

RUSSIAN MIND

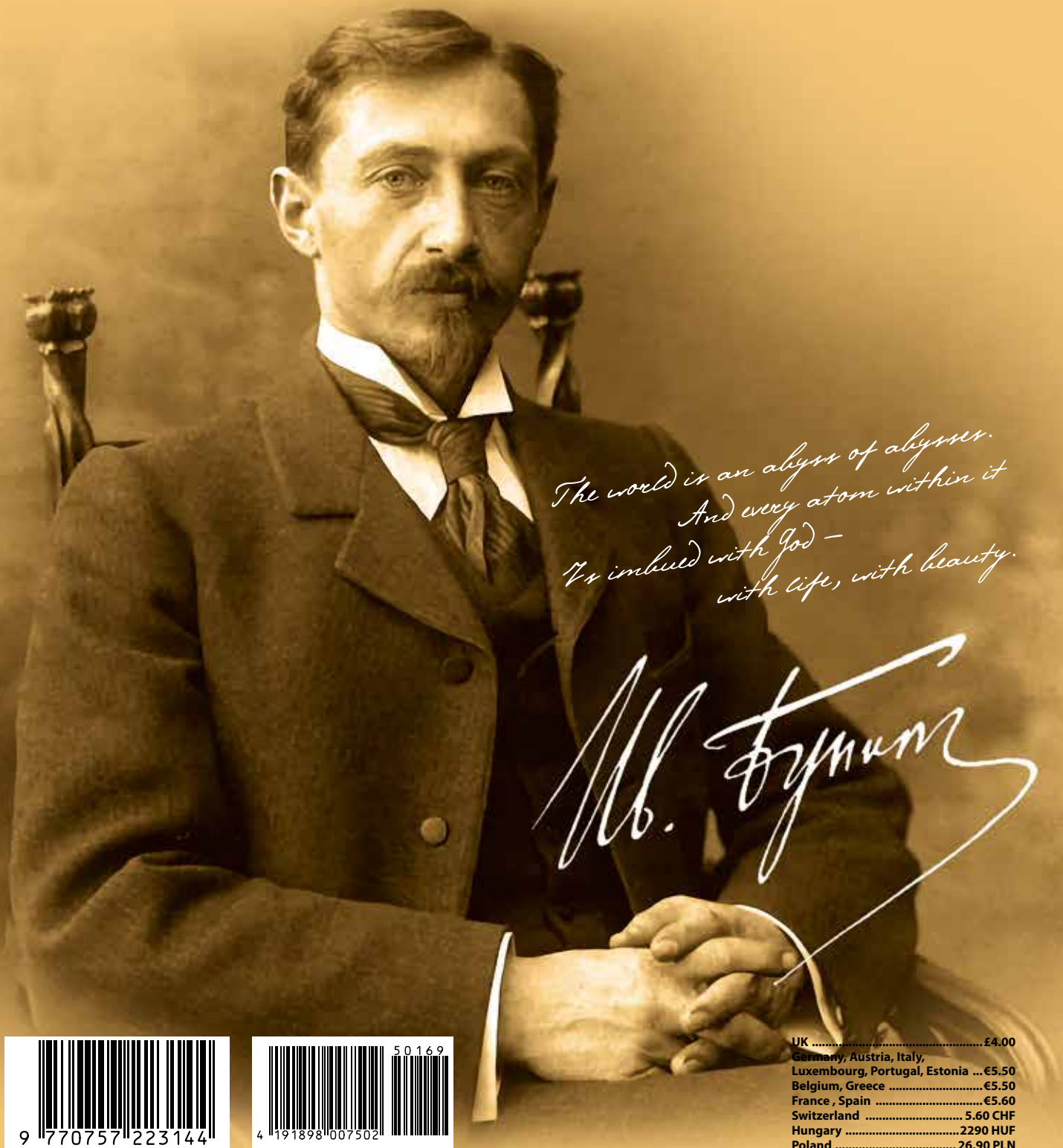
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*The world is an abyss of abysses.
And every atom within it
Is imbued with God –
with life, with beauty.*

A. S. Suvorov



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EDITOR'S LETTER

AUTUMN STARFALL



“The long sobs // Of Violins
// In autumn // Wound my
heart...” Once this season comes,
I recall Paul Verlaine’s Chanson
d’Automne. Since ancient times,
autumn has provoked a feeling
of sadness in Russian people, wherever
in the Northern Hemisphere the fate
throws them. So, it seems to me...
However, I don’t rule out that this is
just a game of my mind, “a tribute to
personal emotions”, as a psychologist
would say.

Autumn traditionally delights
us with literary masterpieces. For
creative people, especially poets, it
is the most fruitful time of the year.
Once I even came across such an
expression in a literary publication:
“Autumn starfall” in reference to
the masterpieces created by writers
during autumn.

The Russian Mind’s new issue is
about the autumn starfall of a slightly
different nature: about the Russian
writers in whose biographies
important anniversaries fall on
the beginning and middle of autumn.

The materials are dedicated to
the 155th anniversary of the birth
of Ivan Bunin and Alexander Kuprin,
the 145th anniversary of the birth
of Andrei Bely, the 130th anniversary
of the birth of Sergei Yesenin...

We will also remember the pioneer
of colour photography in Russia
Sergei Prokudin-Gorsky, the author
of the unique Russian Empire
through Colour Photos collection
in the early twentieth century. We
will also talk with Nikita Lobanov-
Rostovsky about his many years
of interacting with global auction
houses. As always, we will offer our
readers a material by Augustine
Sokolowski, a PhD in Theology, as
well as publications in History rubric:
Andrei Burovsky’s essay on the fall
of the Roman Empire and Lyudmila
Tretyakova’s Three Days of Borodino,
dedicated to the thirtieth anniversary
of the establishment of the Day
of the Battle of Borodino. By
tradition, we publish literary works:
poems and a short story. And those
who love French songs will be able
to test themselves by singing along
to the characters of the essay on
the history of real chanson. We offer
part 1 of this series.

“A sobbing autumn, like a poor
widow // All coloured black, today
is hazing hearts...” How can we not
recall Anna Akhmatova!

Alas, autumn is also a time
of losses for our editorial staff. Prince
Alexander Trubetskoy, a long-time
member of the editorial board
of the Russian Mind magazine,
has passed away. Memory rubric
is dedicated to him. Eternal
memory to him!

By Kirill Privalov

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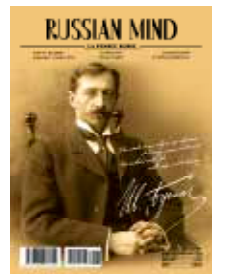
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Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin in 1901



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THE MAIN TOPIC

THE CHALLENGE OF IVAN BUNIN

Despite all the trials prepared for him by time and history, Bunin always remained himself

By KIRILL PRIVALOV

Human generations are bound together in such a tight chain that the distance between the links is sometimes very hard to determine. However, we normally realise the connection of times subconsciously, even reflexively. When you personally touch this baton, polished by the hands of many, many people who have lived, worked and loved on Earth before you, your head spins from the feeling of eternity and the continuity of History.

In this issue of the *Russian Mind* magazine we will celebrate the 155th birth anniversary of Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin: a poet, writer, and thinker. In 1933 he was the first Russian author to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for “the strict skill with which he has developed the traditions of Russian classical prose-writing.” The issue is also dedicated to those outstanding figures who represented Russian culture – and, therefore, our lives – in the twentieth century. First of all, to Bunin’s contemporaries both in emigration and in Russia. After all, the stream of Russian culture, scattered by the will of a merciless era, is actually one and indivisible: it has no limits or borders in terms of States and generations alike.

... My father recalled his meetings with the poet and excellent translator of poetry Samuil Yakovlevich Marshak. Marshak, a disciple of Vladimir Stasov, one of the most influential Russian art critics after the reforms of Alexander II, once told him about how Stasov lived in Paris in the late 1880s. One day he

was sitting in a Russian cafe on Passy when a grey-haired, stately old man came in.

“Hello,” the old man said.

None of the people sitting inside answered him. They did not even move and did not turn their heads in his direction. The old man looked at the people, who had just been so noisy, but were now suspicious and frozen, turned abruptly on his heels and left, slamming the door.

“Who was it?” Stasov asked his companion.

The answer was as biting as a whip: “Dantes!”

“That’s when I felt the connection of times. Pushkin and I: it’s something surreal!... Figuratively speaking, we were separated by only two or three handshakes,” Marshak concluded his story.

I had a similar state of surrealism from what was happening in the home of the writer Umm-El-Banine, who lived in Paris. I was holding the following photograph in my hands: Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin in a soft hat slightly pulled down over his eyes, his face expression dreamy and haughty, tired and ironic. It is written in Bunin’s eternal pen at the bottom: “What is your German writer before this?” (A kind of token of faithfulness to Ernst Jünger, Umm-El-Banine’s great friend). And on the back: “Let me say, Janim [in the Turkic languages it is a form of address, meaning “my life”, “my darling”], in the words of Karl Ivanovich from *Childhood* by Leo Tolstoy:

*Remember when you are close,
Remember when you are far away,
Also remember forever,
Just as I am faithful and loving!*

I. B. 18 August 1946. Paris.”

Bunin and ... me! Isn’t it fantastic? But I was holding that photo in my hands. And the one to whom it was dedicated was in front of me. Umm-El-Banine – slender, light and smiling. She laughed, looking at my hands trembling as I was holding the picture, like a fragile ancient Novgorod charter: “Don’t be afraid, the card won’t fall apart. Just like the armchair you’re sitting in. Whenever Bunin came here and sank into it, it was standing in the same place...”

The Bunin of Paris. Bunin’s Paris. The boulevards he walked on, the cafes he met with his friends in, and the halls where he read his novels and short stories, and sometimes his poems. La Muette, Place des Ternes, the Champs-Élysées... I remember a poet asserting that people’s looks can polish any stone. In this case, there are a lot of Bunin’s “autographs” left on the pavements of Paris.

“The hardest thing for a Russian in exile is to remain himself. Unfortunately, it happens that a writer who has fled his home from the need to act against his conscience and make dubious compromises has to mortify his spirit again in order to survive, but this time abroad. One yoke, noticeable or not, gives way to another... fortunately, this cup has passed me by.”

In my view, these words that Andrei Sinyavsky said in Paris are applicable to Ivan Bunin. Despite all the trials prepared for him by time and history, Bunin always remained himself. Like what? Here is what Umm-El-Banine wrote about this in her book *Ivan Bunin’s Last Duel*: “The small Debussy Hall could hardly accommodate all of Bunin’s numerous devotees. The reclining chairs were taken by storm: they had even to put chairs on the stage...”

“The crush in the hall did not affect me. Since I enjoyed Bunin’s favour, I was given a chair in the front row just opposite the reader. As straight as a candle and as imposing as a king, he appeared in the hall majestically and was greeted with thunderous applause. The snowy whiteness of his hair and his exquisite elegance gave him an irresistible charm. When he started reading, I was even more delighted: his voice, which was too loud in my small room, was just perfect there. It reached all the corners of the hall, humming like a trumpet and enchanting both us and himself. Under the gaze of his admirers Bunin towered and reigned supreme...”

“Bunin did not take advantage of the audience’s admiration and did not protract his reading, as others would have done in his place. In addition, he read ideally: neither too fast nor too slowly; he had excellent diction and never fell into pomposity: he read with the same restraint as he wrote. The evening ended with a triumph and a standing ovation. A monarch responding to his subjects’ greetings from a balcony would not have nodded to the crowd with more regal grandeur than Bunin did.”

A lord, narcissistic and constantly reflecting: this is how Bunin appears in many memoirs. Besides, Bunin’s pose had nothing of the “celebrity type” that he might have felt after being awarded the Nobel Prize. It



Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin. Ca. 1900

was all perfectly natural, because it couldn’t have been otherwise.

“Both before emigrating and after leaving Russia, both before the Nobel Prize and after it, Bunin, in fact, remained the same,” Nina Nikolaevna Berberova, another wonderful émigré writer, told me in Paris. “A very agreeable representative of old Russia. He reminded me of my grandfather, not even my parents. I saw my parents in the context of the revolutions – first the February

Revolution, then the Bolshevik one. But I couldn’t imagine Bunin in that context. He wasn’t old, but he was old-fashioned...”

Yes, Ivan Alexeyevich himself felt as if he had belonged more to the generation of Ivan Turgenev and Leo Tolstoy than of Maxim Gorky and Vikenty Veresaev. Maybe it was precisely in this “old-fashionedness” that the secret of Bunin’s chosenness lay, which we are beginning to comprehend fully now



At the Nobel Prize ceremony, Stockholm, 1933.

From left to right: G.N. Kuznetsova, I. Trotsky, V.N. Bunina, Andrei Sedykh, I.A. Bunin

that – without exaggeration – various Russian media cite *Cursed Days* almost weekly. Including Bunin's chosenness as a poet. (It seems that this aspect of Bunin's genius has not yet been sufficiently appreciated: is it because as a poet he belongs more to the generation of Fyodor Tyutchev than to his contemporaries?) A lyric poet, philosopher and prophet:

*False messiahs walked in the world,
But I was not deceived and guessed,
That lechery and disgrace are their
liturgies,
And their speeches are a clanging cymbal.*

He wrote these lines long before the truly cursed days – the dispossession of kulaks, the purges, and the Gulag. Alas, they were largely prophetic.

Unlike Gorky, Kuprin, and A.N. Tolstoy, Bunin did not return to his motherland, despite the charm and exhortations of “messengers” from Moscow who kept inviting him earnestly and kindly (it suffices to name at least Konstantin Simonov and his wife,

the actress Valentina Serova). He never returned, not even as a tourist-visitor. This irreconcilability is also another challenge of Ivan Bunin, who wrote in October 1952, shortly before his death, in the preface to his book *The Rose of Jericho*, published by the Chekhov Publishing House: “I was not among those who were caught off guard by it (the revolution – K.P.), for whom its scale and atrocities were unexpected, but nevertheless reality exceeded all my expectations: no one who did not see it will ever understand what the Russian Revolution soon turned into. This sight was an absolute horror to anyone who had not lost the image and likeness of God...”

And from the *Cursed Days*: “Russia is a classic country of troublemaker. There were holy men, and there were builders of high, albeit cruel fortresses. But what a long and incessant struggle they were in with the troublemakers, the destroyers: all sorts of sedition, quarrel, bloody disorder and absurdity!”

Bunin openly loathed any forms of violence, rudeness, and

humiliation. In a short but heartfelt article *On Bunin*, published in the *Vozrozhdenie* Parisian emigre magazine on the tenth anniversary of the writer's death, Zinaida Alexeyevna Schakovskoy, a well-known writer and public figure of the Russian diaspora, recalled how Ivan Alexeyevich, “justly outraged at the Nazi customs officers who stripped him naked at the border”, asked her (she was not yet the *Russian Mind's* editor-in-chief at that time – she became one in the late 1960s), “to publicize this outrage in the press.” Later, after the publication of *Dark Avenues*, he would present her with one of its first copies, accompanied by an inscription: “*The Decameron* was written during the plague. *Dark Avenues* in the years of Hitler and Stalin – when they strove to devour each other.”

However, the Soviet authorities paid Bunin with mutual “love”. After repeated fruitless attempts to convince Russia's first Nobel laureate in literature to return home on a wave of post-war patriotism, the second edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, whose first volumes appeared in the early 1950s, declared the writer to be “obsessed with an absolutely rabid hatred of Soviet Russia.”

Nevertheless, Stalin's Cerberuses were powerless to separate the writer from Russia. The only way they managed to take revenge on Bunin, who was painfully experiencing the belated fame that came to him abroad, was to deprive him of the right to be buried in his native land. But there is a logic in this posthumous punishment that was beyond the dictators' control. Bunin rests surrounded if not by people close to him (a genius is always lonely), then by those who are connected with him both by their destinies and their talent: Remizov, Shmelev, Zaitsev, Nadezhda Teffi, Georgy Ivanov, Aldanov, Sasha

Cherny, to name but a few. If the “people's path” to the small town of Saint-Genevieve-des-Bois near Paris does not “disappear” (to put it in Alexander Pushkin's words), it is primarily because Ivan Bunin is buried in its cemetery. The faraway and beautiful constellation of luminaries of Russian literature continues to give Russians its warmth even from another world, and the main planet in this incredible galaxy is him – Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin. It's not without reason that they say that the Russian cemetery in Saint-Genevieve-des-Bois has a unique atmosphere.

... Each of us chose a pot (laying fresh flowers on graves in Saint-Genevieve-des-Bois is banned). The writer Viktor Petrovich Astafyev, who came from Moscow, was with chrysanthemums, and I was with veronicas. So, we made for the cemetery “gilded” in the autumn. The Russian cemetery stood in the foggy October languor. It was Saturday morning: the church was closed, and there were almost no people in sight... We walked along a small avenue, and the further and deeper we went, the more anxious and tense the old writer was. I sensed his tension, but at first attributed it to his age. I thought: “Astafyev, as a man who stands much closer to the last bank of the river of life than to the first, involuntarily attunes himself to the cemetery in



Monument to I. A. Bunin in the town of Grasse, France



The grave of Ivan Bunin and his wife Vera Muromtseva-Bunina at the cemetery of Saint-Genevieve-des-Bois, France

a mournful philosophical way.” But once Bunin’s grave appeared, Viktor Petrovich rushed to it, like someone thirsting to a spring, and I realised that I was mistaken.

“This is where you sleep, Ivan Alexeyevich... This is how it is...” Astafyev froze at a small grey grave. He fell silent. It seemed that he wanted to be alone, and I stepped aside. “Yes, yes, go!” The writer nodded gratefully. “I’ll stay here for a while.”

At the corner of the avenue I turned round and saw Astafyev standing with his hands tightly gripping the granite beam of the cross, as if numb. My first thought was to dash to help him. It was as if the four-pointed Maltese cross on Bunin’s grave could, like a statue of a Knight Commander, drag him into the realm of shadows. But then it dawned on me: on the contrary, Astafyev was drawing strength from a rough stone, warm from the autumn sun. All his life he

had been walking to a meeting with Bunin, and now it had taken place.

Whitish, yellow, and red leaves were falling onto the brick-strewn paths and close rows of tombstones. Father Siluan, an angelic-like creature, an émigré cemetery priest, trotted past, pushing his moped with difficulty. A flock of French boys picking up mushrooms, which grow abundantly on Russian graves, ran swiftly past...

When I returned, Astafyev was still standing in the same position, with his eyes closed. Only his lips were moving. Was he reading a prayer? Or Bunin’s poems?

*... There is no one in the universe,
Only God and me.
He alone knows my
Dead sadness.
What I hide from everyone ...
The cold, the lustre, the Mistral.*

Astafyev heard my steps and said: “Do you happen to have a piece of paper?”

I had a page from a notebook in my pocket. The writer took it and started drawing Bunin’s grave. The biro was shaking, and the drawing was very rough, but the basic contours were correct.

“Oh, what a shame! I, an old fool, should have taken at least a handful of earth or a twig from home to leave on his grave.... At home they will ask me how Ivan Alexeyevich is here,” Astafyev put the cap back onto the biro and lapsed into silence again.

We stood for a while in silence, occasionally interrupted by the horns of nearby cars, and Viktor Petrovich Astafyev began to say goodbye:

“Rest in peace, Ivan Alexeyevich! Farewell, O Russian soul.”

He made the sign of the cross, bent the knee of his healthy leg, which had not been broken at the front, and gently kissed the granite edging:

“Goodbye, our dear man!... Forgive, for Christ’s sake, your sins and ours.”

IVAN BUNIN AND HIS MILIEU

I. S. Shmelev: "Through Bunin, who was born in Russia, Russia itself, imprinted in writing, has been recognised by the world"

By VYACHESLAV KATAMIDZE



Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin in 1901

Writers, publicists, historians, and political analysts learn an immutable truth from the very beginning of their careers: one of the ways to enrich themselves spiritually and develop professionally is through constant communication with their colleagues and creative people in general. In conversations

with them, their own opinions crystallise, truth is born in disputes, and positions are formed in discussions.

The aspiring writer Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin realised this from a young age. Besides, being a well-educated, cultivated and polite person, he easily mastered

the art of communication with creative people.

In January 1895, having quit his service in Poltava, Ivan Alexeyevich first came to St Petersburg. It is known that he spent twelve days in the capital. And over that relatively short span of time, he managed to meet several famous people who were useful to him and important for the realisation of his creative work. He met the literary critic, publicist and brilliant translator Nikolai Mikhailovsky, and was in contact with the publicist Sergei Krivenko, who was at that time a theorist of the Narodnik Movement, for which he had already been in prison and exiled to Siberia. But his most important acquaintance was with the poet Konstantin Balmont, who eventually became a star of the Silver Age of Russian Poetry.

Bunin, who himself began with collected poems, regarded him as a "poet of the soul and heart", a master of elegant and refined poetry. He also admired Balmont's translations.

In 1906 Balmont emigrated abroad and had his poems published in France, as censorship did not allow them in Russia. It should be noted that in 1923 Balmont was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature along with Maxim Gorky.

Bunin was also in contact with Dmitry Grigorovich, the "singer of the village". He met him at a bookshop and immediately found plenty to talk about with him. As Bunin wrote later, the seventy-two-year-old writer struck him with his lively gaze and raccoon fur coat down to his toes.



Germanovskaya's Manor in Voronezh where Bunin was born

Grigorovich was born in the remote village of Cheremshan in the Simbirsk (now Ulyanovsk) province. He is the author of many novels, novellas and short stories on peasant themes, among which the novel *Anton the Poor Wretch*, published in 1847, stands out.

Bunin continued meeting with authors and critics in other cities of Russia. Thus, he visited Leo Tolstoy at his mansion in Khamovniki (now the Leo Tolstoy State Museum in Khamovniki, Moscow). It was there that the great author wrote about 100 of his works, including the novel *Resurrection*, the novellas *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, and *Father Sergius*.

In late December 1903 in Moscow Bunin met with Anton Chekhov who surprised him with his simplicity and affability. Ivan Alexeyevich described that meeting as follows: "I, then still

a young man who was not used to such a tone at first meetings, mistook his simplicity for coldness..."

Both were getting ready for their journeys: Bunin was going to Nice; for Chekhov, who lived in Yalta, it was the penultimate trip to Moscow. Next time he would come here for a very short time before going to Badenweiler, where he would die. Bunin would write many years later: "I couldn't have imagined in those days that it was our last meeting."

Bunin didn't find common ground with the poet Valery Bryusov from the first day they met. Bunin rejected Symbolism straightaway, believing that it was too far from lyrical poetry and even dangerous for it. But their first meeting wasn't about poetry; Bryusov threw the classic Symbolist slogan on Ivan Alexeyevich: "Long Live all that's new, and down with all that's old and obsolete!" Bunin

interpreted this as the promise that his works, both poetic and prose, were going to be thrown into the trash. Thenceforth, Bryusov no longer existed for him.

But he made many talented and active friends when he joined the Sreda Literary Society, whose members met in the home of Nikolai Teleshov. These were Maxim Gorky, his friend the writer and journalist Stepan Skitalets, Fyodor Chaliapin, the prose-writer and playwright

Evgeny Chirikov, as well as Nikolai Teleshov himself.

Sincerely loving art and literature, Teleshov helped writers and was no stranger to writing works of literature himself. Meanwhile, he was a hereditary honorary citizen and co-owner of the Dmitry Yegorovich Teleshov Trading House, established in 1877 by his father, a member of the board of the Commercial and Industrial Partnership for Large-Scale Manufacturing in Yaroslavl, and guild head of the Merchants' Council of the Society of Moscow Merchants (1894–1898).

But even more surprising is that Teleshov took part in the October Revolution, became one of the first Soviet writers and eventually received the title of Honoured Artist of the RSFSR in 1938.

He treated Bunin as his best friend and even paid for his honeymoon

abroad – to the countries of the East.

As for the Society's meetings, they were more like gatherings of a youth literary club than those of experienced literary men discussing issues in current publishing policies. The authors presented their new works and even read excerpts from them, but usually it was about interesting or funny stories rather than the literary merits of their work: these

were left on the editors' conscience. All discussions took place in an informal environment, and to make them even easier and more friendly, each member of the Society had a nickname associated with the name of one or another Moscow Street.

There were also other nicknames in the Society. Nikolai Teleshov called Bunin "restless": he could never stay in one place for long, and letters from Ivan Alexeyevich now came from Oryol, now from Yalta... Gorky was nicknamed "shoemaker" because as a child he used to be a shoemaker's apprentice. No one was offended by these nicknames.

The relations between Bunin and Gorky were interesting. Their principles of literary creative work were extremely different, but then they had a genuine liking for each other. At the very first meeting Gorky told Bunin: "You are the last writer



The interior of the Ivan Bunin Museum in Voronezh

from the nobility, the culture that gave the world Pushkin and Tolstoy." A few days later, Ivan Alexeyevich sent Gorky his book *Under the Open Sky*.

They started a correspondence that lasted for almost two decades. From 1902 on, the names of Gorky and Bunin often appeared next to each other in newspaper news: the writers were reckoned as representatives of the same literary group. It is known that Ivan Alexeyevich attended almost all the premieres of performances based on Gorky's plays. As for the latter, his responses to Bunin's works over that period were mostly positive. For instance, after reading the short story, *Antonovka Apples*, Gorky wrote: "That's good. Here Ivan Bunin has sung like a young god." Bunin responded by dedicating his poem *Falling Leaves* to him.

But the more the coming revolutionary events were felt in

the air, the greater the abyss between the two men of letters was. The last meeting of Bunin and Gorky took place in Petrograd in April 1917. As Bunin recalled, on the very day when he was supposed to leave Petrograd, Gorky organised a big meeting at the Mikhailovsky Theatre, where he introduced Bunin and Chaliapin as special guests.

The audience in the hall seemed dubious to Ivan Alexeyevich, and he didn't like Gorky's speech, which began with the address "Comrades!" to the audience. They parted as friends though. It gave Gorky reason, when he arrived in Moscow in the first days after the Revolution, to let Bunin know that he wanted to meet with him. But in response, he conveyed through Ekaterina Peshkova that their "relations have been broken forever."



I.A. Bunin and V.N. Muromtseva-Bunina. The 1910s

It became clear that their paths had completely diverged. If we take the social and political journalism of the early 1920s, then Bunin and Gorky became opponents. Ivan Alexeyevich referred to Gorky mainly as a “propagandist of Soviet power”. Gorky made even harsher judgements about his former friend. In a letter to his secretary Pyotr Kryuchkov he stated that “Bunin has become brutal.” Later, when a fairly solid group of famous émigré writers who did not accept the Revolution formed in France, Gorky said about them in his letter to Konstantin Fedin: “B. Zaytsev incompetently writes the Lives of Saints. Shmelev is something unbearably hysterical. Kuprin doesn’t write – he drinks. Bunin is rewriting *The Kreutzer Sonata* under the title Mitin.” After that,

no correspondence between them was possible.

Bunin was not a pacifist in the full sense of the word, but he was a humanist and a patriot. The First World War and its horrors made a deep impression on him. When in 1914 the news came about the German shelling of Reims Cathedral, Bunin wrote an appeal *On the War. From Writers, Artists and Actors*, condemning the Germans, whom he called the only initiators of the war, who were destroying values “for the sake of an unrealistic hope to rule the world by violence”; he contrasted the cruelty of the “Germans” with “peace and liberation” on the part of the Entente, guided “only by sacred feelings.” Apart from Bunin, the signatories included Fyodor Chaliapin, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Evgeny Vakhtangov, Ivan Shmelev,

Peter Struve, Maria Ermolova and Alexander Serafimovich. A few days later, Maxim Gorky joined them.

Bunin’s appeal was undoubtedly heard by many cultural figures in Russia, and the number of his devotees increased. Among them was young Valentin Kataev, who called himself Bunin’s disciple.

In 1914 the seventeen-year-old Kataev, who first heard about Ivan Alexeyevich’s poems from the poet Alexander Fedorov, himself came to Bunin, who was in Odessa at that time. Later he described that meeting in the book *The Grass of Oblivion*, mentioning that he was met by a “forty-year-old gentleman, chilly, bilious and dandyish”, dressed in trousers made by a good tailor and English yellow shoes. The young man handed Bunin a notebook of his poems and said bluntly: “I’m writing... imitating you.” The audience was short, but when two weeks later Kataev came to Ivan Alexeyevich for an answer, the “first miracle” happened in his life: Bunin suggested that he find time for a new conversation. From that moment on, their communication began, which continued intermittently until 1920. When Bunin and Vera Muromtseva (his second wife), along with other refugees, reached Odessa in 1918, they met almost daily: Kataev brought his new poems to the writer, and Bunin worked a lot with his manuscripts, making notes, editing, and giving advice. His “initiation as a disciple”, according to Valentin Petrovich, occurred only after he had heard the first praise from Bunin.

Kataev became a member of the Odessa Literary Society, whose meetings Ivan Alexeyevich always attended. Conversations there were quite free-spirited, and Bunin recorded them in his diary. Later he deliberately removed some very sharp remarks of Kataev from his records so as not to let down his

literary godson who had remained in Soviet Russia.

While already in France, Muromtseva-Bunina devoted all her free time to sorting through Bunin’s archives, including his correspondence with prominent men of letters, and studied his diaries thoroughly, striving to weed out everything that could cast a shadow on Ivan Alexeyevich. Among the numerous letters she found one from Kataev “from the White Front”, dated October 1919. It began with the words: “Dear teacher Ivan Alexeyevich...”

Valentin Kataev eventually became one of the most popular authors in the USSR. In his book *The Grass of Oblivion* he described in detail and with light humour how he had associated with Bunin in Odessa.

I think the most fascinating saga in the life of Ivan Alexeyevich was his relations with the writer Alexander Kuprin. They were born in the same year 1870 and first met near Odessa nineteen years later. Almost from the first months of their acquaintance, Bunin supported his new friend as much as he could. Kuprin was just starting his literary experiments, and Bunin gave him some good advice. Both the friendship and literary activities of the two young authors bore fruit.

But in time Kuprin was so upset by the failed attempts to have his short stories published that he began to become disillusioned with his own work and did not even dare to take his stories to a publisher, knowing that they did not like to publish novice authors. Then Bunin personally took Kuprin’s short story to the editorial office of a magazine.

“He was waiting for me outside, and when I rushed out to him from the editorial office with a twenty-five-rouble note, he couldn’t believe his eyes with happiness. He ran to buy himself boots, and then recklessly he took me to the seaside



Members of the Moscow Sreda Literary Society. Top row from left to right: Stepan Skitalets, Fyodor Chaliapin, Evgeny Chirikov; bottom row from left to right: Maxim Gorky, Leonid Andreyev, Ivan Bunin, Nikolai Teleshov

restaurant Arkady to treat me to fried mackerel and white Bessarabian wine. How many times, for how many years, and how quickly and frantically he shouted at me when he was tipsy:

‘I’ll never forgive you! How dared you do a great favour to me and provide me, a barefoot pauper, with shoes!’” wrote Bunin in his diary.

At the same time, their styles, characters, and relationships with their acquaintances were very different. Ivan Alexeyevich was a proud man, and sometimes even harsh, while Alexander Ivanovich always remained gentle and good-natured. According to the reminiscences of Maria Karlovna Kuprina, once during a dinner at their house Bunin, who was proud of his ancestry, called her husband “a noble on his maternal side”. In response, Kuprin composed a parody of Bunin’s short story *Antonovka Apples*, entitled *Milk Mushroom Pies*. This satirical miniature was not offensive, and they continued to be friends.

Kuprin’s creative work was developing, and he was becoming more and more popular. By the end of the 1910s, both writers were widely known, and critics considered them to be among the top five writers in Russia. They were still friends, but, in fact, they were the main rivals in the country’s literary world. No wonder that they became competitors when the destiny of the prestigious Pushkin Prize was being decided in 1909.

In early May Kuprin, who had received information about the preliminary results of the contest, told Bunin that they had both been awarded the “half” Pushkin Prize. In his letter he jokingly remarked: “I’m not mad at you for pinching half a thousand from me.” Bunin replied seriously: “I am glad that fate has connected my name with yours.” In October, it was officially announced that the Pushkin Prize for 1909 was divided between Bunin and Kuprin; each of them received 500 roubles. And less than two weeks later, the news arrived from the Imperial



Copy of the certificate of awarding I. A. Bunin the Nobel Prize. I. A. Bunin Museum in Yelets. Russia

Academy of Sciences about Bunin's election as an honorary academician in the field of fine literature.

Commenting on the results of the Pushkin Prize, in one of his books Kuprin did not fail to note the symbolism of the fact that Pushkin's granddaughter was among the guests at the gala evening at Bunin's home.

Once in the emigration, Bunin did not forget his friends and colleagues. He made a lot of efforts to help many Russian writers, whose work he appreciated, move to France. Of course, Kuprin was one of them.

Arriving in Paris in 1920, Kuprin took up his residence in the same house where Bunin lived, and even on the same floor with him. Perhaps this neighbourhood sometimes burdened Ivan Alexeyevich, who was accustomed to planning his workdays thoroughly, and sometimes he had to put up with the endless stream of Kuprin's visitors. It did not improve

the relations between the old friends at all; Bunin's wife even remarked that Dostoevsky himself would be needed to understand what was happening in their souls.

Nevertheless, after receiving the Nobel Prize in 1933, Bunin brought Alexander Ivanovich 5,000 francs. According to Kuprin's daughter Xenia Alexandrovna, this present helped their family a lot, because money was tight. One of the causes of this condition was Kuprin's passion for alcohol. Once abroad and homesick, he often found solace in liquor, which affected his health.

Though Bunin believed that the mission of Russian emigration was to resist Bolshevism and even stated this when he gave a talk at a meeting of émigré writers, he did not condemn Kuprin when he decided to return to the USSR in 1937. Among the emigres opinions on this issue were divided: the majority

condemned Kuprin, but probably they did not know what Bunin was aware of. Kuprin was seriously ill and believed that he should be buried in his native land.

The relations between Bunin and Nabokov were very complicated.

First of all, let us note that there are several groups of literary critics and literary historians whose positions on the relationship between these two talented writers are not only different, but sometimes diametrically opposed. Some note in these relations the "problem of rivalry", the desire to achieve moral superiority and the indisputability of their postulates; others, on the contrary, see similarities in their manner of presentation, in the reverence for their material presented, and in the depth of the psychological approach to revealing the traits of their literary characters. Perhaps all this was present in the work of both authors – we will not argue

with it. But, assessing the period of development of the relations between Bunin and Nabokov, we should admit that Bunin always acted much more honestly and nobly than Nabokov.

Ivan Alexeyevich's contacts with the Nabokov family began in the late 1920s with Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov, the writer's father. He was a well-known lawyer and one of the leaders of the Cadet Party. Born into the Nabokov noble family, he was married to a daughter of Rukavishnikov, a gold mine owner. The writer's paternal grandfather was Minister of Justice in the Governments of Alexander II and Alexander III.

English people say about those like Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov: "He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth." It was their family's rule always to achieve the goal, no matter what the cost.

So, Nabokov Sr asked Ivan Alexeyevich to review his son's poem, published in the *Rul'* Russian émigré newspaper in Berlin. Bunin responded by sending Nabokov not only a warm and encouraging letter, but also his book *The Gentleman from San Francisco*. A correspondence ensued, and in the spring of 1921 the twenty-two-year-old Vladimir Nabokov, who had his works published under the penname "Vladimir Sirin", joined in. In his first letter the aspiring poet called Bunin "the only writer who calmly serves the beautiful in our blasphemous age."

In 1926 Nabokov's first novel *Mashenka* was published, which, according to critics, is the "most Bunin-like" work by Vladimir Vladimirovich. On the copy presented to Bunin the author wrote: "Don't judge me too strictly, please. Yours sincerely, V. Nabokov."

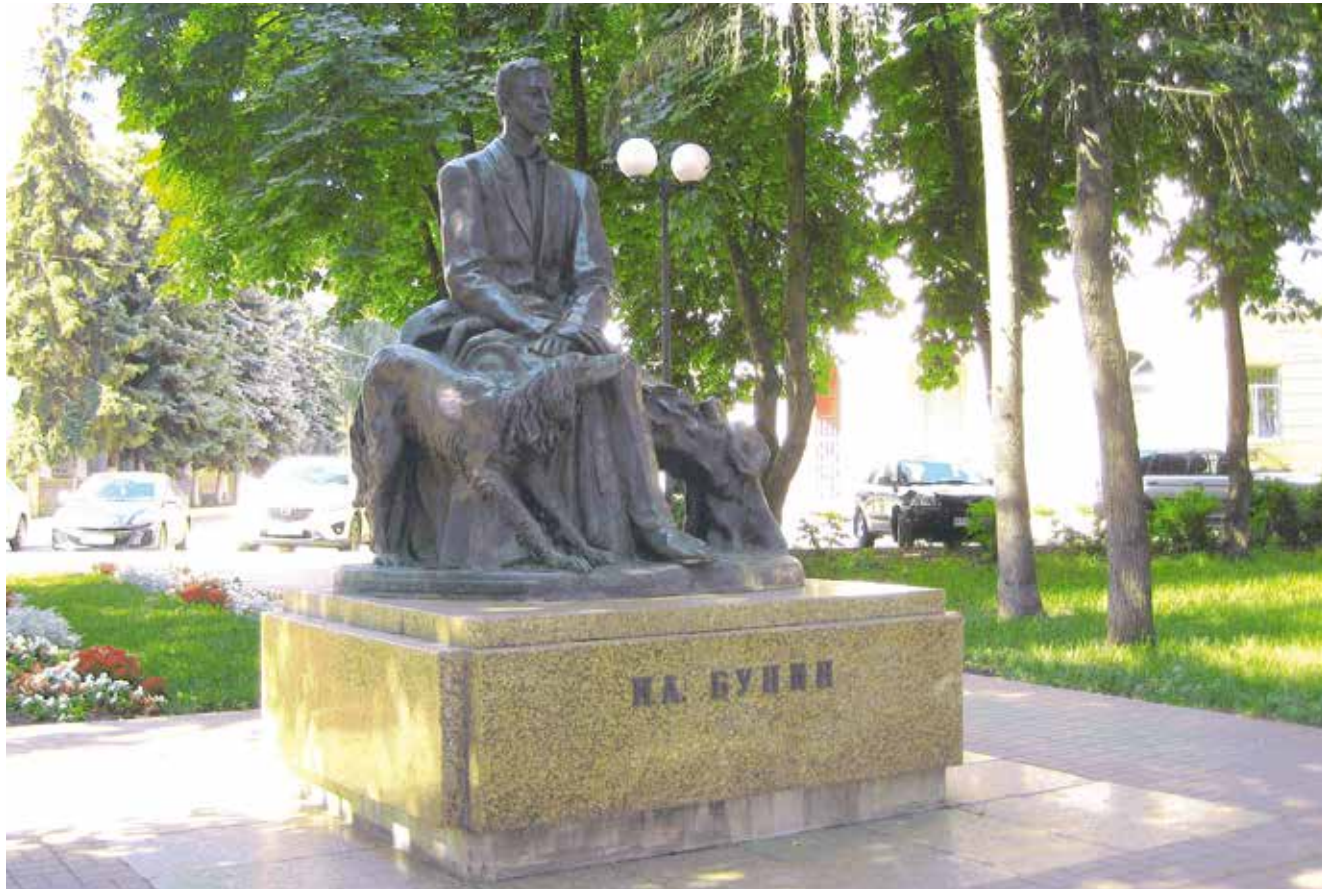
Three years later Nabokov, who had his collected stories *The Return of Chorb* published, sent Bunin a copy with a dedicatory



The cover of the first separate edition of I. Bunin's *Cursed Days*. 1935

inscription: "To the Great Teacher from a diligent disciple." Nabokov's short story *A Bad Day* (1931) was dedicated to Ivan Alexeyevich. Vladimir Vladimirovich welcomed the award of the Nobel Prize to Bunin. In a cable sent to Grasse he wrote: "I'm so happy that you got it!"

Then a period began when Vladimir Nabokov decided that he no longer needed Bunin's praise. The enthusiastic tone disappeared from his letters. After the publication of his novel *Invitation to a Beheading* (1936), he wrote on the volume sent to Bunin: "To dear Ivan Alexeyevich Bunin, with the warmest greetings



Monument to I. A. Bunin on Plekhanovskaya Street in Voronezh

from the author.” Finally, the moment came when Nabokov felt that he had already reached the level when he had not only equalled Bunin but had even surpassed him. It apparently happened when Nabokov became more familiar with contemporary American literature, which radically changed the forms and typology of both novels and novellas. The plots became more straightforward and more intriguing, with more humour, love adventures, and, most importantly, unexpected plot twists.

It should be considered that the Nabokovs possessed enormous financial resources and made full use of them so that the press, not least the emigre press, would launch a propaganda campaign both in Europe and in the USA, creating the image of a “young literary genius”, a Russian aristocrat who

had even surpassed a Russian Nobel Laureate in popularity. Against this background, the emigre community began noise attempts to determine which of the writers held a leading place on the literary Olympus. And as a result, in the second half of the 1930s, Mark Aldanov began to call on Bunin to admit that Nabokov had taken over as leader of Russian literature.

The first meeting of the two writers took place at the end of 1933. Bunin arrived in Berlin for an event hosted in his honour by the publicist Joseph Hessen, and during the festivities he met Nabokov in person. Bunin was extremely amicable and considerate to the young writer. There were no indications that their relations had entered a stage of confrontation.

But then Bunin was dealt a treacherous blow. Nabokov published

an article in which he wrote about a disagreeable meeting with Bunin at a restaurant: with vodka, Roma people, and an appalling atmosphere... Bunin noted in his diary that there had never been any “meeting at a restaurant”. Here is what he wrote in his diary on 14 June 1951: “V. V. Nabokov-Sirin wrote in English and published a book on the cover of which, for some reason, a royal crown is depicted above his last name... There is a page about me, too – with wild and stupid lies that I had allegedly dragged him into some expensive Russian restaurant (with Roma people) to have a drink and heart-to-heart talk with him, as all Russians love it, but he couldn’t stand it. It’s precisely in my manner! But I’ve never been to any restaurant with him.”

It is rather easy to refute Nabokov’s lies. Shortly before his death, Nikolai Teleshov wrote memories of his

meetings with Bunin in the USSR. This is what he related: “Ivan Alexeyevich often invited me to his place for pancakes and pies. But he ate little and mostly treated his guests. He had never been to any pubs or bars – he was squeamish. He had been to restaurants, but never to noisy restaurants of merchants. We had been to quiet, elegant restaurants with him a couple of times – I think, English ones. He couldn’t stand restaurant music! He wanted to talk in a peaceful atmosphere, and not shout over singers. And he hated visiting places where Nizhny Novgorod merchants with prostitutes from the Yar Restaurant could drop in. This is not how he was brought up.”

Nabokov’s supporters and the bribed press kept assailing Bunin. When his book *Dark Avenues* came out, it was labelled as Bunin’s attempt to “even the score with Nabokov”. Meanwhile, Bunin himself wrote with disappointment: “If it weren’t for me, there would have been no Sirin.” Around the same time, Nabokov, who was asked in a written interview to say something about Bunin’s influence on his work, stated that he was not among Ivan Alexeyevich’s followers.

In 1951, an event dedicated to Bunin’s eightieth birthday was being prepared in New York. Mark Aldanov invited Nabokov to read some work by the hero of the day at the evening. Nabokov replied with a written refusal. It put an end to their relations.

In 1906 Bunin met the poet Vladislav Khodasevich, but until he moved to France their acquaintance was superficial. They became close in the emigration. Ivan Alexeyevich would invite Vladislav Felitsianovich to Grasse, help him with money, they would meet at literary events, exchange books and correspond.

In 1923, on Bunin’s recommendation, the prose writer Boris Zaytsev moved to Paris. It was at his home in Moscow that Ivan



In 1993 a memorial plaque was installed at 1 Jacques Offenbach Street in Paris, where Bunin lived from 1920 to 1953

Alexeyevich had once met his future wife, Vera Muromtseva. For a long time, Zaytsev and Bunin were in a very close contact, were considered to be like-minded literary figures, and together took part in the activities of the French Writers’ Union.

When the news came from Stockholm that Ivan Alexeyevich had been awarded the Nobel Prize, Zaytsev was one of the first to inform the public about it, giving the urgent news under the headline *Bunin is Crowned* to the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie*.

Shmelev, who was also pleased with this news, would say in his speech at the celebration: “Through Bunin, who was born in Russia, Russia itself, imprinted in writing, has been recognised by the world.”

A serious disagreement between Bunin and Zaytsev occurred in 1947, when Ivan Alexeyevich resigned from the Union of Russian Writers in protest against the expulsion from it of those who had decided to obtain Soviet citizenship in the post-war period. Leonid Zurov, Alexander

Bakhrakh, Georgy Adamovich, and Vadim Andreyev withdrew from the Union with them. It should be noted that after returning to the USSR, Vadim Andreyev, a son of the remarkable Russian writer Leonid Andreyev, became a journalist and author of wonderful books.

Boris Zaytsev, as the chairman of this organisation, was displeased with Bunin’s act. He tried to have it out with him by correspondence, but it only led to their final break-up.

In 1946 the emigre community reacted extremely negatively to Bunin’s agreement to meet with the Soviet Ambassador Alexander Bogomolov. Contacts with Soviet people (and even more so the repatriation of writers) enraged many emigre men of letters.

When it comes to attempts to humiliate or slander great geniuses, in whatever field they worked, we cannot help but recall how Alexandre Dumas Fils reacted to attempts to slander his father: “My father is an ocean. You will never pollute it with your filth...”

SEASON OF THE LORD

Congratulating readers on the new time of blessings from God, a regular author of Russian Mind magazine, the rector of St. Nicholas Church in the French city of Toulouse, Father Augustin Sokolovski, shares with readers his thoughts on the saints whose memory is celebrated at the beginning of autumn

The first of September is the beginning of the school year. At the same time, even among church people, few remember that in the Church, and not only in Orthodoxy, but also among Roman Catholics, September 1 is the beginning of a new church year. This is the beginning of a new church year, which in Orthodox worship is called the “Summer of the Lord.”

Martyr Andrew Stratelates

In 1591, on the outskirts of Moscow, the Russian army successfully repelled the last invasion of the Crimean Khanate on the capital in history. The troops were located opposite each other, and the centre of the battle took place on the site where, in gratitude, a monastery in honor of St. Andrew Stratilates was soon erected on Sparrow Hills. The victory was won on his feast day. Currently, the St. Andrew’s Monastery houses important dicasteries of the Russian Church, the Synodal Library, and the main Orthodox radio station, Radio Vera.

On the first day of autumn, the Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of the martyr Andrew Stratilates. The exact time of Andrei Stratilate’s life is unknown. It is assumed that he suffered for his faith during the time of the Roman Emperor Maximian (284–305). The Greek word “stratilate” is translated as “army commander”. The life says that Andrew was a pagan, but as was often the case in the Roman army, he trusted Jesus extremely. In

a moment of danger, when he and the detachment under his command were ordered to pursue some “Persians” in order to engage them in battle, he called on the soldiers to hope in Christ. Victory was won. But along with the honours, the soldiers were denounced for confessing the Crucified.

So, Andrew deployed his small army towards Tarsus of Cilicia, the birthplace of the Apostle Paul, because this region was already Christianized, and there was hope of meeting a priest or bishop there to be baptized. After his baptism, Andrew and his detachment laid down their arms so as not to engage in battle with their brothers in arms who had been sent by the pagan command to deal with them. If Andrew truly lived under Maximian, he was a contemporary of the patron saint of the French, Swiss, and other ancient Christian armies, the martyr Maurice. Like Andrew the Stratelates, who, out of brotherly love, laid down his arms with his legion to refuse to fight against his brothers, Maurice was killed for his faith in Helvetia, the future Switzerland. A remarkable example of the Communion of Saints who did not know each other personally, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The early Church glorified its saints not for heroism, but for holiness. Saint Augustine makes a detailed distinction between these two characteristics in his work *On the City of God*. Thus, according to the Father of the Church, the ancient Romans were heroes, but they were also very wicked. Andrew Stratelates

was glorified by the Church not for his military valor, but for his preaching of the Gospel among his fellow soldiers and his willingness to suffer for the faith. Thus, the Gospel commandment was fulfilled: “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

The martyr Andrew Stratelates was the patron saint of the Russian writer Andrei Platonov (1899-1951), whose poems and prose about autumn are characterized by a special melancholy. “There is much gloomy anxiety in life, // The days bring many troubles. // Autumn roads in the rain, // It is hard to walk along them,” he wrote in his poem *Ivan da Marya*.

Like all Russians before the Revolution of 1917, Platonov was a baptized child. But even in his youth he “believed” in Bolshevism, and in his works, he claimed that Jesus Himself was a Bolshevik, and under no circumstances should He be handed over to the “churchmen.” Only at the end of his short but sorrowful life did the writer begin to return to the Church and asked his loved ones to pray for him. The writer looked after his son, who had tuberculosis. Platonov became infected himself and died. Converted to the modern calendar, he was born on August 28, that is, on the Assumption, and died on January 5, before Christmas Eve, as if for poets the history of salvation lived in reverse order.

“But in the deep, dying autumn // One can mournfully and forever fall in love: // After all, the pines turn green in winter – // One must live

all year round,” Platonov wrote in the same poem. The memory of the holy martyr Andrew is also a duty to offer a prayer for the eternal memory of the writer.

The holiness of the third September

On 3 September, the Church celebrates the memory of Saint Vassa of Edessa. Saint Vassa suffered for Christ during the reign of Emperor Galerius at the turn of the third and fourth centuries.

The Greek city of Edessa, from which Vassa came, should be distinguished from the famous Syrian metropolis, the ancient capital of the Holy Image of the Savior. It is interesting to note that on the same day as the memory of Saint Vassa, the Church celebrates the memory of the Apostle Thaddeus of 70, whose name, according to ancient tradition, connects the history of the Holy Image and the preaching of the Gospel in

Syrian Edessa. It is possible that this is not a coincidence, but a consequence of the fact that the editors of the ancient liturgical calendars mistakenly identified two different Edessas and synchronized the memory of the Apostle with that of Vassa of Edessa, as if they were both from the same city. This is indirectly attested by the liturgical office of the Apostle Thaddeus and

the martyr Vassa, which is common for these two saints in the liturgical Menaion.

Along with Saint Vassa, her sons Theognius, Agapius, and Pistus suffered. The memory of the holy martyrs, a mother and her sons, is an example of early Christian family holiness, and, sadly, an example of human betrayal. Vassa was the wife of a pagan priest named Valerius,

who gave her and his own sons over to the pagans.

The saints were arrested, subjected to persuasion, torture, and torment. Hoping that Vassa would give in to the suffering of her own children, the pagans first dealt with the three sons. Their torments were severe and varied. In the end, all three were beheaded. As if wishing to avenge every child raised by her



Martyr Andrei Stratelates. 17th century icon



Gate Church of St. Andrew Stratilates in Moscow's St. Andrew's Monastery. 1675



Reliquary with the relics of St. Aristocles in the Church of the Great Martyr Nikita of Athos, Moscow

in the Christian faith, the pagans subjected Saint Vassa to a bloody triad of tortures: she was burned with fire, she was thrown to the wild beasts and then thrown into the sea.

A passing ship saved her. Perhaps this was an “ordinary” human rescue, perhaps a supernatural phenomenon. Hagiographers believed that those who saved the saint were Angels, and St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain believed that they were her sons. In the apotheosis of their heavenly

glory, they appeared to their mother as a sign of gratitude and strengthening.

At the moment of her interrogation, the saint toppled the pagan idol of Zeus, but the real apogee of her suffering was her “return from the dead”. Like the Lord Jesus in the Gospel, who did not try to escape the torment of the Cross, which He proclaimed at the Last Supper in establishing the Sacrament of the Eucharist as a seal and sign of the voluntariness of His Passion

and our salvation, Saint Vassa returned to her executioners. Eight days later, when the pagans finally considered her lost in the depths of the sea, she again appeared before the court. In divine providence, this was a chance for repentance, correction and conversion. But, unlike the Apostle Thomas, who on the eighth day believed in Christ through touching His wounds, in the future proof that the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist serve as the source of faith, the Greek pagans considered Saint Vassa a ghost. They beat the defenceless woman with sticks for a long time. As if convinced, in their pagan frenzy, that she was not spirit, but flesh, they then beheaded her.

“You were a mother of fair children, O trophy-bearer Vassa. You did bring to the Trinity the fruits of your womb. At you word Theognios, Pistos, and Agapios bravely contested and with you partake of glory. Save those who cry to you: Glory to Him Who has crowned you; glory to Him Who has glorified you; glory to Him Who through you works healings for all,” says the troparion to the martyrs.

The modern Russian Menaion contains a service to the holy martyrs, but, unfortunately, there is no troparion, which is indirect evidence of the modesty of the celebration. On September 30 the Church celebrates the memory of the holy martyrs Faith, Hope and Love, and their mother Sophia. Saint Sophia and her three daughters are much more famous than Vassa and her three sons. The memory of the martyr Vassa and her sons was greatly celebrated on the Greek islands of the Sea of Marmara, where, according to legend, they suffered. After the Asia Minor catastrophe of 1922 and the expulsion of the Greek population from the former Byzantine territories in Asia, there is no longer a Christian presence there. As our contemporary Bishop Vasily Krivoshein wrote,

citing a Greek proverb, “a poor saint has no doxology.”

Holy bishop Athanasius and martyr Anthousa

“To all perfection I see a limit, but your commands are boundless,” says the longest of the psalms in the Septuagint translation (118:96). The Fathers of the Church saw in these words an indication of the possibility of astonishing diversity in the correct fulfilment of the same commandment. Saint Athanasius of Tarsus fulfilled Christ’s commandment to “lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:11) “peaceably,” through the preaching of the Gospel.

The name “Athanasius” means immortal. It is therefore not surprising that it was very popular among Christians, who not only believed in the eternity of the soul, as pagans also believed, but also expected a general “resurrection of the flesh,” as the Apostles’ Creed so realistically states. One of the ancient saints named with such a hope of immortality was the martyr Athanasius of Tarsus. The Church celebrates his memory on September 4. This saint was bishop of the city of Tarsus and suffered for Christ under Emperor Aurelian (270–275). The martyrdom of Saint Athanasius was prompted by the baptism of Anthousa, a young virgin of very wealthy origin from Seleucia.

Anthousa was a pagan, but she saw in a vision a man of God whom she was destined to meet. Later, her parents spoke among themselves of a Christian preacher who had converted many people to Christ and, above all, supported his preaching with numerous miracles and healings. Struck by this coincidence of vision and gossip, of the supernatural and of the everyday, Anthouse set out in search of the evangelist. Having found

him, she asked him for guidance in the faith. Saint Athanasius baptized her and the bodyguards who accompanied her, named Neophytos and Charisimos.

The brief description of the life of Saint Athanasius, of which we know nothing beyond this episode, is an example of the fulfilment of Jesus’ commandment in the Gospel: “Greater love has no one than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:11). He could have preached among the people for a long time. The pagan police knew that the corporation of pagan priests and the ignorance of the masses would sooner or later turn against Christian preachers, and therefore often did not intervene in their activities. But the baptism of a nobleman in this case meant the inevitable death of the Christian bishop. The pagan authorities then reacted quickly and aggressively. They saw the conversion of noble and famous people to Christianity as a major challenge. The testimony of these converts was considerable. It is no coincidence that the Church called martyrs of royal and very noble origin “great martyrs.” Athanasius made his choice.

Almost simultaneously with Saint Anthousa, and apparently in the same region, another saint of the same name, Anthousa, suffered for Christ. Hiding her noble origins, she dressed in coarse and shabby clothes, thus creating one of the prototypes of Christ’s future madness, which, this sacred prophetic madness, would become the asceticism of many saints in the future Church. Tortured along with her twelve servants, she was placed in a well where she died. Tradition calls her Anthousa the Younger, or the New. She is commemorated on September 9. Precisely in relation to her, Saint Anthousa, baptized by Athanasius, is called “Anthousa the Great,” or Anthousa of Seleucia. The Greek name “Anthousa” translates

as “flowery” and, in the modern transcription, Anfisa, was very popular in the last century in Russia and the Soviet Union.

Athanasius was subjected to the most brutal tortures, with rods and a rack, and then beheaded. A brief history of his long suffering has been preserved in the life of Saint Anthousa. As if in gratitude for her conversion and baptism, the saint bestowed upon Athanasius, immortal in name and martyrdom, the “literary” immortality of hagiography and ecclesiastical veneration. However, Anthousa’s life is so similar to that of another famous saint of the time, the martyr Pelagia, that it is difficult to know which of the two could have served as a model for the other.

The mother of the great Church Father, John Chrysostom, venerated as a saint in modern Orthodox piety, was named in honour of Saint Anthousa. One image depicts the mother of Basil of Caesarea Emmelia, the mother of Gregory the Theologian Nonna, the mother of Saint Augustine Monica, and the mother of John Chrysostom Anthousa in the same icon. The memory of Saint Athanasius of Tarsus, of Anthousa of Seleucia and of the martyrs Charissimos and Neophytos is celebrated together on the same day. These are examples of the communion of saints in life and in death, in the memory of the Church and beyond history.

Elder Aristocles of Moscow

Elder Aristocles of Moscow was born in 1846 and went to the Lord in 1918. He was a family man but became a widower and went to Greece to become a monk. Born in Orenburg, Aristocles spent most of his ascetic life on Mount Athos. Yet it was in Moscow where, according to an unfathomable plan of grace, he was destined to bring

the greatest benefit to people through his ministry. The recollections of his contemporaries testify to the saint’s gift of spiritual counsel and prophecy, as well as to the power of his prayer, which once restored sight to a blind man. It was as if the elder overlooked other righteous men of that time in time and space. Ambrose of Optina and John of Kronstadt were older than him, and Patriarch Tikhon and even Silouan of Athos were younger.

The Lord evidently protected Saint Aristocles throughout his life. At the end of the 19th century, he was prior of the Moscow Metochion of the Russian Athos Monastery but was later recalled. The First Russian Revolution of 1905 therefore did not affect him – he remained on Mount Athos. Shortly before the outbreak of conflict over the veneration of the name of Jesus on the Holy Mountain, Aristocles was brought back to Moscow. Thus, he escaped the dramatic events just before the First World War, which led to the mass expulsion of Russian monks from Mount Athos.

Shortly after the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, God called Aristocles to Himself. On the eve of the monastery’s destruction in 1923, the believers prophetically insisted on his reburial at the Danilov Cemetery. Thus, his relics were preserved for future veneration. On September 6, 2004, the anniversary of his death, he was beatified. The Lord miraculously and carefully preserved His saint so that he could preserve and protect others. Saint Aristocles is a living example of the charitable gift of spiritual guidance and of creating good in humble silence, despite the winds of all kinds of change in troubled times.

The Synaxis of Moscow Saints

On the Sunday before September 11, the Russian Church celebrates



Cathedral of Moscow Saints, early 20th century icon

the Synaxis of Moscow Saints. This holiday often coincides with City Day. The first canonized Moscow saint is considered to be Metropolitan Peter of the Russian Church. He was born in 1260 and was elected metropolitan in 1308. In 1325, by an amazing coincidence, exactly one thousand years after the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, he chose Moscow as his place of residence. The future capital was then the only large city in Rus’ that did not have its own bishop. According to the canons of the Ancient Church, there should not be two bishops in one city. This was an absolutely prophetic decision, which, without exaggeration, not

only determined the rise of Moscow, but also predetermined the course of subsequent Russian history. Just a year later, Peter departed to the Lord and was buried in the wall of the original Dormition Cathedral. August 6th marks the transfer of the relics of Saint Peter to the newly built Dormition Cathedral, which took place in 1479. Many centuries later, it was on this autumn day of Saint Peter’s remembrance that the elder Aristocles departed to the Lord. Therefore, the days of remembrance of Peter and Aristocles coincide. If Peter became the first Moscow saint in time, then Aristocles was one of the last.

A MAN OF HISTORY

In memory of Prince Alexander Trubetskoy, a member of the Editorial Board of the Russian Mind magazine



“My motherland is France, and my fatherland is Russia. I feel more Russian than French,” Prince Alexander Alexandrovich Trubetskoy said in one of his interviews. His whole life is behind these words. He ended his earthly journey after a serious lung disease caused by

protracted pneumonia. He was ill for a long time, becoming weaker before everybody’s eyes, but always kept his spirit up. “This is the character trait of my ancestors,” Trubetskoy asserted. “We never give up – we go to the end: the harder it is at the beginning, the higher we rise later.”

Needless to say, Alexander Alexandrovich was lucky with his forebears. Born in Paris in 1947, he was a descendant of the famous noble Trubetskoy-Golitsyn family, originating from the Lithuanian princes. From this root grew a huge sprawling family tree of the Trubetskoys: military men and scientists, politicians and figures of art.

The prominent musicologist Nikolai Trubetskoy, Alexander Alexandrovich’s great-grandfather, founded the Moscow Conservatory together with Nikolai Rubinstein. Alexander Alexandrovich’s grandfather Eugene Trubetskoy was a distinguished Christian philosopher of the Silver Age. His brother Sergei Trubetskoy, a philosopher, became the first elected rector of the Moscow State University. His mother Alexandra Mikhailovna was a granddaughter of Dmitry Golitsyn, the Moscow Military Governor-General and a veteran of the Patriotic War of 1812. His father, Alexander Evgenievich, fought in the First World War and then in the Volunteer Army.

Alexander Alexandrovich’s parents first met in emigration in France. “We lived very modestly – no hot water, no bath,” Alexander Alexandrovich recalled his youth. “My father worked both as a taxi driver and a tram conductor. During the occupation the Germans invited my father to fight with them, to go to war for them... But he refused resolutely: he remained a patriot of Russia forever.”

After serving in the French Army, Prince Trubetskoy got a job as an interpreter at a shipyard in Nantes. In the 1970s The Soviet Union signed a contract with France to supply fishing

vessels. A quick mind, the ability to make good acquaintances and knowledge of the Russian language allowed Alexander Alexandrovich to be involved in supplying French welding equipment to the USSR. In the 1980s he began working for the Thomson corporation that specialised in the development and production of mass communication media, and in the 1990s he serviced contracts in the energy sector. In 2011 he was granted Russian citizenship, and he headed the Board of Directors of the Svyazinvest telecommunications holding company.

However, by his nature he always remained a humanitarian, or rather a historian, because that was his initial education. Trubetskoy collected archival documents, helped museums, and even contributed to the rapprochement of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. His main passion was the history of the Russian nobility. His house in the town of Juoy-en-Josas near Paris became a real centre of Russian culture. Trubetskoy collected rare books and family heirlooms... He wrote interesting articles for our magazine. He was a co-author of monographs on the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and on the Italian campaign of Alexander Suvorov.

His knowledge of genealogy and heraldry was encyclopedic: he could tell for hours how in the olden days the Trubetskoys built churches and how the Golitsyns supported Russian art. The prince’s ambition was to open a Trubetskoy-Golitsyn family museum. To do it he was restoring their family estate near Rybinsk in the Yaroslavl region. He was writing a book about his family. But unfortunately, he did not have time to realise his dream...

Trubetskoy was an honorary professor at the Moscow State University, president of the Imperial



Trubetskoy family coat of arms

Guard Memorial Association, head of the Franco-Russian Alliance Association, and took active part in the work of the Coordinating Council of the World Congress of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad. He used to say: “The main goal for me, as for the entire Coordinating Council, is always to remind my compatriots that we belong to the Russian world. This is both an honour and a patriotic duty... We are envoys of Russia...”

In recent years, Moscow became a home for Alexander Trubetskoy and his family. He has stayed here forever. The funeral service for the prince was performed at

the Great Cathedral in honour of the Don Icon of the Mother of God at the Moscow Donskoy Monastery. Alexander Alexandrovich has been the first of the Trubetskoys since the Revolution to choose as his resting place the family vault of the princely families of Golitsyn, Shcherbatov and Trubetskoy at the Church of the Archangel Michael of the Donskoy Monastery. He used to say: “We are not just names in textbooks, we are living history.” He went down in History himself.

Eternal memory to him!

*Editorial Board and editorial staff
Of the Russian Mind Magazine*

ON THESE AUTUMN DAYS

World Architecture Day

At an international meeting of architects, including representatives from the USSR, in London on 8 September 1946, it was decided to establish the International Union of Architects (UIA). Currently, over a million architects from all over the world are UIA members.

At the 20th General assembly of the UIA in Barcelona in 1996, it was decided to mark World Architecture Day on the first Monday in October.

On this day, architectural conferences and symposia are held in many countries, where issues related to the construction of new buildings and the restoration and protection of historic architectural monuments are discussed, and various exhibitions are organised.

Every year, World Architecture Day is dedicated to a particular theme. Last year, for example, the theme, Mobilising Young Talent for Urban Transformation, was chosen, emphasising the importance of attracting young professionals in an environment of accelerated urbanization.

This year, the UIA is celebrating World Architecture Day on 6 October under the slogan, Design for Strength.



Photo: Katerina Gliznitsova / Unsplash



The Church of the Intercession on the Nerl. 1165

The Feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God

The feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God began to be celebrated in Russia in memory of the appearance of the Mother of God to worshippers at the Blachernae Church when Constantinople was besieged by enemies. The Virgin Mary spread Her omophorion (head covering) over the Christians and thereby saved the capital of the Byzantine Empire from destruction.

This festival in the Church calendar falls on 1/14 October. In Russia it has long been associated with the beginning of winter, with the first snow that covers the ground, marking the approach of winter cold. By this time, the peasants had finished all their work in fields and gardens, stopped driving cattle to pastures and begun to heat their log huts.

From the feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God on, young unmarried women would start to meet in the evenings and the autumn wedding season would open.

Churches in honour of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God appeared in Russia in the twelfth century. The oldest of them is the Church on the Nerl near the village of Bogolyubovo in the Vladimir region. This unique church of white stone was built in about 1165 by Grand Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky. It is believed that thanks to him the feast of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God became widespread in Russia.

Plastic as a Global Threat

It's no secret that plastic poses a serious threat to the environment and human health. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Earth currently produces about 400 million tons of plastic per year, most of which is not recycled. About 79% of the plastic produced ends up in landfills or in the natural environment, where it decomposes over hundreds of years.

Plastics, especially single-use plastic products (bottles, bags, tubes, etc), are a major source of ocean pollution. According to the UN, about eight million tons of plastic end up in the oceans annually, and this is a threat to the ecosystems of marine flora and fauna. Numerous marine creatures often eat plastic particles and die.

Plastic degradation products are dangerous chemicals that, once in the human body, can cause hormonal disorders, problems with the reproductive system, and increase the risk of developing various conditions, including cancer, diabetes, heart and vascular diseases.

The presence of microplastics in food is of particular concern. Studies have shown that microparticles of plastic can enter the human body through fish, seafood, water, and even food sold in plastic packages.

Unfortunately, in practice, plastic recycling faces many difficulties, since not all of its types are recyclable.

In recent years, scientists have been actively developing alternatives to plastics that can

become more environmentally friendly. Bioplastics made from plant materials such as maize or potatoes are gradually becoming more popular. The main advantage of these materials is that they can decompose in nature without

causing as much damage to ecosystems as traditional plastic.

Today many countries are taking serious steps to limit the production and use of single-use plastic, which poses a huge threat to nature and human health.



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