risen Lord (Matthew 28:19). Faith in the Holy Trinity is contained in Scripture, formulated, and for the firmness of confession of this truth myriads of martyrs shed their blood.

The uniqueness of the Transfiguration is in the manifestation of the glory of God, which was directed at His Son. According to the Gospel, Elijah appeared to Jesus with Moses, and they talked with Him (Mark 7:4). “A voice came to Him from the magnificent glory: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” writes Peter in his Epistle (2 Pet. 1:17). The Apostles were witnesses to this. Apparently, what they experienced during the Transfiguration was soon forgotten by them in the vicissitudes of the betrayal and crucifixion approaching Jesus, but after the Resurrection it was fully realized, moreover, it was experienced in a new way. The theology of the Church calls this the Easter reading of the life of Jesus.

Indeed, the final words of the Gospel account indicate that the Transfiguration is directly connected with the Cross of Christ. Then the Lord revealed His glory, after which He announced to the Apostles His upcoming Passion. “And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus forbade them, saying: Tell no man this vision until the Son of Man be risen from the dead. For the Son of Man will suffer” (cf. Matt. 17:9.12). That is why the Exaltation of the Cross is celebrated on the fortieth day after the Transfiguration.

If new honey is blessed on the Feast of the Procession of the Holy Cross, then apples are blessed on the Transfiguration. Depending on the climate and geographical location of the parish, grapes, watermelons and other fruits are added to apples in our time. As food globalizes, the range of fruit blessings expands, and this is an amazing example of Orthodox missionary inculturation.

In the church environment, there are many popular interpretations, proverbs and even just jokes on the topic of “Transfiguration apples”. All this testifies to the important role that church traditions, even such simple ones as the biblical dedication of the new harvest to God, play in the formation of cultures and civilizations.

Although the Transfiguration falls during the Dormition Fast, the refusal to eat apples until the holiday has nothing to do with the Lenten rules about food. Everything first and important is dedicated to the One God, and the tradition of blessed apples, reminds people of this probably in the most harmless and delicate way.

In the Russian Orthodox tradition, in popular piety, the feast of the Transfiguration is called “Apple Saviour”. Perhaps, teaching the Christian religion in school to the younger generation is necessary at least so as not to confuse what came first, apple technologies or apple church celebrations. Our great contemporary Umberto Eco (1932–2016) wrote about this, although using other examples.

In conclusion of this brief reflection, let us remember that in the liturgical calendar, both in Orthodoxy and in Western Christianity, August is the last month of the year. The time of the Church begins in autumn. Thanks to the church holidays, the days of August are transfigured. They become keys to autumn sadness, nostalgia for time, liturgy and New Testament holiness.

AN IRREPARABLE LOSS

On 27 June Maria Kopyova, known to thousands of readers by her penname Alice Danchokh, a contributor to the Russian Mind magazine, passed away



Time has no unit of measure in our memories. We evaluate our days primarily by the people who marked them and “painted” them in certain colours. If these men and women have given our existence (which, alas, is not always rosy and cheerful) new “colours” that delight the eye and soul, we are lucky. It means we won some wonderful and enriching moments of communication. Or maybe even whole hours of intense happiness, derived by thinking people only from intelligent speeches and sincere books.

Maria Kopyova, known to thousands of readers by her penname Alice Danchokh, has passed away, leaving her beloved husband, son and grandchildren. The accursed disease that plagued her for many years despite the beautiful woman’s unyielding fortitude has taken its toll... Our world has lost a talented, unique and “one-off” (as the ever-memorable Gennady Shpalikov would say) person.

Who was she, our author Alice Danchokh, whose works – almost all of them – were published in the *Russian Mind* magazine? A prose writer, an essayist, a columnist?... She was all at once in a perfect mix of genres. And most importantly, she knew how to tell stories. And how she

did it!... Once we heard from her: “He who believes that the world consists of atoms is wrong. It’s made up of stories that you should be able to hear and convey.”

Maria Mikhailovna Kopyova, or rather Alice Danchokh, was a master of listening and hearing. In her books she did not invent sonorous myths and elegant fairy tales for laymen; she told true stories for people who had a keen interest in history, literature, culture, physiology and even cooking. No wonder one of her first books was entitled, *Culinary Memories of a Happy Childhood*.

We don’t think Maria-Alice was a romantic, yet nostalgia was strongly present in her soul. It was mostly a tribute to her family, which gave the girl an excellent education, and

She used to say: “Irina Lvovna Filimonova, a French vocabulary teacher, was a mother figure to me...”

We can’t help but think of the title of her another book, *The Not-Quite-Holy Family from Silver Lane*. In the “Nationality” column of a humorous questionnaire started by *Literaturnaya Gazeta* Danchokh indicated: “Cosmopolitan”. It’s not very accurate: our Alice was a “native” of the famous Old Arbat Street. It is no coincidence that the literary club she set up in Romanov Lane was called the *Reading Room in Arbat Street* at her suggestion. Born in Moscow’s oldest maternity hospital named after Grauerman, she cherished the hope of opening the Grauerman Children Association someday, which would

She enjoyed recalling the old Arbat courtyards, archways, kitchens with intoxicating smells curling from the windows into the frosty air to the tram tracks, the Ars cinema transformed into Science and Knowledge, the shop where turtles and parrots were sold... “Ah, Arbat, my Arbat...” The “world of Arbat”, received from her grandparents and dissolved in her blood, was something sacred to her. Crudely earthly, but at the same time irrevocably distant and impalpably Heavenly, like the Star of Bethlehem above the Infant Jesus. Like the mysterious land of Kotovia from the fairy tale on the *Cat Kotovich and Princess Myshkana*, written by Alice probably for her grandchildren.

“The elite has not disappeared, but it has lost its relevance,” Alice

Alice Danchokh on the Subtleties of Writing and Creative Inspiration

“I’m still interested in people, their stories, destinies, feelings and experiences. They still surprise, delight, and exasperate me.”

“I know little about the subtleties of writing, so I can’t share anything. But I do have a secret to share – I write all my books, essays and articles with Graf von Faber–Castell pencils and an eraser that perfectly erases unsuccessful thoughts. To paraphrase Kozma Prutkov: ‘If you want to be an author, be one.’”

“Literary activity is akin to drug addiction. It’s very hard to stop.”

“For the author the books he has written are like children who need to be loved and need continuous attention. You should not offend them – I try to be impartial. But it is up to readers to decide how successful they are.”

“Catching inspiration is akin to experiencing the ecstasy of love. For me inspiration is a complex physiological process in which inner energy is sublimated into constructive work– splashing words and thoughts onto paper or into cyberspace. To bring inspiration into action you should experience a perpetual acute sense of creative hunger and, hunting for new impressions and emotions, consume ‘alluring food’ without fear of mental shocks, worries and difficulties...”

gratitude to their home (which was always open and hospitable) where her grandmother Vera Alexeyevna reigned supreme – a wise beauty who knew all the secrets of the world, knew how to defend her own opinion and create true wonders in the kitchen out of petty things. A tribute to her childhood at school in Moscow’s Spasopeskovsky Lane, at an elite school specialising in French and, of course, at the Institute of Foreign Languages, which still bore the name of Maurice Thorez back then.

unite the “Arbat geniuses” of all times and ethnic groups: “A baby born at Grauerman’s becomes a privileged resident of the capital from its first cry. The Kremlin and Red Square are a stone’s throw away; wherever you step, fountains of spiritual life are everywhere. The Moscow Conservatory is two steps away, The Lenin Library is three steps away, and you can go to the Vakhtangov Theatre and the Pushkin Museum every day, not to mention three cinemas...”

Danchokh pronounced her verdict on modern society in an interview. Maria Kopyova, nee Malysheva, belonged to the class of aristocrats of the spirit: her father was an editor and translator of literature from Turkish at the *Khudozhestvennaya Literatura* Publishing House, and her mother was the editor of a popular music magazine (her parents were divorced). By right of birth into a family of intellectuals, free from avarice, she lived without being bound by caste envy, long-term

humiliation, or the Bolshevik thirst for domination and suppression of someone else's will.

When we saw Alice Danchokh, we usually thought of Anna Akhmatova: "I can do without what is necessary, but never without what is superfluous." A special talent? Definitely. But not only that. Alice Danchokh listened keenly and attentively to herself and to others. She listened physiologically and psychologically. This is where her books, *Medical History, or a Health Diary*, and *A Long Road to the Land of Age-Related Changes*, were born. With "water of life" and the axiom: "As you chew, so you will live", and with happy centenarians... And, like icing on the cake, with sensational revelations about men: "Women fail to understand that they and men are not just different planets, but essentially have nothing in common." Maria-Alice looked at representatives of the seemingly stronger sex with a hidden smile. At the same time, she secretly sympathised with men and even pitied them – strong-willed and ambitious poor devils.

She was a person of principles. She recalled her grandmother's instructions: "The groom comes only to the bride who is waiting for him. And adventures are for those who are ready for them." And also: "It's important to me when we agree on what seems funny." And she wasn't afraid of seeming funny herself – ever since her extremely funny sketches she showed on the student stage at the Department of Foreign Languages. She did not at all strive to differ from others, which some women do. For some reason her "peculiarity" was natural – with an "old-fashioned" manner of carefully pronouncing and dragging out long words, with feline flexibility in gestures. This happens...

"I write about what interests me," said Alice Danchokh. And she was interested in a wide range of things.

"You don't cut a thread with a sword. I write with a pencil, returning to the manuscript over and again," she would say about her creative workshop. "The idea of a new book can also be prompted by the 'genius of a place', not least such a luxurious one as the Cote d'Azur or Florence, or maybe just an old incunabula book found in a flea market of a small town..."

Continually creating, giving herself easily and wittily to plans and ideas that change with the speed of kaleidoscope patterns, at first was for her a professional need, and then a form of struggle with a protracted illness.

The Art-Liniya Foundation, which has held hundreds of concerts for children musicians in Russia and abroad and trained genuine, renowned artists, was her idea. The Russian Insomnia at the Tsaritsyno Museum-Reserve in Moscow, The Inmost Recesses of the Russian Soul – this is also her, Alice in the land of the beautiful reality she creates. The Imperial Gardens of Russia Festival? Nothing could happen here without Danchokh. Without her *Eight Rose Stories*, in which the rose flower played a key role in the lives of the characters...

Only an absolutely extraordinary person could leave behind a dozen and a half books translated into French and Italian (one of her books will be published in English soon): so different, multi-volume, but connected by the author's immediately recognisable intonation.

Alice Danchokh's notes (I can't bring myself to call them "travel notes", as they are much deeper), *Florence. A View from the Hill*, and *Stories from a Missing Suitcase. Myths of the Cote d'Azur*, are unusual too. The author's suitcase has not only a reliable handle, but also strong locks. Those who are alive and

have a flexible mind will swiftly find the keys to them and discover such characters as Merezhkovsky and Cocteau, Brodsky and Tchaikovsky, Dostoevsky and Blok in the trunk...

As a famous Italian-American film ends: "Life is not over as long as you have if only one story and someone to tell it to." Alice Danchokh has a host of such stories. They are united into a skilled knitting and woven into an original canvas. Reading her books, even those who have lived in France or Italy for years catch themselves thinking that they are discovering something new. For in her "suitcase stories" Alice Danchokh not only opens up new things to seemingly knowledgeable people, but also makes us all think differently about the world and about ourselves.

Maria Kopyova did not live to see her birthday by a couple of months. But despite the irreparable loss, the *Reading Room in Arbat Street* will reconvene in September. This time it will be in Saratov, the city of Maria Mikhailovna's ancestors. Her new book will also come out, because she worked till her last breath on a family saga, whose publication was scheduled for their golden wedding anniversary with Vyacheslav Vsevolodovich Kopyov.

"I believe in the law of the conservation of energy," the writer Alice Danchokh stated in one of her numerous interviews. If the energy of her touching love for her family and friends helped Maria Kopyova fight the illness, then Alice Danchokh's creative energy charged her with a permanent desire to work: to write, to help others, to bring up children... Alice Danchokh, aka Maria Kopyova, taught us to do good and love people too.

Eternal memory! We will always remember her!

**Editors
of the Russian Mind
magazine**



FACTS THAT TURNED INTO A FAIRY TALE

On Alice Danchokh's book, Stories from a Missing Suitcase. Myths of the Cote d'Azur / Cultural Essays (Moscow: U Nikitskikh Vorot, 2025. 304 pages)

By ALEXANDER SENKEVICH



Nice. Cote d'Azur

Who is the writer or the journalist who has not written about the sunny and fertile south-eastern Mediterranean coast of France, stretching from Marseille to the Italian border! For many people this land is luminous and healing. This is why it's called the French Riviera, the Cote d'Azur.

The starting point for the emergence of the cult of this stunning region of France was the 1887 novel *La Cote d'Azur* by Stephen Liegeard, a virtually forgotten French novelist and poet. Soon other Western authors would glorify this land near the Mediterranean Sea. The most popular novels among readers would

be *Tender Is the Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Hello Sadness* by Francoise Sagan and *The Garden of Eden* by Ernest Hemingway.

A new book about one of the top attractions in the world, published this year under the mysterious title *Stories from a Missing Suitcase. Myths of Cote d'Azur*, written by Alice Danchokh, is a combination

of scientific, educational and literary narratives. The blend of these genres has led to a striking result. Once you start reading this book, you can't tear yourself away from it.

Its magnetic effect on the reader was explained by the scientist and author Vasily Zubakin: "The genre of this book is elusive, almost unprecedented. These are an intellectual and cultural travelogue, a warm and inspired history with geography, and a series of essays on the signs and geniuses of the place... This is why I take Alice Danchokh's new book as a remedy to boost immunity and a panacea for a bad mood. It is filled with large doses of sun, sea and beauty; personal stories are intertwined with the history of the Cote d'Azur; it is replete with characters – from the flower seller at a market in Nice to Alexander II, from Herzen to Cocteau, from Garibaldi to Somerset Maugham... Reading at one stretch within a day can cause an acute desire to leave off everything and fly to the Cote d'Azur straight away."

On reading the *Introduction* that precedes the ensuing stories, you assume that this book has a detective background. This idea is confirmed by the loss of their suitcase full of fashionable clothes that have not yet been worn. Alice Danchokh's narrative commences precisely with this unpleasant event. Many years ago she accompanied her husband to an important symposium in Monaco. They boarded another plane at Brussels Airport. On arrival at the Cote d'Azur, it appeared that they had lost a suitcase...

I thought that the loss was not a mere accident, and it preceded a twisted detective story. After reading chapter 1, *The Birth of a Myth*, I realised that the "missing suitcase" was a metaphor.

"To overcome time do not stand still!"

In *Story 1*, Alice Danchokh relates how, thanks to what and to whom about 190 miles of the rugged Mediterranean coast gained fame. It appears that myths and legends have elevated it to this extreme height. Like an experienced guide, Alice Danchokh page by page takes the reader through the wilds of history, flavouring her narrative with various myths. She introduces the reader not only to historic sites and local legends, but also to prominent figures who lived on the Cote d'Azur at different times and whose deeds are remembered to this day. As for history, it is also unusual-mythologized. And the author is convinced that "all self-respecting myths have roots in Ancient Greece and Rome."

Alice Danchokh draws our attention to the fact that the Ancient Greeks were the first to take a fancy to this region. She highlights an important circumstance that prompted the Greeks to look further ahead: "They had so much that they desperately needed to sell their surpluses. To sell their goods they paved trade routes and set up trading centres along all the coasts neighbouring Greece. Thus the powerful colony of Massalia (now Marseille) appeared on the Mediterranean, along with smaller ones – Antipolis (Antibes), Nicaea (Nice) and others in local harbours in convenient locations. Not only did they want to sail the seas, but also to move freely by land separated from their motherland."

However, the Greeks ignored the main danger: the Ligurians, the Celts and other tribes who attacked the trading caravans of foreigners passing near their settlements.

Whatever it was, the Greeks were unable to accomplish what they

had intended and hoped for. Then they turned to Rome for help. It could easily pacify the tribes of the Ligurians, the Celts, etc. The Romans readily agreed, seeing for themselves a huge benefit in the future. Having gained a foothold in the lands of these tribes, they called them to order. The result of Roman help was staggering.

I will quote from the text of Alice Danchokh's book again: "I never tire of admiring the Romans and their thorough approaches to achieving their goals and objectives; I am especially impressed by their love of building. Before the Greeks and the tribes knew it, a straight road passed by them, connecting Rome with its possessions in Spain. Along the road standard cities appeared, protected by high walls, and then everything else.

"Two best preserved Roman towns on the Cote d'Azur are Cemenelum (the Cimiez neighbourhood of Nice) and Frejus. Their ruins are awe-inspiring to every traveller. Even today the architectural remains show the wisdom of Roman urban development: an amphitheatre, an arena, a circus – for entertainment and gatherings; a gymnasium – for the education of worthy citizens; a pantheon – for strengthening faith; an aqueduct and baths – for everybody, as well as housing, a brothel, pavements for chariots, etc."

Alice Danchokh had remarkable qualities of the mind and the soul that, unfortunately, have become rare in our pragmatic times. Victoria Peshkova, the author of the Preface to the book, noted this feature of her personality: "There are people who have a rare gift for warming up not only their close ones, but also those far away – that is, everyone who finds themselves in their field of attraction, brightening the drear and gloom of everyday life. Oleg Pavlovich Tabakov called them 'bearers of an atom of the sun.' And Alice Danchokh is certainly one of them..."

And we, exhausted by endless stress, turn to those who are able to share the positive, convincing us that in life, for all its contradictions, there are sunny sides, and teaching us to rejoice in any of its gifts, even though modest.”

Alice Danchokh recently formulated her motto of a meaningful and inspired life in a talk with the journalists Natalia Dronina and Vladimir Kupriyanov: “To overcome time do not stand still!”

I will return to the starting point of Alice Danchokh’s book. The attire from the lost suitcase corresponded to the location and level of the international meeting. Clearly, such events are not limited to speeches of its participants and altercations between them. It was the same this time. Its organisers included the following events in the programme, far from the issues discussed: a gala dinner on the occasion of the end of the symposium and an evening visit to the casino in Monte Carlo.

This is what Alice Danchokh tells readers about this: “As a devoted James Bond fan, repeatedly I was mentally next to the super-agent when the dealer uttered the famous phrase: ‘Place your bets, gentlemen!’ And, of course, I knew how important it was for the appearance of those present to correspond to these words. This is why my most elegant summer dress was put into a new suitcase that flew out of Sheremetyevo Airport with the tag ‘Moscow–Nice.’ Next to the dress there were other things needed for a comfortable stay at a prestigious resort. My husband’s tuxedo, which he had just bought, was very good for going out in the evening too. We could have looked great in them if they had reached Nice.”

Nevertheless, Marina Tsvetaeva was right to say that “the most precious thing in life and poetry is what was frustrated.” To put it bluntly, everyday troubles in

the lives of creative people awaken imagination and stimulate fancy. It may be rare, but it still happens that a spark of God present in these people ignites into a powerful flame.

I presume that Alice Danchokh didn’t accept Marina Tsvetaeva’s wise oxymoron straight away, but after some time. It was then that her book about the missing suitcase and the myths of the Cote d’Azur appeared. It consists of eighteen chapters, or stories. The number eighteen is no coincidence: it implies the esoteric nature of the narrative.

According to numerology, people who are protected by the sacred number eighteen are rich and have leadership abilities. They are bold and decisive in their actions. Besides, they are ambitious and attain their goals against all the odds. They have a meaningful and deep understanding of life. Those who are protected by this sacred number always make reasonable decisions. With their strong energy, they do not forget to take care of others. In general, they live in full harmony with the surrounding world and its inhabitants.

“Myth is a lie that becomes a truth”

Chapter 1 is called *The Birth of a Myth*. It would be apt to recall the statement of the French writer, artist and film director Jean Cocteau: “History is the truth that becomes a lie. A myth is a lie that becomes the truth.”

Maxim Gorky’s conclusion is of no less interest: “When nature deprived man of the ability to walk on all fours, it gave him the ideal as a staff! And since then, he has been unconsciously, instinctively striving for the best – ever higher!”

Alice Danchokh quotes a phrase from Alexander Kuprin’s essay *Azure Shores*: “Everything lies on the Cote

d’Azur. Roman ruins alone don’t lie.” Then she adds what else, apart from the ruins, the Romans and the Greeks left for posterity. A lot of necessary and useful things, especially for human health and a comfortable lifestyle. So, the Romans built aqueducts and roads, and planted thousands of coniferous trees all over the Cote d’Azur. Mostly umbrella pines. As Alice Danchokh notes, “Under the great Roman Emperors they fed the soldiers with delicious seeds of their fruits.” The Greeks preferred the common fig tree to the umbrella pines.

From the book readers will learn a lot of interesting facts about the culinary delights of that era, some of them have survived to this day. For instance, the garum seasoning, which “improved the taste of all Roman dishes, including goose pate and desserts.” I will add that it is still the case. An outsider will be shocked to discover what this seasoning was made from. Alice Danchokh writes: “Garum is nothing but a product of fermentation of fatty sea fish entails.”

Another culinary speciality is the bouillabaisse fish soup – the king of local cuisine. About a dozen species of fresh fish and seafood are used for its preparation. The best bouillabaisse is when there is “sea scorpionfish” among its fish: a bright red fish with bulging eyes and long spines in the dorsal fin.

Regarding bouillabaisse, Alice Danchokh quotes Alexander Kuprin again: “Bouillabaisse is the most brutal dish in the world. It consists of fish, lobster, red pepper, vinegar, tomatoes, oil of Provence, and all sorts of stuff that makes you feel as if a dynamite cartridge had been put into your mouth and ignited.”

Despite her undisguised antipathy to this dish, Alice Danchokh showed profound knowledge of the history of France. She took the reader back to 1834 and told a curious

story about how thanks to the UK Lord Chancellor Henry Brougham and bouillabaisse the French city of Cannes came into being.

The Lord Chancellor was travelling to Italy on business, but before reaching Nice he was stopped by local authorities due to the cholera epidemic. The book says: “Lord Brougham was not discouraged. He remembered how the day before in the fishing village of Cannes on the shore of a picturesque bay he had been treated to fish soup and local wine. Brougham had enjoyed both so much that he did not stay in Cannes for two months of quarantine, but for thirty-four years.”

He came to love this corner of Paradise. It was with his appearance that the mythologization and even the sacralization of the Cote d’Azur began. But, as we know, any fantastic events are preceded by purely mundane ones.

Alice Danchokh describes these events in their chronological sequence: “Between Cannes and Frejus Brougham built himself a villa resembling a palace, naming it ‘Eleonore-Louise’ in honour of his daughter and made it his winter residence, where he lived till his death. Representatives of London’s high society enjoyed visiting Brougham in winter. They liked to stay by the sunny sea, and many of them, following the example of Henry Brougham, acquired property, or rather, made up their residence on the outskirts of the then poor fishing village. Today the aristocratic British settlement is the most prestigious area of the city of Cannes.”

As Alice Danchokh notes, “two years after the death of the famous Briton, the local authorities decided to pay tribute to the creator of the Cannes myth and unveiled a monument, albeit modest, to the bouillabaisse lover.”

After the fall of Rome, the age of serenity was over. The confusion

caused by the change of authorities began. Robbers, pirates, adventurers, and invaders were superseded by the Genoese, the Piedmontese, the Spaniards, the Saracens, the French, and Papal troops. The Saracens were the cruellest of all and committed monstrous atrocities. This is what Alice Danchokh writes about them: “For a century, they terrorised the entire south-eastern coast, suddenly attacking inhabitants from the sea. Those who resisted were murdered with extreme brutality, the others were robbed and enslaved. There was a special hunt for beautiful women, whom they sold in slave markets.”

That troubled period is reflected in the legend of the brave Catherine Segurane. The author takes us back to 1543, when the troops of the French King Francis I, with Ottoman support, besieged Nice. They managed to thoroughly loot the villages around it, but in the end they failed when they faced resistance from the local populace. Women came to the men’s aid, armed with household items. Segurane held a washing roller made of durable olive wood. It proved to be more terrifying to the enemies than a faceted mace of bronze. Legend has it that she knocked down the enemy standard-bearer with this roller and finally finished him off, leaning on the defeated foe and blocking his air access with her extremely big breasts.

It is obvious that Catherine Segurane’s feat deserves to be immortalized in plastic form. Centuries later – on 25 November 1923, St Catherine’s feast – this long-awaited event took place. Money for the monument was raised through crowdfunding. As a result, a marble bas-relief depicting this brave woman appeared on a wall of the dilapidated castle in Nice.

Alice Danchokh was disappointed with this memorial: “The authors of the bas-relief unsuccessfully copied the *Liberty Leading the People*

by the artist Delacroix. Not only did they fail to convey the pathos of the moment, but they also hypocritically covered the heroine’s bare breasts, and she looks too petty and ordinary.”

The mess of heinous crimes against the Côte d’Azur populace caused by the change of the authorities ended in 1860, when the Royal House of Savoy ceded Nice to France, and Napoleon III held a referendum on the ownership of the Côte d’Azur and won.

The event that drastically changed the attitude of the Western world towards Nice took place in the 1760s and was personified in the image of the Scotsman Tobias George Smollett, a writer and physician who appeared in it. His famous novels include *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* and *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*. It should also be added that one of the central streets of Nice is named after him.

Alice Danchokh gives the reason for the appearance of the forty-two-year-old Smollett in Nice in the spring of 1763: a pulmonary disease. Back then, the Cote d’Azur was not a well-known health resort yet. Daily bathing of an unknown foreigner in the cold waters of the bay shocked people walking along the shore. The swimmer was reckoned as a madman who needed to be isolated in a mental hospital. This opinion was shared by local physicians. They believed that such water procedures would lead the arrogant Scot to a deplorable end.

Meanwhile, Smollett did not lose heart, and in his letters from Nice to his friends and acquaintances, praising Nice and its surroundings to the skies, he reported that he was feeling better and better every day. Then he wrote a book about his practice of curative hardening and published it in 1766 under the title *Travels Through France and Italy*.

To describe Nice’s healing air and the evidence of its effectiveness in

the treatment of many diseases, Smollett used lavish colours and arguments. No wonder that Tobias Smollett, as Alice Danchokh rightly notes, “with his sea bathing exercises and their descriptions ‘laid the first stone’ in the building of the resort of Nice, which became one of the European health resorts in the nineteenth century. After a centuries-long break, balneotherapy became fashionable again.”

So, let's return to the literary classics, which are closer to us in time than Tobias Smollett. For example, to Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. Unlike his Scottish colleague, he did not express great enthusiasm for Nice and its surroundings, but he nevertheless showed some objectivity in his judgements about them, as evidenced by his letters to his relatives. Here is what he wrote to his sister Maria Pavlovna Chekhova in a letter dated 25 September (7 October) 1897: “It is warm in Nice; the sea is charming, there are palm trees and eucalyptus trees; but the trouble is that local mosquitoes bite: if one of them bites you, you'll have a bump for three days.”

However, the next letter to his sister from Nice dated 29 September (11 October) of the same year contains no complaints: “Nice is warm and does not even smell of autumn.”

Chekhov's letter from Nice dated 29 September (11 October) 1897, sent to the playwright, analyst and journalist Alexei Sergeyevich Suvorin; his close friend who made Chekhov's name widely known), is quite emotional. Here is an excerpt from this letter: “In Nice I live in a Russian boarding house. My room is quite spacious, with windows facing south, with a fitted carpet, with a bed like Cleopatra's, and with a lavatory; breakfasts and dinners prepared by the Russian cook (borscht and pies) are as plentiful as in the Hotel Vendome, and just as

delicious. I pay eleven francs a day. It's warm here; even in the evenings it doesn't feel like autumn. The sea is gentle and affecting. The Promenade des Anglais is overgrown with greenery and shines in the sun: in the morning I sit in the shade there reading a newspaper. I walk a lot. I met Maxim Kovalevsky, a former Moscow professor who was dismissed under paragraph 3 (*The Code of Criminal and Correctional Penalties* of 1885. – A.S.). He is a tall, stout, lively and good-natured man. He eats much, jokes much, and works much – and he's easy and fun to be with. His laugh is booming and infectious. <...> There is also the artist Jacobi, who calls Grigorovich a scoundrel and a rogue, Aivazovsky a bastard, Stasov an idiot, and so forth. The day before yesterday Kovalevsky, Jacobi, and I dined together and laughed until our stomachs hurt, to the servants' great amazement. I often eat oysters.”

From *Story 1* readers learn that such a relaxed life in nature not only leads to euphoria, when patches of sunlight waltz in front of you, but also to unexpected death. It is usually called an accident.

Percy Bish Shelley, who came to the Italian Riviera with his friend George Gordon Byron, drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 1822, before turning thirty. And Byron didn't outlive his friend by much: he died of malaria, having come to Greece to fight for the freedom of the fraternal people against the Ottoman yoke.

The world-famous French architect Le Corbusier drowned in the same waters. According to Alice Danchokh, “he had a small and very original house in the town of Roquebrune, close to Monaco, and he took long daily swims.” You can't foresee everything. Especially when what you are passionate about becomes a habit.

The author of the book also mentions the absurd monument at Nice airport. A strange figure appears in front of you, moulded “from huge pieces and blocks of featureless dirty grey stone or concrete, entangled with barbed wire.” Alice Danchokh suggests replacing this mediocre improvisation with a monument to the poet and prose writer Stephen Liegeard and, in the meantime, putting up a sign: “Welcome to Mythland – the Cote d'Azur” next to the ugly conglomeration at Nice Airport!

Story 2 is dedicated to the Principality of Monaco: the smallest and most populous country in the world. This is an operetta and relative state, according to Alice Danchokh, “as if it were a state, prestige, business, entertainment with pleasure, a beautiful life... Here one show is followed by another: Formula 1, a yacht fair, sports tournaments, charity balls and dinners, academic and economic congresses, expensive weddings, anniversaries, and parties that gather people of all kinds and ages. Everyone here involuntarily participates in vanity fair, glam and illusory well-being, which is often based on dubious machinations.”

In Monaco quite ordinary human needs are clothed in operetta robes. Besides, it is the place in the world where the temptation of games of chance and indulgence in the basic instincts underlie local business.

The reader will learn a lot about the history of this tiny state and its princes, about Princess Grace and Roger Moore, who played James Bond.

Story 2 ends on a sad note: “It is so boring in this mythical Paradise, where homegrown successful businessmen's abandoned wives with children and abandoned mistresses live! But it's safe and convenient to travel to the golden mirage of the Cote d'Azur.”



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