

Evgenia Kirichenko

## **MOSCOW'S CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR**



### **Its Creation, Destruction, and Rebirth** 1813-1997

Translated by  
**Thomas H. Hoisington**

in consultation with  
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## CONTENTS

Author's Preface	iii
A Note from the Translators	v
The Patriotic War of 1812 in the Destinies of Russia and Moscow	1

### **Design Stages of the Cathedral: 1813-1832**

The First Competition	23
Alexander Vitberg's Fateful Design	36
The Second Competition	59

### **Constructing the Cathedral: 1839-1883**

Moscow in the 1830's and 1840's. Establishing a Site for the Cathedral	77
Ton's Design	92
Sculpture on the Façades	109
Interior Decoration	125

### **Cathedral Life: 1883-1931**

Prints of Moscow and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior	169
Dedication of the Cathedral	183
A Monument Erected to Alexander III	192
The Life of the Cathedral	199
The All-Russian Church Council and the Ordeal of Patriarch Tikhon	244

### **Explosion! The Cathedral of Christ the Savior Destroyed: 1931-1932**

Implementing the "Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic"	267
Moscow's Monasteries and Churches in the 1920's and 1930's	277
Plans for the Palace of Soviets	288
Blowing Up the Cathedral	316

### **The Cathedral's Rebirth**

	345
Chronology	355

## Author's Preface<sup>1</sup>

*Dedicated to the memory of my unforgettable grandparents,  
Anna Arefievna and Ivan Prokofievich Zhakov*

A building, much like a person, can be unique and possess a fate all its own. The life of some buildings is uncommonly successful and happy, some have an even and peaceful keel, while the life of other buildings can only be described as dramatic. The life of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow is striking, impetuous--and truly tragic.

The idea of constructing the Cathedral arose during the Napoleonic invasion, known in Russia as the Patriotic War of 1812, and was linked to Russia's victory in that war, one which not only determined her future but also played a great role in world history. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was built as a national monument to express the nation's gratitude to Christ Jesus for saving Russia. It was intended to immortalize the torments, sacrifices, and great feats of the Russian people in the 1812 war. Its creation attracted Russia's finest creative forces, and the laying of the Cathedral's cornerstone and its consecration were celebrated as national events. The leading Russian architects, Giacomo Quarenghi, Andrey Voronikhin, Avram Melnikov, Alexander Vitberg, and Konstanin Ton, all participated in the design competitions for the Cathedral. Its façades were decorated by sculptors Alexander Loganovsky, Nikolai Ramazanov, and Pyotr Klodt, and its interior décor was executed by more than thirty artists, among them Vasily Vereshchagin, Vasily Surikov, and Ivan Kramskoy.

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<sup>1</sup> When *Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior* was first published in 1992, there were no plans to rebuild the Cathedral.—*Trans.*

Russia's most important commemorations and other special celebrations all took place in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The church was designed as a place not only for religious rites; it also served for cultural and educational observances as well. In it were commemorated, for example, the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of St. Sergius of Radonezh, one of Russia's most revered holy men, and the centenary of Nikolai Gogol's birth. Within the walls of the Cathedral music by Piotr Ilych Tchaikovsky and Pavel Chesnokov was performed and the voices of Fyodor Chaliapin and Konstantin Rozov (given the exclusive title of "Grand Archdeacon") were heard. After the Revolution of 1917, an extraordinary church conference was held in the Cathedral; it was followed by the All-Russian Church Council at which, after a hiatus of more than two-hundred-years, the Moscow Patriarchate was restored.

Only the idiosyncrasies of Russian history explain the highly improbable fact that a monument of such great moral significance, one regarded by Russians as a national shrine, was destroyed, turned into a pile of rubble, and attempts made to eradicate all memory of it. In the late 1920's and early 1930's, Moscow, like many other Russian cities, lost many of its most valuable architectural monuments. The panoramas of Russian cities were altered beyond recognition. They were deprived of their most distinctive characteristics: their individual silhouettes. Churches were decapitated, crosses removed. Reduced to their foundations, disfigured, ecclesiastical buildings were turned haphazardly into warehouses, workshops, garages. This is Russia's history. For churches razed or blown up penance, long delayed, has found expression in resurrecting their memory, as is the case with persons—often whole classes of society--who were the victims of political repression.

Recently much has been done and great efforts have been made to define the composition and scope of what was lost in order to determine what Russia has been deprived of forever and what might be restored. The events of the last few years in Russia have greatly increased interest in the tragic fate of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The sincere desire to restore the true course of events, to shed light on information heretofore unknown has acted as a stimulus, inspiring many researchers to undertake detailed study of the Cathedral's creation, life, and destruction.

### **A Note from the Translators**

English versions of the captions of drawings and photographs accompanying the text of Dr. Kirichenko's book referenced to the pages in the original on which these reproductions appear are appended to each chapter of the translation.

In a number of places Kirichenko includes names, details, and comments of historical interest to her Russian readers. Some of this information we elucidate by means of notes or minor textual additions and some has been edited.

Thomas and Sona Hoisington are Slavists by training and experience, having earned doctorates in Russian and Polish at Yale University in 1971. In the course of pursuing academic careers they have published translations of both fiction and nonfiction from Russian and Polish as well as scholarly articles and reviews.

## The Patriotic War of 1812 in the Destinies of Russia and Moscow

*City mysterious, city ancient,  
You've encompassed within your bounds  
Settlements and villages,  
Mansions and palaces.*

*Begirded by a ribbon of fields,  
Midst gardens all multicolored. . .  
So many churches, so many towers  
On your seven hills.*

*With a gigantic hand  
Like a great charter you developed  
And on a small river  
Grew great and glorious...*

*Like a martyr, you were burned,  
Oh, white-walled Moscow!  
And the river in you boiled  
Burning ferociously!*

*And beneath the ashes you lay  
Imprisoned,  
And from those ashes you rose  
Immutable!*

*May you flourish with eternal glory,  
City of churches and mansions,  
City at the center, the heart,  
Ur-City of Russia!*

Fyodor Nikolayevich Glinka  
Moscow, 1841

1812 was a terrible year for Russia. It was a year of destruction on a huge scale, a year of tremendous losses, and yet it witnessed the emergence of a national consciousness that has few parallels in Russian or, for that matter, world history. To understand the significance of events in memory of which the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was erected, a few words about these circumstances are in order.

In the night of June 12, 1812,<sup>\*</sup> French troops without warning crossed the border of the Russian empire. The following day, Russian Emperor Alexander I, in Vilnius for a military review, issued orders to his armies and promulgated his “Open Letter to Field Marshal Count Saltykov.” The final words of the letter sound like an oath: “I will not lay down My arms so long as a single enemy soldier remains in My Realm.”<sup>1</sup> Less than a month later, on July 6, in Polotsk the Emperor signed another proclamation, “To Moscow, Our Ancient Capital:”<sup>†</sup> “[F]or purposes of properly defending Our land, to muster new inner strength, We turn first to Moscow, the ancient Capital of Our Forebears. Moscow has always been the most important of all Russian cities . . . . [A]s blood flows into the heart, into it flow the sons of the Fatherland from all other regions to defend that Fatherland. Never has the need been greater; the deliverance of Faith, Throne, and Realm so demands. May the spirit of this righteous fray grow in the hearts of Our illustrious Nobility and in all the other estates, may a shared fervor develop, may zeal gain in strength, and may these become manifold, first in Moscow, spreading throughout the vastness of Russia. We Ourselves will hasten to appear amidst Our

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<sup>\*</sup> June 24, “New Style.” Until 1917, Russians adhered to the Julian calendar, which in the first half of the nineteenth century was twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the West. Dates in the text are “Old Style,” that is, Julian, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>†</sup> Russia’s capital at the time was St. Petersburg.



people in the Capital and in other parts of Our Realm to consult with and be guided by all of Our militias . . . .”<sup>2</sup>

In a second proclamation promulgated that same day, Alexander urged the entire Russian populace to take up arms and gather resources: “[W]ith unwavering hope in Our brave host We think it absolutely necessary to muster new forces within the Empire which, by inflicting terror on the enemy, will constitute a second bulwark and defend the homes, wives, and children of each and all.

“We have appealed already to Our Ancient Capital City of Moscow, and We appeal now to all of Our subjects, to all estates and ranks both clerical and secular, inviting them to form a bond with Our brothers and sisters, joining them in a common uprising against all the designs and encroachments of the enemy. Indeed, the enemy will find at every step faithful sons of Russia. May he encounter in each nobleman a Pozharsky, in every clergyman a Palitsyn, in every subject a Minin.<sup>‡</sup> Noble gentry! At all times ye have been saviors of the Fatherland. Most Holy Synod and Clergy! With your heartfelt prayers you have caused heavenly grace to descend upon Russia. Russians! The brave heritage of brave Slavs! May you all join together. With a cross over your heart and weapons in your hands, no human force will defeat you.”<sup>3</sup>

There was a reason for these exhortations: Napoleon’s *Grand Armée* was the largest in the world, and it was poised to conquer Russia. The number of Russian troops positioned on the western border of the country was roughly one third its size, 240,000 men in all. Moreover, the Russia troops were fragmented. Armies were separated by significant distances, and, worse still, there was no commander in chief. When the war began Russia’s troops were forced to retreat into the

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<sup>‡</sup> Pozharsky, Palitsyn, and Minin, leaders in the struggle against the Polish-Swedish intervention in Russia in the early seventeenth century, organized militias and marched to defend Moscow. A memorial to Minin and Pozharsky was erected on Red Square in Moscow after the 1812 war.

interior of the country to avoid being destroyed in a large-scale battle, as Napoleon wanted. The task of uniting the armies was all-important for Russia. Napoleon's strategic plan to bring a quick end to the war was not realized, but neither was the Russian plan for a quick unification of the two main armies under the command of Princes Mikhail Barclay de Tolly and Pyotr Bagration. By retreating, however, the Russian forces wore out their opponent. Thanks to local militias and partisans, the war quickly became an all-Russian campaign. "Hour by hour the nation's war shines more brilliantly," observed poet Fyodor Glinka (1786-1880) in his *Letters of a Russian Officer*. "When a village is burned, it ignites the fire of revenge in its inhabitants. Thousands of Russians who took cover in the woods and converted their sickles and the scythes into defense weapons, artlessly, by fortitude alone repulse the scoundrels. Even women join in the battle!"<sup>4</sup>

Everyone who has written about the Napoleonic invasion, including official ideologues, makes note of the decisive role played by the Russian people. The Patriotic War of 1812 was thus a war truly national in scope. It evoked extraordinary patriotic enthusiasm. It made all Russians realize that, regardless of their divergent views, the people, together with outstanding individuals, national heroes, were the true makers of history. Without this nationwide sense of patriotism the propitious outcome of the war would not have been possible, nor would the Cathedral of Christ the Savior have become an integral part of this national movement and the transformed social consciousness it begat.

Until the French were driven out of Russia, for the long and horrible six-month period stretching from June to December 1812, all of Russia's western and central territories were transformed into a massive battlefield and a commensurate site of conflagration. By August troops began to gather near Smolensk, where from August 4 to August 7 the first large-scale battle took place. In Glinka's

*Letters of a Russian Officer* we find a firsthand impression of events: “The Russians yielded not a single foot. They fought like lions. The French . . . in a frenzied attack climbed up the walls, burst open the gates, hurled themselves onto the ramparts, and in countless ranks massed around the city. . . . [C]louds of bombs, grenades, and sharpened cannonballs flew at buildings, towers, stores, churches. . . . Everything combustible burst into flames. . . . Residents fled en masse while Russian regiments pushed into that very fire.”<sup>5</sup>

In the end, Russian troops were forced to abandon Smolensk. Napoleon, it seemed, was succeeding in bringing his design to fruition. Of the three possible directions for delivering a fatal blow to the Russian troops—toward St. Petersburg, Kiev, or Moscow—he preferred the last. “If I were to occupy Kiev,” Napoleon emphasized, “I’d be taking Russia by the leg. If I seize St. Petersburg, I’d have her by the head. By capturing Moscow I’ll strike her in the heart.”<sup>6</sup> However, a sober assessment of the difficulties involved in implementing this strategy forced Napoleon to take what at first seemed like an unexpected step. After the Battle of Smolensk he sent Barclay de Tolly, who had been appointed commander in chief of a now united Russian army, a letter intended for Alexander I. In it he discussed possible terms for peace. However, Barclay chose not to reply. Preparations were already underway for a large scale battle that would decide the outcome of the war.

At this point, when in both the army and the country at large dissatisfaction with the policy of retreat was growing, Alexander I yielded to public pressure and removed Barclay as commander in chief. In his place he appointed Prince Mikhail Kutuzov and vested in him absolute authority. On August 17 Kutuzov arrived in Smolensk Province and assumed command of an army weary and in need of rest, and, more significant, an army substantially smaller than the French one. Reinforcements under General Mikhail Miloradovich and militia from Moscow

had yet to arrive. In his first appeal to the nation, issued on August 20, Kutuzov declared: “Esteemed inhabitants of Smolensk, most esteemed countrymen! It is with great enthusiasm that I exalt the unparalleled examples of loyalty and devotion on your part and from every quarter to your most precious Fatherland. In the fiercest calamities you display steadfastness of principle. You have been cast out of your dwellings, but your stalwart hearts faithfully and devotedly have joined with us in sacred and firm bonds of common faith, kinship, and country. The enemy was able to destroy your walls, turn your belongings into dust, lay heavy fetters on you, but he could not and cannot conquer and subjugate your hearts. You are indeed true Russians!”

Kutuzov sought to strengthen and expand the emerging partisan movement. Its efforts were unanimously and enthusiastically supported by the officer corps. In response to Kutuzov’s first proclamation to the nation, Glinka wrote in his diary: “‘Everyone who is able should take up arms’ says the commander in chief. So it has become a war of the people.”

Kutuzov immediately began to tackle the toughest problems, namely, halting a numerically superior enemy and ensuring that the Russian forces went on the offensive. He prepared for a decisive battle, the Battle of Borodino, which was to be one of the most legendary battles in Russian history. The battle took place on August 26 and continued for twelve hours, acquiring, in the words of one French officer, “a horrible, ominous character.”<sup>7</sup> A moral victory for the Russian troops, Borodino marked a turning point in the war. Kutuzov himself observed: “This day will remain an eternal memorial to the courage and outstanding bravery of the Russian soldiers, a day in which the entire infantry, cavalry, and artillery fought tenaciously;”<sup>8</sup> Napoleon commented: “Of the fifty battles I have experienced, in the Battle [of Borodino] the most valor was displayed and the least success

obtained. . . . The Russians earned the right to be called invincible;”<sup>9</sup> and finally, in *War and Peace* Leo Tolstoy wrote: “[T]he moral strength of the attacking French army was drained. . . . The Russians gained a moral victory at Borodino, a victory which convinced the opponent of the moral superiority of his enemy and of his own impotence.”<sup>10</sup>

After the Battle of Borodino, the Russian army retreated toward Moscow. On September 1 at a momentous war council held at Fili, outside the city, Kutuzov reached a decision requiring great boldness as well as faith in his own authority. His concluding words to the council were imbued with a sense of tragedy: “Even if Moscow is lost, still Russia is not lost. My first duty is to preserve and protect the army. . . . The army will exist as long as we maintain hope of satisfactorily bringing this war to an end.”<sup>11</sup> These were prophetic words. The army was preserved. It fell back in order to gain advantage, to be able to dictate its own terms to the opponent, and in the final analysis to secure victory. Kutuzov had spoiled Napoleon’s plans. The Russian army retreated from Moscow along the road to Ryazan. But then by order of the commander in chief it turned onto the road to Kaluga and stopped at the village of Tarutino. At Tarutino, Russian troops took the initiative, fighting from positions they themselves had selected. A great battle ensued, and the first Russian victory was achieved; this led, in turn, to a fully-fledged counter-offensive. Kutuzov compared Tarutino with the epoch-making battles so crucial to Russia’s history: the defeat of the Tartars at Kulikovo in 1380 and the defeat of the Swedes at Poltava in 1709.<sup>12</sup> By the end of 1812 Russia had been liberated. A year and a half later, Paris would be taken and Napoleon totally defeated.

But all this lay in the future. For the moment terrible events were unfolding in Moscow. During the early hours of September 2, Kutuzov’s order to evacuate

the city was read to the troops, and the following morning the withdrawal began. Many residents left Moscow with the troops. In a city that had a population of 270,000 and teeming with activity, no more than ten or twelve thousand remained. French troops entered Moscow that same day, but their presence in the ancient capital hardly constituted a victory, nor did it give them any sense of moral strength. On the contrary, it was here in Moscow that the moral decay of the French army set in. There was looting, pillaging. The most devastating fire in all of Moscow's centuries-old history broke out.

Judging by what is known, the fire had no single cause. The retreating Russian troops destroyed strategic sites, but there was no plan to burn the city. There were instances of arson committed by Muscovites remaining in the city after its occupation, and the Frenchmen who looted Moscow dwellings also played a role in starting fires. Moscow eventually turned into a sea of raging flames. Everything was consumed: houses, churches, shops, public buildings. According to Vasily Perovsky who was in the rear guard of the Russian army and taken prisoner by the French, "It is impossible to imagine what Moscow looked like. The streets were littered with objects and furniture that had been thrown out of houses, songs of drunken soldiers filled the air along with the yelling of those engaged in pillaging who were fighting among themselves. . . . Fires had broken out and soldiers from various regiments were dragging about clothing, furs, food supplies from shops on fire." Little by little, the city was squeezed by a semicircle of Russian regulars and militiamen. Napoleon's position was hopeless. In October, a little more than a month after French troops entered Moscow, Napoleon began his retreat along the road to Smolensk, the one road free of Russian troops. He left an order to destroy the Kremlin, but, due to haste, this terrible plan was not fully executed. The Kremlin's walls, two of its towers, the Arsenal, the Faceted

Palace, and the Filaret Belfry next to the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great suffered damage from explosions.

The French left Moscow in a horrible state. Napoleon's *Twentieth Bulletin* attests to this: "Moscow, one of the most beautiful and richest cities in the world, no longer exists." French Abbot Segura, wrote: "Moscow is gone! All that remained of this once splendid city was a vast pile of ashes. . . . Only a few houses of great Moscow survived amongst the ruins. This smitten and burnt colossus, like a corpse, emitted a strong odor. . . . Ash heaps and in places ruins of walls and charred rafters were the only indication of what had once been streets."<sup>13</sup> Statistical information is no less sorrowful, no less eloquent: less than a third of the 9275 buildings in Moscow remained, of those that had burned 6532 were residential.<sup>14</sup> Somewhat surprising, masonry buildings suffered more than wooden ones; that can be explained by location. The fire affected primarily the central parts of the city. Areas located beyond Zemlyarnoy Gorod, beyond the line formed by the present Sadovoye Koltso (Garden Ring Street), were much less likely to have burned.

Immediately after Moscow's liberation and the expulsion of the French from the neighboring—and also devastated--provinces of Kaluga and Smolensk, systematic restoration work began. The restoration of residential housing went through two stages: basic housing stock was restored first and then cities and towns were reconstructed. By 1817, 2514 buildings had been restored in Moscow, and 623 masonry and 5551 frame buildings had been built. Thus, five years after the fire not only had the city's housing been fully restored, but new structures had been erected as well.<sup>15</sup>

The restoration and reconstruction of Moscow was put in the hands of a Building Commission created in 1813. It continued to function until 1842.

Commission architects and surveyors drew up plans for entire areas, streets, squares, and also for public and administrative buildings and residential housing. The Commission determined what would be built and monitored the rebuilding process. To guarantee that buildings would be well integrated and appealing, the Commission developed rules regulating private building efforts, rules that, among other things, stipulated dimensions of structures and the amount of space between them. Wooden houses—their size and location—were subject to the strictest control. One of the Commission architects' chief concerns was the appearance of building façades. A set of colors, preferred ornamental details, and roof specifications were developed. As was the case before the fire, the vast majority of residential houses were frame. However, in order to give the appearance of greater splendor, they were made to look like masonry buildings by means of stucco or thin-board siding painted in one of the Commission-approved colors. Special attention was paid to masonry walls damaged by the fire, especially those “in prominent and visible places,” that they not “disfigure the city.”<sup>16</sup> The Holy Governing Synod financed the rebuilding of churches by allocating its own resources and by organizing collections of “monies for the repair of cathedrals, churches and monasteries, educational institutions' buildings, and to provide for church personnel ravaged by the enemy in Moscow and its districts and in other eparchies through which the enemy's marauding troops passed.”<sup>17</sup>

Restoration and reconstruction efforts in Moscow proceeded at an extremely rapid pace. Not only was there a pressing need; the restoration quickly took on an aura of patriotic duty, becoming a symbol of victory and of the rebirth of Russia. Its realization was extremely fruitful. One need only recall the aphorism from Alexander Griboyedov's famous comedy, *Woe from Wit*: “the fire did much to enable Moscow's adornment.” Thus, the ancient capital became a unique, grand



architectural ensemble, termed by historians of art and culture “Post-Conflagration Moscow.”

The appearance of Moscow at the end of the eighteenth century was defined by magnificent neoclassical palaces designed by Russia’s best-known practitioner of this style, architect Matvey Kazakov (1733-1812). The terms “Kazakov’s Moscow” and “The Kazakov School,” like “Post-Conflagration Moscow,” acquired a specific historic sense and meaning. Neoclassical Moscow reflected city-building principles associated with the work of architects Osip Bove (1784-1834), Domenico Gilardi (1785-1845), and Afanasy Grigoriev (1782-1868). Post-Conflagration Moscow, on the other hand, became synonymous with urban artistic unity and harmony, and it was defined by ensembles built in the late neoclassical or “empire” style.

The Building Commission was under the direct supervision of Moscow’s Governor-General, Fyodor Rostopchin. His charge to the Commission contains a set of fundamental propositions that made for substantive changes in the historically shaped appearance of Moscow and its planned areas, especially the city’s center. Streets were straightened and widened, the areas surrounding the Kremlin and Kitay-gorod were reordered and given new anterior structures. A system of architecturally interconnected and organized spaces was created around them from reconstructed or newly built squares and thoroughfares.

Reconstruction of Red Square was one of the first and most crucial tasks undertaken by the Commission. In September 1813, Bove, the architect who played the most important role in making Post-Conflagration Moscow a reality, tackled this. The Kremlin lost its insular status. Just outside its walls the Alexander Gardens were laid out. The moat at the base of the Kremlin’s wall that joined the Neglinnaya and Moskva Rivers and once held water was filled in. The

fortress walls that stood on both sides of the moat were dismantled. (Along Red Square in front of the moat there had been three walls, one behind another; all three were taken down.) Red Square was enlarged considerably, and, because of the new configuration, the Kremlin wall and St. Basil's Cathedral became part of the Square's ensemble. Old squares, for example, Resurrection Square, were rebuilt and new ones, Kaluga, Serpukhov, Miuskaya, Konnaya, were created. New tracts of land for building began to open up in other parts of the city. The construction of a ring of boulevards with attached streets begun at the end of the eighteenth century was completed. Rostopchin's instructions to the Commission stipulated that all ancient structures be treated as historic treasures and that the Kremlin, Kitay-gorod, and St. Basil's be preserved in "their original condition,"<sup>18</sup> in other words, their status as historical monuments was made official.

These were the circumstances that prevailed when the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was conceived of and begun. While the first stage of Moscow's reconstruction was underway, events were taking place far from the city to which the genesis of this extraordinary structure can be traced.

As noted above, the Patriotic War of 1812 was accompanied by a heightened sense of national awareness. Recall the words of future Decembrist<sup>§</sup> Sergey Muravyov-Apostol: "We were the children of 1812. We were motivated by the sincere desire to sacrifice everything, even our lives, out of love for the Fatherland."<sup>19</sup> When it became obvious that the rout of the French army was inevitable and the enemy would be driven beyond Russia's borders, those in educated circles close to the Emperor perceived the need to immortalize the country's heroism in the war. The idea of creating a monument spoke for itself.

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<sup>§</sup> The Decembrists were educated, upper-class individuals who were influenced by liberal Western thinking. They formed secret societies and in 1825 staged an unsuccessful uprising against Emperor Nicholas I for which they were severely punished. Muravyov-Apostol was executed in 1826.

The question was what form it should take. The first idea that emerged was to erect a column, obelisk, or pyramid made out of cannon seized from the adversary. This type of monument was customary in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and it was favored initially by Alexander I. Count Rostopchin, Moscow's Governor-General, was also in favor of this idea and made efforts to bring it to fruition before the end of 1812. In November the Emperor wrote Commander in Chief Kutuzov to request that all artillery seized from the adversary be transported to Moscow.<sup>20</sup> By December 20, three designs for the monument had been drawn up. "I have the honor to forward to Your Imperial Highness three designs for a monument," Rostopchin wrote Alexander I, "a monument which for centuries to come will serve as testimony to Napoleon's insanity and Your wisdom. The proposed pyramidal design requires 800 cannon, but if more armament is incorporated into it, the monument will be even more majestic since it will soar higher."<sup>21</sup>

Three days before Rostopchin dispatched this letter to Alexander I, however, another individual, someone well informed about such matters, put forth his own idea for a war monument. In a formal letter to Vice-Admiral Alexander Shishkov, Pyotr Kikin formulated the idea of erecting a cathedral-monument in Moscow in gratitude to Jesus Christ who had saved Russia.<sup>22</sup> The letter is so pithy, its ideas so viable, that it is worth citing in toto. Its object was to reaffirm the idea, widely prevalent in earlier epochs and popular still in eighteenth-century Russia, of building a votive church as an expression of gratitude:

*Who among us has not raised fervent prayers to the Almighty? Whose heart has not been filled with gratitude to God, to our one and only Savior? Who does not feel a sincere need to express thankfulness for His divine mercy which has so manifestly protected us? Naturally, each and every one of us; about this there can*

*be no doubt. However, opinions are manifold about how this might best be done. That is why I offer my opinion to Your enlightened mind, knowing that by doing so it will be imbued with the requisite truth.*

*Everyone cries out about the need to build a monument, but there is a problem: agreeing on the type of monument. One person says it should be an obelisk, another a pyramid, a third a column, and so forth. Everyone wants different inscriptions. I think that this monument should correspond in all ways both to its objective and to its time.*

*As is obvious, the war was intended to decide Russia's fate, to jolt the bases of its civil and political fabric, even its faith. This was no ordinary war. Therefore, the monument must not be ordinary.*

*God's Providence, aided by faith and the people's ardor, has delivered us. Thanks be to Him. O God, save us from being like the slow-witted monkeys of ancient times, from forgetting that we are not idolaters. Obelisks, pyramids, and the like flatter human haughtiness and pride, but in no way do they satisfy the noble, gratitude-suffused heart of the Christian.*

*My heart and mind are of one accord in demanding that a church dedicated to the Savior be erected in Moscow, a church to be called the Cathedral of the Savior. This is the only way of satisfying expectations in every respect.*

*I say erect this cathedral in Moscow, for it was there, in the heart of Russia that the haughty enemy hoped to strike a fatal blow to the Russian people. There he dared to commit sacrilege, there Providence placed a limit on his pernicious designs against humankind, and there the ruin of his countless forces commenced.*

*By rendering unto God that which is His, we conjoin faith and posterity. We will be blessed forever by erecting a monument signifying our thankfulness to Him rather than indulging in mere plumery which only attracts attention to itself.*

*This Cathedral to the Savior should be situated on a magnificent square (something which now can be easily realized), a square bounded by a wall artfully constructed from the adversary's cannon, with a pyramidal gate or columns. Inside the cathedral artists should place imaginatively flags, standards, and other captured materials of all the peoples who waged war against us--all of this, of course, in good taste. In the cathedral there must be a side altar with inscribed bronze tablets that memorialize those who perished honorably on the battlefield. For the lower ranks only the regiments should be designated, for nobility each individual name should be designated, for it is comforting to a mother to read the name of her son, or to a son that of his father who laid down his life at a sacred moment in the defense of his insulted and overrun Fatherland. The inscription on the pediment of the cathedral should read: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Psalm 115). To my way of thinking nothing could be more ideal, more in keeping with the aim of such a monument than this text even though it is all too familiar and often inappropriately cited.*

*There should also be a three-day celebration every year to commemorate the day our borders were freed of the enemy. The **first** day should be devoted to the faith and therefore conducted by the clergy: a procession making its way to the cathedral from all parts of Moscow, a service on bended knee, and a requiem for the deceased. Troops under arms. The **second** day should be a military celebration, renewing annually the memory of the glory of our arms with every fighting man pledging an oath to the Fatherland. The **third** day should be a public celebration which will pass on to posterity the undying honor which clothed our Orthodox faithful in that war and, by the same token, the ever-present threat to enemies of the Russian lands.*

To accord special honor to the service of the Emperor, Russia's troops, and its citizenry in the war, Kikin further proposed that *obelisks be erected in the square on each of the four sides of the cathedral, one to the Emperor, the second to the Commander in Chief, the third to the troops, and the fourth to the Russian people. But here, something gives me pause: Would it be fitting--and not arrogant--to also include in a monument to the Savior, in eternal memory of our gratitude to Him, tributes to those who erected it?*

Appended to the letter was a postscript permitting "whatever use" might be made of these thoughts along with the date and place of its origin: "December 17, 1812, Vilnius."<sup>23</sup>

The author of the letter, Pyotr Andreyevich Kikin (1772-1834), was an aide-de-camp to Alexander I. He wrote it when the Emperor was headquartered in what is now Vilnius, Lithuania. He was forty and had served as an aide-de-camp since 1801, the first year of Alexander I's reign. From the start of the war in June 1812 until the taking of Paris in March 1814, he served as officer of the day at various army headquarters. After the war ended, he was appointed to the post of state secretary for handling petitions submitted to the Emperor. Here was an individual in the tsar's own retinue, someone fully conversant with prevailing opinion. To understand Kikin's motives, however, one must be cognizant of another aspect of his activities, activities which had nothing to do with state service. Kikin created and was the first president of the Society to Advance the Arts and was patron to a number of Russian artists, always ready to intercede on their behalf. Thus, for Kikin thoughts about the monument were, on the one hand, linked to his general philosophical outlook and, on the other, to his natural concern about forms and about avenues for realizing works of art, in this instance, creating a monument on an epoch-making scale.<sup>24</sup>

No less important was the personality of the individual to whom the letter was addressed, Alexander Semyonovich Shishkov (1754-1841), an ill-starred opponent of innovation who resisted the development of contemporary literary Russian, a reactionary and a conservative. It was hardly by chance, however, that Kikin chose Shishkov as the recipient of his letter: Kikin writes to someone who was even closer to the Emperor at the time than was he.

Shishkov is the representative of a little-studied movement in Russian culture, a movement which in terms of policy and official ideology has been characterized as the antipode to the enlightened absolutism of the Petrine period of Russian history, in other words, “unenlightened absolutism.” The term wonderfully captures the essence of two constantly opposed directions in Russian culture that have yet to lose their urgency. “Enlightenment” is understood to encompass the values broadly understood as European and Western of the educated classes, principally members of the nobility. The problem of ‘Russian and Europe’ has always existed. But it acquired special urgency from the time of Peter I’s reign, when Europeanism, that is, an orientation based on European forms and culture in education and governmental structure, was proclaimed official policy.

Periods during which the ideology and policy of enlightened absolutism were unquestionably prevalent alternated with periods during which “unenlightened absolutism” was revived, when there was official support of and appeal to the cultural traditions of pre-Petrine Russia. The reigns of Peter I, Catherine II, and Alexander I are associated with the former, those of Elizabeth and Paul I with the latter. From the time of Nicholas I (1825-55) to the Russian Revolution in 1917, the second tendency—an orientation toward native and national, i.e., medieval, pre-Petrine culture—was paramount. Periods marked by a

revival of the traditions of pre-Petrine culture by no means signified a rebirth of this culture as a whole, a total turning back. And, during periods of great enthusiasm for enlightened absolutism these antipodal tendencies did not die out altogether. The reign of Alexander I is illustrative: diverse phenomena in the areas of culture and art are encountered, as the activities of Kikin's addressee, Shishkov, attest to. The problem of European versus Russian creativity will necessarily be revisited more than once in the chapters devoted to the history of the design and realization of Christ the Savior Cathedral, since an understanding of Russia and Europe, of East and West, and of national traditions and the culture of antiquity inevitably encompasses more pressing issues, issues linked to the fate of Russia and its people.

In sending this letter to Shishkov, Kikin was performing a ritual. Both men doubtless counted on the letter being presented to Alexander I. Kikin and Shishkov were not only good friends, they professed the same views. Neither supported the Europeanism prevalent among the nobility. Both made efforts to return to and revive the traditions of old Russia which, together with faithfulness to the tenets of Russian Orthodoxy, they viewed as a favorable omen, one that had brought about the turning point in the war and also signified a great future for the country. Kikin's proposal to build a cathedral as a sign of gratitude to Providence and to memorialize the great feat of the Russian people could not help but command the attention of Shishkov, a graduate of the Maritime Military Academy, writer, and philologist-proponent of incorporating Old Church Slavisms into the literary language, the arch opponent of Western-oriented writer Nicholas Karamzin (1766-1826) who urged the educated classes to "write as you speak."

Shishkov's career as a philologist had begun in 1795 with the compilation of the *Maritime Dictionary in Three Tongues*. Under Paul I (1796-1801), Shishkov



occupied the high post of adjutant general and head tutor for the Imperial Navy. When Alexander I ascended the throne, he left the court “to engage in literary pursuits.” Shishkov published his basic beliefs in *Thoughts on the New and the Old Styles in Russian* (1803) and in *Addenda to Thoughts on the Old and New Styles* (1804) where he fought for the rebirth of Old Church Slavic, insisting that its solemnity made it truly Russian. Shishkov subsequently gathered about him like-minded individuals, people who were convinced that blindly imitating foreign sources, in particular, French literature, was pernicious and that Russia’s own traditions of folk and medieval art were genuinely fruitful. In 1811, his circle, called “Lovers of the Russian Word” was officially recognized by the Emperor and began publishing a journal, *Readings from Meetings of the Lovers of the Russian Word*. Guests to the private gatherings of the circle who became members of the officially sanctioned society included the poet Gavril Derzhavin, playwright and fabulist Ivan Krylov, and also the author of the proposal to erect a great cathedral in gratitude for Russia’s victory over the French, Pyotr Kikin.<sup>25</sup>

In the period 1812 to 1814, Shishkov again enjoyed success in government service. Alexander I made him a state secretary whose duties included the compilation of the tsar’s proclamations, edicts, and orders. Kikin’s choice of addressee was deliberate. The brief time between the date of the letter, December 17, and the date of proclamation authorizing construction of the Cathedral, December 25, is noteworthy. The speed with which the Emperor accepted and legitimized Kikin’s proposal is testimony to the fact that the idea was in the air and that it was shared by the Emperor himself.

The December 25 proclamation announcing the construction in Moscow of a large church dedicated to the Savior was one of three issued by the Emperor that day. A second expressed “gratitude to the Lord God for liberating Russia from the

invasion of hostile forces,” and the third ordered the striking of a “silver medal for soldiers who had participated in the battles of the war.” These proclamations mark the appearance of a new kind of edict, one expressing thankfulness. The first such edict was “A thankful proclamation to the Russian people” of November 3, 1812, stating: “[T]o all our loyal subjects, as true sons of Russia . . . We consider it a duty and obligation by means of this Our public declaration to express before the whole world Our gratitude and to render due justice to the brave, faithful, and devout Russian people.”<sup>26</sup> A natural extension of this are the sentiments contained in the proclamations announcing “the building in Moscow of a church in the name of Christ the Savior” and “the need to render thanks to the Lord God for liberating Russia from the invasion of the enemy:”

*The deliverance of Russia from its enemies, such a multitude of forces, so evil and fierce in design and action, who were entirely driven out in six months and in their desperate flight only a tiny portion of whom succeeded in passing beyond Our borders, this deliverance is a unmistakable outpouring of God’s grace on Russia. It is indeed a memorable event that the centuries will not blot from the chronicles. In order to preserve the eternal memory of that unparalleled zeal, of faithfulness and love of Faith and Fatherland with which in those difficult times the Russian people excelled and to commemorate Our gratitude to God’s Providence for saving Russia from the ruin that threatened her, We have conceived the idea to create in Moscow, Our Ancient Capital City, a church in the name of Christ the Savior. Detailed resolutions for its creation will be announced at the proper time. May the Almighty bless Our undertaking! May it indeed come to pass! May this cathedral stand for many centuries, and in it may the thurible of gratitude of later generations, together with love of and emulation of the deeds of their forebears make sweet the holy Throne of God.<sup>27</sup>*

- <sup>1</sup> Cited in M. Mostovskii, *Istoricheskoe opisaniie Khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve* (Moscow, 1883), p. iv.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. viii-ix.
- <sup>4</sup> F. N. Glinka, *Pis'ma russkogo ofitsera* (Moscow, 1815), I, pp. 110-121 as cited in O. V. Orlik, *Groza dvenadtsatogo goda* (Moscow, 1987), p. 36.
- <sup>5</sup> Glinka, *op. cit.* p. 41.
- <sup>6</sup> Cited in V. Kharkevich, *Voina 1812 goda: ot Nemana do Smolenska* (Vilnius, 1901), p. 64.
- <sup>7</sup> I. P. Liprandi, *Komu i v kakoi stepeni prinadlezhit chest' Borodinskogo dnia?* (Moscow, 1867), p. 39 as cited in Orlik, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- <sup>9</sup> Cited in L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Borodinskoe srazhenie* (Moscow, 1971), p. 71.
- <sup>10</sup> L. N. Tolstoi, *Sobranie sochinenii v 20-ti tomakh*, (Moscow, 1960-65), VI, *Voina i mir*; III, p. 299 as cited in Orlik, *op. cit.* p. 53.
- <sup>11</sup> M. I. Kutuzov, *Dokumenty* (Moscow, 1954), IV, pt. 1, p. 221 as cited in Orlik, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
- <sup>12</sup> Kutuzov, *Dokumenty*, IV, pt. 2, pp. 650-651.
- <sup>13</sup> Cited in *Istoriia Moskvyy*, III (Moscow, 1954), p. 109.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- <sup>15</sup> A. A. Fedorov-Davydov, *Arkhitektura Moskvyy posle Otechestvennoi voiny 1812 goda* (Moscow, 1952), p. 7.
- <sup>16</sup> Such is the wording of instructions about how funds allocated in 1813 for rebuilding Moscow should be expended. Cf. *Istoriia Moskvyy*, III, p. 146.
- <sup>17</sup> TsGIA [Central State Historical Archives], f. 797, op. 1. 1813 g., d. 4540, ll. 4ob.-6ob.
- <sup>18</sup> *Istoriia Moskvyy*, III, p. 146.
- <sup>19</sup> Cited in Fedorov-Davydov, *op. cit.* p. 12.
- <sup>20</sup> Cited in V. G. Sirotkin and V. T. Kozlov, *Traditsii Borodina. Pamiat' i pamiatniki* (Moscow, 1989), p. 26.
- <sup>21</sup> *Pozhar Moskvyy. Po vospominaniyam u perepiske sovremennikov*, Part I (Moscow, 1911), pp. 89-90. The author is indebted to Z. K. Pokrovskaya for this source.
- <sup>22</sup> Kikin's letter was published twice before the 1917 Revolution. The first time in 1846 in the journal *Moskvitianin*, submitted by a subscriber. Its second appearance was in the journal *Russkii arkhiv* in 1880, coinciding with the completion of the construction of the Cathedral (Book 2, pp. 229-232). The letter was republished recently in A. A. Shamara's article, "Imeni tvoemy," *Nauka i religiiia*, 1 (1991) pp. 20-21.
- <sup>23</sup> "Pervaia mysl' o postroenii khrama Spasitelia v Moskve. Pis'mo k Gosudarstvennomu sekretariu Aleksandru Semenovichu Shishkovu ot fligel'-ad'iutanta P. A. Kikina," *Russkii arkhiv*, 1880, Book 2, pp. 229-232.
- <sup>24</sup> Concerning Kikin, see Shamara, *op. cit.*, p. 21, and *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, VIII (Moscow, 1897), pp. 629-630.
- <sup>25</sup> *Istoriia russkoi literatury*, V, pt. 1 (Moscow, 1941), pp. 184-193.
- <sup>26</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv-xvi.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

## Illustration Captions

- Page 8*            Moscow viewed from the left or Foundling Home-side balcony of the Imperial Palace. Early nineteenth-century colored reproduction by G.-L. Lori after a 1797 original by Gerard Delabart.
- Page 9*            View of the Kremlin and Kitay-gorod. Drawing by Auguste Cadolle lithographed by Lemetr, Moscow, 1825.

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- Page 10* Emperor Alexander I. 1804 colored dot print by E. Scriven after an original by G. Kyugelkhen.
- Page 11* “The Battle of Borodino, August 26,” by P. Gess appearing in an edition of the *Niva* supplement “*Nashestvie Napoleona. Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda*” published by Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky, St. Petersburg, 1911.
- Page 12* “The Return from the Petroff Palace” by Vasily Vasilevich Vereshchagin, appearing in an edition of the *Niva* supplement “*Nashestvie Napoleona. Otechestvennaia voina 1812 goda*” published by Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky, St. Petersburg, 1911.
- Page 13* Moscow aflame in September 1812 as viewed from the balcony on the right side of the Imperial Palace. 1816 colored aquatint print by I.-N. Zhibile after a copy by Homoff of an original work by Delabart.
- Page 14* 1825 city plan of Moscow.
- Page 15* View of the Kremlin from the Foundling Home. Lithograph after a drawing by Cadolle, 1825.

## DESIGN STAGES OF THE CATHEDRAL

1813-1832

*“It is my ardent wish that this be a cathedral worthy of the people.”*

Alexander Vitberg

*What you have wrought has not been wrought in vain. No, humanity knows how to value what is truly great, and your place in the history of art is thereby assured.*

Alexander Herzen in a letter to Alexander Vitberg

### The First Competition

Erecting the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the mightiest and most significant endeavor to create an all-Russian memorial to the Patriotic War of 1812, was not the only such endeavor. As noted above, that desire first found expression in designs for a monument to be constructed from enemy cannon presented to Emperor Alexander I by Moscow Governor-General Rostopchin in December, 1812. Ultimately, this idea was realized not in Moscow, but in St. Petersburg and in granite, namely, the celebrated Alexander Column which stands in the historic center of the city and imparts a sense of completion to Palace Square. Erected in 1834 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Russia’s victory over Napoleon, it was designed by Auguste Ricard de Montferrand, the architect of St. Isaac’s Cathedral located nearby. By reworking ancient classical models and their later imitations, Montferrand created one of the most striking monuments in St. Petersburg.

To celebrate the return of the troops from Paris and the victorious end of the war, a triumphal gate of wood, the Narva Gate, designed by architect Giacomo Quarenghi, was erected on the outskirts of St. Petersburg. Commemorative triumphal arches were common in European Russia; prototypes come from ancient

Rome. In 1834 the Narva Gate was rebuilt in stone under the direction of architect Vasily Stasov (1769-1848).<sup>\*</sup> In Moscow, a triumphal gate designed by architect Osip Bove was erected. Begun in 1829 to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the victory over the French, it was not completed until 1834, in time for the twentieth anniversary. Flanked by symmetrically-placed guardhouse (*corps de garde*) buildings, the Moscow gate lent organization to the square where the road from St. Petersburg ended. It served as a ceremonial entrance to the ancient capital. (That space, formerly the Tver Gate Square, is now the plaza in front of the Belorus Railroad Station.<sup>1</sup>)

Memorials to the 1812 war were also attached to various public buildings, most notably to the “*eksertsirgauz*,” or Manège, just off Red Square designed by Bove and built in 1817. To celebrate the war’s anniversaries, a special unit of the Imperial Guards made up of veterans of the 1812 campaign rode from St. Petersburg to Moscow. The Manège was designed as the place where this cavalry unit was reviewed. Its construction was directed by General Lev Karbon’e d’Arsit, a fortifications engineer.<sup>2</sup> In 1825 the Manège was adorned with a cornice frieze featuring military heraldic devices executed from drawings by Bove.

A number of noblemen constructed memorials to the 1812 war on their estates outside of Moscow and in the provinces of Kaluga and Smolensk which had been devastated by the French invasion. In addition to memorials, museums devoted to the war and its participants were built. The 1812 War Gallery of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg is a prime example. Created in 1826 by Carlo Rossi and restored by Stasov after a palace fire in 1837, the Gallery contains approximately one hundred fifty portraits of war heroes painted between 1819 and 1829 by the well-known English portraitist George Dawe (1781-1829). The

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<sup>\*</sup> Moscow-born, though a prolific practitioner of neoclassical buildings and interiors in St. Petersburg.

Winter Palace's Alexander Hall was redesigned by Alexander Bryullov (1798-1877) to commemorate the 1812 war. Incorporated into the gothic decoration of its delicately elongated groups of columns are richly molded stucco figures of winged goddesses, "the Glories," popular symbols for victorious war, together with medallions sculpted by Fyodor Tolstoy (1783-1873) portraying important aspects and events of the campaign such as the volunteer militia, the Battle of Borodino, and the liberation of Moscow. The Emperor purchased a building on an estate in Borodino and made it into a museum memorializing the 1812 war. St. George's Hall in the Grand Palace of the Moscow Kremlin is also dedicated in part to the 1812 war.

The most numerous memorials to the 1812 war, however, took the form of religious sanctuaries. Some acquired memorial significance not long after being built, others while still in the planning stages. Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg, designed by Andrey Voronikhin<sup>†</sup> (1759-1814) and completed in 1811 on the eve of the war, for example, became the repository for banners captured from the French, keys to cities taken by Russian troops, and trophy armaments such as marshals' batons, swords, and sabers. The Cathedral's iconostasis was created as a memorial to the war. It was designed by Konstanin Ton, the architect whose design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was subsequently realized. The iconostasis was made of silver plundered by the French and subsequently seized by the Don Cossacks and returned to Russia. The remains of the commander in chief of the Russian armies, Field Marshall Kutuzov, who died in Bunzlau, Prussia before the war's end, were interred in the Cathedral's north altar area on June 13, 1813.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>†</sup> This prominent architect was the son of a serf of the wealthy and influential Stroganov family. Voronikhin was brought to St. Petersburg and educated at the Academy of Fine Arts and then sent abroad to study in Italy. He also studied in France and England. Kazan Cathedral is located on Nevsky Prospect, St. Petersburg's main thoroughfare, near the Stroganov palace. During the Soviet period, the Cathedral became the Museum of Atheism.

On December 25, 1837, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the deliverance of the Russian lands from the enemy, full-length statues of Kutuzov and Barclay de Tolly, sculpted by Boris Orlovsky (1793-1837), were unveiled in front of Kazan Cathedral. The order to erect these monuments was promulgated in 1818 by Alexander I: “In glorifying the immortal deeds of times past, We express heartfelt gratitude as well for contributions made in our own times. The glory of General and Field Marshall, Prince Golenishchev-Kutuzov of Smolensk, and of Barclay de Tolly should be memorialized and monuments to them should be erected to adorn the two squares in front of the Cathedral to the Kazan Mother of God where Russians can view the numerous trophies of their victories, victories the Lord granted us and for which all mankind is grateful.”<sup>4</sup>

But in the end, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was to become the principal memorial to the Patriotic War of 1812. Judging by materials that have come to light to date, the designs for the first competition for the Cathedral (1813-15) were fairly homogeneous; architects worked within the strictly defined concepts of the “empire” style.<sup>‡</sup> The designs are similar to those created for similar competitions, such as that for St. Isaac’s Cathedral in Petersburg. In its own way, St. Isaac’s was also designed as a memorial church. It was dedicated to Isaac of Dalmatia on whose saint’s day Peter the Great was born. In this sense St. Isaac’s Cathedral was thought of as a church memorializing the emperor who created a new Russia with its new capital.

Russian architects submitting designs for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the first competition, announced in December 1812, were inspired by three neoclassical models. The first was St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome (1506-1614), the

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<sup>‡</sup> Late neoclassical style, sometimes referred to as the Alexandrine style since it was synonymous with the reign of Alexander I. In his *A History of Russian Architecture* (Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1993), William Brumfield notes that the “term was borrowed from French usage, and in architecture, it generally refers to late neoclassicism in Moscow and the provinces” (p. 374).



principal church of the Roman Catholic world. St. Peter's was identified with the notion of state power. A desire to outdo it architecturally was pervasive in Russia during much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The characteristic features of the Basilica's vast spatial composition--the huge dome supported by pendentives resting on square piers, the memorable ribbed shape of the dome, the compositional unity of dome and portico, and the curvilinear form of the colonnade in front of the main façade—all these elements were used widely in religious architecture of the neoclassical period.

The second and equally popular model was the Pantheon in Rome, one of the greatest monuments of ancient Roman architecture (ca. 125 A.D.). "Pantheon" in Latin means a temple or place dedicated to all gods, and the Pantheon was a "temple of all the gods." Over time the word took on the meaning of a crypt where a nation's great men and women were buried. The Pantheon in Rome became a national mausoleum after such famous Italians as Raphael and Baldassare Peruzzi were buried there. Because of this the characteristic compositional elements of the Pantheon, its round shape crowned by a hemispherical dome, its main façade defined by a mighty portico (eight columns along the front and eight more inside), and also its arcuate interior, served as a model for many burial chapels, mausoleums, and memorial churches.

The third model or source of inspiration is less specific. The result of the evolution in Russia of the neoclassical style in its late, Alexandrine phase, it has to do with the way in which the principal style-forming elements or architectural *order* are treated. In the designs of such master architects as Voronikhin, Stasov, Vitberg, Andreian Zakharov, Avram Melnikov, Bove, and Gilardi, all of whom took part in the first design competition for the Cathedral, one detects "Hellenistic" elements (the term is that of twentieth-century art historian Igor Grabar). These

architects were repudiating the orientation toward the legacy of ancient Rome evident in Russian architecture of the second half of the eighteenth century. Instead, they affirmed that of ancient Greece, of Hellas, displaying an allegiance to the architectural order of Greek antiquity represented by the Temples at Paestum with their Doric columns. The Hellenists were also distinguished by a love of smooth surfaces, laconic, strict geometric spaces, and restrained use of decoration.<sup>5</sup>

The designs from the first competition for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior reveal the use of all three basic neoclassical models enumerated here.

Giacomo Quarenghi (1744-1817),<sup>§</sup> one of the greatest representatives of St. Petersburg neoclassicism, presented a design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the spirit of the Roman Pantheon. The main façade facing west is defined by a portico with eight Corinthian columns approached by a ceremonial staircase. The altar section, a rectangular apse, placed on the east side in accordance with the requirements of Orthodox service rites, corresponds to the portico of the west façade. Identical ceremonial staircases lead to both façades. The east façade is decorated with an identical portico of eight columns also crowned by a triangular pediment, but the columns are attached, not freestanding. The interior also evokes the Pantheon with its grand, coffered dome which covers almost the entire internal space of the Cathedral and rests on a ceremonial colonnade in the form of a ring with Corinthian columns, echoing those of the façade. The circle theme is dominant in Quarenghi's design. Externally and internally it is repeated in several variants: the oculus, the dome itself, its base, the inside colonnade, the circular form of which is accentuated by bands, friezes, and cornices. Rational order is evoked by the circle symbolism. The circle also signifies eternity and is a symbol of God. Thus, like the Pantheon, Quarenghi's design for a national memorial

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<sup>§</sup> The creator of important buildings in St. Petersburg, Quarenghi, born in Italy, was invited to work in Russia in 1779 and was favored by Empress Catherine the Great.

cathedral is inseparably linked with the idea of eternity and God. The symbolism emphasizes the memorial character of the building, one that is virtually devoid of the usual features of a Russian Orthodox cathedral.

Other designs which have survived from the first round of the competition for the Cathedral, including Vitberg's which is discussed below in Chapter 2, gravitate toward a different model, that of St. Peter's.<sup>6</sup> Voronikhin's designs, many of which have been preserved, represent highly original work. Clearly, they are attempts to offer solutions where there are no precedents. In this regard they are more akin to Vitberg's, even though the efforts of the two architects veer in quite different directions. In the designs that Voronikhin developed in 1813 seven variants can be distinguished. They divide into two basic groups, structures with a round plan covered by a single large dome and structures cruciform in plan topped by five cupolas.<sup>7</sup> In the former group the basic compositional principles of the Pantheon and St. Peter's are joined: the building projected has a circular plan with a huge dome covering its central area. The eight-column portico can be traced back to the ancient Roman prototype, the ribbed dome on a high drum to the Renaissance one. But these elements have been recast in a sculptural mode to create a sense of the "total façade" characteristic of Russian architecture, linked to the Russian tradition of locating churches in the center of squares. The designs of the latter group are cruciform, although the cross is an internal form, inscribed into a circle or into a square gravitating toward the form of a circle by means of rounded corners. In both groups of designs, the external colonnaded porticos manifest the cross.

A significant innovation in Voronikhin's designs, one quickly seized upon by his contemporaries, is the treatment of the five domes which combines two fundamental "crowning" variants in Christian church architecture--pentacupolar,

which is distinctively Russian,\*\* and a single central dome, typically Western. By turning the four small side domes into open, gazebo-like bell towers it became possible to incorporate a large central dome on a wide drum. The five domes do not influence the composition of the church's interior; rather they restore, but on a completely new basis, a type of ancient Russian church known as "that which is under the bells" (*izhe pod kolokoly*) where the belfry forms the upper part of the church. Russian architectural practice of the first half of the nineteenth century demonstrates how viable this idea turned out to be. Many churches--among them St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg designed by Montferrand, Vitberg's winning design for the Cathedral that was begun but later abandoned, Melnikov's design for the Uniate church in St. Petersburg (one of his finest churches), and Ton's design for the Cathedral that was actually realized, and many of Ton's other church designs--all of these can be traced back to Voronikhin's first competition designs. It is not surprising that Vitberg, who was familiar with Voronikhin's work, commented that these designs were done in the "Byzantine spirit." They were without question among Voronikhin's most original and perfect works. The designs opened the way to the future, initiating one of the most viable and fruitful directions in Russian architecture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, what came to be known as the Russian Style.†† Voronikhin was the sole architect participating in the first round of the competition who drew on ideas from ancient Russian architecture. Without repudiating the compositional schemes and forms of classicism, he succeeded in blending the two together to form an integral, original, and expressive composition, graphically conveying a sense of enthusiasm about the

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\*\* The Cathedral of the Dormition—Uspensky Cathedral—in the Kremlin, where the tsars were crowned, exemplifies the pentacupolar design of five stylized domes.

†† Dr. Kirichenko's authoritative volume on this subject is available in English: *Russian Design and the Fine Arts, 1750-1917* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991).

architectural conception, the creation of a national memorial church. It inspired Voronikhin to impart to the monument a “visual” national coloration.

Voronikhin’s second group of cathedral designs is especially intriguing because of their Byzantine elements. Here the ribbed dome--from St. Peter’s--is crowned by a typical Russian onion dome. Moreover, at the base of the dome’s wide drum, eight-sided at the bottom and round at the top, are semi-circular apertures framed by bands which bring to mind the rows of *kokoshniki*, the exterior decorations that resemble peasant women’s elaborate tall hats, characteristic of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Russian churches. Further indication of this is to be found in the small, decorative keel-shaped semicircular arches that adorn both sets of apertures. Most striking, however, in the design are the side domed belfries, the prototypes of which clearly are the side domes of St. Basil’s Cathedral on Red Square. These tented bell towers are common in seventeenth-century Russian architecture. The domed belfries harmoniously blend with the oviform main dome which is crowned with a picturesque, distinctive Russian cupola. The equally distinctive six-column porticos effect a fine symbiosis of arcade and colonnade. Voronikhin proposed locating the cathedral in the center of an open square set off by a series of arches.

This second type of design, so different from other architects’ designs for the Cathedral, did not emerge from a void. Voronikhin drew on characteristic architectural aspects of a style popular in the second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the “gothic.” Paradoxically, this newer style, born out of a desire to articulate the national qualities of Russian architecture by employing features characteristic of pre-Petrine architecture, is called “gothic” even though gothic architecture in the Western sense did not exist in Russia. Combined with old Russian forms, the gothic style employed lancet windows and other features

typical of medieval architecture in western Europe. Any medieval architecture, whether Western European or Russian, was termed “gothic” in the eighteenth century. A European term was used to designate this Russian cultural trend, thus giving old Russian architecture the trappings of western European architecture. Historical authenticity at the time did not demand an exact correspondence; to express a national idea it was sufficient to invoke a remote or conditionally understood link.

Vitberg, however, termed Voronikhin’s design “Byzantine.” Although the term emerged in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Vitberg used it to designate the same phenomenon: architecture based on a national tradition, architecture that was called upon to express new spiritual and ethical values, namely, national character (*narodnost’*), nationalism (*natsional’nost’*). Using the term “Byzantine” to designate a national style in architecture reflected a new understanding of what was national. Romantic philosophy and aesthetics tied the originality of each national culture to its original source. In this context the originality of Russian culture was thought to be based on the Byzantine cultural milieu. Thus, “Byzantine” emphasized the cultural tradition that old Russia belonged to and at the same time demonstrated that it was also part of European culture. In tracing its lineage to Byzantium (the “newer” Greece), Russian culture could claim to be the direct heir of ancient Greece, which was held in such high regard at that time. In addition, belonging to the Byzantine cultural tradition set Russia apart from the other European peoples and underscored the distinctiveness of its culture, something of paramount significance in the system of nineteenth-century values that accompanied the rise of romanticism.

The innovative nature of Voronikhin’s design and the vitality of the style initiated by him were based on an evocation of Russia’s ancient legacy. The

design presented a structure destined to become one of two basic types of Russian edifice, to become a new ideological, artistically-defined *ensemble* for the ancient capital and a focal point for urban planning in Russia. His design challenged the hierarchy of building styles, genres, and settings that had been rigorously observed for more than a half century. Buildings in the gothic style (“gothic” as understood in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) could be constructed on country estates. Churches, pavilions in parks, walls and gates in parks, and, though rarer, estate houses were all built in the gothic style. In the urban milieu, however, they were allowed only in certain prescribed locations. They could form the walls and towers of monasteries and fortresses, but only rarely were gothic structures found inside them and almost never were they built directly on town or city streets.

Voronikhin’s design was not adopted because the architect died in 1814 before he could complete it. More importantly, perhaps, it was not deemed acceptable because it was so innovative, failing to convey adequately what at the time was considered proper. In the development of Russian art, and especially of architecture as *the* ruling art of arts, following the Patriotic War of 1812 something unanticipated had occurred. The growth in national consciousness and the outburst of patriotism brought with it a new flowering of art and architecture based on the neoclassical (empire) tradition. Tendencies like those expressed in Voronikhin’s designs were pushed aside. Perhaps the reason for the new blossoming of neoclassical architecture was due to the fact that a turning point in social consciousness had been reached. The victory over Napoleon was regarded as the victory of the Russian people and, simultaneously, as an event which had important meaning for all mankind. To express this frame of reference architecture drew on forms that corresponded to the neoclassical order. As a consequence, Vitberg won the first round of the competition for the design of the Cathedral of

Christ the Savior. He succeeded in expressing the national idea in neoclassical form, one which interpreted an event in national history within a Christian system of general human values.

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<sup>1</sup> The gate and the corps-de-garde buildings were taken down in 1930 in the course of reconstructing Gorky (now Tver) Street. The gate's cast iron sculpture was moved to the grounds of the Museum of Architecture housed at the Don Monastery and remained there until 1962. In conjunction with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Patriotic War of 1812, a memorial arch was erected on Kutuzov Prospect near the building housing the Battle of Borodino panorama also constructed for the anniversary. A. Smirnov, *Moskva—geroiam 1812* (Moscow, 1981), p. 10, and L. G. Badalian, *Arkhitekturnye pamiatniki russkoi voennoi slavy* (Leningrad, 1983), p. 16 maintain that it is impossible to document where the wooden Moscow gate stood from written sources and illustrations. The text on the foundation plaque read as follows: "This triumphal gate is erected in remembrance of the festive celebration afforded Russian troops in 1814 and as a tribute to the restoration of those magnificent monuments and buildings of the ancient capital of Moscow destroyed in 1812 by the invasion of Gauls and their confreres who spoke in twenty tongues" (Smirnov, p. 10). The reference is to the grand celebration organized in Moscow in 1814 to mark the taking of Paris and the end of the War. A curious document from this time has been preserved: "*Programma moskovskikh torzhestv po sluchaiu vziatia Parizha russkimi voiskami v 1814 i stikhi P. A. Viazemskogo, napisannye k nazvannym torzhestvam* (RPB OP [The Manuscript Division of the Russian Public Library], f. 542 Oleninykh, d. 701). Vyazemsky explains the need for such a celebration: "After hearing the news that Paris had been taken, members of the nobility, sensing the full extent of the glory and greatness with which our much-adored monarch and Russian fighters had been eternally honored, resolved to express the public's great feelings of joy and heartfelt devotion to the tsar with a glorious celebration. What place could be more appropriate than Moscow, the city that had sacrificed herself in order to save the Fatherland and restore independence to Europe? Should we not be the first to celebrate the destruction of the machinations of tyranny and hate, we who brought our lives and property to the sacrificial altar of the Fatherland when the monarch first appealed to us?" According to the program, the celebration was in two parts: "The first consisting of public entertainments, the second reserved for the nobility and merchants of the first rank."

<sup>2</sup> Smirnov, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Badalian, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> RPB OP, f. Shil'dera kart. 28, No. 1, l. 1-1ob.

<sup>5</sup> I. E. Grabar', "*Ot ekaterininskogo k aleksandrovskomu klassitsizmu*," *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, III (Moscow, no date), pp. 449-468.

<sup>6</sup> G. G. Grimm catalogs and describes the large collection of working sketches connected with the competitions for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and St. Isaac's Cathedral in *A. N. Voronikhin. Chertezhi i risunki* (Moscow, 1952) and *Arkhitektorskiy Voronikhin* (Leningrad-Moscow, 1963). The designs--more than 40 sheets—are classified on pages 95-99 of the second edition of *A. N. Voronikhin*.

<sup>7</sup> Grimm, *Arkhitektorskiy Voronikhin*, p. 95.

## Illustration Captions

*Page 20* Design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior's main façade proposed by architect Giacomo Quarenghi. Ink and watercolor on paper, 1815.

*Page 21* Cross section of Quarenghi's Cathedral design. Ink and watercolor on paper, 1815.

*Page 22* Quarenghi's architectural plan for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Ink on paper, 1815.



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*Page 23* View of Moscow from the Kremlin terrace. 1839 lithograph published by A. Brai.

*Page 24* The main façade and a cross section of designs for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior proposed by architect Andrey Voronikhin. Ink and watercolor on paper, 1813.

## **Alexander Vitberg's Fateful Design**

Participation in the design competition for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior radically changed the life of Alexander Vitberg (1787-1855). Vitberg's design signified both his hour of triumph and the total collapse of all his creative plans. Although he designed many buildings, Vitberg became part of Russian architectural history because of his Cathedral design. The principal work of his life, no other design is comparable in terms of scope, depth of conception, and grandeur.

Alexander Lavrentievich Vitberg was born January 15, 1787 as Karl Magnus in St. Petersburg into the family of a "lacquerer of the Swedish nation." His father came to Russia in 1773 and, after spending a short time in Revel (now Tallinn, Estonia), settled in Russia's northern capital. In 1802, Vitberg was admitted to the prestigious Russian Academy of Fine Arts. There he worked under one of the most celebrated Russian painters of the day, Grigory Ugryumov (1764-1823). He enjoyed success in his studies, being awarded in 1806 the Academy's small and large silver medals and in the following year its gold ones. As a recipient of the gold medals Vitberg was entitled to study in Italy or elsewhere in Europe at state expense. But, because of the Napoleonic wars, travel abroad had been suspended. Vitberg stayed on at the Academy, further developing his talents as an artist while serving as Ugryumov's assistant. Vitberg was influenced by his teacher: in addition to producing works on Biblical and mythological themes, he devoted considerable effort to creating paintings on themes from Russian history. His representational work includes imaginative architectural creations, views of St. Petersburg, landscapes, and portraits executed in pencil, watercolor, sepia, and India ink, many of them exceptionally beautiful. Had Vitberg not abandoned the pursuit of painting and drawing, he might have become one of the most significant

Russian artists of the romantic era. He was especially drawn to the portrait, a favorite romantic genre. Vitberg's portraits depict people close to him in spirit. In poetic quality and inner dignity they are akin to the paintings of the most accomplished Russian portraitist of the early nineteenth century, Orest Kiprensky (1794-1836), best known for his portrait of the famous Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.<sup>1</sup>

Young Vitberg's circle of friends reflect his spiritual and artistic interests--and ultimately his fate. Vitberg was welcomed into the home of Alexander Labzin (1766-1825), one of the most prominent Russian Freemasons of the period, the pupil, follower, and relative of one of the important figures of the Russian Enlightenment, journalist, writer, and Freemason Nicholas Novikov (1744-1818). From what is known, Labzin played a significant, perhaps even a decisive role in forming Vitberg's views.

Labzin was no ordinary person. In 1789, after completing studies at Moscow University, he moved to Petersburg where he served in the "College," or ministry, of Foreign Affairs and engaged in literary pursuits, compiling a *History of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem* at the request of Emperor Paul I.\* A broadly educated individual, in 1799 he was appointed administrator and subsequently vice president of the Academy of Fine Arts. He was energetic and forceful, doing much to make the Academy flourish. Service at the Academy and shared literary interests are what brought Labzin and Vitberg together. Thanks to Labzin, Vitberg became a Mason. And also thanks to Labzin he met those persons in whose midst the idea of creating the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was born--members of the Lovers of the Russian Word, including the greatest Russian poet of the eighteenth century, Gavril Derzhavin (1743-1816), as well as a person of unusual, manifold

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\* Paul I, son of Catherine the Great, was murdered in a palace revolution after only five years of rule (1796-1801). He was succeeded by his eldest son, Alexander I.

gifts, Nicholas Lvov (1753-1803), architect, writer, and engraver. The eight Masonic medals preserved in the historical museum in Vyatka where Vitberg later lived in exile tell us that Vitberg had attained a high level in the Masonic hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> Freemasonry, his immediate surroundings, and the deep religiosity of the members of the Lovers of the Russian Word doubtless influenced Vitberg, convincing him of the need to erect a cathedral in Moscow to immortalize the 1812 war. Without question the range of ideas professed by those close to Vitberg found reflection in the content of the program, structure, and composition of his design. However, the program *per se* contains no specific Masonic ideas or symbols. Rather, it is entirely based on Christian ideas and in no way contradicts early nineteenth-century architectural interpretations of Orthodoxy by Russian architects.

In certain aspects Freemasonry is a distinctive and profoundly nationalistic phenomenon in the history of Russian culture. It was born out of the inner need of educated Russians to make old religious ideals harmonize “with principles of Western culture which were new to them.”<sup>3</sup> Masonry began to take root on Russian soil toward the end of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna’s reign (1741-62). Despite its foreign origin and forms, it has been called the first idealistic current in Russian social thought.<sup>4</sup> Educated noblemen, dissatisfied with traditional Orthodoxy, were drawn to the philosophy of the French Enlightenment which advocated liberation of the personality and inspired demands for the rights of individuals as citizens. This group of peers sought to realize their ideals through social action, governmental reform, and by spreading education and disseminating ideas about morality. Novikov is a prime example. When Novikov’s social and educational activities collided with the prohibitive policies of Empress Catherine the Great—she stopped publication of his satiric journal *Zhivopisets*—he found

himself at the critical juncture of voltairianism and religion. He experienced a deep spiritual crisis. Circumstances forced him to seek “alternative ways to serve his Fatherland.” This is how Novikov’s formulation of “true Masonry” came into being. It consisted “of that enlightenment which one reaches following the paths of Christian moral admonitions.”<sup>5</sup> The last two decades of Novikov’s life can only be described as tragic. Incarcerated by the Empress from 1792 until her death in 1796, he was so broken spiritually and physically that he could not return to his former educational activities after being freed by Paul I.

Masonry, which had suffered so greatly at the end of Catherine the Great’s reign, entered a period of relative wellbeing during the reigns of both Paul and Alexander I. The lip service paid to “voltairianism” by Catherine and her circle contrasted with Paul’s childhood with its Masonic influence. Masons also were favored in the period of the Patriotic War of 1812 and afterward by Alexander I, whose director of the Ministry of Police could declare to the grand master of the Peter and the Truth (*Pëtr k Pravde*) lodge that “The Sovereign has commanded that you be assured of His favor.”<sup>6</sup> The internationalism of the Masons (“The Universe is the Fatherland of the Mason”) did not run counter to profound feelings of patriotism. Russian Masonic speeches often contain phrases such as “the title ‘citizen of the world’ does not absolve us from love of the Fatherland.” And, the “hellish” policies of Napoleon were not condemned in words alone. Among the heroes of the Patriotic War were many famous Russian Masons, Field Marshall Kutuzov most notably.<sup>7</sup>

Vitberg’s patron Labzin was among the most influential Masons. Another was Pyotr Chekalevsky (1751-1817), an instructor at the Academy of Fine Arts and the author of a well-known treatise on aesthetics. He succeeded Labzin as the Academy’s administrator.<sup>8</sup> Taking into account this milieu, the significance of the

basic Masonic symbols--trowel, mallet, compass, and square--all indicating that the main goal of a Freemason was to create a inner temple of life, a relationship to God as Chief Architect of the Universe, and, given Vitberg's impressionable, romantic personality, it is hardly surprising that he started work on a design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior with near exuberance. Here was a unique opportunity for him to embody the basic Christian tenets which inform Masonic ideology.

Vitberg was not attracted to architecture by chance. The first scholar to write about Vitberg's work, Vladimir Snegirev, found evidence that Vitberg had at an earlier point attended architecture classes. Testimony to an interest in architecture also comes in the form of a design for a suspension bridge dated 1809. The proclamation announcing the competition for the design of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior completely absorbed Vitberg's life and career. Alexander I's idea was striking in its breadth and singularity. As Vitberg himself would note, "To erect a cathedral in the name of Christ the Savior as a monument to the glory of Russia, as a prayer in gratitude for the redemption of Russia, was a completely new idea. Previously, Christian churches were erected and dedicated to a feast day or in honor of a saint, but here the meaning was to be all-embracing."<sup>9</sup>

Firmly convinced that he could create the winning design for the Cathedral, Vitberg studied architecture independently for half a year in Petersburg, and in June 1813 he moved to Moscow in order to devote himself to this project. At the same time he began practicing as a general architect. In Moscow he designed private residences, thus helping shape the type of building characteristic of Post-Conflagration Moscow. He also designed churches and manor houses for the estates of noblemen. At first everything went exceptionally well for him. Because of the originality and breadth of his conception for the Cathedral and the notions of

patriotism and national character he was able to incorporate into the design, Vitberg succeeded in attracting the interest of Russia's illuminati. The approval of Novikov was especially valuable, for Novikov represented the highest authority. It was thanks again to Labzin, Novikov's nephew, that Vitberg was able to make his acquaintance. Novikov supported the architect, stating "that if . . . a national cathedral is indeed needed, then let it not be cold stone but alive, imbued with ideas, not limited to graceful forms alone but with expressions of inner thought engraved on each and every form." Novikov further noted that "poetry and art are sisters; they by no means hinder but rather foster inner development."<sup>10</sup> Thanks to Dmitry Runich, Moscow's Postmaster, Vitberg's design became known to poet Ivan Dmitriev, to Moscow's Governor-General Rostopchin, and to Count Aleksey Razumovsky, the Minister of Education. Count Ioannis Kapodistrias proposed publishing Vitberg's design in Greece, and Count Semyon Vorontsov thought of building a miniature version of the Cathedral on his estate in the Crimea. Prince Alexander Golitsyn, Procurator of the Church's Synod, was also fascinated by Vitberg's plan for the Cathedral. He helped Vitberg gain an audience with Alexander I so that the architect could explain his design to the Emperor in person.

Vitberg's work on designing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior can be divided into two stages, before and after the birth of the idea of building a tripartite cathedral. Both stages, represented by many variants, coalesce into a few basic schemes. Early designs present a squared rotunda and then a cruciform building crowned with a dome on a drum or without a drum. Vitberg tried to create highly expressive variants, fronting façades with a colonnade or a portico with a triangular pediment which he situated either close to or away from the wall of the façades, either leaving the space open between the wall and the colonnade or enclosing this space with a low wall and turning the porticos into distinct narthexes. There are

also more complex, tiered compositions in the form of two cubiform masses placed one upon the other, the upper one crowned with a dome on a drum. Another variant is topped by a dome with a belvedere but without a drum. A second variant of the rotunda church has a dome on a drum, or without a drum, and porticoes on all four sides beneath triangular pediments. For this work alone, Vitberg would have been assured a place in the history of Russian architecture.

Vitberg's historic role in Russia is not beholden to his ties with contemporaries. What distinguishes the architect are new ideas which find expression in the content, structure, and composition of the cathedral *qua* monument. The joint philosophical and religious concept that characterizes his second design stage is unusual for its range of neoclassical ideas. Vitberg's idealism, deep religiosity, and Masonry have a lot in common with romanticism. In spite of the underlying neoclassical form of the design, as a figure Vitberg is transitional, uniting characteristics that are both romantic and classical.

Christian tradition was the starting point for Vitberg's grandiose structure. The Christianity of the romantics was of a special sort, one permeated with ideas about nationalism and individual freedom. Vitberg's design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior as well as the one created by Voronikhin represent virtually the first incarnation in Russia of the idea of creating a national memorial church. This new type of cultural edifice, while remaining a church, acquired also the functions heretofore unknown of national museum and monument. In the nineteenth century church architecture came to express social and ethical values, national character, and nationalism. Vitberg's work on the design for the Cathedral is connected with the origins of this process as it evolved in Russian architectural practice. For this reason the project acquired enduring historical significance.



Vitberg's "chief idea" about the Cathedral was based on three propositions. To quote his words: "First, that by means of colossal size it correspond to the majesty of Russia; second, that the architectural style be entirely original to ensure that the Cathedral is free of slavish imitation; third, that all the parts of the Cathedral constitute not simply arbitrary forms produced to meet architectural demands, not be an inert mass of stone, but express the spiritual idea of the living church, human in body, soul, and spirit, following Christ's dictum 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?'"<sup>11</sup>

Thoughts about a monument worthy of Russia's glory were hardly novel. Common in the eighteenth century, they could not help but command the respect of Vitberg whom revolutionary thinker and philosopher—and erstwhile fellow political exile--Alexander Herzen called "a man of the eighteenth century." "Russia, a vast and mighty state . . . has not a single monument which corresponds to its eminence. . . . I understood that this cathedral must be majestic and colossal, that ultimately it would outweigh the glory of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome."<sup>12</sup> Here Vitberg is speaking as a classicist. As noted above, the creators of the most prominent Russian cathedrals in the second half of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries took their models from European architecture, from St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. However, the idea of rivaling as well as imitating St. Peter's are joined in Vitberg's mind with an entirely new idea. The cathedral, he observed, "must be worthy of the people," "a work national, patriotic, religious in the Russian sense." These are not sentiments one would expect from Russian architects of the time who wallowed in imitations of foreign models (Vitberg criticized a design sent from Italy for "not corresponding in any way to the Greek church."<sup>13</sup>).

It was the Cathedral's dedication to Christ the Savior that gave Vitberg the idea of emphasizing the underlying Christian significance of this monument to one of the greatest Russian historical events, not satisfying "merely the needs of the Græco-Russian church . . . for the fact that it is dedicated to Christ demonstrates it belongs to all Christians. Consequently, the Cathedral must be triune, a temple of the body, a temple of the soul, and a temple of the spirit. However, since man, being triune, comprises a single nature, the Cathedral, for all is triune qualities, must be a single entity as a whole." Vitberg strove "to make all the external forms of the Cathedral bear the imprint of this internal idea."<sup>14</sup> His *Zapiski* or *Notes*, a crystallization of the architect's historical and philosophical views, trace the materialization of this idea, of a new, romantic expression of the principles of form in architecture. The second stage in Vitberg's design process begins with the incarnation of the idea of a triune cathedral.

The numerical symbolism and three-in-one concept are notions fundamental to Christianity. God is one, but in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity, consubstantial and indivisible. "All three persons have equal Divine worth. Among them there is no elder or junior; since God the Father is the true God, so also is God the Son the true God, so too is the Holy Spirit the true God."<sup>15</sup> The second basic idea Vitberg attempts to express in the structure and appearance of the Cathedral is the correlation between the triune nature of God and that of man. In agreement with Orthodox canon law "man is triform, consisting of body, soul, and spirit. . . . Man's body is created by God 'of the dust from the ground' (Genesis 2:7) and therefore it belongs to the earth: 'for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return' (Genesis 3:19). The soul is given by God as a life-giving principle to govern the body. . . . The Lord God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul'" (Genesis 2:7). Over

the body and the soul there exists something higher—namely, the spirit. “The spirit,” writes Orthodox prelate and saint Feofan, “is strength issuing from God; it knows God, seeks God, and in [Him] alone finds peace.”<sup>16</sup>

The first Christian churches, which traced their origin to the public buildings of ancient Rome, took the form of basilicas. They had rows of columns that divided them into naves or “ships” (*korabli*). These symbolize the ship of the City of God riding on the waves of history and the sea of life. In Byzantium, from which Russian Orthodox churches trace their beginnings, the notion of a ship or vessel, of a “meeting house,” was augmented or supplemented by the idea of the Cosmos, something that was important also in the composition of the ancient temple of Solomon. Byzantine and Russian architecture joined these two principles of buildings sacred in Old Testament times, when the temple as the house of God and the synagogue as a meeting house or a place for prayer existed separately. “The Byzantine church clearly demonstrates that the church of the New Testament is a synthesis of the two. It was intended for the people and simultaneously was a *sui generis* ‘cosmic ark’ encompassing the presence of the Creator. . . .”<sup>17</sup> Vitberg’s design revives the old Russian Orthodox notion of the church as simultaneously Cosmos and meeting house. Corresponding to the triune nature of man, Vitberg emphasizes, are three moments in the life of Christ: Birth, Transfiguration, and Resurrection. The canonical structure of the New Testament Orthodox church, which harks back to the Old Testament temple, consists of an altar (the symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven), a middle part, and a narthex.<sup>18</sup> Vitberg’s design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is tripartite in a vertical sense as well. He situates, one above the other, a subterranean church dedicated to Christ’s Birth, another church above ground dedicated to his Transfiguration, and an upper church dedicated to the Resurrection. Each has its own form,

symbolically expressing one of the three human hypostases and one of the three defining moments in the Life of Christ.

According to Vitberg, “[t]he form of the line in nature,” signifying the single and manifold nature of the Creator and creation, “is best expressed by the parallelogram with its eternally short sides. I gave this form to the subterranean church, called the corporeal church, since the mathematical line, once it is transformed into a body, produces a parallelepiped.” The parallelepiped “befits” the lower church also because the “human body without a soul is lain in a grave of that same shape.”<sup>19</sup> Over the lower church, the symbol of man’s bodily origin and of Christ’s life on earth, Vitberg proposes erecting a church embodying the soul or moral spirit in the shape of a cross. “As the form of the parallelepiped is to the dead body, so the form of a cross is to the soul, since the cross is an appurtenance of the spiritual aspect of man, midway between his dead body and his undying spirit . . . the **means** of uniting man with God.”<sup>20</sup> Vitberg’s design is crowned by a church of the spirit, divine in form, “a pure circle, a result of the cross. Moreover, since the circle has no beginning and no end, it is the best shape for expressing eternity,”<sup>21</sup> the symbol of the divine in man.

Vitberg’s identification of the Cathedral’s structure with the triune nature of both God and man refers to a complex system of analogies peculiar to the Middle Ages which were revived by the romantics, analogies where one element symbolizes another. Since the Cathedral would memorialize the Patriotic War of 1812, this too found symbolic expression in its form. In this context another comparison emerged: the heroic deeds of those Russian soldiers who perished for the Fatherland were analogous to Christ’s expiatory sacrifice. “With the lower bodily, physical church,” Vitberg emphasizes, “I felt it appropriate to combine a memorial commemorating the sacrifices of 1812, remembering those who laid

down their lives for the Fatherland, and to create a magnificent catacomb to pass on to posterity the memory of all those soldiers who were slain for the Fatherland.’<sup>22</sup> This notion distinguishes Vitberg’s design from that proposed by Kikin and by Ton which immortalized only officers by name. Vitberg’s ideas would seem to reflect a profound change in social consciousness. They reveal the eradication of class barriers and acknowledge, albeit posthumously, equality among all those who perished for the sake of the Fatherland. In addition, the symbolism of this plan for the Cathedral is free of any analogy to the state, an analogy typical of Russian neoclassicism. Vitberg’s conception, like that of Voronikhin, signifies the emergence of a new moral civil code characteristic of the nineteenth century, one of service to the people, not to the state.

In the course of developing the tripartite design, the elaborate crown of the cathedral became equal to its subterranean component. Vitberg’s search again branched out in various directions. The basic plan had been established: over the subterranean church, rectangular in shape, a cruciform middle church would rise, and above it a round, upper church with a dome on a broad drum (in one variant the upper church has five domes, in another a five-domed rotunda). Thoughts about the upper part of the Cathedral took shape while Vitberg was working on the overall design. The architect viewed the high bank of the Moskva River at Sparrow Hills<sup>†</sup> as a natural pedestal for this grand edifice. He proposed that the subterranean church be built into the side of the embankment, with staged approaches in the form of majestic steps framed by colonnades. There are various versions of the five-domed upper church and of the bell towers, but the strict symmetry and hierarchy of the composition remained unchanged, as did the Doric

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<sup>†</sup> Renamed Lenin Hills during the Soviet period, and now rechristened Sparrow Hills, this site southwest of Moscow’s center is home to the “Stalinist baroque” towers and buildings of Moscow State University, erected in 1953.

order of the Paestum type used in the colonnades. This is how the Cathedral was depicted in the presentation tablet of 1817, the year the cornerstone was laid.

In terms of dimensions, the Cathedral was to be the world's tallest, 112 *sazhens* (the equivalent of 237 meters) in height, measured from the foot of the embankment to the cross crowning the top. The steps, more than 50 *sazhens* (106 meters) wide, would begin 70 *sazhens* (149 meters) from the river's embankment, and have five terraces. The portion of the Cathedral above ground was to be 170 meters high, the diameter of the central dome greater than fifty meters. By comparison, St. Peter's is 141.5 meters high, the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great in the Kremlin 80 (or 122 meters above the level of the Moskva River). The square in front of the lower church was to be flanked by colonnades, each extending 640 meters, inside of which Vitberg envisaged building two triumphal columns 106 meters high. Here Vitberg was literally following Kikin's idea. One of the columns was to be made from canon taken from the enemy on Russian soil, the other from canon captured abroad.<sup>23</sup> Vitberg continued to work on the design after the groundbreaking ceremony had taken place. The final version, presented in 1825 as a series of illustrative sheets together with the formal plans, shows a square cathedral, single-domed with four majestic twelve-column porticos under triangular pediments. The porticos render the space of the middle church cruciform. The height and prominence of the church has grown. Vitberg proposed that the edifice be placed in the center of a rectangular square bordered by a colonnade. For the side of the square facing Kaluga Road he planned a gate with two bell towers.

Vitberg alone had grasped the philosophical and symbolic meaning implicit in the 1816 announcement of the international competition. Proof of this is the reaction of the Emperor to the design as later reported by Vitberg: "You divined

my thoughts, my wish for this cathedral which I secretly kept within myself, not proposing how architects should satisfy me; you have made stone talk.’’<sup>24</sup> In the Emperor’s view, only an Orthodox could speak in an Orthodox way. But Vitberg was a Protestant. Alexander I expressed the wish that the architect of the Cathedral be Orthodox. So, Vitberg converted to Orthodoxy, receiving at baptism the name Alexander in honor of the Emperor.

Vitberg’s vacillation in choosing a primary source or model for his design is characteristic of the period, one of transition from neoclassicism to romanticism, a transition that the architect’s work on the whole personifies. The question of the adequacy of stylistic forms to express ideas is typical of romantic thinking and of nineteenth-century architecture in general. For “pure neoclassicists” such as Quarenghi this question did not exist. The customary hierarchy prescribed for designing state structures was dictated by the standard architectural *order* of styles. Vitberg was overcome by doubts: which style would express the content of his conception more fully, gothic or Greek? At the time it was extremely popular to emphasize the Greek sources of Russian culture. As a religious denomination, Orthodoxy was designated “Greek” or “Græco-Russian.” Thus, Vitberg’s unease about the Greek character of the Cathedral can in part be explained by notions about the Greek sources of Russian culture prevalent in the early nineteenth century. But, in fact, all this is secondary. The point is that Vitberg’s artistic ideal had ceased to be wholly neoclassical. “Now I am carried away by the refinement of Greek paganism, now by the gothic qualities of Christian cathedrals. I am fully aware that the gothic cathedral . . . resulted from Christianity’s desire to separate itself fully from everything pagan. Yet I cannot agree to accept the lack of control in gothic forms given the simplicity and refinement of the Greek ones. It seems to me that this form of beauty, which grew to become a norm, embodies the idea of

refinement. It gives me pause.”<sup>25</sup> The idea of Greek sources being an eternal norm won out, yet Vitberg himself rebelled against this very idea when he criticized the designs of his comrades at the Academy as imitative.

In the course of less than a decade, Vitberg’s doubts about whether one could express a national idea with the help of Greek forms had disappeared. Evidence of this can be found in the design for the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Vyatka (1838), his second most important edifice and, similarly, a programmatic one. At the base of this composition lies the plan for one variant of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, a five-domed rotunda with bell towers at the four cardinal points. Because it draws on the heritage of old Russian architecture, the Vyatka cathedral is quite different from the design for its predecessor in Moscow. This edifice belongs to the architecture of romanticism, and displays kinship with works of its greatest representatives, Alexander Briullov, Konstantin Ton, and Mikhail Bykovsky. It belongs rightfully to the trend contemporaries referred to as the Byzantine style. In a letter to Alexander Herzen, Vitberg defines the stylistic peculiarities of this design with the combined adjective “Egypto-Byzanto-Gothic.”

But all this was to come later. Equally nontraditional was Vitberg’s first choice of a location for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior: the Kremlin. This proposal was rejected by Alexander I. Even pulling down the section of the Kremlin wall that faced the Moskva and the prospect of fundamentally changing the appearance of this ancient and sacred place had not deterred Empress Catherine the Great when she resolved to build a new Kremlin palace as a grand monument to the new Russia.<sup>‡</sup> However, Catherine’s grandson, Alexander I, expressed different sentiments: “It is improper to ruin the ancient Kremlin. Moreover, the building would be out of place mixed in with the Byzantine buildings of the

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<sup>‡</sup> The palace, designed by architect Vasily Bazhenov (1737-1799), was never built.



Kremlin.”<sup>26</sup> Two things should be noted here, first, the attitude, born in a time of high patriotic feeling, toward ancient Russian structures as historical relics inviolable and worthy of being preserved, and, second, the concern about newly erected buildings conforming to the character of historic structures, especially structures that marked national, sacred places or were ancient monuments.

The Emperor proposed that the Cathedral be erected on historic Shvivaya Gorka, the present Kotelnicheskyy embankment, and his trusted advisor, the conservative general Aleksey Arakcheev, suggested that it be located near the Simonov Monastery where there were gunpowder storehouses. Vitberg disputed both proposals, observing that the latter was disadvantageous because the Cathedral could be approached only from one side and thus would lose much of its majesty. A road would have to be built for it together with a bridge, and the road would necessarily pass through the poorest section of Moscow. Moreover, “the proximity of a new edifice in the Greek style would detract from the Simonov Monastery, a fine group of buildings in the Byzantine style, and the new building would not be enhanced by the mixed character of the old complex.”<sup>27</sup> Vitberg here advances arguments made by Alexander I in rejecting the idea of erecting the Cathedral in the Kremlin.

The influential architect Vasily Stasov considered it expedient to build the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the center of Moscow, but not in the Kremlin. “Thinking about this important edifice, which is intended to convey to posterity the taste, enlightenment, might, and glory of the State of our time, I find myself debating. . . . [s]hould it be included in the already constrained Kremlin, where the cathedrals that take greatest precedence in Russia and date back to ancient times are located, or should a site be selected that not only would be strikingly close to the Kremlin but would exercise dominion over all of Moscow, displaying its full

majesty on all sides from far away? There is such a site close by, only a verst or so from the Kremlin . . . and there are precedents for such a site: the Kazan, Vladimir, and St. Basil Cathedrals were all built outside the Kremlin to commemorate events that have befallen Russia.” The question of style also worried Stasov as it had Vitberg and also Voronikhin. What was more preferable: simple forms and straight lines like those found in the edifices of Greek architecture that had been preserved or the luxuriant Roman variety that had disappeared without leaving a trace.<sup>28</sup>

Vitberg proposed building the Cathedral on Sparrow Hills, which Alexander I poetically termed “Moscow’s crown.” Adding weight to Vitberg’s proposal was not only the fact that the Emperor had given his consent to build the Cathedral outside the city proper “where there was enough space for such an elegant building,”<sup>29</sup> but also that important precedents could be cited. St. Peter’s was located outside the city proper, and St. Paul’s Cathedral was not near the center of London. From the Virgin’s Field at the foot of Sparrow Hills the Cathedral could be viewed “in its [total] geometrical appearance,” frontally, from the side of the main façade. The final argument in favor of Sparrow Hills was “historical.” The Hills were situated between the roads to Smolensk and Kaluga, the routes Napoleon’s troops had used to enter and retreat from Moscow.

The cornerstone for the Cathedral was laid on October 12, 1817, the fifth anniversary of the departure from Moscow of Russia’s enemies. The ceremony was an extraordinarily beautiful and festive event. “On the morning of October 12<sup>th</sup> numerous regiments began assembling on the *Virgin’s Field*. . . . The inhabitants of Moscow gathered from all parts of the city, some hurried to the *Virgin’s Field*, others to *Sparrow Hills*. At 10 a.m. *His Majesty the Emperor* and the members of His Most August Family arrived at *Luzhniki*, and entered the

*Church of the Tikhvin Mother of God.* Beneath the sacred vault of this remote and secluded church the Autocrat of Russia prayed. During this time, regiments of troops arranged themselves in back of the *Monastery of the Virgin* and on *Luzhniki* so that all eyes were directed toward *Sparrow Hills*; clergy with icons and gonfalons formed a queue near the church where the liturgy was being sung. . . . At twelve o'clock the procession began crossing a bridge which had been specially built over the Moskva River from *Luzhniki* to *Sparrow Hills*. Shortly thereafter, from the Church of the Mother of God, emerged *His Majesty the Emperor* with His Most August Family accompanied by high-ranking military and government officials. In the middle hollows of *Sparrow Hills* was a rise where the altar of the lower church was to be situated. To this place the Royal Builder of the church climbed amidst rows of clergy. The sanctification of water began. A profound silence reigned across the river and atop *Sparrow Hills*. Despite the multitudes standing there, only the singing of prayers could be heard under the clear sky. Once the water was sanctified, *His Majesty the Emperor* put the first stone for the foundation of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in place. After this, His Grace, Bishop Augustine, delivered a short and moving speech: '[I]ndeed *five years* have hardly passed, and the ancient Capital has already risen from the dust and ashes in new splendor and beauty. Moscow has been revived, its devastation has disappeared. . . . Sons and defenders of the Fatherland, you shall not die. Here in the walls of this holy church, erected on the top of Sparrow Hills from whence the ancient capital city appears in its full splendor, here you will be remembered as long as the brightness of the daily light shines on the Faith, on fidelity to and love for the Fatherland.'"<sup>30</sup>

Documents of the time describe a stirring sense of spiritual enthusiasm during the cornerstone-laying ceremony. "Only the hand of Raphael and the pen

of the psalmist David could depict the scene of this great celebration. . . . Who among us recalls without palpitations of the heart and without a spiritual quiver the year 1812 when Moscow, the mother of Russian cities, was left helpless and homeless and groaned more than six weeks under the yoke of a tyrant, the leader of the Gauls? Its churches and buildings had been turned to ashes. . . .”<sup>31</sup> These were recent events, fresh in everyone’s memories. Thus, when “the regimental music heralding this joyous day was heard in all the streets,” people began gathering along the route of the ceremonial procession. “The confluence of people was so great that it surpassed all comprehension. Not only were buildings, balconies and windows filled with people, many spectators sat on roofs while others sat on staging erected especially for this purpose.”<sup>32</sup> Participating in the ceremony “were more than 30 archpriests, and some 500 priests and deacons [and] two choirs, the Imperial Court Choir and the Synodal . . . in fine, most luxuriant vestments.” After the liturgy in the Tikhvin Church, the religious procession lead by the clergy and the Emperor and “courtiers, high military and government officials to the ringing of bells and the playing of regimental music” proceeded to the place where the cornerstone was to be laid. “Fifty thousand troops participated and more than 400,000 Muscovites were present.” Once the cornerstone was in place, the procession returned to the Church of the Tikhvin Mother of God, and “after His Majesty had returned and been duly saluted, the troops were dismissed to their quarters.”<sup>33</sup>

The cornerstone-laying ceremony marked the completion of the initial preparatory work. Earlier, on September 1, 1817, to mark the fifth anniversary of the appearance of enemy troops, a wooden cross had been erected on Sparrow Hills at the future site of the Cathedral. On the following day, the actual anniversary “of the barbarians’ entry into Moscow,” the site was sanctified with

holy water and the foundation excavations begun. On September 13, the calendar day which marked the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, Vitberg placed the foundation's first four stones in the form of a cross after which work on the base of the structure commenced. Parallels between the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem found in the symbolism of the Cathedral's initial design were hardly coincidental. The two churches were frequently compared, a comparison evoked also by the concurrence of dates: "Each of us remembers," writes the author of the *Historical Description of the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on Sparrow Hills*, that "the French on this date [*i.e.*, October 12.—*E.K.*] quit Moscow during the night. . . . This is the day the Church celebrates the Icon of the Jerusalem Mother of God."<sup>34</sup> Similarly, comparisons were drawn between the events of 1812 and those described in the Old Testament; the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I were equated with those of Judaic kings David and Solomon. The cornerstone-laying ceremony prompts the author of the *Historical Description* to observe: "The Sovereign, like Moses, went up onto the mountain."

This analogy of Moscow as the New Jerusalem and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior as the Temple of Solomon underlies the "*Song on the Solemn Occasion of the Laying of the Cornerstone for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow*" *Delivered to the Society of Lovers of the Russian Word at Moscow's Imperial University by Member and Professor Aleksey Merzlyakov* (Moscow, 1817), as the following excerpts demonstrate:

*God is on Gibeon.<sup>35</sup> Rejoice, Jerusalem,  
Dwelling place of Faith and forbearance--  
God is on Gibeon! And before Him Solomon,  
In the invisible temple of Moses!*

*A new Israel! Oh, chosen people,  
Great thou art to the heart of God!  
Oh, Russia! Whither like a torrent of waters  
Dost thou rush in seeking thy father, the Lord?  
Whither goest thee, bright Moscow,  
In endless wide space sited,  
City of cities, infused with holy rapture  
Whither dost thee flow?*

Merzlyakov would link Russian monasteries with names such as Resurrection Monastery in New Jerusalem near Moscow and St. Varlaam's on Lake Ladoga to 'Cathedral of Christ the Savior on the Moskva.' The Moskva itself is likened to the River Jordan ("The Moskva, the Russian Jordan"), Sparrow Hills to Mount Tabor, the groves on Sparrow Hills to the Mount of Olives, the rebirth of Moscow with miraculous events from the life of Christ.

*It seemed that I was witnessing miracles near Tabor!  
Do the Mount of Olives' shady groves,  
Hills strewn about in playful rises,  
Not beckon in their piety?  
Is it not here that revived, transfigured, and resurrected  
Was the Universal Savior?!  
Make known to me thy craggy visage, servant of the Unseen:  
Are these not steps that lead upward to the heavenly abode?*

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<sup>1</sup> V. L. Snegirev, *Arkhitektors A. L. Vitberg* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1939), pp. 5-12 and his "A. L. Vitberg i ego arkhitekturnye raboty," *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 1939, No. 7, p. 79; "Vitberg, A. L.," *Khudozhniki narodov SSSR. Biobibliograficheskii slovar'*, II (Moscow, 1972), p. 287; and E. I. Kirichenko, "Aleksandr Lavrent'evich Vitberg," *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 1987, No. 6, pp. 92-99.

<sup>2</sup> Snegirev, *Arkhitektors A. L. Vitberg*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> A. V. Semeka, "Russkoe masonstvo v XVIII veke," in S. A. Mel'gunov and N. P. Sidorov, eds., *Masonstvo v ego proshlom and nastoiashchem* (Moscow, 1991, a reprint of the 1914 original), I, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>5</sup> V. N. Tukalevskii, "N.I. Novikov i I. G. Shvarts," *Masonstvo v ego proshlom i nastoiashchem*, pp. 179-180, 153, 183.

<sup>6</sup> T. O. Sokolovskaia, "Vozrozhdenie masonstva pri Aleksandre I," *Masonstvo v ego proshlom i nastoiashchem*, p. 189.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-193.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-154.

- <sup>9</sup> A. L. Vitberg, *Zapiski* in A. I. Gertsen, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30-ti tomakh*, I (Moscow 1954), p. 380. Vitberg's notes, recorded by fellow-exile Alexander Herzen, were first published thanks to T. P. Passek who gave Herzen's transcriptions to the editors of the journal *Russkaia Starina* (1872, V, nos. 1, 2, and 4). The transcriptions were republished in *Gattsuk's Gazette*, and in Volume I of Herzen's *Complete Works*.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 443-4.
- <sup>11</sup> I Corinthians 3:16; A. L. Vitberg, "Avtobiografiia," *Russkaia starina*, XII (1876), pp. 109-110.
- <sup>12</sup> Vitberg, *Zapiski*, p. 387.
- <sup>13</sup> F. A. Vitberg, "Vitberg i ego proekt khrama Khrista na Vorob'evykh gorakh," *Starye gody*, February issue, 1912.
- <sup>14</sup> Vitberg, *Zapiski*, p. 385.
- <sup>15</sup> *Zakon Bozhii*, Archpriest Serafim Slobodskoi, comp., 4th ed. (New York, 1987), p. 24.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125-127.
- <sup>17</sup> Archpriest Aleksandr Men', *Tainstvo, slovo i obraz* (Leningrad, 1991), p. 16.
- <sup>18</sup> *Zakon Bozhii*, p. 609.
- <sup>19</sup> Vitberg, *Zapiski*, p. 386.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 387-388.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 387.
- <sup>23</sup> M. Mostovskii, *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve* (Moscow, 1883), pp. 5-6 ff.
- <sup>24</sup> Vitberg, "Avtobiografiia," *Russkaia starina*, XVII (1876), No. 9 (September), p. iii.
- <sup>25</sup> Vitberg, *Zapiski*, p. 390.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 406.
- <sup>28</sup> RPB OR, f. 737 Stasov, V. P., 1813, d. 46, ll. 1-2.
- <sup>29</sup> Vitberg, *Zapiski*, p. 407.
- <sup>30</sup> "Zalozhenie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia i vospominaniia ob izgnanii vruga iz Rossii," *Russkii vestnik*, 1817, Nos. 19-20, pp. 5-11.
- <sup>31</sup> P. Sokolov, *Istoricheskoe opisanie torzhestva, proizkhodivshego pri zalozhenii khrama Khrista Spasitelia na Vorob'evykh gorakh pri Vysochaishem Pristutstvii Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Gosudaria Imperatora Aleksandra Pavlovicha . . .1817 goda 12 oktiabria.*, Moscow 1818, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 16.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 22, 38-39.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- <sup>35</sup> In a note, Merzyakov explains that this is the name of "the high place in Jerusalem where the Prophet Solomon erected the Temple to God."

### Illustration Captions

- Page 25*      Design for the Cathedral's main façade proposed by Voronikhin. Ink on paper, 1813.
- Page 26*      Alexander Vitberg, architect of the unrealized plan to erect the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on Sparrow Hills.
- Page 27*      View of Moscow and its environs (Sparrow Hills). Drawing by Cadolle in a print of 1825.

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- Page 28* Design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior's façade by Vitberg, 1817. Ink on paper.
- Vitberg's architectural plan for the Cathedral, 1825. Ink on paper.
- Page 31* Cross section of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior proposed by Vitberg, 1817. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Site plan for the Cathedral on Sparrow Hills by Vitberg, 1825. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 32* Design for the Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky in Vyatka by Vitberg, 1838. Lithograph by Ivan Seleznev.
- Page 33* The Cathedral of Alexander Nevsky in Vyatka, 1864. Print from *Gattsuk's Gazette*.
- Page 35* General view from the river side of the monument-cathedral dedicated to Russia's victory in the Patriotic War of 1812 proposed by Vitberg, 1825. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 36* Historical depiction of the festivities accompanying the foundation-laying ceremony for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on Sparrow Hills, October 12, 1817, by A. Afanasiev. Colored dot print.
- Page 37* The Church of the Tikhvin Mother of God where a liturgy was sung on the day of the foundation-laying of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on Sparrow Hills. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co.



## **The Second Competition**

In the wake of laying the cornerstone commenced the everyday, practical work of actually building the Cathedral. Alexander I entrusted the project's realization to Vitberg, despite misgivings and objections on the part of the latter. While completing the Cathedral's design--work that continued even when he was living later in exile--Vitberg had to determine where construction materials could be obtained and how to transport them to the building site. That alone took nearly three years. Vitberg also had to find ways to finance the project. He was undertaking something quite extravagant with only modest resources to draw on, and he would have to do so without encumbering the project with the ruinous contracts and financial problems so characteristic of armed conflicts and public disasters handled by the government. In 1820 the Emperor approved the "Economic Plan" for erecting the Cathedral. Vitberg proposed borrowing ten million rubles from the Moscow Board of Guardians in order to purchase 18,000 manorial serfs with land in Moscow and neighboring provinces. The plan was to deposit money earned by the serfs' labor into the state treasury, which would then disburse it for Cathedral construction expenses. At the completion of the project any land and other property that remained under the jurisdiction of the Commission for Erecting the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was to devolve to the state. Serfs bought by the Commission (as strange as this may sound) were obliged to engage actively in Cathedral construction work or hire workers to do so in their stead or pay quitrent. Timber for the project was to be bought near Moscow. To procure the desired building stone from the Vereya and Ruza areas north of the city, plans were developed to make the headwaters of the Moskva River navigable. In 1821, the Commission for Erecting the Cathedral with 11,275 serfs at its

disposal authorized excavations for the building's foundation. This entailed altering the slope of Sparrow Hills, which teemed with hillocks and ravines, to create a level space for the Cathedral's subterranean component. The space would also be used to store construction materials and to finish stone used for the foundation and to structure the embankment. The length of the area was some 500 *sazhens* (1065 meters), the width, 100 *sazhens* (213 meters) and it was to be situated 10 *sazhens* above the level of the Moskva.

In 1823, in the village of Grigorovo in Vereya District preparations began for procuring stone for the Cathedral. The first attempt to quarry it was successful, and in 1825 the Emperor ordered the joining of the upper reaches of the Volga and the Moskva so that the stone could be transported to the building site in Moscow. However, this effort was not fruitful. The water level of the Moskva could not be raised enough to allow wooden barges loaded with the stone to reach Moscow. And this was hardly the only difficulty Vitberg encountered in attempting to carry out his vast project. Various problems plagued construction management; Vitberg's worst fears were realized. Although excavation work was conducted on a large scale, the land area had not been properly investigated and a specific plan for building the foundation had not been developed. Vitberg decided that the failure to procure stone was deliberate. It cost the treasury some 300,000 rubles. This plus other abuses prompted him to travel to St. Petersburg and report directly to the Emperor about them. He proposed to the members of the building commission that all further work be stopped until "His Majesty's decision concerning the proper management of the undertaking" was received. In response to Vitberg's report, Alexander I entrusted the building of the Cathedral to General Aleksey Arakcheev, who subsequently fell ill and had to relinquish all official duties. Two months later, in November 1825, the Emperor died, and Vitberg lost

his royal patron. Russia's new autocrat, Nicholas I, ordered that work on the Cathedral be halted. To determine whether Vitberg's design was in fact feasible, on May 4, 1826, Nicholas appointed a special Fine Arts Committee, chaired by Karl Opperman, a military engineer. Other members included St. Petersburg architects, Monferrand, Rossi, and Stasov and engineers Pierre-Dominique Bazaine and Leo Karbonier.<sup>1</sup> In his 1939 monograph on Vitberg, Vladimir Snegirev asserts that the Committee's conclusion that the ground at Sparrow Hills was unfit for erecting the Cathedral was formulated to discredit the architect.<sup>2</sup> It is hard to agree with this assertion. Most likely what transpired is what so often transpires in autocratic states. Doubts about a project can be expressed only after the death of its royal patron. The question is not whether this committee of experts was authoritative, competent, or honest, nor was Vitberg's personal honesty and high moral stature subject to doubt. Public opinion, authors of reminiscences, and, finally, even an official publication based on materials of the second Commission to Erect the Cathedral of Christ the Savior all attest to Vitberg's probity and view his tragedy as the collision of an artist and idealist with people who were totally unscrupulous--and also thieves.<sup>3</sup> So, this huge church construction project, greater in scope than that of Vasily Bazhenov's design for the Great Kremlin Palace, ended tragically for the architect. Work on the Cathedral stopped altogether. In 1827 the Commission for Erecting the Cathedral was disbanded, and in 1835 Vitberg was exiled to the provincial city of Vyatka.

In Russia of the 1830's a distinctive national quality began to be associated with the heritage of modern rather than ancient Greece, namely, with that of Byzantium. Here was the kernel of yet another tragedy for Vitberg, one which has yet to attract the attention of scholars. Vitberg's design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was developed in accord with thinking prevalent during the first two

decades of the nineteenth century. It could not be executed in the 1830's and 1840's because new convictions had formed about how a memorial cathedral should be created along "national" lines. Vitberg's return to St. Petersburg from exile in the 1840's was the final blow to the hope of realizing the selfless labor of much of his life. During his final years Vitberg worked only occasionally as an architect. He died in 1855 impoverished and in obscurity.

The Fine Arts Committee appointed by Nicholas I was charged with providing answers to three questions: 1) Was it possible to construct the Cathedral Vitberg had designed at the location he had chosen for it? 2) Was it possible to construct the Cathedral using another design on this same site? And, 3) If Vitberg's design were realized, could one use only the upper part of Sparrow Hills as the site, abandoning the idea of building other parts of it into the side of the Hills?<sup>4</sup> Prince Fyodor Golitsyn, Moscow's governor-general, was ordered to commission "expert officials and architects to compile a detailed description and drawings of Sparrow Hills, showing where, in their opinion, it was possible to build the Cathedral and the nature of the terrain therein."<sup>5</sup> He appointed Moscow architects Ivan Tamansky and Osip Bove and two military engineering assistants for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> From tests of the incline of Sparrow Hills these special experts concluded that it was not possible to build the subterranean component of Vitberg's design for the Cathedral, "but that on the extensive place at the top of Sparrow Hills an enormous building could be constructed." Because of the absence of adequate stone in the Moscow region, in place of the stairway of four hundred forty-four steps called for in Vitberg's design, the experts recommended gently sloping, curved roadways, and, so that there would be a connection with the city, the construction of an iron bridge across the Moskva "which would feed onto

an elevated great road or *chausée* on an embankment across Luzhniki.”<sup>7</sup> On November 22, 1827 their findings were dispatched to St. Petersburg.

Tamansky and Bove *et al.* were then given the task of weighing the possibility of erecting Vitberg’s Cathedral atop Sparrow Hills. New investigations had to be carried out since those done earlier were limited to the side of the Hills. In a second report, dated September 1828 and signed by Tamansky, Bove, and other architectural authorities, the possibility of erecting the Cathedral minus its lower components atop the Hills is discussed. The authors of the report stressed that they only judged the quality of the site’s terrain and that they had not considered the architectural demands of the project or what materials would be needed to erect such a huge building. Attached to the report was a special opinion by an engineer named Yanish to the effect that numerous springs on the side of the Hills indicated sandy subsoil and thus excluded the possibility of erecting a large church not only on the side of the Hills but also on top of them because of the precariousness of uneven underlying sediments.<sup>8</sup>

The Fine Arts Committee, chaired by General Opperman, unanimously endorsed the conclusions of these two reports, doing so despite an ancillary opinion submitted by member Karbonier to the Minister of the Imperial Court, Prince Pyotr Volkonsky, “that the newly proposed location for [the Cathedral] has exactly the same qualities as the former one and therefore does not present greater trustworthiness than the site on which Vitberg started foundation excavations.”<sup>9</sup> In addition, committee member Stasov offered views of his own. While noting the artistic merits of Vitberg’s design (“when all is said and done very fine architecture”), Stasov disputed Colonel Yanish’s opinion about the quality of sandy subsoil of Sparrow Hills. The Petersburg architect felt, however, that a building with multi-sized foundations erected on uneven sediments at different

levels would be fragile.<sup>10</sup> While not agreeing on particulars, in a general statement all the members of the Committee expressed their agreement with the conclusions of the Moscow architects: “[T]ogether with the explanations of the Moscow architects and Colonel Yanish about the impossibility of carrying out Vitberg’s design because of the immensity and irregular arrangement of the building proposed and the lack in the environs of Moscow of sufficiently solid material for constructing it, the Commission confirms its earlier decision about the absolute necessity of obtaining further instruction so that the finest architects can compile a plan for Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Savior, one that will take into consideration the means of obtaining materials as well as their quality.”<sup>11</sup>

The Committee’s findings sealed the fate of Vitberg and his design. It passed judgment on the possibility of realizing the Cathedral at the place chosen by the architect, on the slope of Sparrow Hills. Imperial edicts were addressed to Prince Nicolas Yusupov, Senator and member of the Privy Council, and on May 11, 1827 the Senate issued an ukase which read: “The Commission to Erect in Moscow a Cathedral in the Name of Christ the Savior is hereby ended. Its activities, officers, structures, materials procured, and all its official property are transferred to the office of the Military Governor-General of Moscow and to Privy Councilor Prince Yusupov.”<sup>12</sup> And thus the first stage in constructing the Cathedral came to an end.

In April 1829, the Emperor expressed his wish that the Minister of the Imperial Court “gather the most famous and most skillful architects of Moscow and command them to choose an appropriate place in this capital city to erect the proposed Cathedral of Christ the Savior” and to compile designs and estimates for doing so. So began the second competition. Unlike the first, in which mainly St. Petersburg architects participated, initially the second competition involved only

Moscow architects. Two months later, in June, Nicholas, again via Pyotr Volkonsky, issued a new ukase, abrogating the one issued earlier: “Although it has been proposed that the Cathedral in the Name of Christ the Savior be erected on Sparrow Hills, detailed inquiries and observations have demonstrated that in many respects it is not possible to construct the Cathedral according to Vitberg’s design and that it would be impossible to erect any sort of important structure on the slope of the Hills where excavations were begun. For this site a chapel is proposed.”<sup>13</sup> The new decree reflected the vacillations of Nicholas I and his entourage regarding the fate of Vitberg’s project and Alexander I’s wish to see the Cathedral of Christ the Savior erected on Sparrow Hills. The close timing of these inconsistent proposals irked Prince Golitsyn, Moscow’s governor-general. In response, he proposed to the Emperor that the architects “look for places to erect the Cathedral and compile plans for the same and in due time deliver those plans to me. I will make bold to present the plans for the places chosen together with that developed by architect Tamansky to His Imperial Highness for consideration and humbly report that each of them is fully prepared to employ all of his knowledge and abilities to please His Majesty.” Since the best Moscow architects were still fully occupied at this time with the rebuilding of Moscow in the wake of the great fire and to do this would have “to concentrate all their knowledge and talent on a single objective,” Prince Golitsyn proposed giving notice of a competition “not only in Russia, but also to the outstanding architects in Europe, inviting them to create and submit designs and designating a prize for the one whose design is approved.”<sup>14</sup>

Golitsyn’s petition had its effect. In a matter of days, on February 19, 1830, the Minister of the Imperial Court informed the Governor-General that “His Imperial Highness commands Prince Golitsyn to assemble the architects and ask if they are in agreement with the idea of erecting the Cathedral on Sparrow Hills and,

if not, to choose locations for it and to organize a design competition of Russian and foreign architects.”<sup>15</sup> All of the Moscow and St. Petersburg architects invited to participate in the competition agreed that it was possible to erect the Cathedral on top of Sparrow Hills, but many of the Moscow ones proposed designs for a cathedral located on other sites. In addition to the professional architects invited to participate, others participated on their own initiative as did a number of dilettante architects. The second competition turned out to be much more representative and diverse than the first one; perhaps it was the most representative of any such competition ever held in Russia.

Designs for constructing the Cathedral atop of Sparrow Hills were created by a number of Petersburg architects--most notably, Stasov, who contributed his own interpretation of Vitberg's tripartite cathedral, placing it on level ground rather than on the slope of the Hills. Stasov's design harked back to the neoclassical modification of the multi-tiered Russian church so typical of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In his design the first tier is a square with four-columned porticoes at the center of each façade. The tier serves as a footing for bell towers which surround the second tier, a circular podium. Above it rises the encircling colonnaded dome of the cupola, a third, graceful compositional tier, which has been elongated vertically.<sup>16</sup>

The design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior by Moscow architect Kutepov presents a cathedral-like edifice with five domes that imitates ancient Russian churches. The plans call for the Cathedral to be placed at the center of a vast square, the perimeter of which is to be surrounded by neoclassical, Petersburg-style buildings. Kutepov's cathedral is extraordinarily similar to the one designed by Konstantin Ton that in the end would win the Emperor's approval. It also testifies to the viability of Voronikhin's idea. The fact that Kutepov's design is in



the Russian style is particularly important because the competition's specifications gave no indication of style.<sup>17</sup>

Another group of designs by Moscow architects were submitted in response to Nicholas I's instruction to find a more appropriate place in Moscow for the Cathedral. All these designs strive to tie the new edifice visually and in what might be termed an urban planning sense to Moscow's historic center, the Kremlin and Kitay-gorod, and at the same time they attempt to give the building a value entirely its own. One is tempted to think that these architects were implementing the ideas of Stasov formulated in an 1813 letter to Aleksey Olenin, Vice President of the Academy of Fine Arts, about constructing a large church not far from the Kremlin to provide a new silhouette for Moscow and a new urban focus for the city's development.

Four of these designs have been preserved. The most interesting is that of Ivan Tamansky (1775-1850)\* which was presented to the Emperor by Prince Golitsyn. It proposed locating the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the immediate environs of the Kremlin, on the opposite side of the Moskva in Tsaritsyn Meadow. Like Vitberg's design, Tamansky's is oriented toward standard neoclassical models, but it also reflects a conscious effort to accommodate Russia's emerging sense of historicism. That is realized in two ways: first, by establishing a direct tie between the Cathedral ensemble and the Kremlin and, second, by making the ensemble a memorial museum. In the memorandum accompanying his design, Tamansky expresses an idea which had become dominant in the 1830's, namely, the need to be guided not only by ancient and modern monuments in Rome, but also by those of Byzantium and old Russia. But for him the latter was merely a declaration. The Tamansky program, preserved in several copies, sets out to prove

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\* Tamansky was appointed to the Commission to Erect the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in 1838.

that Vitberg's choice of Sparrow Hills was inappropriate: "Even if the Cathedral is constructed atop the Hills," he writes, "access to it will be difficult, and the 'wildness' of a place due to its remoteness leads one to conclude that it is not likely to gain population and this in turn would lead to low attendance at the Cathedral." These two basic shortcomings, remoteness and the real possibility that the Cathedral might be excluded from the life of the city, forced Tamansky "as a Russian, as a resident of Moscow in heart and soul" to propose "erecting the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the very center of the city and in doing so to furnish our historically illustrious capital with an adornment of the size and magnificence worthy of those immense monuments of ancient Rome and Byzantium, the famed Vatican and Hagia Sophia. We must remember that all of the outstanding ancient churches in Russia were built in imitation of churches in Constantinople, those dedicated to Sophia, Divine Wisdom, or the Assumption of the Mother of God. It would be appropriate to erect this church in Tsaritsyn Meadow, directly opposite the Kremlin."

Like Vitberg, Tamansky adduces "historical" factors to buttress his choice. In the distant past, a meadow did in fact form a background for the Kremlin's churches. Without a doubt the place had been captivating. It was from the Tsaritsyn Meadow side, moreover, that the enemies had entered Moscow, the Tatars, Poles, Lithuanians, and here "shone with glory the valor of the Russians." Finally, "[w]hat could be more becoming than erecting opposite the chambers of the earthly tsar chambers for the heavenly tsar? . . . [A]nd think of the memory of antiquity and the appropriateness of the place together with its beauty and the vistas . . . over which holds sway the Kremlin with all its history."<sup>18</sup>

One of the models for Tamansky's ensemble design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was Voronikhin's Kazan Cathedral with its semicircular square

and colonnade fronting the main façade. There are many prototypes for the oval square in front of the second, longitudinal façade of the Cathedral, the façade turned toward the Kremlin. Although there are repeated references to the square of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and to the plans of buildings typical of ancient Rome, hippodromes, coliseums, here the principal influence is the oval shape of the famed Trajan's Forum. The main axis of the ensemble, oriented to the Kremlin's Cathedral Square, is accentuated by a pier on the riverbank. In front of the Cathedral, Tamansky proposed raising an equestrian statue of Alexander I and in the middle of the rounded parts of the ovals triumphal gates symbolizing "the two extreme points of the great feat, the taking of Paris and Moscow renewed to the glory and greatness of the Fatherland." Obelisks or pyramids would stand inside the colossal areas formed by the ovals adorned with bas-reliefs and inscriptions to form "a living national history, a book opened wide before the chambers of tsars and of God! . . . Opened wide to Moscow and to Russia as a whole and to the beauty of the surrounding structures as well. . . ." According to Tamansky, this cathedral, unlike the one planned for Sparrow Hills, would be able to evoke "many feelings, many lofty ones."<sup>19</sup>

The design of an apprentice architect named E. G. Malyutin also calls for erecting the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the center of Moscow, in the immediate vicinity of the Kremlin on a huge area stretching from Vozdvizhenka Street to Znamenka Street and from the Alexander Gardens to the Arbat Gate. Malyutin's five-domed cathedral, in the tradition of the Kazakov School, seems anachronistic in post-conflagration Moscow. The design is interesting because of its four-petal plan, rare in neoclassical architecture and closer in this regard to churches built in the "Naryshkin Baroque" style of architecture popular in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. One of the two variants of this design

envisaged a direct tie between the Cathedral's area and the Kremlin by means of a bridge thrown across the Alexander Gardens. The other variant retains the "petal" cathedral plan but, imitating Voronikhin's Kazan Cathedral in Petersburg, incorporates semicircular colonnades on the sides. "[B]ecause of their poor application" Malyutin's designs were not "deemed worthy of His Imperial Majesty's attention." However, they merit our attention as yet another example of the persistent efforts to tie a new sacred site both visually and in terms of design to the historic one, to tie the Cathedral of Christ the Savior to the Kremlin, and by means of gigantic dimensions to equate the two.

Unlike his Petersburg confreres, Konstantin Ton was acutely sensitive to new trends and thus attracted to the quests of the Moscow architects. How approval of his design occurred has yet to be ascertained. It is possible that help came from Ton's patron, Aleksey Olenin, who had been able to draw Nicholas I's attention to Ton once before when he had helped Ton win the design competition for St. Catherine's Church erected near the Kalinkin Bridge in St. Petersburg. Two previous design competitions for this church had failed to yield results. The Emperor, displeased by the neoclassical style of the façades in the plans other architects submitted, expressed his wish to see a church designed in the spirit of old Russian national architecture. Olenin advised Ton to project a church in "old-style architecture," which Ton did in 1830. The following year Nicholas summoned Ton to Moscow, and the design of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was entrusted to him.<sup>20</sup> Thus the fate of the architect was determined and also to a large degree what became known as the Byzantine Style. Given the success of his previous design, Ton could not help but turn again to the heritage of old Russian architecture. As noted above, his design bears a striking resemblance to that of Kutepov. But, unlike Kutepov, Ton adopted the Moscow architects' ideas about a

more propitious place to locate the Cathedral. He proposed various sites all of which were relatively close to the historic center of Moscow and directly aligned with the Kremlin.

Ton's design is the first in which the idea of the Cathedral, its appearance, and its location are in harmony. Having had an opportunity to acquaint himself with the sweep of Moscow and the specific character of Moscow's architectural landscape, Ton proposed to the Emperor three possible locations for the Cathedral: on the far side of the Foundling Home where the Church of St. Nikita the Martyr was located; across the Moskva (a variant of one of the sites proposed by Bove) on Tver Street where the Strastny Monastery was located (now Pushkin Square; this was one of architect Shestakov's variants); and at the Great Stone Bridge not far from the Kremlin on the site of the Alekseev Female Monastery. The Emperor chose the last.<sup>21</sup> It was a felicitous combination of the preferred locations: on a high bank of the Moskva and in immediate proximity to the Kremlin. In February 1832, the Sparrow Hills site was revoked and further acceptance of designs halted.<sup>22</sup> Then, on April 10, 1832, Nicholas issued an order to the Holy Governing Synod of the Orthodox Church and to Governor-General Golitsyn: "Emperor Alexander I of blessed memory, inspired by a feeling of reverence and gratitude . . . commanded that in Moscow a cathedral in the Name of Christ the Savior be built, a monument to the great events of that time and close to that great Sovereign's heart. In 1817 the cornerstone for this cathedral was laid on Sparrow Hills, but insurmountable obstacles . . . halted the undertaking. It was fitting to select another, more appropriate and becoming place: the one considered by Us presently occupied by the Alekseev Female Monastery is located in the midst of the city and its conditions are similar to that of the earlier site. In approving the design to erect the Cathedral and in proceeding to carry out the eternally sacred will of Our

deceased Sovereign and Brother, it is Our pleasure to entrust you with the benevolent task of proclaiming to the loyal inhabitants of Our ancient capital that the promise made by Him on that unforgettable day of Russia's salvation will with God's help be fulfilled."<sup>23</sup>

There are two other significant designs from the second competition. One cannot determine where Moscow architect N. S. Koshalevsky wanted to place his cathedral. The work of a self-confessed "seventy-year-old man," the Minister of the Imperial Court, Prince Volkonsky, returned the design to its creator, observing that "it could not be presented to the Emperor for consideration because His Imperial Majesty had ordered the Moscow Governor-General on April 10, 1829 to assemble all *master* architects in Moscow."<sup>24</sup> How rigid the official Table of Ranks must have been for Koshalevsky not to be included in that elite group. The story of the second design is more curious. In 1836, several years after Ton's design was approved, the Synod received a copy of *A Short Discourse on Erecting Christian Churches in Accordance with Symbols Found in Holy Scripture*. The author, an official named Kushkovsky, accuses architects of the time of building churches without symbolic unity, basing them solely on symmetry and rules of architecture. Kushkovsky sought to increase richness of content; more important, he wanted Moscow to have a church similar to the ancient Jewish Temple, the whole and parts of which would "offer symbols worthy of a church." The author, "not divinely gifted as an architect, had conceived a design based on completely new meanings, the visionary symbols in the Revelation of St. John the Divine." His odd, yet distinctive work reflects a tendency perceptible in Vitberg's design: dissatisfaction with neoclassical architecture arising from that style's emphasis on the external, the beauty of shapes, harmonies, an emphasis inadequately expressing the content represented by those shapes, a shortcoming most obvious in church

architecture. To Vitberg belongs the withering criticism of Melnikov's design as lacking in content. Here like-minded Kushkovsky, not a professional architect but an official, takes this one step further, characterizing Russian church architecture of his time in general as lacking content.

In a memorandum from 1837 written to Count N. A. Prostasov, Ober-Procurator of the Church's Synod, Moscow Metropolitan Filaret states that during the previous winter an unknown official by the name of Kushkovsky had left him a set of drawings and a description of a design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. A short time later Kushkovsky paid a visit to the Metropolitan to try to figure out if his design could be published. Filaret gave him a negative response; to publish the design was inappropriate since a design had already been approved by His Imperial Highness and construction of the Cathedral would soon begin according to that design. More important to the Metropolitan, however, was the fact that Kushkovsky's design contained "much that was erroneous in its adaptation of Revelations."

In an explanatory note to his *Design for Erecting in Moscow a Cathedral in the Name of Christ the Savior*, Kushkovsky does not hesitate to criticize Ton's design and church architecture in general: "None of the proposed designs for the Cathedral in plan or façade correspond to this edifice's announced purpose. Cogitating on this and puzzling over it, I decided, though not an architect, to assemble a plan for a cathedral with a completely new meaning, one based on the symbols conveyed by the vision of St. John the Divine in Revelations as well as conforming to the notion of creating and capturing rare beauty of form. . . . The immensity, or architectural boldness and magnificence, of designs for the Cathedral made public are striking to viewers, but they are nothing more than a gift

of chance or possibility which hardly teaches anything. In the Cathedral everything should be by secret letter of the alphabet and signs (Exodus 25:40).”

Kushkovsky’s design is also interesting because of its deep ‘literary’ significance. The use of completely non-architectural, non-plastic, and un-canonical forms makes it typologically similar to Vitberg’s ideas, ideas obviously unknown to Kushkovsky. Kushkovsky puts forth a series of unusual proposals. For example, instead of windows he proposes seven slits with stained glass to symbolize the seven lamps before the throne of God, to light the dome four arcs of seven bands of stained glass—symbolizing the rainbow—and to crown the Cathedral’s dome a sculpture of the Lamb of God. Kushkovsky’s design contains ideas rejected in 1836 as incompatible with Orthodoxy that, paradoxically, were realized less than fifteen years later in building the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. For instance, Kushkovsky proposed mounting bas-reliefs on the outside walls of the Cathedral, from the left of the entrance a bas-relief depicting Napoleon crossing the Neman, another showing public prayers being conducted in the Kremlin when Alexander I exhorted the troops to defend the Fatherland. Other bas-reliefs should depict the battles at Vitebsk and Smolensk, the capture and burning of Moscow, in other words, subjects expressing what Russians had experienced at the hands of the enemy. To the right side of the entrance different bas-reliefs should depict the enemy receiving his due: the flight of the French from a ravaged Moscow, the battles of Borodino, Tarutino, and Maloyaroslavets. Since there was but one road to truth and salvation there should only be one entrance to the Cathedral. By the central door Kushkovsky proposed placing a bust of Alexander I and of the reigning monarch, by the side doors busts of wartime allies Emperor Francis II of Austria and King Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia. Filaret pointed out that placing the Lamb of God on top of the dome was contrary to



Christian tradition. He also felt that the seven bell towers proposed were unnecessary and that the bas-reliefs were inimical to the spirit of the church since they depicted subjects without Orthodox significance. Kushkovsky, wary of publishing the design under his own name, claimed instead that the design was that of Filaret, forcing the latter to dispatch an explanatory letter to the Synod.<sup>25</sup>

The idea of creating bas-reliefs on the outside walls of the Cathedral, found in both Kushkovsky's and Ton's original designs, was realized. The subjects of historical pictures originally proposed for a set of inside murals, however, were altered by Filaret. Is this not a fine illustration of how ideas that are deemed absurd in a milieu of national religious consciousness spawn ideas and tendencies, then mature and undergo development within the realm of high culture and professional sensitivity?

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<sup>1</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-21; V. L. Snegirev, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> Snegirev, pp. 65-66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68; Mostovskii, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Mostovskii, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> TsGIA, f. 472, op. 12, 1827-1828, d. 74, l. 12-12ob.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 64. The soil research on Sparrow Hills conducted by the Moscow architects and engineers is also discussed by Z. K. Pokrovskaia, *Arkhitektori O. I. Bove* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 75-77.

<sup>7</sup> TsGIA, f. 472, op. 17 (96(993), 1826-1829, d. 11a, ll. 143, 145.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 215-218.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 226-228.

<sup>10</sup> RPB OR, f. 737, V. P. Stasov, d. 8. 1828, ll. 6ob-7.

<sup>11</sup> TsGIA, f. 472, op. 17 (96(933), 1826-1829, d. 11a, l. 230.

<sup>12</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov, vtoroe*, t. II, No, 1509 (cited by Snegirev, p. 65).

<sup>13</sup> TsGIA, f. 742, op. 17 (96(933), 1829-1831, d. 11b, ll. 1ob-2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 8.

<sup>16</sup> V. I. Piliavskii, *Stasov arkhitektori* (Leningrad, 1963), p. 196.

<sup>17</sup> M. V. Nashchokina, "Gradostroitel'nye aspekty sooruzheniia v Moskve khrama-pamiatnika Otechestvennoi voiny 1812 goda," *Arkhitekturnoe nasledie Moskvy* (Moscow, 1988), p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> TsGIA, f. 789, op. 1, ch. II, d. 945, ll. 165-171 and f. 472, op. 12, d. 399, ll. 39-45, a text the author discovered had been signed by Tamansky himself (l. 46). The same text can be found—without a signature—in OP RPB. The design was first described and published by Nashchokina in her article "Gradostroitel'nye aspekty sooruzheniia..." pp. 70-71.

<sup>19</sup> TsGIA, f. 789, op. 1, ch. II, d. 945, ll. 166-171ob.

<sup>20</sup> T. A. Slavina, *Konstantin Ton* (Leningrad, 1989), p. 113. On page 38, Slavina writes that "on September 8, 1831 by the Kalinkin Bridge the cornerstone of the Church of St. Catherine was formally laid. On September 24, the architect brought the design for the quay [with sphinxes, opposite the Academy of Fine Arts] to Tsarskoe Selo. Evidently this was his first meeting with the Emperor. . . . A month later, Nicholas I, then in Moscow, summoned

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Ton [and] the architect went to the old capital. It was no longer a matter of creating a small parish church but an object of national significance, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.”

<sup>21</sup> A. A. Braikovskii, *Opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve: Putevoditel' dlia poseshchaiushchikh v nastoiashchie vremena khram Khrista Spasitelia* (Moscow, 1862), p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> Nashchokina, “*Gradostroitel'nye aspekty sooruzhenia. . .*,” p. 70.

<sup>23</sup> TsGIA, f. 472, op. 12, 1828, d. 399, ll. 91-91ob.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 31ob-32.

<sup>25</sup> TsGIA, f. 807, op. 1, 1836, d. 629, ll. 1-1ob and f. 797, op. 8, 1837-1839, d. 23762, ll. 1-1ob, 14ob-17ob.

### Illustration Captions

- Page 38* Design of the west façade of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior proposed by architect Avram Melnikov, 1831. Ink on paper.
- Page 39* Site plan for the Cathedral by Melnikov, 1831. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- View from Sparrow Hills. Photograph from A. Sidorov, *Moskva* (Berlin, 1928).
- Page 40* Variants of a site plan for the Cathedral by architect E. G. Malyutin, 1829. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 41* Mid-structure cross section of Malyutin’s design for the Cathedral, 1829. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 42* Principal façade of the design by architect Iosif Sharleman for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on Sparrow Hills, 1831. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Site plan for a Cathedral of Christ the Savior on Tsarytsn Meadow proposed by architect Ivan Tamansky, 1829. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 45* Design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior’s principal façade and adjoining square proposed by architect A. Kutepov, 1831. Ink and watercolor on paper.

## CONSTRUCTING THE CATHEDRAL

1839-1883

*The walls and the narthexes of the Cathedral should serve as memorial tablets for the nation. . .they should constitute a public record of words and of people.*

Konstantin Ton

### **Moscow in the 1830's and 1840's Establishing a Site for the Cathedral**

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior took almost a half century to build. Before describing this process, it is helpful to know more about the site and buildings on the site and their fate.

We should try to imagine the way Moscow looked more than a century and half ago. While most Russian cities rebuilt in the second half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century followed the principle of regularity along geometric lines, the rebuilding of Moscow did not, even in the restoration efforts following the great fire of 1812. Moscow's distinctive layout evolved over centuries. It was subject to regulation only twice, in 1775 and 1816. Although architects designed buildings in accordance with international norms, they heeded deeply ingrained national notions when fitting their buildings into the city's landscape. Moscow's exceptional beauty was imparted by its picturesque location, hilly relief, and abundant green spaces. This made it distinct from European cities and from St. Petersburg to which Russian architecture was oriented in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth.

As noted above, the late 1820's and the 1830's, when the second competition for the Cathedral took place, was a turning point in Russian culture and Russian architecture. Although the tie with the old national tradition in

Russian, especially Muscovite architecture was never abandoned, clearly what was considered beautiful and significant was neoclassical culture, the culture reborn in the epoch of the Renaissance. Russian regional and national values were secondary, imbued with purely local significance. In the neoclassical canon of the 1830's and 1840's values national rather than universal begin to appear. What had been regarded as Moscow's shortcomings—its “irregular” layout, the odd arrangement of its streets, its insufficiently “urban” look—were now being viewed as worthwhile, original.

Mikhail Zagoskin (1789-1852) was among those who hailed Moscow in the 1830's and 1840's. He found Moscow attractive because it differed from European cities. Author of several famous historical novels written after the Patriotic War of 1812, most notably, *Yury Miloslavsky*, Zagoskin is also acclaimed for a collection of descriptive essays entitled *Moscow and Muscovites*. Zagoskin is not simply enamored of Moscow's beauty, its antique quality, for him Moscow is a symbol of everything national, the embodiment of what is most characteristic and original about Russia. Zagoskin feels Moscow should be accorded special status in the art of city-building for its overall beauty, its picturesque quality, and the breadth of its panoramas:

“In the summertime ascend the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great, look around, and you will see before you not a city but an earthly sea sprinkled with buildings. This is not a poetic outburst, but an expression of truth. Except for the center of the city, where the buildings are for the most part contiguous, rare is the building you find without a tiny yard, even if it consists only of a few elderberry and acacia bushes. Everywhere the city's splendor and rustic simplicity curiously blend. There are yards, vegetable gardens, ravines, hills, even entire fields wherever you look. Moscow represents all of Russia, a country unlike those of the West.

Similarly, Moscow is unlike European cities, unlike magnificent Petersburg, foppish Berlin, Paris, Vienna, all of the European cities. It is beautiful in and of itself, not because of beauty borrowed from somewhere else.”

Yet Moscow, Zagoskin observed, was not merely picturesque. “The Russian handicraft industry thrives in Moscow with its 198 different industrial enterprises, 884 factories, and 2989 handicraft establishments. More than a fifth of the city’s 70,209 people are employed by them. Were Moscow not the ancient capital of the country, one might in all fairness call it the Russian Manchester.”<sup>1</sup>

The new location for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on the high bank of the Moskva near the Kremlin was most Moscow-like and thus praised by many. A. A. Bashilov, the senator in charge of Moscow’s Building Commission, wrote that His Imperial Highness “has deigned to allow work on a project to erect a monument, the Cathedral of the Savior, to glorify the events of 1812 where the Alekseev Monastery now stands. It involves clearing the area on top of the hill opposite the house of Prince Sergey Mikhailovich [Golitsyn], where there is a fire station and an old dwelling. The hill is next to the Moskva. A marvelous thought, one worthy of Nicholas I, who desires this new monument to face the ancient Kremlin.”<sup>2</sup> Another commentator, writing after the Cathedral was consecrated, noted that “[a]lthough the riverbank there is lower than the one on which the Kremlin stands, it nonetheless is high enough to display the Cathedral’s grandeur. [The Cathedral] harmonizes with the view of the Kremlin; its immense size does not overshadow the latter.”<sup>3</sup>

It was in fact an advantageous location. The churches located on the site of the future Cathedral had become indelibly inscribed--as the Cathedral would later--into the panorama of the Moskva’s banks viewed either from the Yauza River (Simonov Monastery side) or from the Neskuchny Gardens (now Gorky Park),

Sparrow Hills, or Zamoskvorechie. Viewed from the opposite bank of the Moskva, the Cathedral conjoined the Kremlin. To no small degree this was favored by the Great Stone Bridge next to the Cathedral.

The old Great Stone Bridge and the iron one that replaced it in the mid-nineteenth century were at a different location from present bridge which dates from the 1930's. Those bridges were further down the Moskva, on an axis with Lenivka Street, and, more importantly, were aligned differently to the embankment. The beds of the two older bridges were level with the embankment, their spans did not visually interrupt the embankment as is now the case. Also, the spans of the old bridges were not divided into lanes. One perceived these bridges as single wholes, like wide avenues.

The sites Ton suggested for the future cathedral all share a common trait: places where there were existing churches or monasteries. The real advantage of the site ultimately selected was its magnificent view. Looking out from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior one saw the Kremlin with its cathedrals, towers, and the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great. This was fundamental to the Cathedral's symbolic value.

The edict announcing the new location for the Cathedral characterized the new site as worthy of the earlier one without any of the first site's drawbacks; it was in the city's midst and in a general sense similar to the first site. In actual fact, the similarity was limited to its relation to the Moskva. Ton's cathedral, like Vitberg's, would face the river and stand at one of its high bends. But there were far more differences than similarities. A cathedral erected near the Kremlin entered a historically shaped system of vertical Moscow churches and also the panorama of the city's principal--and highly formal--ensemble, one which was oriented to the Moskva. This new, large structure together with the Kremlin and

St. Basil's on Red Square would dominate the city's center. Surrounding structures seemed to gravitate toward this mighty church. As it was being put up one observer wrote: "The Bell Tower of Ivan the Great in Moscow can serve as a standard for the height of the building: it could be placed entirely inside the church now being constructed."<sup>4</sup> In other words, a huge church roughly one hundred meters high would be situated far enough from the Kremlin so as not to look like an appendage, yet near enough for one to perceive it as being directly linked to the Kremlin.

The similarities between the placement of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and that of another central Moscow church built to memorialize a victory of the Russian people, St. Basil's Cathedral, are striking. Both were situated next to the Kremlin, sharing the panorama of the Moskva's embankment with the Kremlin. St. Basil's, although outside the Kremlin's walls, is however significantly closer to the Kremlin and therefore more firmly tied to it. St. Basil's relates to the Kremlin in yet another way: it echoes the cathedrals in the Kremlin's Cathedral Square with nine distinct, pillar-shaped churches brought together by a central "tent" and by its bell tower and side chapel.

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was linked to the vertical towers and churches of the Kremlin by contrast: with its pyramidal silhouette, smooth expressiveness, identical façades, overall compactness, and yet the form and contour of its domes correlated with Kremlin structures. Because it was located away from the Kremlin, the Cathedral's grand dimensions plus its traditional, cubiform shape made Ton's edifice a vital, distinct component of Moscow's formal, river-facing façade.<sup>5</sup>

The Alekseev Monastery, where the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was erected (and the location during the Soviet period of the enormous "Moscow"

swimming pool complex), was founded in the fourteenth century near the former Semchino village. During the second half of that century, after a fire, it was relocated for protection to the fortifications of Bely Gorod. At its former site rose the Zachatiev Monastery, some buildings of which exist to this day on Zachatiev Lane.

The main buildings of the Alekseev Monastery, its cathedral and bell tower, were classic seventeenth-century structures, striking, dome-topped edifices situated at the center of the monastery. The monastery's main church was one of the original multi-tent-roofed sanctuaries, exclusively Russian, dating from the first half of that century. The main part of the church was topped with two well-proportioned tent-like roofs. Illustrations of this church, executed on the eve of its dismantling, show that these tent-roofs are "light-admitting" rather than decorative, "blind" ones. They are similar to those of the sole remaining Moscow church of this type, the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Putniki on Chekhov Street. All Saints Church, adjacent to the Alekseev Monastery, was also raised to build the Cathedral.<sup>6</sup>

A new location for the Alekseev Monastery was slow in coming. Initially, Izmailov Island was proposed, subsequently, Sparrow Hills where the Meshchansky Almshouse (the former Andreev Monastery) was located. A third proposal was the one finally implemented. In 1837, the Alekseev Monastery was moved to the site of the former seventeenth-century parish Church of the Holy Cross with its tented bell tower in Krasnoye Selo (now Krasnoselskaya Street).<sup>7</sup> During the 1812 war the church had been pillaged by the French. Although some of the monastery buildings were put up almost immediately, the monastery was not finished until the 1850's. Architect Mikhail Bykovsky (1801-85) was its designer. In 1853, the Church of Aleksey Man of God, a heated hospital chapel, was built in



the monastery. Four years later the chapel was enlarged and a surrounding wall with towers added. After the 1917 revolution, only St. Aleksey's Church, radically rebuilt and bereft of its domes, All Saints Church, erected 1887-1891, and part of the Church of the Holy Cross remained from the monastery complex. The monastery's wall with its towers and another church were taken down when Krasnoselskaya Street was widened. The gravestones in the cemetery situated on the monastery's grounds disappeared at this time.

The manifesto announcing the building of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was timed to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Patriotic War of 1812. In its wake work began on acquiring private properties at the proposed site. As before, project management was placed in the hands of a special Commission. Chaired by Governor-General Golitsyn, the Commission incorporated a Building and Artistic Council of two architects and two engineers that had been appointed earlier. Ivan Tamansky and Osip Bove (who died in 1834) were the Council's two architects.<sup>8</sup> By 1838, the Council's members included military engineers German and Maksimov, architects Mikhail Bykovsky, Afanasy Grigoriev, A. I. Mironovsky, Evgraf Tyurin, and Tamansky.<sup>9</sup> Konstantin Ton, the design's creator, was made superintendent of work and chief architect.

In that same year, 1838, construction got underway. The buildings of the Alekseev Monastery and All Saints Church were taken down and excavations made. On July 27, the foundation was begun with stone procured from the village of Grigorovo in the Ruzsk District, the same foundation stone chosen earlier by Vitberg. The best stone from the quarry was used. The foundation was laid in such a way as to ensure that the entire underpinning of the church formed a single uniform mass. Work proceeded at a brisk pace. It was decided to schedule the cornerstone-laying ceremony for September 10, 1839 to mark the twenty-fifth

anniversary of the end of the war with the French and the March 1814 taking of Paris. The ceremony coincided with the dedication of a memorial column at the battlefield near Borodino, a column executed in the style of an ancient Russian tented church, the first of fourteen monuments designed by Domenico Adamini to commemorate the 1812 war. The dedication of the monument at Borodino and the cornerstone laying for the monumental cathedral became a grand celebration honoring Russia's historic victory.

The Borodino ceremony was most festive. One-hundred twenty thousand soldiers assembled, forming "close-ordered columns around the monument, with infantry on two sides and cavalry and artillery on the third." The dedicatory party was led by Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, Emperor Nicholas I, and the abbess of a monastery at the battlefield built in memory of the abbess's husband, General A. A. Tuchkov, who had been killed in the great battle there. According to one account, when the procession emerged from the Borodino church and approached the monument and as drums rolled, music played, and canticles were being intoned, a sunbeam cut through the clouds, magnificently illuminating the scene.

"At the moment in the divine liturgy when the monument was consecrated, the roar of one-hundred twenty cannon blended with the 'Hurrah' of the one-hundred twenty thousand amassed troops. . . . At the end of the religious ceremony, the Emperor with an extended suite of attendants in tow made up in part of veterans of that great era rode past this great memorial and lowered his sword before it. Then the entire army, each corps, each regiment, and each of the standards honored the memorial column in the same manner. . . . The ceremony, which was over at two o'clock, had a profound effect on the hearts and minds of all those present.

“August 29. Three days later, the Battle of Borodino, known also as the Battle near Moscow, was reenacted. Troops were positioned in the places where troops had been in the cold weather of that historic time. The battle began with the attack on the village of Borodino. All aspects of that memorable day were reenacted with full accuracy. Fortifications still extant were taken and repulsed several times over. . . .”<sup>10</sup>

The cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Cathedral followed the same scenario as it had before on Sparrow Hills, and was as grand, colorful, and well attended. Scaffolding was erected around the place where the ceremony took place designed to accommodate ten thousand people, and a chapel adorned with images of various saints constructed. Three thousand troops who had participated in the Borodino maneuvers ringed the foundation together with a battalion of cadets from the Moscow Military Academy. Twenty-one infantry battalions and six cavalry squadrons lined the route along which the religious procession passed as it made its way from Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin to the place where the cornerstone was to be laid. Following a liturgy in Uspensky Cathedral, the ceremony’s participants assembled on Red Square. “Red Square was like a huge church where under the dome of Heaven a solemn sacrifice would be offered.”<sup>11</sup>

At 11:30, when Nicholas I arrived with his suite at Cathedral Square, the procession began. It passed the Imperial Senate, leaving the Kremlin via the St. Nicholas Gate, and, moving in the direction of the Moskva River Bridge, followed the embankment to the Alexander Gardens, and proceeded along Volkhonka Street to the site of the future cathedral. Leading the procession were disabled veterans of the 1812 war. Behind them came the miraculous Iberian and Vladimir icons of the Virgin, and behind the icons walked officials of the Commission for erecting the cathedral, generals who had participated in the 1812 war, a hundred deacons,

priests, and archpriests, nine archimandrites, three bishops, and the Metropolitan of Moscow. The Emperor, mounted on horseback, followed with members of the royal family including the heir to the throne, the future Emperor Alexander II. Senators, ministers of state, members of the Court, and high-ranking military officers came next. Bells rang, the finest church choirs in Russia—the Court and the Synod Choirs—sang, and Metropolitan Filaret addressed those present. After the singing of a *Te Deum* and messages wishing long life to the imperial family, artillery located on the embankment opposite the Kremlin were fired, church bells began to ring, and in inverse order the procession returned to the Kremlin. The official description of the event ends as follows: “This day will remain forever in the history of Russia, in particular, in the history of Russian art which will acquire in the cathedral an eternal and worthy monument!”<sup>12</sup>

The untoward fate of the first attempt to build the cathedral nonetheless hung like a specter over the new edifice’s construction, especially at the beginning. State and church authorities tried again and again to ameliorate negative impressions that lingered in Muscovites’ minds about the subject. The memoirs of contemporaries testify to this as do Metropolitan Filaret’s words at the second cornerstone-laying ceremony and his remarks a year earlier when objects from the first cornerstone-laying were transferred to Uspensky Cathedral, symbolic evidence of the final rejection of Alexander I’s decision to erect the Cathedral on Sparrow Hills. News of the transfer drove Vitberg to despair: no longer was there any hope of building the Cathedral according to his design. In his remarks at the transfer ceremony Filaret “drew attention specifically to the doubts which had arisen in the public’s mind. . . . He attempted to dispel them by citing the example of the Tabernacle which had not been set up where Jacob had his vision . . . and the Temple of Solomon which was not erected where the Tabernacle had been.”<sup>13</sup>

During the construction of the cathedral, situated now in the center of Moscow, the symbolic comparison of the deeds and ideas of the Russian emperors and the notion of viewing the 1812 war through the prism of historical events drawn from the Old Testament, Jerusalem, and Israel, acquired additional significance. It helped to calm the doubts, fears, and negative premonitions elicited by the change in site. At the end of the ceremony, after retrieving the objects from the cornerstone, Filaret approached the Emperor and pronounced: “David conceived of the idea of building the Temple in Jerusalem, but it was Solomon who did this. In the same way it is pleasing to the Lord that the idea of this great edifice, visited upon Alexander, will be fulfilled by Nicholas.”<sup>14</sup>

Yet a sense of fateful misfortune, perhaps even tragedy, like the Sword of Damocles, hung over the Cathedral. Even after the official transfer of objects from the old foundation site to the one, rumors continued to circulate. The actual start of construction work confirmed the worst fears of many. “[S]imple folk said: ‘Woe to the workmen who lay a finger on the Alekseev Monastery.’ And right they were. On the very first day of work in the presence of a large crowd a workman who was taking down the cross [of the monastery church] fell and was crushed!”<sup>15</sup>

Because of circumstances such as these, in his address at the cornerstone-laying ceremony at the new site Filaret stressed the theme of David and Solomon as founders of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

“Most Pious Sovereign!

“In accordance with Divine Providence, in certain important matters a lofty idea is destined for a chosen one but to another is destined its majestic fulfillment.

“And so, David, out of gratitude to God for affirming his kingdom, wished to create a Temple to Him in Jerusalem. . . . A splendid thought, devised by one prophet and approved by another. The two prophets, however, could not divine

Providence's destiny; it revealed itself: God designated Solomon to execute David's wish. . . .

“And so, Alexander the Blest, out of gratitude to God for saving his kingdom, thought of creating . . . a Temple to Christ the Savior in that capital that had burned to the ground to save the Fatherland and was reborn from its ashes. His thought was proclaimed and blessed by the church. Thou alone of His brothers stood by His side. This we now understand as the Almighty directing Thee to carry out the sacred vow of Thy Sovereign Brother with Thy Sovereign hand.”<sup>16</sup>

Filaret, the highest Russian church authority, sanctifies the change in site by conflating two emperors' intentions. His train of thought is telling, giving expression to specific historical notions in terms of the times' general outlook. Comprehending events of the present through the prism of sacred history was characteristic of both religious and secular public thinking in nineteenth-century Russia. Parallels with testimony from the Bible were routinely drawn in support of efforts to surmount sundry physical and moral problems. While it may be hard now to fathom this, viewing the world in terms of the standards and events contained in the principal book of Christians was then quite natural, reasonable, obvious. Also, it harked back to other facts related to the Cathedral's creation and its meaning. The events of the Patriotic War of 1812 were compared to the formation of the Kingdom of Israel, the building of the Cathedral to the erection of Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the ancient churches of Byzantium (the Second Rome). Moscow, heir to the great Muscovite sovereigns, was viewed as a New Jerusalem, the Third Rome.

Once the original cornerstone was laid on Sparrow Hills, symbols associating the Cathedral with ancient and modern Rome were crowded out by symbols having a Christian, Orthodox, and national historical significance. The

new symbols were associated with Russian culture and the notion of a Russian national character. Russian nationality became the great all-embracing idea of nineteenth-century Russia. Nicholas I was its spokesman in the realm of government policy and in the realm of the most “governmental” of arts, architecture. This is but one expression of that change in outlook begat by the 1812 war. The abortive Decembrist Uprising of 1825 against autocracy had the effect of strengthening and reinforcing these ideas. The theme of David and Solomon reemerged in the building of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. It became an integral part of the cathedral plan, appearing when the site was changed and it influenced the style of the building, attracting another architect whose work embodied the distinctive qualities of nineteenth-century Russian architecture that succeeded neoclassical and empire designs.

In Herzen’s memoirs and those of other contemporaries, Vitberg’s personal tragedy—he was accused of corruption--overshadows the tragedy of how construction of the first cathedral was begun without adequate analysis of the site chosen for it. But that is not really the issue. As noted above, the decade and a half that followed approval of the first design for the cathedral and the building of the edifice according to Ton’s new design proved fatal for Vitberg and his creation. And not only for him, also for many artists working in the classical mode, especially the older ones. The choice of Ton’s design marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of architecture. The process meant a change in generations, and a painful one at that, especially in St. Petersburg because of interference from above. In 1831, in order to make space in the Academy of Fine Arts for the then young architects Konstantin Ton and Alexander Bryullov who had just returned from paid apprenticeships abroad, the two Mikhailov brothers were forced to retire. A year later, Carlo Rossi was also retired. In Moscow

analogous events were less dramatic. In 1832, after long ruminations, obviously realizing that changes in the realm of architecture were not auspicious for him, Domenico Giliardi, one of the leading masters of post-conflagration Moscow announced he would return to his Swiss homeland. His faithful comrade-in-arms, Apollon Grigoriev continued work in Moscow, but his designs could hardly be said to inform Moscow architecture of the 1830's and 1840's. In 1834, Osip Bove died and Mikhail Bykovsky was appointed in his stead. Over the next three decades, Bykovsky and Ton would dominate the development of Moscow architecture.

<sup>1</sup> M. N. Zagoskin, "Moskva i moskvichi," *Polnoe sobranie sochineii*, VII (Moscow, 1898), pp. 4, 12, 24, 105, 297, 116.

<sup>2</sup> RPB OP, f. G-IV, d. 691, l. 66, ob.

<sup>3</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> "Kratkie svedeniia o sooruzhaemom v Moskve khrame vo imia Khrista Spasitelia," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennykh del*, 1838, ch. 29, No. 8, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> E. I. Kirichenko, "Arkhitekturnye ansambli Moskvy 1830-1860-kh godov," *Arkhitekturnoe nasledstvo*, vyp. 24, (1976), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Pamiatniki arkhitektury Moskvy. Belyi gorod*, Moscow, 1989, p., 37.

<sup>7</sup> A. A. Braikovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> TsGIA, f. 1287, op. 8, 1835-1839 gg., d. 23, ll. 24-26.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 1263, op. 1, d. 1629, 1838, l. 3, 75ob-79.

<sup>10</sup> "Zapiska vitebskogo, molgilevskogo i smolenskogo general-gubernatora, kniazia Golitsyna," *Russkaia starina*, 1891, LXIX, January, pp. 105, 107-109.

<sup>11</sup> A. Orlov, *Torzhestvo zalozeniia khrama Khrista Spastelia v Moskve 1839 goda sentiabria 10-go dnia* (Moscow, 1839), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> "Perenos pamiatnikov zalozeniia khrama Khrista Spasitelia s Vorob'evykh gor v Uspenskii sobor," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 1838, No. 53, July 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> T. P. Passek, *Iz dal'nykh let*, II (Moscow, 1963), p. 146 cited by T. A. Slavina, *Konstantin Ton* (Leningrad, 1989), p. 123.

<sup>16</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

### Illustration Captions

*Page 50* Emperor Nicholas I. 1850's colored lithograph of an unidentified artist's portrait after an original by Frants Kryuger.

*Page 51* View of the Stone Bridge and surrounding area in Moscow from the Small Wooden Bridge and the Naugolny Tower. Delabart drawing in a 1799 print by M. G. Eikhler.



*Page 52*      Alekseev Female Monastery (founded in 1625) viewed from the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral. 1838 oil by K. Rabus from the private collection of Igor Tsvetkov.

*Page 53*      Alekseev Monastery, Church of the Exaltation of the Cross (1682, rebuilt in 1857).

Church of Aleksey, Man of God. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., 1901

## **Ton's Design**

Konstantin Ton (1794-1881), a young and relatively unknown architect, became famous overnight because of his plan for the Cathedral. Articles in periodicals of the time invariably emphasize his role as a trail-blazer, characterizing his design as a turning point in Russian architecture and calling it the prototype for a new Russian architectural style. The authors all agree, to quote the words of one, that the Cathedral of Christ the Savior “is the beginning of a new epoch in Russian art. It will be the first monument in Russian architecture”<sup>1</sup>

“New” Russian architecture meant architecture reviving old, i.e., medieval, national traditions. And the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was indeed that. Ton was the forebear of a new epoch in Russian art, the author of the first programmatic edifice of a new trend. In terms of influence exercised on the development of Russian architecture he had no equal. The building of churches in the Russian style enshrined in the Cathedral spread throughout Russia. From only episodic appearances in country estates or ancient monasteries and town fortresses, it was transformed into a massive phenomenon, accepted everywhere, in towns and cities, on estates, in villages.

Ton, an exceptionally hardworking individual, designed a large number of churches, most of them in St. Petersburg and its environs. Cathedrals designed by Ton were erected in Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk, Yelets, Sveaborg, Tikhvin, and other Russian cities. The total number of churches constructed according to Ton's designs cannot be accurately determined. In addition to planning actual churches, Ton created two albums of model church designs. In 1835, recommended by his loyal patron, Aleksey Olenin, to the ober-procurator of the Orthodox Church's synod, Stepan Nechaev, Ton was asked as one “known for his superb taste in old

Russian architecture” to compile an “atlas” of model designs for church construction. To help fulfill this assignment, Ton was given the specifications of old Russian churches in the synod’s possession. The first album, published in 1839, is comprised largely of designs executed by the architect between 1830 and 1834. When it was published, Nicholas I issued an order: “[I]n creating designs for Orthodox churches, the old Byzantine style of architecture should be preserved to as great a degree as possible. Ton’s model plans should be consulted.” The synod, however, did not deem the first album wholly satisfactory. It contained designs mainly for cathedral-sized structures, while the need was for design models for “smaller churches that did not require special decor, in particular, churches for villages.” In response, Ton created another series of designs, largely for small masonry and wooden churches. They were published in 1844 as a separate volume.<sup>2</sup>

The Emperor’s order to build churches that mimicked old Byzantine architecture in effect mandated this kind of architecture. Contemporaries felt the need to write flattering things about Ton such as “Old Russian architecture is being resurrected in churches with golden domes. In the hands of a skillful practitioner it acquires an original, Russian, Ton-esque quality.”<sup>3</sup>

The design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the two albums of model church architecture made Ton’s ecclesiastical buildings famous. They, more than anything else, defined his contribution to the history of Russian architecture. However, he also designed a number of successful secular buildings, among them the St. Petersburg Railroad Station in Moscow and the Moscow Station in Petersburg, the famous quay along the Neva adorned with two sphinxes opposite the building of the Academy of Fine Arts in Petersburg, and the Maly Theater in Moscow. Ton also put out an album of model designs for structures in

rural areas. A remarkably skillful builder, he introduced many innovations and improvements to his buildings, in the case of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior the way the foundation was laid, its heating system, and network of inside drains.<sup>4</sup>

For Moscow, the significance of the Cathedral's construction was manifold. The transfer to Ton of the responsibility for building it is associated with two broad, yet inextricably entwined phenomena. Erection of the Cathedral marked the boundary between two building epochs in Moscow's history: the end of what is usually referred to as post-conflagration architecture and the beginning of the neo-Russian style in central Moscow. In 1839, with Ton's plan for the Cathedral in place, structures were being built which to this day define the look of the Kremlin and its central façade along the Moskva, namely, the Great Kremlin Palace and the Armory. Both were built in the Russian style; both are striking representatives of this distinctive new stage in Russian architecture. This transformation of the city's center proceeded in an entirely different way from what previously had been the case. Instead of reconstructing existing squares and streets and/or creating new ones to organize public space, building activity took place largely along the banks of the Moskva. The panoramas, the silhouette of the ancient capital were altered by renewing the system of churches characteristic of the city's past, in particular those churches located on the river or viewed from it.

Ton contributed to this process not only with his Cathedral design but with the bell tower of the Simonov Monastery as well. Although the site had been selected by another Moscow architect, Yevgraf Tyurin, erection of the bell tower, like the unveiling of the monument to Minin and Pozharsky on Red Square, depended in part on patriotic feeling evoked by the 1812 war, for the monastery contained the graves of two heroic monks from the fourteenth-century Battle of Kulikovo when Russia threw off the Tartar yoke. As the site for the new bell

tower Tyurin had chosen not the center of the monastery but its periphery, in accordance with eighteenth-century tradition. The Simonov Monastery's tower was transformed into a large gate church, much like those in Moscow's Novospassky and Don Monasteries. Those monasteries' bell towers related to the Kremlin in similar ways, and, although located at opposite ends of the city, both were on the Moskva. One could say that they flanked the Kremlin on the east and on the west. It is possible that Ton sensed this distinctive symmetry. The placement of the monasteries and their bell towers vis-à-vis the Kremlin may have buttressed his idea of echoing this by placing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in a position analogous to that of St. Basil's on Red Square. Ton's design for the Simonov Monastery's bell tower brings to mind the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great in the Kremlin and that of the Novodevichy Monastery; it emphasized the kinship of these three structures.

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the bell tower of the Simonov Monastery were among the first projects that signaled a new stage in the city's development. They are associated with the mid-nineteenth-century revival of Moscow's historic system of vertical churches and bell towers, a trend which would soon become widespread in both the city and its environs. Examples are the bell tower of St. Sophia's Church on the St. Sophia embankment (now the embankment of Morris Torez), of the Ivanov Monastery, the bell tower of the Church of St. Nikola Mokry (located on Vasiliev Street which ran from the former Moskva Bridge to St. Basil's, the bell tower disappeared in the 1930's when a new bridge and the surrounding area were rebuilt), and also new monastery bell towers constructed on streets leading to the Kremlin and to Kitay-gorod: Strastny, Nikitin (destroyed), Rozhdestvensky, and bell towers for new churches built on the outskirts of the city.<sup>5</sup>

The trailblazing significance of Ton's design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the unfailingly favorable disposition toward him of Nicholas I inevitably resulted in the association of official nationality in architecture with his name. The striving for nationality and national character in art, however, was a broad phenomenon. Hardly limited to official actions, it predated the state-endorsed policy and continued to thrive long after the notion ceased to be de rigueur. It should be pointed out that art, especially large-format art, is not restricted by politics nor can it be viewed simply as a mouthpiece for specific political programs. This is especially true in architecture, the abstract language of which is capable of expressing only the most generalized characteristics of any epoch.

Another point that should be made in this context is that Russians' relationship today to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is quite different from that of their countrymen before and after the 1917 Revolution. For Russia's democratically-oriented intelligentsia, the Cathedral was the incarnation of official nationality in architecture. Many architects, artists, and art critics in the second half of the nineteenth century were united in their hostility to Ton. And not only to Ton as the author of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, but also to Ton as an architect in general, as a creative individual.

In 1910, in discussions surrounding the reconstruction of Ton's Moscow Railway Station in St. Petersburg, the project's designer, Alexander Pomerantsev, proposed what from today's point of view would seem to be the only sensible solution—to preserve the original building as a historical and cultural monument and add a new section to it in the spirit of the original building. The prominent artist Alexander Benois, however, subjected this proposal to scathing criticism; his sarcasm and mocking of the architect was extraordinary. Benois was indignant

because of what seemed to him to be an absurd idea: preserving an inconsequential structure that disfigured the city. His articles forced the Ministry of Communication to remove Pomerantsev from the project and to announce a competition for a new station design.

Ton's design for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, like any work of art that initiates a new developmental stage, does not reject but rather draws on what came before. Is this not a general rule in the way things evolve? History is based on a similar principle: there is a step forward, whereby each successive stage relies on the experience of what came before, followed by a rejection of that experience. Moreover, in the process of negating, emphasis is placed on what was previously of secondary importance, and what was dominant becomes secondary. To prove its independence the new generation asserts its difference from its fathers, not wishing to be associated with the fathers and what they did. Present in every work of art is a dialectic between that which is new and that which is inherited.<sup>6</sup>

A comparison of Ton's and Vitberg's designs for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior demonstrates this. Ton is Vitberg's heir in so far as he relies on Christian dogma for the Cathedral's content and symbolism, but Vitberg's challenger in the way he interprets these principles. In Ton's design the theme of a national cathedral-monument, weakly enunciated in Vitberg's, is clearly and programmatically stated. The new building was conceived by Ton as a monument to a great feat of the Russian people, one that drew its strength from deep bonds with the Russian land. The composition, style, and, especially, the location of the Cathedral tilt toward the Russian national tradition. These, inimitably characteristic of and distinctive to old Russian architecture, are employed in a building on a holy site at the very heart of Moscow, next to the Kremlin.

The programmatic change of Orthodox religious edifice transformed into Russian historical monument, a national cathedral-monument, also finds expression in the church's altars, the principal one dedicated to the birth of Christ and secondary ones dedicated to St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker and St. Alexander Nevsky. This also marked a return to a time-honored tradition. The original proclamation announcing the building of the Cathedral was issued on December 25 (Old Style), Christmas, the feast of Christ's birth. Thus, Christmas became associated with the banishing of the enemy from Russia. Votive and memorial churches all over Russia were dedicated to saints' days or feast days on which memorable events occurred. For the Cathedral additional grounding in this old tradition came in the form of a second proclamation issued in 1814: "December 25th is the day of the Christ's Birth. From this day on December 25th is ordained as a day of thanksgiving in the Church for our Savior's Birth and in memory of how the Church and the Russian State were saved from the invasion of the Galls and those who spoke in twenty tongues."<sup>7</sup>

Ton's design for Christ the Savior drew on models of old Russian cathedral churches, models grand as well as traditional. Russia's ancient temples were inspired by Byzantine churches which have five domes and four pillars and façade arches whose decorative curvilinear tops (*zakomary*) express the buildings' vaulting. The Cathedral recreates the basic scheme of five domes and four pillars. It also reproduces several secondary characteristics of its fully executed prototypes which have important symbolic significance: for example, the keel-shaped outlines of the curved upper wall sections typical of Moscow churches of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They can be seen in the Kremlin's Cathedral of the Annunciation, the church of the Moscow tsars, and in the Church of the Deposition nearby.



Another distinctive characteristic of old Russian cathedrals which Ton imparted to Christ the Savior was a covered gallery encircling the church. In old Russian churches the galleries were lower, imparting a notched silhouette and vertical look to the churches. Ton's Christ the Savior has a two-tiered gallery. Its gallery and choir lofts, though drawn from different eras, are synthesized and united as was the case in many examples of old Russian architecture (choir lofts are prevalent in churches dating from the most ancient, pre-Mongol period). The Cathedral's two-tiered gallery is the same height as the rest of the edifice. This makes the exterior of the Cathedral a single whole. The double nature of the interior—an internal nucleus with a gallery around it—is not revealed by the façade.

Harking back to ancient Russian prototypes as well is the form of the Cathedral's main dome and of the four domes of the bell towers. All have the characteristic onion shape of old Russian architecture of the Moscow period, that is, of churches dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

In several other compositional aspects and in overall appearance, however, the Cathedral displays a kinship with the neoclassical tradition in which Ton had been nurtured. In many ways it is a unique synthesis of characteristics distinctive to both old Russian and more modern architectural styles, characteristics not always easy to distinguish. Although the Cathedral has distinctly Russian details, in its overall composition other prototypes can be identified. In the massive, cubiform space and the peculiarities of five domes, a large one on a wide drum and the others relatively small, one recognizes a scheme popular in neoclassical architecture which St. Petersburg architects were especially fond of. It is a scheme frequently employed in the designs submitted to the competition for St. Isaac's Cathedral as well as to that for Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

The layout of the Cathedral is equally heterogeneous. It is cruciform, but it forms a cross not by means of porticoes extended out from a rectangle or a square. The cross is inherent to the Cathedral's space. It is an even-armed cross, the Greek or St. Andrew's cross, not the elongated Latin one.

The myth about the Cathedral's Byzantine prototype in the form of an equal-armed cross arose from the desire to see in the Cathedral's architecture a renaissance of the principles of Byzantine and old Russian artistic forms. "During the time of Great Prince Saint Vladimir of Kiev Byzantium transmitted this plan to Russia. All ancient Russian churches were built according to this plan."<sup>8</sup> This assertion, although hardly corresponding to reality, sanctifies by authority of tradition a complex shape and form for a building design rare for its time. Cruciform-shaped churches, while not usual, are indeed encountered in old Russian architecture. The famous Church of the Ascension at Kolomenskoe (1532) is cruciform. Ton could not help but be aware of its existence as an example of the old Russian style. Other cruciform churches of the early Petrine era the architect may not have been aware of. Two of the most famous Baroque-style churches in St. Petersburg, the Cathedral of the Smolny Monastery designed by Bartolomeo Rastrelli and the Voенно-Nikolsky Cathedral designed by Savva Chevakinsky employ the Greek cross. Ton could not help but know them both since he was a native of Petersburg and had studied at the St. Petersburg Academy of Art, and he profited from the experience of his predecessors. During the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna (1741-62), European architectural styles began to evolve in Russia. It was a time when, simultaneously, a conscious effort was made to express Russian originality by examining ancient national traditions.

The Cathedral's façades correspond to the Greek-cross plan. They are identical in composition and appearance (each arm of the cross was approximately

90 meters wide). The façades differ only in the subject-matter of the sculpture placed on them. The Cathedral's façades are uniform in a compositional sense; the east and west façades differ in content, but not in meaning. The notion of having façades on all four sides is a dominant architectural feature of traditional Orthodox churches. Orthodox churches reign over the surrounding area, they are visible from all sides, and their composition reflects this. The church building so familiar in Europe, one included as part of a settled residential area and not intended to be visually grasped except by means of its main, west façade, is unknown in Russia. In this respect Ton's Cathedral was a typical work of Russian architecture, an expression of Russia's architectural tradition.

Although the architectural look of the Cathedral was defined in 1832, because of the long construction time, it was altered more than once. Changes were constantly introduced; one has only to compare the originally approved design to the building that actually was erected. And the changes have something in common: they all tend to make the Cathedral look more like Moscow's most famous historic monuments. The first and most important of these innovations dates from the 1840's. A band of false arches resting on columns girding the façades at the window level is introduced. It reproduced a characteristic and readily recognized particularity of the façades of Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin (which had been borrowed from churches of old Vladimir, in particular, from Vladimir's Uspensky Cathedral). In numerous descriptions of the Cathedral special note is made of the band of arches being like "that found on the façade of Moscow's Uspensky Cathedral and of other ancient churches that adorn the old cities of our Fatherland."<sup>9</sup> The look of the Cathedral was altered in other ways as well. Ribbing was added to the domes of the bell towers making them reminiscent of the domes of St. Basil's smaller towers. The base of these domes was

embellished with a small decorative band of keel-shaped *kokoshniki*, which echo in miniature the keel-shaped *zakomara* ornamentation at the top of the Cathedral's façades.

In 1851 Ton introduced major changes. He surrounded the windows of the drum of the large central dome with an arcade analogous to that circling the façades, and to the dome itself he added the same ribbing that had been added earlier to the small domes of the bell towers. The base of the large dome also now echoed the bell tower domes with a small band of decorative, keel-shaped *kokoshniki*. In addition, the *kokoshniki* were embellished with shells analogous to those adorning the shields at the top of the walls of Archangel Cathedral in the Kremlin. In a report about these changes submitted to Moscow Governor-General Count Arseny Zakrevsky, Ton observed: "In the drawings approved by His Majesty of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior stars were proposed for the gilded smooth surface of the large dome and ribs for the four small domes. Subsequently, architect Ton, as the result of consultations with artists has decided that the large dome, because of its height, should have, instead of stars, ribbing such as that found on the small domes. In this way all five domes harmonize to a far greater degree with the overall size and style of the edifice. Architect Ton has the honor to present his opinion for Your Highness's judgment...."<sup>10</sup>

So, the symbolism of the Cathedral's exterior made it harmonize with the Kremlin's cathedrals. In acquiring these symbols, the Cathedral acquired the status of those cathedrals and became an important official sacred place. Evidence of the Cathedral's deliberate orientation toward ancient Russian churches, especially those in the Kremlin, is found even in the number of windows in the main apse. The apse, as well as the other façades, had a threefold window arrangement. In 1853, Metropolitan Filaret explained this to Governor-General Zakrevsky: "In

ancient cathedral churches, for example, in Uspensky Cathedral, on the east wall there are three windows, referring of course to the threefold light of the Most Holy Trinity. Similarly, on the east side of the Cathedral of Christ, now in the process of being created, there are three windows. These windows thus are in accord with ancient church custom and to close them off is not appropriate. Indeed, for illuminating the altar they would be most valuable. To fit them with stained glass with a depiction of saints or of the Holy Cross in the middle window would be appropriate to the apse and would add to the splendor of the altar.”<sup>11</sup>

To complete the description of the Cathedral’s exterior, mention should be made of its bells. Fourteen of them which were cast at Moscow’s Finlyansky bell foundry hung in the Cathedral’s four towers. All were unique not only in a musical sense but also in an artistic one, for they were decorated with bas-reliefs, ornamentation, and inscriptions. An object of special pride was the large ceremonial bell weighing 1654 poods (some 26 tons, or 26,464 kilos). On it were depicted figures deemed important by Church and government officials, namely, those of the Deisis chain--the Savior, the Mother of God, and John the Baptist--and, lower on the surface, depictions of Emperors Alexander I, Nicholas I, and Alexander II in the form of medallions. The bell next in size, the feast-day bell, weighed 970 poods (15.5 tons, or 15,520 kilos) and was decorated with images of Moscow Metropolitans Pyotr, Aleksey, Iona, and Filip. Third in size, the “poly-balm” bell, weighed 635 poods (about 10 tons or 10,160 kilos) and was inscribed with bas-reliefs of three holy men, Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, Alexander Nevsky, and Zosima of Solovetsk. Bells rung daily were hung in descending order according to their weight.<sup>12</sup>

In 1851, when the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was only partly finished, an article about it without any attribution as to author or source appeared in the

Moscow press. Appended to the article, which was cited frequently over the years, was a sketch of the Cathedral and a table comparing its height to that of the three other landmark church edifices of the ancient capital, the Church of the Savior na Boru in the Kremlin, the oldest church in Moscow (demolished in the 1930's), Uspensky Cathedral, and the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great.<sup>13</sup>

By 1858 the first--and most important--stage in the building of the Cathedral had been completed. The structure, freed of its timber superstructure, displayed its gigantic volume in full glory. From that time on the Cathedral formed an integral part of Moscow's landscape. It towered over other structures, over the trees of the Alexander Gardens. Upon entering Moscow from the south or southwest it was visible from a distance of more than ten versts (nearly seven miles).

The Cathedral's enormous size was intentional. It underscored the significance of the building, and it testified to the Cathedral's uniqueness as a church, a cathedral of cathedrals if you will. Sketches of the time convey its disproportionate quality unabashedly, including one done after the Cathedral's completion in 1881 by the famous Russian artist Apollinary Vasnetsov. The elevation of the Cathedral site was accentuated by semicircular support walls along the edges of the plaza in which it stood and by a double flight of steps leading down to the embankment from the central axis of the building. From the embankment two additional sets of steps led to the river—to the Jordan was the implied meaning.

In the course of construction changes were made not only to the overall appearance and to the façades of the Cathedral but also to its setting. The plaza in which the Cathedral stood underwent several design stages. The first, approved by the Emperor in 1832, called for a huge equilateral square with the cathedral at its center. It reflected a typical city-planning principal where the abstract idea

subordinated all else. Because the sides of the original cathedral plaza did not line up with existing streets in the area, in 1855 a new design was drawn up with grounds in the shape of a trapezoid. This plan was further defined and corrected in 1875. Later, with the aim of creating more convenient entrances and also with the idea of glorifying another historic event, the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, a memorial bell tower 100 sazhen (213 meters) high was planned for the west side of the Cathedral's plaza. Designed by Semyon Dmitriev, Ton's staff assistant, this plan formed the basis for the grounds with steps, ramps, and small round plazas ultimately realized.

Dmitriev worked on various designs for the Cathedral's grounds. Though they differ from one another, they basically synthesize ideas expressed earlier by Kikin and Tamansky. The grounds of Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg with their monuments to Kutuzov and Barclay de Tolly clearly influenced Dmitriev. For its four corners he proposed monuments to Alexander I, Nicholas I, Kutuzov, and Barclay de Tolly and for the north side entrance to the Cathedral's plaza, that is, from the Kremlin and Volkhonka sides, chapels in honor of the Smolensk and Vladimir icons of the Mother of God. The Smolensk icon is associated with Kutuzov and the historic events of 1812, the Vladimir Mother of God is one of Moscow's most sacred objects. A desire was also expressed to move two obelisks formed from arms taken from the enemy that had been placed near the Arsenal in the Kremlin to the slope leading down from the Cathedral to the Moskva. And, it was proposed to mount on the posts of the bronze fence surrounding the plaza bronze busts of the heroes of the 1812 war.<sup>14</sup> In 1878, a new design for the site with slightly reduced west and east sides was given official approval.

In reviving the Russian tradition of locating a church at the center of a square, the designers gave the *square itself* architectural value. Emphasis was

placed on the church and not on a square plus surrounding buildings. The square is treated as a huge pedestal. It became the footing for a gigantic church, conveying a sculptural quality to the church as a whole. After construction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was completed, trees that would not grow too tall and shrubs were planted on its plaza and elaborate flower beds were laid out there. The structures envisaged by Dmitriev were not realized because of their cost. In the end, building costs for the plaza, embankment, and slopes had to be met by the Moscow City Duma.

In the process of redesigning the Cathedral's plaza, Dmitriev refashioned the façades, bringing them closer to the aesthetic norms of the mid-1870's, that is, he made them less severe and ascetic. This design, signed by Ton and Dmitriev, called for a rich sculptural décor modeled on the architecture of ancient churches of Vladimir and Suzdal. It would have wrapped the entire exterior of the Cathedral with a magnificent and elaborate covering that reflected a superb knowledge of old Russian prototypes and free use of their attributes. Expensive as well as difficult to execute, the design was not realized.

The interior of the Cathedral underwent even greater changes than the façades. Its direction was similar to that of the remake of the exterior, namely, great emphasis was placed on "Russian" qualities. Moreover, since the original design of the interior was neoclassical, the change was more radical. The original design called for sculptural decoration using exclusively the styles and motifs of classical fine art. The interior actually realized was in the Russian style, i.e., not sculptural. Rather, the walls were decorated with murals that followed Orthodox church-building norms, including that of old Russian churches, both in terms of subject and style.



As noted above, the design of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was constantly changing while the building was being erected. For this reason one should view it as an artistic monument, one which embodies the most poignant tendencies not only of the time when its design was approved but those too of the entire half century of its construction. Discrete parts of the Cathedral reflect discrete stages in the artistic process of its creation. The earliest stage, 1830 to 1850, relates to the façades themselves while the high reliefs adorning them are a manifestation of a much later stage, 1846 to 1863. The murals inside the Cathedral correspond to an even later stage, 1860 to 1880, the church's furnishings and plate to the final years of construction, 1870 to 1883.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, Part Two," *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, IV, Pt. 1 (1838), p. 196 (the article repeats, word for word, one that appeared in the *Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennykh del*, in a journal for students of military academies, and in a series of other publications that same year).

<sup>2</sup> T. A. Slavina, *Konstantin Ton* (Leningrad, 1989), p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Khudozhestvennaia gazeta*, 1841, No. 5, p. 4, cited by Slavina, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> For more detailed information about Ton's work, see T. A. Slavina's 1982 and 1989 studies, both entitled *Konstantin Ton*.

<sup>5</sup> E. I. Kirichenko, "Arkhitekturnye ansambli Moskvyy....", pp. 3-19.

<sup>6</sup> This notion was introduced to Soviet architecture by T. A. Slavina.

<sup>7</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. cxxi.

<sup>8</sup> "Khram vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve," *Zhurnal dlia chteniia vospitannikov voenno-uchebnykh zavedenii*, 1851, XCIII, No. 369, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>10</sup> RPB OR, f. 379. Kornilov, F. T., d. 31, l., 1.

<sup>11</sup> RGB OR, f. 90, k. 1, d. 20, l. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-161. According to another source (A. N. L'vov, *op. cit.*, p. 17), the weight of the feast-day bell was still greater, 1800 poods.

<sup>13</sup> N. V. Dmitriev, "Khram vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, 1851, No. 42, April 7.

<sup>14</sup> RGB OR f. 90, k. 1, d. 9, ll. 22-23; Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

## Illustration Captions

*Page 54* Konstantin Ton, architect of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior constructed on the site of the Alekseev Monastery.

*Page 55* General plan of the construction site for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior designed by Ton, April 10, 1832. Ink and watercolor on paper.

*Page 56* Ton's design for the Cathedral's embankment façade, 1832. Ink on paper.

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- Cross section of Ton's Cathedral design, 1832. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 58* West façade of Ton's Cathedral design with a variant of the dome, 1852. Ink on paper.
- Page 59* Ton's plan for the Cathedral approved by Emperor Nicholas I, April 10, 1832. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Ton's site plan for the Cathedral, 1870's. Ink on paper.
- Page 61* Broad view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Ton's architectural plan in an 1830's watercolor by an unidentified artist.
- Page 62* View of the Stone Bridge. Lithograph after a drawing by Cadolle, 1825.
- Page 63* Cathedral of Christ the Savior viewed from the Kremlin embankment. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., late 1890's.
- Page 65* "Construction and materials guide for the Cathedral Named for Christ the Savior in Moscow." 1838-39 sketch. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 66* "Overall view of excavations for the foundation of the Cathedral Named for Christ the Savior, of the façade of the Cathedral, and of the former Alekseev Monastery." 1838-39 sketch. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 67* "Components of the foundation of the Cathedral Named for Christ the Savior, September 10, 1839." Drawing by Alexander Rezanov. Ink and watercolor on paper.

## **Sculpture on the Façades**

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior synthesized various types of decorative art. As such, it is significant not only in the history of Russian art but of art in general. The sculpture on the Cathedral's façades and the murals on its interior walls were based on principles alien to old Russian art, that is, to the style and spirit in which the Cathedral was ostensibly erected. The sculptural principles followed, however, were not characteristic of neoclassical architecture, so popular in Russia, in which sculptural décor was paramount. In terms of mid-nineteenth century Russian art, even in terms of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art as a whole, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was exceptional for both the quantity of its sculpture and the rich content and fine workmanship of the sculptural compositions on its façades and doors. An integral part of a unified plan, the Cathedral's sculpture nonetheless can be viewed separately, as a comprehensive type of art existing within the framework of a discrete oeuvre.

The task of choosing subjects for the sculptural compositions on the façades and for the interior paintings and also selection of inscriptions placed both outside and inside the Cathedral fell principally to the church's highest ecclesiasts, chiefly the metropolitans of Moscow. They reinterpreted religious ideas through the prism of history, that of Russia and of the Russian Orthodox Church, or in the words of a writer of the time: "[I]n accordance with the wishes of its Tsar-Testator the Cathedral was to be a religious monument that expressed gratitude, a sublime witnessing of the Intercession on behalf of the Russian people in the Patriotic War of 1812 as well as a historical monument, an indelible depiction of our forebears' glorious deeds. Thus, on all four sides of the Cathedral sacred and historic depictions are found which recall or directly identify events in that war together

with figures of holy intercessors and supplicants for the Russian land, important persons who worked to establish and spread the Orthodox faith, and Russian princes who sacrificed their lives for the freedom and preservation of the Russian land. The subjects were chosen by Metropolitan Filaret in 1844.”<sup>1</sup>

In religious art, representation of historical events in icons and murals and the dedication of churches and side altars in churches to saints and feast days which coincide with specific historical events are a traditional way of preserving the memory of those events. There was already a memorial church in Moscow that predated the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. The Church of St. Paraskeva Pyatnitsa on Okhotny Ryad had acquired this status in the wake of its restoration after the fire of 1812. The church’s main altar was dedicated to the Christ’s Resurrection. In its upper level an altar was added dedicated to the memory of St. Alexander Nevsky, the patron saint of Alexander I. Fourteen icons were painted for this church commemorating the saints’ and feast days on which had taken place the main battles of the 1812 war, Borodino, Tarutino, the departure of the French from Moscow, the liberation of Smolensk, and other such events.<sup>2</sup>

In the high reliefs on the exterior of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, however, religious subject matter was paired with historical compositions and specific historic symbols such as military banners and banners of militias active in the 1812 war. This thematic synthesis was wholly original, unprecedented in Russian or, for that matter, in world art devoted to religious and national historical subjects. The historical symbolism of the Cathedral’s sculptural décor, which was executed earlier than its murals, is more traditional. Work on the high reliefs began before construction of the Cathedral was completed, even before the wooden staging was taken down in 1846, and it continued for almost twenty years, until 1863. Initially, it was proposed that the high reliefs be made of galvanized bronze

rather than Carrara marble which deteriorates in the Russian climate. A representation of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God carved from marble quarried in the village of Protopopov not far from Moscow, however, proved to be durable. All the sculpture on the Cathedral's façades was executed in this stone as were the basic design elements of the walls: footing, pedestals, pilasters, corner columns, walls in back of the pilasters, columns and bas-reliefs, cornices, and façade arches. The remaining parts of the walls were made of brick, stuccoed with Portland cement and painted to imitate marble. The stucco was so solid that it was indistinguishable from the marble.<sup>3</sup>

These materials gave the Cathedral that gold-white hue characteristic of Vladimir-Suzdal, Novgorod-Pskov, and early Moscow architecture. The familiar epithet "white-walled Moscow" harks back to those far-off times when the walls of the Kremlin and churches were built from "white" stone, namely, limestone. An additional color chord was struck on the façades by the dark red granite used for all the entrances and the edifice's footing. Initially the footing was faced with limestone. In 1856, after the red granite steps were built, the footing was refaced to prevent a color dissonance.

Sculpture was placed on all four of the Cathedral's identical façades following an identical plan. The high reliefs were located in two places. Above, at a height of thirteen sazhen (27.7 meters) saints were depicted in round medallions. Two types of composition were used in the second, lower tier of sculpture, a wide band girding the façades at a height of 4.5 sazhen (9.5 meters). Individual figures executed in high relief (*alto-relievo*) were placed on each side of the five arches over the three entranceways and accompanying two side window walls, and at corner section there were multi-figured compositions. To achieve unity, the

subjects of the sculpture on each of the façades possessed characteristics tying them to a common theme.

Traditionally, the west façade of a Christian church is the principal one. The high medallion at the center of this façade of the Cathedral portrayed Christ the Savior blessing those entering the cathedral. Flanking Christ were the patron saints of Russia's emperors: St. Alexander Nevsky, St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas of Pskov (whose feast day coincided with the birthday of Empress Maria Alexandrovna, wife of Nicholas I), and St. Elizabeth (guardian angel of Alexander I's wife, Elizabeth Alekseevna). The sculpture over the entry arches of the façade symbolically depicted Russian troops being protected by the forces of Heaven. On the arch of the middle entry were placed carved angels with outspread wings holding a banderole with the inscription: "The Might of the Lord is with us" and cherubim holding a banderole with the date 1812 written in Old Church Slavic letters. Over the arches of the side portals on the right were placed two angels with gonfalons, symbolizing the Moscow militia who used religious gonfalons as standards, on the left were angels with banners symbolizing the Russian host. On the sides of the window arches of the portal were figures of the archangels Jegudiel holding a crown in his hand, Barachiel with a flower, Gabriel with a lily, and Uriel holding a flame.

The theme of representing events of 1812 was continued on the west façade by means of multi-figured sculptures. To the right of the main portal David was depicted giving the plans for the Temple to Solomon at a gathering of important personages. This was designed to create an analogy between the building of the Cathedral and one of the most important events in Old Testament history. On the left wall of the west façade there was also a relief portraying the anointing of Solomon as king of the ancient Hebrews. Again, a correlation was intended with

Russian history: once he became Emperor, Nicholas I would fulfill the promise made by his brother to build Christ the Savior. All the sculpture on the west façade was the work of Alexander Loganovsky.

The Cathedral's south side looked across the Moskva to the places where decisive battles for the city had taken place and from where sallies against the enemy occupation had been launched. On this façade saints were depicted together with compositions directly related to Napoleon's invasion. High on the center arch was a medallion of the Smolensk Mother of God in memory of this miraculous icon which accompanied the Russian troops for more than three months. On the eve of the Battle of Borodino, Kutuzov ordered that the icon be displayed to the troops and prayers intoned. On the four side arches small medallions depicted St. Roman of Ryazan in commemoration of the battle at Klyastitsy, July 19, 1812, St. Thomas the Apostle, the battle near Polotsk and at Tarutino, October 6, 1812, St. John the Baptist, the battle at Maloyaroslavets, October 12, 1812, and St. John, Archbishop of Novgorod, in memory of the battle at Krasny on November 5, 1812.

Below, over the sides of the three porticoes were sculptural depictions of Old Testament events and personages, on the sides of the arch above the center entrance the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel to the warrior Joshua (Jesus Navin), and above the side entrances Moses and Miriam, Deborah and Barak. These high reliefs together symbolized a single notion related to the war of 1812, namely, that those who keep their faith do not perish. Deborah and Barak defeated their strongest enemy, and Moses liberated the Jews from the power of the Egyptian pharaohs.

The sculpture placed on the south façade below the side window arches continued the theme begun in the high tier of medallions. Saints were depicted whose feast days coincided with the days of decisive battles: St. Varlaam of

Khutinsk, the battle at Krasny, November 6, 1812, St. Gabriel (Blessed Prince Vsevolod) of Pskov in memory of the defense of Pskov, and Saints Anthony and Feodosy, founders of the famous Monastery of the Crypt in Kiev. Two compositions mounted on corners of the south façade were designed to represent symbolically the victorious completion of the war, Alexander I's triumphal return after the defeat of Napoleon. On the right corner Abraham was shown returning after defeating King Chedorlaomer and his associates being met by Melchizedek, and on the left corner David being greeted after slaying Goliath. All of these sculptural works were also executed by Loganovsky.

The east façade of the Cathedral, behind the main altar, was turned toward the Kremlin. Its high reliefs expressed other religious and historical themes. Here were depicted national saints who defended and interceded for Russia and delivered her from external enemies, highly revered icons of the Mother of God, and the two most important events in the life of Jesus, his birth ("The Veneration of the Shepherds") by Loganovsky and resurrection by Nicholas Ramazanov.\* On these two feast days occurred historical events related to the invasion of Russia, the expulsion of Napoleon's army and the taking of Paris on March 19, 1814.

High in the center of the east façade in a medallion was represented the icon of the Vladimir Mother of God, commemorating the Battle of Borodino. The Battle had taken place on August 26, 1812, the day dedicated to this religious image, the most sacred object in the ancient capital, which was kept in the Kremlin's Uspensky Cathedral. In other medallions women saints were depicted: Empress Alexandra of Rome, Mary Magdalen, Anna Prorochitsa, and Catherine the Martyr. All of these were done by Ramazanov.

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\* Sometimes spelled "Romazanov" in the text.



Below, around the arched entranceways were depictions of especially revered Russian saints. On the sides of the large middle entryway arch were sculptural depictions of Saints Pyotr and Aleksey, both Moscow metropolitans. The former held a banderole with a depiction of Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin, the latter was shown blessing a model of the Church of the Miracle of Archangel Michael (also in the Kremlin, but no longer extant). On the arched sides of the east façade's lesser right portal were sculptures of St. Stephen, Proselytizer to the Permians, with a banderole containing the Komi script he invented, and St. Sergius of Radonezh. Saints Iona and Filipp, also Moscow metropolitans, were depicted in full regalia on the sides of the left portal. The sculptor of these works was Pyotr Klodt. On either side of the main entrance near the windows were, on the right, Nikon of Radonezh and Iosif of Volokalamsk, both by Ramazanov. On the left Saint (and Prince) Michael and Boyar Fyodor of Chernigov who were buried in the Kremlin's Archangel Cathedral. These works were sculpted by Klodt.

Finally, on the north façade, facing Volkhonka Street and the Museum of Fine Arts, were high-relief representations of national saints--proselytizers of Christianity among the Rus and saints who helped save Russia from her enemies and to whom Russian owed success on the battlefield, saints whose feast days coincided with the most important battles of the war with Napoleon. In the center of the upper tier was a relief depicting the Iberian Mother of God executed according to a facsimile of the icon found in the chapel, since dismantled, near the Resurrection Gate and the passageway leading to Red Square. On either side of it were depictions of Holy Martyr Laurus (the Battle of Kulm, August 18, 1813), Holy Martyr Sergius (the fall of Leipzig, October 7, 1813), St. Gregory the Great

(the campaign against Paris, March 12, 1814), and Holy Martyr Khrisanf (the fall of Paris, March 19, 1814). All were sculpted by Loganovsky.

The sculpture on the side arches of the entranceway of the north façade commemorated the history of Russian Christianity: Emperor Constantine and his mother, Empress Helen of Byzantium, who made Christianity an official religion; Princess Olga during whose life the first Kievan prince accepted Christianity; and Vladimir who declared Christianity the official religion of the Rus.

Next to the window arches of the north façade were depictions by Klodt of St. Andrew the Apostle, who according to church legend delivered a sermon on the hills of Kiev, and of St. George who was highly revered in Russia. (The sculpture of St. George was executed at the same time his image was incorporated into the Moscow's coat of arms.) Over the left window was a representation of the Most Venerable Daniel of Moscow, son of Alexander Nevsky and founder of the Danilov Monastery, and of St. Savva, pupil of St. Sergius, who founded the Savvino-Storozhev Monastery near Zvenigorod. These reliefs were sculpted by Ramazanov.

On the blank sections of the Cathedral's north façade were two historical compositions. To the right of the entryway St. Sergius of Radonezh was depicted blessing Dimitry Donskoy before the battle with the Tartars (the famous Battle at Kulikovo). For aid in battle Sergius gives Dimitry icons of Peresvet and Osliaha. To the left was an analogous composition, the Most Venerable Dionisius, Archimandrite of the Troitse-Sergiev Lavra, blessing Minin and Pozharsky who would rid Moscow of its foreign enemies. In the Time of Troubles, this famous monastery played a huge role in the effort to save Russia from foreign domination. Dionisius with Avram Palitsyn, the Lavra's cellarer, like St. Sergius in his time,

were spiritual leaders who inspired the nation to fight Polish and Lithuanian aggressors. Loganovsky was the sculptor of these two works.<sup>4</sup>

A total of sixty high reliefs were executed for the façades of the Cathedral. Those on the lower tier consisted of eight single-figure compositions plus forty figures that adorned the sides of entrances and windows. Twelve images adorned the façades' upper alcoves (*zakonomy*). The lion's share of the work was executed by the sculptor Alexander Loganovsky (1810-1855). A brilliant student who graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, he was awarded a gold medal for his 1836 sculpture "A Lad Playing Svaika [a Russian folk game]." Loganovsky's sculpture and a companion work by Stepan Pimenov ("Lad Playing Knucklebones [*babki*]") were displayed at the same exhibit. (The great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin memorialized both pieces in verse.) These works are noteworthy because they do not adhere to neoclassical norms and because they are based on Russian themes. As a recipient of the gold medal, Loganovsky was privileged to study abroad. During those years he made further attempts to incorporate the "Russian" spirit in works on national subjects. In Rome Loganovsky, evincing his proclivity for monumental sculpture in urban or natural settings and in architecture, worked on a composition for a fountain on the theme "Kievan Youth and the River Dniepr." The bulk of his work after returning to Russia was in the area of architectural sculpture. He first worked in St. Petersburg, executing sculptural works for St. Panteley's Church and two bas-reliefs for St. Isaac's Cathedral. In the early 1840's he moved to Moscow and began work on sculpture for the Great Kremlin Palace and for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior which in terms of size and style reflected new tendencies in art.<sup>5</sup>

Similar tendencies can be seen also in the works of other artists who executed sculptures for the Cathedral. Nicholas Ramazanov (1817-1867) was a

remarkably versatile individual. Also a teacher, art critic, and art historian, in addition to monumental sculpture he produced many “intimate” pieces. The latter tend to be stylized, yet a certain degree of naturalism permeates them.

The artist who produced the fewest works for the Cathedral, Pyotr Klodt (1805-1867), is the most famous because of his striking ensemble depicting the taming of a horse that adorns the Anichkov Bridge in St. Petersburg. An equally popular work, executed in an entirely different, naturalistic, manner is his monument to the famous Russian writer of fables, Ivan Krylov, in the Summer Garden in Petersburg. Each of these works is remarkable in its own right. The Anichkov Bridge ensemble is remarkable for the way in which it harmonizes neoclassical abstract idealism with realistic subject in all four of the sculptural groups. It can be viewed from various angles for an extended period without violating the neoclassical unity of place, time, and action.

In the sculpture of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior despite the unified, underlying neoclassical style of Loganovsky’s works, one also senses original, non-neoclassical attributes, an amalgamation of other, diverse styles. In other words, diversity can be perceived within the bounds of a clearly perceptible discipline, a discipline both strict and idealistic. The Cathedral’s reliefs were high reliefs. They were almost rounded, i.e., they had independent mass. The sculpture’s exaggerated, voluminous quality, its over-saturation with figures, and the rhythmic complexity of its construction are characteristics of the baroque. Searching for something new in the wake of neoclassicism, art turned to the heritage of western European sculpture, the baroque tradition, a style minimally developed in Russia. The neoclassical principle and tradition survived in the works of Loganovsky not only in the distinctive treatment of figures and faces but in the beautiful drapery and majesty of pose. The motif, widely used by

Loganovsky in the Cathedral sculptures, of two angels with banners and gonfalons, for example, is a slight modification of a motif favored by neoclassical artists in Russia from the early nineteenth century, especially after the 1812 war, of the Glories in flight. This motif can be found above the main entrances to the Admiralty in Petersburg (the work of Ivan Terebenev). The same motif is employed on a number of buildings in St. Petersburg: for example, on the arch of the General Staff Building on Palace Square and on the Senate and Synod Buildings on St. Isaac's Square and on the main façade of the Alexandrinsky Theater, and in Moscow on mansions built by Gargarin on Novinsk Boulevard (destroyed by a bomb during World War II) and Razumovsky at Gorokhovoe Pole.

Also present in the sculptural compositions of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was a degree of accuracy, previously unknown, in the likenesses and dress of personages not only from Russian history (patriarchs, princes, and military figures) but also from the Bible, especially from the Old Testament. This historically accurate depiction stemmed from the latest achievements in the field of archeology.

The combination of ideal and historical authenticity, so characteristic of the Cathedral's sculpture, is also an indicator of romanticism, and it is thus not inappropriate to call this grandiose architectural ensemble a "romantic" endeavor. The contemporary Russian scholar and critic Stanislav Rassadin has fashioned a capacious, laconic definition of romanticism: uniting that which cannot be united. The definition embraces both the complexity and the charm of romanticism, namely, its tolerance of internal contradictions, contradictions which are not regarded as shortcomings. To view them as such is to judge the movement according to the canons of neoclassicism.

The high reliefs of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior display not only the contrasting styles of baroque and neoclassicism, they also demonstrate a familiarity with the traditions of old Russian art (traditional motifs of any sort are the exception in European sculptural reliefs found on façades). Analogies that come to mind are the top sections of walls of twelfth-century churches found in the Vladimir area, randomly placed exterior reliefs such those on St. Dimitry's Cathedral, those on the parts of the façade of Uspensky Cathedral which predate that edifice's reconstruction, and those of the Pokrov-on-the-Nerle Church. These were models, which to a degree guided the creators of the sculptural décor of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

Another model in this context was of course Renaissance sculpture, the most obvious being the use of sculpture as part of a building's architecture: round medallions containing sculpture found on a smooth section of wall. The baroque heritage had an indirect effect, manifesting itself in the techniques of high relief, in the powerful plastic forms, and in the size of individual figures and multi-figure compositions (the last substantially surpassing anything created when the baroque was in vogue). Neoclassical effects can be sensed in many of the compositional characteristics described above, in the way, for example, pairs of angels recall representations of the mythical Glories. But in the labile yet tense poses of figures on the arches over windows and doors, in the way they fail to be constrained by bordering arches and columns, another great model can be detected, namely, the sculpture for the tombs of the Medici Chapel in Florence, executed by the great Michelangelo Buonarotti. The multi-figured compositions which were placed without any discernible pattern on side panels of the façades recall the famous reliefs on the Arc de Triomphe at the Place de l'Étoile in Paris. While the architect alone determines where reliefs will be placed on the walls of a building, architect

and sculptor nonetheless both pursue a single objective. In the case of the Cathedral, evident is a shared preference for a type of art, an appeal to sources that had previously seemed to exclude one another, the neoclassical and the medieval, a mix of neoclassical and non-neoclassical traditions.

The grand entry doors of the Cathedral were also covered with sculpture and opulently ornamented décor. The exterior sides were bronze, adorned with reliefs done from studies by sculptor, medalist, graphic artist, and painter, Fyodor Tolstoy (1783-1873). Tolstoy, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts and later one of its instructors and leaders, was a versatile master, author of works both recreating the traditions of classical antiquity and representing “romantic” neoclassicism. Tolstoy’s famous door medallions memorialized the 1812 war, and were as remarkable for their subtle execution as his well-known bas-reliefs in wax of scenes from Homer’s *Odyssey*.

The prototype for the bronze doors of many post-Renassiance churches, including St. Isaac’s in St. Petersburg and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, were the famous doors of the Baptistery in Florence by Lorenzo Ghiberti. Tolstoy was the first Russian artist to depart from what had become almost canonical in eastern notions about church doors of this type. The bronze doors of the Cathedral created in accordance with his studies were an attempt, in tune with Ton’s architecture, to evoke the heritage of old Russian art. Tolstoy helped revive the tradition found in the bronze doors of ancient Russian cathedrals, St. Sophia’s in Novgorod and of the Birth of the Mother of God in Suzdal. The influence of their ornamentation and composition can be felt in the complex, multi-planed form of his medallions.

The medallions of the upper parts of all twelve Cathedral doors, four large and eight small, contained sculptural depictions. In the large center doors the

medallions were significantly larger. The creators of these doors obviously heeded the symbolic notion that the ancient Russian cathedral doors constituted a boundary between the sacred and the worldly. In the figurative sculpture of the bronze doors of Christ the Savior preference was given to the depiction of Russian saints, the preservers, protectors, intercessors of the Russian land. And Russian saints were fundamental to Tolstoy's reliefs. At the same time, in accordance with the notion that the church was a national memorial, the most prominent section of the center doors of the main, west façade was devoted to sculpture reiterating the subjects of that façade's medallions, Christ the Savior and saints who were celestial protectors of the imperial family. However, the general scheme and individual subjects based on the Bible were reinterpreted by the sculptor. On the doors' exterior were carefully thought out and wrought inscriptions designed to emphasize the Cathedral's uniqueness as a national monument, as a one-of-a-kind temple of the Russian nation.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>2</sup> M. V. Nashchokina, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Mostovskii, pp. 45-46

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-52.

<sup>5</sup> N. A. Ramazanov, *Materiali dlia istorii khudozhestv v Rossii* (Moscow, 1862), pt. I, pp. 59-63.

### Illustration Captions

- Page 68*      Principal façade of Ton's Cathedral of Christ the Savior, 1832. Pen and ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 70*      West façade of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. Photoengraving by A. Reinbot and Co., St. Petersburg, late 1890's.
- Page 71*      West entrance doors of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photoengraving by K. Fisher, Moscow, early 1900's.
- High relief sculpture over the left portal of the west side of the Cathedral depicting angels holding banners from the 1812 war created by Alexander



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- Loganovsky. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., Moscow (from the album *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 72* High relief sculpture “David Presents the Plans for the Temple in Jerusalem to Solomon” (in a niche on the Cathedral’s west façade) by Loganovsky. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- High relief sculpture over the right portal on the Cathedral’s west façade depicting angels with standards of militias of the 1812 war.
- High relief sculpture of angels over the middle portal on the Cathedral’s west façade.
- Page 74* Cathedral of Christ the Savior viewed from the Moskva. Photograph from a picture postcard published by M. Kampel, Moscow, early 1900’s.
- Page 75* Left and right parts of Loganovsky’s high relief “Archangel Michael Appears to the Young Jesus” on the arch of the south façade’s center portal. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 76* Loganovsky’s high relief sculptures “David after the Defeat of Goliath” and “Abraham and His Confederates Returning after Defeating the Kings and the Meeting with Melchizedek” (in a niche of the Cathedral’s south façade). Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 78* Photograph of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior taken from the Bersenevskaya embankment, ca. 1900.
- Arch of the large middle portal of the Cathedral’s east façade. On the sides are Moscow Metropolitan St. Peter (holding a charter with a depiction of Uspensky Cathedral) and Metropolitan St. Aleksey (blessing the model of the Church of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael) sculpted by Pyotr Klodt.
- The arch of the smaller right portal. Sculptures of St. Stephen of Perm and of St. Sergius of Radonezh by Klodt. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Photograph of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior taken from the Kremlin, ca. 1900.
- Page 80* Photograph of the north façade of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, ca. 1900.

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Loganovsky's high relief sculpture "St. Dionisius Blesses Commoner Kuzma Minin and Prince Dimitry Pozharsky" (in a north façade niche of the Cathedral). Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).

*Page 82* Loganovsky's high relief sculpture "St. Sergius Blesses Dimitry Donskoy before the Battle and Presents Him with Icons of Peresvet and Oслиabia" (in a north façade niche of the Cathedral). Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).

*Page 84* Bell tower of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior with the Kremlin in the background. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., 1890's.

*Page 85* Bell from a Cathedral of Christ the Savior tower. From M. S. Mostovskii's volume, *Khram Khrista Spasitelya v Moskve* (Moscow, 1883).

*Page 87* The Cathedral's environs viewed from the Alexander Gardens. Lithograph by Jacottet and Bachlier after a drawing by Sharleman. Lamerrier's Press (Paris), published by Datsiaro, 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).

## **Interior Decoration**

In terms of its art, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was a complex organism, rich in content and huge. And as such the Cathedral has yet to be studied closely. Architectural historians mention its sculpture and other artwork only in passing. The interior blending of architecture and art is what makes this edifice so outstanding in the history of Russian art.

Describing the Cathedral's interior is a far more difficult task than describing its façades. Photographs fail to convey the rich interrelationship between the art there and the feeling of grandeur it produced. Readers should keep in mind that the Cathedral was cruciform and the important role this played in the church's interior décor. The cruciform plan corresponded to the Cathedral's overall meaning as a symbolic representation of Christ's earthly feat of sacrificing himself on a cross to save mankind. Echoing Christ's sacrifice was Moscow's offer to sacrifice itself to save Russia and the sacrifices of all those who had struggled to save the Fatherland during the war with the forces of Napoleon.

The principal defining element of the church's interior was the area beneath the main dome. Traditionally the main part of a church, the area formed the core of a well defined, central, hierarchical order to which everything else was subordinate. The supremacy of this space was defined not only by the fact of being the church's center but also by height. The dome area was more than twice as high as analogous indices in the adjoining arms of the cross. The inside height of the dome was 32 sazhen (68.16 meters), each side of this space at floor level was 36 arshins (25.56 meters), whereas the height of each of the arms of the cross was only 43.5 arshins (30.8 meters), the length and the width of the area of each arm 10.65 meters. The height of the galleries or passageways encircling the

interior was smaller, the lower one 12 arshins (9.11 meters), the upper 17 arshins (12 meters).<sup>1</sup>

The same hierarchy of primary and secondary also applied to the amount of outside light received by various parts of the Cathedral. God is not only the creator of the world, He is also its light. Accordingly, the space under the main dome was flooded with light from 16 huge windows that were 11 arshins (7.81 meters) high and 3 arshins (2.13 meters) wide. Contrasting to this was the semi-darkness of the side areas of the Cathedral lighted by windows in the lofts supplementing weak light from the dome. The same hierarchical principle was consistently followed in the subject material of the murals and in other aspects of the interior décor. The meaning and importance of subject, the richness of decoration, and the amount of illumination increased from the periphery to the center, from below to above, from west to east, from the Cathedral's entrance to its altar area.

The role played by the murals in the church's interior was enormous. Because the murals did not exist as independent entities, their meaning and importance were quite different from that of easel art. They were to be viewed in a meticulously defined architectural medium, a specific milieu. The Cathedral's interior was an artistic whole which could not be reduced to the sum of its separate parts. The murals, wall decorations, ornamental décor, architectural elements, furnishings, and lighting fixtures constituted an artistic whole; all of these acquired meaning from the manner in which they were executed, their color or gamut of colors, from the way they were arranged, their scale, their location in the inner space of the Cathedral, and from the manner in which artistic representation correlated with architectural form. The area under the central dome was octagonal. The corners of the four gigantic pylons were cut off at the foot producing niches that were adorned with art work. Above them pendentives ran gracefully up and into the rounded drum and dome.

The Cathedral's interior design was first discussed in 1854. It was decided not to decorate it in a neoclassical style but rather in a Byzantine one to correspond with the façades. Responsibility for its implementation was given to Alexander Rezanov, Ton's principal assistant. Between 1860 and 1870, with work on the interior of the Cathedral already underway, designer Lev Dal' made sizeable contributions to the final product. Rezanov and Dal', both younger than Ton, had trained in the Academy of Fine Arts and were gifted architects.

Alexander Ivanovich Rezanov (1817-1887) devoted most of his professional life to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. In 1831, before graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts, Rezanov interrupted his studies to work as a draftsman for the Commission charged with erecting the Cathedral. He finished his studies at the Academy in 1839 and was awarded a gold medal for outstanding achievement. Rezanov worked in Ton's Moscow office from 1840 to 1842 when Ton was building the Great Kremlin Palace. After returning from a sponsored trip abroad, he was made a member of the Academy and, in 1852, appointed professor of architecture. In 1871 Rezanov became the head of the Academy's architectural division and the deputy director or, in the terminology of the time, assistant architect, of the Cathedral construction project. Upon Ton's death in 1881 he was appointed chief architect.

Rezanov was essentially a teacher. He did in fact teach at the Academy of Fine Arts, and he had a magnificent sense of "styles." In his own designs he favored the Russian style, and he liked to build churches, planning mainly large and one-of-a-kind structures. Unlike other architects based in St. Petersburg, he built a large number of buildings in Moscow and its environs. This was not only because of his work on the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, but also because of his appointment as an architect in the Department of Crown Lands. In Moscow, Rezanov's designs included the publishing house of Kosma Soldatenkov on

Myasnitsky Lane, the Popov Building on Smolensk Boulevard and a shopping arcade on Kuznetsky Most, the Bogau Building in Vorobino, and structures on Moscow-area estates at Borodino, Pokrovskoe-Streshnevo, and Il'insk-Usov. He also executed a design for the Moscow City Duma which was not realized.

Most of Rezanov's Petersburg buildings, except for a few large structures such as the Palace of Grand Prince Vladimir Alexandrovich on the Palace embankment, were erected outside the city. After the suppression of the Polish Uprising in 1861, Russification of the Empire's northwest regions was intensified. Part and parcel of this was construction of Orthodox churches for which Rezanov acted as artistic consultant. Churches built according to his plans in Vilnius, Lithuania were one expression of this Russification effort.<sup>2</sup>

The path leading Lev Vladimirovich Dal' (1834-1878) to the Cathedral was quite different. The son of the compiler of the famous *Comprehensive Dictionary of the Living Russian Language* and creator of tales under the pseudonym of Kazak-Lugansky, he inherited his father's love for Russian folk culture. This found expression in Dal''s strong attraction to the Russian style in architectural design, in his research on early Russian architecture, in the restoration of old monuments (he was a prominent member of the Russian Archeological Society), in service as the history editor of the Russian architectural journal *Zodchii*, and as author of a series of articles devoted to early Russian architecture.<sup>3</sup>

Dal' designed the ornamentation for the central part of the Cathedral. He also planned the murals and ornamentation for the upper galleries or lofts. The Cathedral's unique iconostasis was either Dal's work or that of Dal' and Rezanov. Dal' also designed other items for the Cathedral, special Gospels and tabernacles, for example. Rezanov executed the designs for the Cathedral's furniture and plate, its icon and book stands, icon cases, sacramental fans, two- and three-branched candlesticks, and similar items.<sup>4</sup>

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior became in a sense part of the Academy of Fine Arts, its unofficial school of building arts where many prominent architects from both Russian capitals were educated and worked. To those cited earlier in the text, the names of Leonty Benois, Alexander Krakau, David Grimm, Alexander Kaminsky, Viktor Kossov, A. P. Popov, Viktor Shreter, Karl Rakhau, Domeniko Gilardi, Yakov Reimers, and F. I. Shults should be added.<sup>5</sup> Both architects and artists created the Cathedral's interior. The placement of murals, how the murals correlated, the overall appearance of the church with its decorative murals, furniture, and plate were all planned by them. In the process of doing so they adhered to a single principle, the same one followed in the composition of the exterior façades: a marriage of two great artistic traditions, European and early Russian. The two traditions were joined in a distinctive, complex way; they were not mere borrowings.

In the Cathedral of Christ the Savior the tradition of creating bands of murals typical of early Russian churches was revived. Also revived was the idea of using the lowest row of these bands for decorative, original, and ornamental but not topical murals. In repudiating neoclassicism's sculptural décor and "orders," the Cathedral's architects gave new life to a practice widely followed in Russian baroque and neoclassical churches, especially those in provincial cities, of placing topical depictions in architecturally appropriate ornamental frames and thereby turning the walls into an iconostasis. In these churches paintings were also used to emphasize architectural earmarks, the ways in which various structural elements fit together. This same principle was applied in the Cathedral by employing motifs borrowed from early Russian art, specifically, the characteristic color gamut of exterior murals of seventeenth-century churches or that of illuminated manuscripts. Basic articulations and forms of the Cathedral's interior were demarcated by ornamental strips. Painted ornamental designs set off the arches of the arms of the

cruciform plan, the windows, the band of murals in the drum of the dome, and the arches of the lofts.

The lower part of the Cathedral's walls was faced with marble. Facing of this sort, especially faux marble, was widely employed in neoclassical buildings. In the Cathedral, however, the facing corresponded to early Russian church practice. In the cutoff corners of the pylons that faced inward, toward the area under the dome, were niches with murals. The subjects of those in the southeast and northeast niches related to the Cathedral's feast day, the Birth of Christ. In the west niches (northwest and southwest) that were of lesser importance in terms of the Cathedral's hierarchy, the subjects were taken from the Old Testament and Russian history.

The marble-faced walls acquiesced to the structural peculiarities of the Cathedral's interior. Their height was determined by a low encircling passageway. The artwork began at the loft level or second tier of the encircling gallery. Metropolitan Filaret raised objections to the way the lower part of the walls were to be faced. But the plan had been approved by Nicholas I and, as is so often the case in Russia, the arguments of secular power prevailed. In a letter to Arseny Zakrevsky, Moscow's Governor-General, dated April 8, 1855, Filaret lamented that the faced surfaces would not be higher and that the design called for relatively few icons:

“Only by raising his head will a viewer be able to see images on the wall, a position he will not wish to maintain very long. Otherwise, his eyes will meet only marble. Normally, an Orthodox believer looks intently at an icon, makes the sign of the cross, and prays. But if instead of icons he sees only marble, he will feel awkward. . . . [I]n addition to the sacred images on the walls and those on the Royal Gates and the north and south altar doors next to the Royal Gates places are set aside for only two icons, one of the Savior and a second one of the Mother of



God. I saw no place for an icon of the Cathedral's feast day, the Birth of Christ. . . . [S]uch a paucity of icons is not at all satisfactory given the enormous size of the Cathedral. It is not only appropriate but also clearly necessary to cut places in the marble, especially of the east wall, for frames to hold icons at the level best suited for the eyes of worshippers who will stand there. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

Church dogma and rules of art had come into conflict. However, a compromise was reached: marble facing up to the level of the lofts that was proposed by Rezanov would be retained but depictions of saints in medallions would be placed on the marble panels. And while its position did not change, the design of the iconostasis was altered and the number of icons it held increased. In front of the pylons with sacred images in their niches were low marble railings that also held icons. The final plan for the interior was approved by Alexander II in 1873, more than forty years after the first variant was tendered.

The colossal labors of the designers, artists, and builders resulted in a magnificent, rich, and festive interior. After a long hiatus, the use of gold backgrounds was revived by the Cathedral's creators; multicolored ornamentation backed with gold was used on a wide scale.

The original intent was to build the Cathedral from exclusively native Russian building materials since it was to be a national church. But this could not be implemented; too much time would be wasted seeking out the appropriate Russian marbles. Therefore, except for two kinds of Russian stone, dark green Kiev labradorite—used for the first time--and dark red Shokshino porphyry, imported materials were used: light blue Bardiglio, yellow Sienna, red-veined Porto Santo, and white marble with black veins—all from Italy--and black marble from Belgium.<sup>7</sup>

Since the Cathedral was a memorial church, the range of subjects for the art was strictly defined. The murals and icons on the walls told the story of Christ's

earthly existence and his divine powers. And they testified to the role of fate in the world, in particular, the fate of Russia, for the Cathedral was devoted to one of the most important events during Russia's ten centuries in the hands of the Almighty. The Cathedral's murals and furnishings were designed to create a memorial church that embraced history in a two ways, first, as a museum preserving the memory of a great and miraculous event in the history of the Russian people, and second, as a fine arts museum which "would demonstrate to future generations the degree of perfection attained in the art of painting of the time."

The result was a set of murals significantly different from that heretofore regarded as canonical and traditional in terms both of subject *and* placement. Choice of subject was dictated by the place assigned and, to an even greater degree, by its relationship to the momentous historical events in Russia's spiritual and secular life. This meant a collection, huge and without precedent, of depictions of Russian saints and events from their lives and of saints whose feast days coincided with momentous events in the war with the French.

Leading church hierarchs determined the choice of subject and the location of paintings in the Cathedral. Decisions about those in the central area, which were painted first, were made by Metropolitan Filaret. Innokenty, who succeeded Filaret as Metropolitan of Moscow, and Ambrose, Bishop of Dmitrovsk, determined what murals were appropriate for the lofts and how they should be placed. The texts on the marble slabs of the lower passageway were taken from information supplied by the General Staff, and they jibed with the murals.<sup>8</sup> In a word, the Cathedral's system of art and inscriptions formed a harmonious whole, conveying throughout the idea that Christ's earthly existence, sacred history, and the history of Russia were closely linked.

The norm for the central part of Orthodox churches, that is, for the area directly under the main dome and small side domes and a matter of huge

importance to church hierarchs, was an expression of the triune God or one of the hypostases of God's threefold essence. As in every church, the place where subjects of such great significance could be depicted in the Cathedral was firmly established, not open to debate. The same held true for the Royal Gates and the sequencing of icons on the tiers of the iconostasis. When a believer entered the Cathedral, a grand and magnificent spectacle opened before him or her, the solemnity and splendor of the interior was truly overwhelming. On the axis leading from the principal entrance to the east end of the church, the east arm of its cruciform plan, stood a compositionally unique iconostasis. Having the form of an octahedral chapel, it was made of white marble crowned by a gilded bronze tent roof. The white marble was decorated with multicolored marble inlays. The ornamental grillwork of the tent's gilded panels was decorated with multicolored enamel. High above the iconostasis upward-soaring arches with pendentives supported the dome. The dome itself rose over the interstice of the four arms of the Cathedral to the height of a present-day seventeen- or eighteen-story building.

This chapel-iconostasis, without analogy or precedent in either early or post-Petrine Russian architecture--and never copied--was defined by its surroundings in the Cathedral. Instead of being a tall iconostasis or low altar barrier usual in early Christian churches, the Cathedral's iconostasis was made to look like a Russian tented church typical of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Cathedral's interior thus became a church within a church, and this helps explain why the church became significant as a cathedral unique among cathedrals. The iconostasis can also be viewed as an architectural analogue to the practice in church texts of doubling or even tripling key words and concepts. Examples of the latter are "King of Kings" from the New Testament, found on the pediment of St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, and the familiar words from sacred writ: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the

things that are God's." The four tiers of the chapel met the standard iconostasis practice. The actual altar was within. Thus, the chapel-iconostasis served as the canopy over the altar table.

In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Russian churches canopies are suspended over the altar table (and in some over the tsar's throne as well). The tradition of building a solemn ceremonial altar can be traced back to the times of the Judean kings. The creation of the Cathedral's iconostasis may have been inspired by the altar of King Solomon which, according to 1 Kings 10:18-20, was executed in ivory and overlaid with gold. The colors, white and gold, and materials, white marble and gold, used for the Cathedral's iconostasis were analogous to those of Solomon's altar. In Holy Writ, however, the word "altar" or "throne" [*prestol*] signified not merely the throne of earthly kings, but also that of the King of Heaven: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne. . . ." (Isaiah 66:1).<sup>9</sup> In ancient Christian churches the mysterious presence of God in the altar area was marked by an altar table under a canopy. In Orthodox churches the divine presence is symbolized by a raised section in the altar area. All of this multi-layered symbolism could be observed in the Cathedral's unusual iconostasis. Parallels and associations with events from sacred history, early Russian traditions, and events from recent Russian history found in the church's architectural composition and style, in the reliefs of its façades and entrance doors, are echoed in the design of the iconostasis.

The idea for the Cathedral's iconostasis, i.e., a church within a church, may have originated with Metropolitan Filaret. His role in subordinating neoclassical forms and returning to the traditions of early Russian iconostases is well established. Filaret's concern about the form of the Cathedral's iconostasis was evinced at the time of the first competition. In a letter to his parents dating from 1813, Filaret writes about a conversation with the ober-procurator of the Church's

synod, Prince Alexander Golitsyn, about the internal arrangement of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and how he had “revealed” to Golitsyn “his thoughts about iconostases executed in the most recent style which because they were small and skimpy lacked or even contradicted the sense of grandeur the altar should convey. But I see no iconostasis [in recently built edifices] which combines size, correctness, and beauty in a way that corresponds to current tastes, and this may explain and justify my thinking. I wish I had in my possession a drawing of the iconostasis of Kolomenskoe Cathedral [the Church of the Ascension at Kolomenskoe.—*E.K.*].”<sup>10</sup> It was not the iconostasis of the Church of the Ascension but the church edifice itself which in the end served as the prototype for the Cathedral’s iconostasis.

The height of the iconostasis of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior including the tented portion was 26.6 meters. To give a sense of its size suffice it to say that Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin minus domes and supporting drums is only 23 meters high. Once the iconostasis was built, it was discovered that the side doors were out of sync with the general dimensions of the Cathedral and so they were widened.<sup>11</sup> Following the tradition of early Russian iconostases, on the Royal Gates were depicted the Annunciation and the four Evangelists (by Timofey Neff) and the Savior and the Mother of God (by Kirill Gorbunov). On the bottom tier of the iconostasis, where traditionally icons of local significance are found, an icon to the right of the Royal Gates depicted the Almighty and one on the left Christ’s birth.

Following tradition, the second tier of the iconostasis was devoted to the feast days of Christ and the Virgin. Here, to the right of the Royal Gates, were found depictions of the Presentation in the temple, the Epiphany, the Transfiguration, the raising of Lazarus, the entrance into Jerusalem, the Resurrection, and the Ascension--that is, holy days connected with the earthly life

and deeds of Christ. To the left were icons depicting events in the life of the Mary, her birth, presentation in the temple, the Assumption, the Feast of the Intercession and also icons depicting the exaltation of the Cross, the Trinity, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.<sup>12</sup> Most of the icons of the main iconostasis and of the side ones located in the lofts were painted by Timofey Neff (1805-1876). In 1876 Neff sent the Cathedral's Building Commission twenty-eight of the images he had contracted to execute.<sup>13</sup> That same year, however, he died, and the remaining icons were executed from his sketches by St. Petersburg artists Kirill Gorbunov, Yevgeny Sorokin, Ivan Makarov, and Mikhail Vasiliev. Several of the icons painted by Gorbunov and Pavel Shilstov were original works.

The icons of the third tier of the iconostasis, usually referred to as the *Deisus* chain, depicted New Testament events (Jesus and the Virgin, John the Baptist and the Apostles). They were done by Gorbunov. The fourth tier's icons depicting Old Testament prophets and rulers were executed by Shilstov. Over the north and south doors were icons that expressed the national-memorial purpose of the church. Accordingly, next to icons of the saints whose feast days fell on the birthdays of Nicholas I, Alexander II, and Empresses Alexandra Fedorovna and Maria Alexandrovna were icons of saints whose names were the same as those of the spiritual authors of the Cathedral, Moscow Metropolitans Filaret and Innokenty, icons related to the laying of the Cathedral's cornerstone on Sparrow Hills, and icons depicting Russian and Muscovite saints.<sup>14</sup> It is evident from the descriptions of the murals in the center of the Cathedral and of the iconostases and paintings of the side altar lofts and the icons in the passageway on the ground level that this pattern of subjects was repeated over and over.

The murals found in the main altar area were sacred pictures that told the story of the birth of Christ and of the events during his last days on earth. A depiction of the Intercession of the Virgin was proposed originally for the vaulting

on the east side of this area. But Filaret objected to this, observing that it would be “unbecoming to have a depiction of the Mother of God on the east side in one of the most prominent places where one would expect depictions of the great events from Christ’s earthly existence.”<sup>15</sup> Depictions of the Virgin in the main altar area thus were deemed incongruent with the purpose of the memorial church.

On the vaulting over the altar area the Holy Spirit was depicted in the form of a dove surrounded by an aureole with the seven divine gifts and groups of seraphim, the work of Nicholas Koshalev. Down lower, on the east wall was a painting of the birth of Christ, celebrating the Cathedral's feast day in accordance with the holy anthem “Today a virgin gives birth to the Transubstantiator” by Vasily Vereshchagin. Below it, over the throne [*gornoe mesto*], was Genrikh Semiradsky’s “Last Supper,” and flanking it Vereshchagin’s “Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane,” “Ecce Homo,” “The Way of the Cross,” “Crucifixion,” “The Descent from the Cross,” and “Christ Laid in the Tomb.”

The murals in the center of the Cathedral under the dome were dedicated to the idea of a divinely-inspired world order or showed ways of achieving salvation “beginning with the creation of the world and the Fall of the first people to the redemption of mankind by the Savior together with the triumphant idea of God vanquishing through suffering and death (the notion of death put right by Christ’s sacrificial death).” In the vaulting of the main dome the triune God was depicted as the Lord God of Sabaoth giving his blessing with outstretched arms, with the Son of God on his lap, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove on his chest. “The depiction was located high in the vaulting because God Almighty is above all creation and must be so represented.”<sup>16</sup> “The light emanating from the Creator makes the sun dark, a fathomless heaven serves as a throne for the Almighty (‘The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool,’ Isaiah 66:1). Fluttering raiment issues from the light He created and disappears into space (‘Who coverest

thymself with light as with a garment,' Psalm 104:2). Everything is whole, indivisible."<sup>17</sup>

The murals of the dome, begun in 1861, were the Cathedral's first paintings. Only five years were required to complete them, and they were immense. The figure of the Lord God of Sabaoth, seven sazhen tall (14.91 meters), was located at a height of thirty-three sazhen (71.29 meters), *i.e.*, higher than Kremlin's Uspensky Cathedral (55 meters), the Church of the Ascension in Kolomenskoe (60 meters), and the central sanctuary of St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square (61 meters). In painting the dome, artist Aleksey Markov had to overcome enormous technical difficulties because of the sharp concavity of the vaulting. He was forced to paint in semidarkness, lying on his back. The artist was helped by three assistants, among them his most talented pupil--and later famous painter--Ivan Kramskoy.

Originally, no paintings were planned for the west side of the dome. While painting the dome, Markov sensed that an unpainted surface adjacent to a painted one would be jarring. So, he proposed a subject for a mural based on the Hebrew names of the Creator (Elohim), which would "serve as a reflection of the embodiment of the Tri-Hypostatic God. Before this sign of the Source of Being would soar winged seraphim singing eternally 'Holy, Holy, Holy!'" The gaze of the seraphim—as well as of cherubim--was to be directed to the east, that is, toward the Creator of all that is visible and invisible. Markov's proposal was approved and he then painted the mural.<sup>18</sup>

The sequencing of murals was from top to bottom, that is, from the dome to the niches at the floor level of the pillars under the dome and to the walls of the lower passageway. Murals were placed from east to west to symbolize historical time from the creation of the world to events immortalizing Russian history. In other words, to the traditional symbolism of an Orthodox church--a likeness of



heaven on earth--was coupled a historical function, a combination not uncharacteristic of the *weltanschauung* of the time.

Beneath the murals of the dome, conveying the idea of the creation of the world and the Creator's eternal, omnipotent nature were murals focusing on the history of the world He had created. The next set of murals, found under the windows of the drum supporting the dome, formed a broad, continuous, circular band and depicted symbolically humankind's earliest period, starting with the Fall and ending with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah being fulfilled by Christ's coming and the Messiah's service to the human race were illustrated on the drum of the dome by figures taken from the Bible who foretold and bore witness to his coming and who preached his gospel.

In the band of murals on the east side of the main dome Christ the Savior was shown seated on a throne wearing white robes and holding an open book displaying the words: "I am the light of the world." On either side of him were thirty sacred figures symbolizing the heavenly church gathered at a moment of joyous exultation: the Mother of God, John the Baptist, Archangels Michael and Gabriel, church forefathers Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and King David, Old Testament prophets Elijah and Isaiah, Apostles Peter, Paul, James, John, Andrew, Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James Alphaeus, Judas Iscariot, and Simon, St. Stephen the Martyr, Emperor Constantine, and Grand Princes Vladimir and Alexander Nevsky.<sup>19</sup> Pyotr Vasilievich Basin (1793-1877) was contracted to execute this composition in 1866. A relative of Ton and an outstanding artist, his murals adorned both Kazan and St. Isaac's Cathedrals in St. Petersburg. His work, however, represented an earlier era. His studies, which are preserved in the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts, were executed in the best tradition of academic romantic painting: lithe, beautiful figures in soft, light

colors.<sup>20</sup> The style of his paintings for the Cathedral, which seemed antiquated compared to the work of other artists who painted the church's interior, elicited the displeasure of Emperor Alexander II. As a result, in 1875 the artist Nicholas Koshelev was asked to redo the murals. Initially, he repainted the three central figures and changed the color tones of the remaining ones, but the following year he repainted the entire band, preserving only the general composition and rhythm of the figures' placement.<sup>21</sup> Basin was greatly distressed by his lack of success, and the shame of having his work destroyed was almost too much for him to bear. A year later he died.

A distinctive characteristic of early Russian churches, revived in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, was the use of inscriptions, inscriptions intrinsic to the church's art and architecture. One encircled the drum of the dome under the band of murals. Below the *Deisus* composition of Christ with the Virgin and John the Baptist was inscribed: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John I:1-2). Of special importance to the symbolism of the Cathedral as an Orthodox church was the inscription on the west side of the drum: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians I:22-23).<sup>22</sup> The arches supporting the dome on the north, west, and south sides were inscribed with the words of the Creed and on the east arch with the words of the eastern rite hymn "The Only-begotten Son and the Word of God (*Edinorodnyi syne i Slove Bozhii*)."<sup>23</sup>

All of the murals located under the Cathedral's dome were suffused with a feeling of joyous triumph produced by Christ's message to the world. The paintings on the pendentives continued the story of Christ's earthly existence begun in the altar area murals. Absent, however, was the theme of Christ's

suffering. Three sacred pictures “depict the greatest moments in the Savior’s earthly life, whereby the Lord revealed his glory in all its fullness,” his Transfiguration, Resurrection, and Ascension. A fourth showed the descent of the Holy Spirit. Below these compositions on the pylons under the pendentives were portrayed the Evangelists who preached to the world about the teachings and earthly existence of Christ.<sup>24</sup>

The next cycle of pictures was found in the low niches of the chamfers of the colossal columns supporting the dome. In the east niches, closest to the altar area, the subjects linked the life of Christ with the history of mankind. The northeast niche was graced by “The Veneration of the Shepherds,” the southeast one by “The Homage of the Wise Men and the Presentation of Gifts to the Infant Jesus.” Murals in these niches depicted aspects of Christ’s life that were bright and joyous, promising hope and instilling faith. In the altar area murals depicted the Savior’s birth and his final days on earth.

The theme of individuals with premonitions about or who foretold the coming of Christ and of individuals whose victories were credited to faith in Christ was continued in the paintings in the niches of the Cathedral’s west side: “The Anointing of David by the Prophet Samuel” (in the southwest niche), and “St. Sergius of Radonezh Blessing Prince Dmitry Donskoy before the Battle against the Tatars.” The work of Vereshchagin,<sup>25</sup> they repeat subjects found in the high reliefs of the church’s exterior.

The story of the murals created for the pendentives and pylons was in many ways similar to those of the drum of the main dome. In 1871, Fyodor Bruni (1799-1875), one of the most celebrated masters of romanticism in its late academic phase--he had created the sketches for the famous mosaics in St. Isaac’s Cathedral--signed a contract to paint the murals for the pendentives and also depictions of the Evangelists to go below these murals. Bruni died in 1875, leaving the work

unfinished. Members of the Commission were critical of the work he had done. Completion—and improvement--of these works fell to the academician Yevgeny Sorokin (1821-1892).<sup>26</sup>

Artists Neff and Bruni, whose works for St. Isaac's Cathedral and the Kazan Cathedral in Petersburg executed in a style fashionable in the mid-nineteenth century enjoyed success, failed, however, to satisfy the aesthetic criteria for the murals in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Their lack of success mirrored that of long-respected architects such as Melnikov, Mikhailov, and Stasov who were pushed aside during the second competition for the Cathedral in favor of the design of a young and unknown architect.

The content of the murals in the side wings of the Cathedral was closely tied to those in the central part. The small domes, echoing the large one, contained depictions of God's hypostasis based on themes from the Apocalypse. In the east dome, over the altar, as noted above, was a representation of the Holy Spirit. In the west dome opposite the Savior was depicted seated on a throne clothed in royal robes. In his right hand he held a book, in his left, a scepter. Over him arched a rainbow, beneath him spread a sparkling, glassy sea, and before him were twenty-four venerable elders in worshipful poses.

In the dome of the south wing Jesus was depicted as an infant surrounded by angels emanating radiance against a background containing the Star of Bethlehem and inscribed with the words "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). On the periphery were four six-winged seraphim. On the opposite, north dome was a representation of the Almighty, in His hands a scepter and the Book of Judgement sealed with seven seals and at His feet four symbolic representations of the Evangelists singing hymns of praise. On the periphery were four six-winged seraphim and the words "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and

is, and is to come” (Revelation 4:8), These were painted by Koshelev who also created the murals in the band of the main dome.<sup>27</sup>

On the side walls of the north and south wings and the walls of the west and east wings under the domes of the Cathedral the Mother of God was depicted in various settings. Before and to her side were paintings of saints, either life-size or as medallion paintings, the latter set against a background done in the Russian ornamental style. The subjects’ feast days coincided with feast days commemorating appearances of the Virgin and her miraculous icons and with important events of the 1812 war.<sup>28</sup>

Murals visible through the large arches on the walls surrounding the windows of the lofts also formed part of the overall plan. The scheme on the walls of the side wings was repeated. Saints were depicted on the sides of the window arches, and on the tympana over the windows were paintings of Christ: “The Presentation of Christ in the Temple” (south wing), “The Epiphany” (north wing) painted by Genrikh Semiradsky, and “The Entry into Jerusalem” (west wing). Thus, on the most prominent visual spaces in the Cathedral the depiction of significant events in Christ’s earthly existence was continued. These large compositions, besides linking Christ’s life to life in general, also linked his life to the Russian Orthodox Church and the history of Russia, the principal subject of murals in the lofts.

As in early Russian churches, the walls and vaulting of the Cathedral’s lofts or passageways were completely covered with murals. There were also two side altars. One was dedicated to St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, the patron saint of Nicholas I, who had fulfilled his brother’s, Alexander’s, promise to build the Cathedral. This altar was on the south side of the church since the saint had lived and worked on soil lying to the south of Russia. In analogous fashion, the north side altar was dedicated to St. Alexander Nevsky, sacred to the three emperors

involved in building the Cathedral, Alexander I, who vowed to erect it, Alexander II who saw it completed, and Alexander III during whose reign it was consecrated.

Corresponding to side altars' dedicatory message about Christianity having come to Russia from Byzantium to the South and the fact that places sacred to all Christians were in the East, the murals found in the south passageway depicted the history of the universal church from the third to the tenth centuries, that is, before Russia's conversion. These murals traced the history of discord within the church, portrayed the persecutions it suffered, celebrated the triumph of orthodoxy, and affirmed Christian dogmas. On the walls were depicted the "champions of truth at the seven Ecumenical Councils, martyrs who died for the purity of the faith and devotion to the Savior, saints . . . and apostles who spread Christ's teaching" plus events related to St. Nicholas.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the subjects of the murals of this section of the passageway were directly connected with the theme of the dome of the south wing, where the infant Jesus corresponded in an iconographic sense to the notion of "The Word made flesh."

The iconostases of both side altars, traditionally found in early Russian churches, were made out of a nontraditional material, white marble. Sketches indicate that they were designed by Ton himself in the Russian style.<sup>30</sup> Icons for them were painted by Neff, Vasiliev, and Viktor Fartusov. The murals of the south portion of the lofts were done by Vasiliev, Fartusov, Nicholas Bodarevsky, Pavel Pleshanov, Pyotr Shamshin, Karl Venig, and Dmitry Martynov. To Konstanin Makovsky belonged murals depicting St. Nicholas's ordination and his receiving clandestine aid. There were also paintings in this part of the Cathedral by I. L. Pryanishnikov: "Saved from the Storm," "The Reprieve," and "The Transfer of St. Nicholas's Remains." The four Ecumenical Councils were portrayed by Bodarevsky and Vasily Surikov.<sup>31</sup>

These artists are enumerated in order to give them their due. The names of many of the mural artists are difficult to establish with any certainty (only the surnames of some of them are known). The author's object here was to make progress, however minimal, in the effort to revive the memory of those whose names for so many years have been buried in oblivion.

In the murals in the lofts of the north and west sides of the Cathedral subjects from Russian history provided the common theme. Yet, each wing had nuances of its own. The west wing was devoted basically to individuals important in the history of the Russian Church, to the many saints venerated "who planted in our fatherland the Orthodox faith and who were celebrated because of their holy lives. Dating from the ninth century A.D. to our times, they were builders of peaceful cloisters of enlightenment and piety. Now in Heaven, these saints are zealous and persistent intercessors before the Lord for the preservation of the world, the well-being of the Church, the prosperity of Russia, and they provide Russia with armor for victory over her enemies."<sup>32</sup>

The north wing, which contained a second side altar honoring Alexander Nevsky, patron saint of the three emperors who participated in the building of the Cathedral, was dedicated to Russian history. Depicted there were historic figures canonized by the Church and the historic events in which they participated. In murals and icons appeared prelates and holy men who predated Alexander Nevsky as well as those who were his contemporaries: "Holy Russian princes, Nevsky's kin, abettors to prelates and holy men in affirming the Christian faith in Russia, holy princes, holy men and prelates who lived after him in various parts of his principedom and in neighboring principedoms, those who brought the Russian lands together . . . martyrs who suffered and laid down their lives in battles to free the Fatherland, particular events in the life of Alexander Nevsky, and the most important miracle-working icons of the miraculous appearances of the Mother of

God which are accorded special esteem in Russia.”<sup>33</sup> The murals of the north and west wings made this part of the Cathedral a unique temple of Russian saints, where religious and lay figures of all of the Russian lands could be found: Moscow Metropolitans Pyotr, Aleksey, Ion, and Filipp, Yefrem of Novgorod, Sergius of Radonezh and Herman of Varlaam, Varlam of Khutyn, Metropolitan Constantine of Kiev, and Simeon, Bishop of Suzdal, Kievan Prince-Saints Igor, Olga, and Vladimir, Constantine, Mikhail, and Fyodor of Murom, Yaroslavl and Smolensk Saints Constantine and David, Blessed Prokopius of Ustyuzh, Holy Dimitry of Prilutsk, and many others. Compositions depicted the baptism of St. Olga, the baptism of St. Vladimir in Korsun, the founding of the Kievo-Pechersky Lavra, the building of the Holy Trinity Lavra by Saint Sergius, the foundation laying of Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin by Metropolitan Pyotr and Grand Prince Ivan Danilovich Kalita, the appearance of the Mother of God and of the Apostles to Saint Sergius, and other such events.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the artists mentioned above, Sorokin, Pigulevsky, Akim Karneev, Firs Zhuravlev, Alexander Litovchenko, Nicholas Lavrov, Grigory Sedov, Bodarevsky, Gorbunov, Martynov, Pleshanov, and Tyurin also participated in the decoration of the Cathedral’s lofts. The entire architectural décor, the decorative ornamentation of the window arches and the arches that opened into the central part of the Cathedral, the outlines of the vaults and also of the murals in the vaults, magnificent in terms of their quality, beauty, and sense of light and form, were executed according to Dal’s designs.<sup>35</sup>

There was an effort to use the art work in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior as a springboard for reviving the Russian style in painting, in other words, to make these works play a role analogous to that of the Cathedral’s design in architecture. In 1856 a class in “Orthodox icon painting” was created by Prince Grigory Gagarin (1810-1893). A talented artist and firm believer in reviving national and ancient



Christian traditions in all artistic forms, Gagarin first put his ideas into practice in plans for churches built in Georgia and in murals for Zion Cathedral in Tiflis and for the domestic chapel of Grand Princess Maria Nikolaevna in St. Petersburg. His important role in reviving early Russian traditions, especially in painting, is woefully underappreciated. One of Gargarin's illustrations for Vladimir Sollogub's satiric work *Tarantas* (1845) is a depiction of an idealized town in the Russian style. His sketches and plans formed the basis of one of the first, if not *the* first block of flats in Moscow constructed in the 1850's in that style, the wood-framed Pogodin Cottages. Gargarin also compiled and published "chronological plates displaying Byzantine art," *A Collection of Byzantine and Early Russian Ornamentation*, and *A Collection of Byzantine, Georgian, and Early Russian Architectural Monuments*. Gargarin worked hard to instill ideas about Byzantine style among the faculty and associates of the Academy of Fine Arts who specialized in religious art. Thanks in part to him the movement to revive old national artistic traditions struck deep roots in the field of Russian architecture. He was a pioneer in reviving national traditions in painting. Gargarin published something akin to Ton's albums of model church designs, but in the realm of art. His *Depictions of the Holy Gospels in Free Imitations of Ancient Sources* contains "prototype compositions" for artists working in the sphere of religious art. In these compositions he strives to combine ancient iconographic designs modeled on early Christian and old Russian art with modern historical and archeological scholarly notions, for example, in areas relating to costumes, ethnic types, and 'authentic' depiction of landscape and architecture.

Gagarin, like many of his contemporaries, viewed church murals and icons as historical art. The establishment of a class in "Orthodox icon painting" was aimed at affirming "historical verisimilitude" and "proper refinement" in religious art. To revive these ancient traditions a deep knowledge of Byzantine art was

required, and with this in mind Gargarin organized a collection of Byzantine models: “if not originals, then at least copies worthy of the originals . . . the best models of Byzantine art and Greek sculpture . . . which are to be found in the old churches of ancient cities, that is, in Novgorod, Moscow, Suzdal, Vladimir, Kiev, in the Caucasus, especially in Georgia, and also among Orthodox Slavs and Greeks on Mt. Athos and in Venice and other Italian cities.”<sup>36</sup>

Timofey Neff, the artist who executed many of the paintings in both the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and St. Isaac’s Cathedral in Petersburg, directed the icon-painting class. As it turned out, the undertaking was premature; only a few artists showed interest. Among the many artists working on the Cathedral’s murals and icons, only Bruni, Neff, and Vasiliev drew on the medieval Byzantine and early Russian traditions and then only to a degree. By and large, the Cathedral’s art reflected later academic norms which relied heavily on Renaissance and neoclassical notions. In an effort to be historically accurate, art became more realistic. An interest in authentic depictions characteristic of genre painting during the latter half of the nineteenth century meant that great attention was devoted to conveying the inimitability and originality of life in times long past. Early Russian art had no impact on this well-established Renaissance value system. At most, a few iconographic schemes from early Russian art were revived. For example, in Neff’s work the Trinity is presented in the Old Testament interpretation of three angels. Vasiliev began to use gold backgrounds. In some instances, figures were more elongated than was normal and the eyes made overly large. On the whole, however, even the work of the artists who employed aspects of the Byzantine tradition was still basically in the academic tradition. The same could be said about the Cathedral’s sculpture, which was more closely tied to the neoclassical tradition than was the building’s architecture. In any event, the attempt to revive the Byzantine tradition in the murals and icons of the Cathedral of Christ the

Savior proved to be unsuccessful. Its murals were a monument to late academic art.

Even though the artists working on the Cathedral belonged to different generations and adhered to different traditions, most were “academic” artists. A few were realists of the *Peredvizhnik*, or Wanderer, school such as Ilarion Pryanishnikov, Aleksey Korzukhin, Kramskoy, and Surikov, but nonetheless their works had a stylistic unity rooted in the norms of academic art. After all, there was an overall conformity to pictorial art of the time, an interdependence of style and genre. Style in painting, as in art in general, does not exist by itself in a pure form. It is realized in specific creative works of one type or another and is conditioned by the function of these works at the time they were produced. The subjects of church art have never been dealt with in terms of genre and theme, as is the norm with secular painting. The lack of knowledge about and a reluctance to work in the spirit of early Russian art compelled artists, regardless of their creative sympathies and antipathies, to rely on academic norms in art: loftiness, idealism, and an abstract quality. These norms were deemed more fitting than realism to convey the common human ideals of Christianity and perform the function of religious painting.

This digression, which readers may deem peripheral to the discussion of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior’s interior, is included to explain how in plan and content the Cathedral’s murals sacrificed canonical principles stipulating how subjects were placed in churches. This was done because the Cathedral was a national memorial temple. For the Cathedral and only for the Cathedral a carefully ordered and strict hierarchical system for placing the murals was developed. The most important depictions, symbolizing the most sacred and fundamental Christian beliefs, were sited in the high central portions of the Cathedral. The further murals and icons were from the center of the church and the closer they were to ground

level, the more historical were their subjects. The central area under the main dome and the small domes was reserved for depictions of God. Lower down were depictions of Christ's life on earth. In the wings of the church's cruciform plan were icons of the Virgin Mary and of saints. The paintings in the lofts were historic in nature; they depicted the history of Russia as part of the history of Christianity.

The lower passageway completed (or, if you will, initiated) this carefully ordered system of placing subjects. As the least significant part of the Cathedral's sacred space, it was the area where events and *dramatis personae* from Russia's history were immortalized. In other words, it fulfilled a historical-memorial function based on prevailing scholarly and cultural ideas. Ton, the chief architect, designed the layout. The passageway was to be a detailed museum or chronicle of the war with the French. Moving along the passageway, one moved through the time and space of that campaign.

Proposals to decorate the lower passageway, however, kept changing. They all related to the *raison d'être* for the Cathedral, namely, the creation of a historical museum, but that was the only thing they had in common. Initially, the plan was simply to decorate the passageway with paintings with subjects to be chosen in due time. A curious archival document listing the Cathedral's murals specifies those subjects in a special section entitled "Historic Events." The choice of events is most interesting. The criteria for their selection were defined by events from sacred writ, which was a way of demonstrating Russia's greatness and her role in world history. Not surprisingly, a prominent place was reserved for depictions of events that took place in the war with the French. But included also were the most important events in Russia's long history: the lifting of the Tartar yoke, the Battle of Kulikovo, deliverance from Tamerlane's invasion and the invasions of Akhmat Khan and the Crimean Tartars, the taking of Samarkand and Khiva, Alexander

Nevsky's victory, Peter the Great's victories at Gangut and Poltava, Russia's annexation of Lithland and Podolia, the storming of Warsaw in 1831, the Peace of Turkmanchai and the Peace of Adrianople, and the annexation of the Amur territory in the Far East. The selection principle was analogous to that of the central area and the lofts whereby the history of the Russian Church was treated as an integral part of the history of Christianity. In the exact same way the 1812-1814 war was included with other Russian victories, making it an integral part of Russia's military history. The building of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was also to become part of Russia's secular history and so included were depictions of the accession to the throne and the death of Alexander I, the birth, marriage, and death of Nicholas I, the marriage, accession to the throne, and coronation of Alexander II and the great reforms of this tsar--the emancipation of the serfs and the establishment of a public legal system--and from earlier history, of Peter the Great's reform of the church in 1721, even the approval of the legislation that set up the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>37</sup>

A second, more varied plan for passageway mural subjects was developed, and this was the one ultimately realized. Formally proposed by the Chief Architect and approved by Nicholas I, it specified that "the lower passageway should be regarded as the narthex of the Cathedral and dedicated to the memory of the epoch of 1812, to the glory of Russia, our Fatherland, which divine providence unmistakably blessed. The most important events of 1812 should be depicted in paintings on the pillars of the Cathedral narthex and the names of warriors who sacrificed their lives for the Fatherland should be inscribed together with the names of civilians who sacrificed their material wellbeing and whose work for peace and truth rendered them worthy of immortality and gratitude. And on the pilasters should appear the names and the keys of cities freed from the enemy."<sup>38</sup> Ton took

special pride in the creation of an uninterrupted circular passageway that “would be a public expression of the history of 1812 in writing and in portraiture.”<sup>39</sup>

Alexander II reexamined and changed the layout of the art in the Cathedral’s lower passageway three times. He proposed that the principle followed in creating the exterior sculptural décor, a norm for memorial churches, be repeated, namely, that the history of the 1812 war be inculcated by painting “images of saints who had been alive when battles were taking place, with troparions inscribed below them.” His Majesty also saw fit to order “that the names of the units of the troops, and, if possible, the names of the heroes who fell in battle be inscribed there, as had been done in the church in Sevastopol in August 20, 1875.”<sup>40</sup> The Emperor deigned to approve the plan for decorating the walls and for the paintings of the lower passageway, noting, however, apropos of the banners prescribed in the sketches presented to him: “these trophies are kept in Kazan Cathedral and I do not wish them removed from there.”<sup>41</sup>

A problem had arisen regarding the correct way to memorialize the 1812 war. Adjacent to allegorical and symbolic depictions of historical events traditional to Orthodox churches were now to be quite different documentary, factual ones. Initially, it was suggested that the two ideas be combined by placing texts providing a chronology of the war next to the murals. The official Military Research Committee furnished the Construction Commission with material for the inscriptions: lists of battles with the names of participants, military leaders who led troops in battle, soldiers slain, wounded, or distinguished in battle, regiments decorated for distinguished service, and awards given to generals.<sup>42</sup>

The lists bewildered Ton. He felt that they presented only part of the story. To understand why information of this kind should be found in the Cathedral, it was necessary, he emphasized, “to include the edicts of Emperor Alexander I explaining the reasons for the War and bearing witness to the fact that the War was

a war of the people for which not only Russian troops but the entire Russian populace was deserving of eternal glory. The material sacrifices of the people, the militias, the bravery and steadfastness, love of faith, Emperor, and Fatherland were unsurpassed.” Ton was amazed how it was possible, “not to recall the sacrifices and the services of the entire Russian people, to ignore the enormous sacrifices borne by Smolensk, Moscow, and other cities which amounted to more than thirty thousand gold pieces, more than one hundred million rubles, together with the fire of Moscow and the ravaging of Smolensk Province that devoured in terms of real estate alone more than three hundred million rubles. Could it be that these sacrifices were not to be recorded on tablets in the Cathedral?”<sup>43</sup>

The information proposed for the inscriptions turned out to be so comprehensive and the number of marble tablets required to accommodate this level of detail so great that decrees had to be issued in August 18, 1873 and in August 21, 1875 abrogating the number of murals to be painted. Subsequently, it was decided to limit the number of marble tablets with inscriptions. Documentation had been allowed to supplant allegory and symbol. At this point, at the behest of the clergy and the president of the Commission, Moscow Governor-General Dolgorukov, the circular passageway around the Cathedral was nixed in an attempt to free up space for the credence table, vestry, and sacristy behind the main altar. In the end, thanks to a concerted effort by the three architects directing the Cathedral’s construction, Ton, Rezanov, and Dmitriev, the passageway was retained. The justification for eliminating the passageway and erecting the credence table in the area next to the altar was that this was standard in early Russian churches (although not in later ones). It was also felt that without this extra space the altar area would be cramped and awkward to use. As a result, it was proposed that the memorial tablets be placed so as not to obtrude in the performance of religious rites. In 1879, an edict called for further changes. The

credence table would remain in the altar area, while the sacristy and a library, which had also been proposed for the space near the altar, were to be moved out of the memorial area and into the east part of the passageways.

Dolgorukov was opposed to the terms of the 1879 edict. His objections were “based on the needs of those performing sacred rites that clearly take precedence over the wishes of those laboring in the architectural and artistic realms. In deciding questions about the altar area, the demands of performing the divine liturgy should have been fully weighed. In fact, the observations and requests of the late Innokenty, Metropolitan of Moscow, and Leonid, Archbishop of Yaroslavl and Rostov were ignored. [Innokenty and Leonid] sought free access to the credence table for laymen of both sexes without impinging on the inviolability of the main altar. They also suggested that in another recess, on the opposite side, separate space be provided for a vestry where the clergy . . . might vest, perform ablutions, remove their street clothing and footwear so as not to have to perform these actions in the altar area. . . .”<sup>44</sup> Alexander II left the final decision to the discretion of the Synod, which passed a compromise resolution. The credence table and vestry would remain in the altar area, and during divine liturgy the altar area’s passageway would be cordoned off with an iron screen. The archbishop’s stall behind the altar would be reduced in size, and to the side, opposite the vestry, a temporary sacristy would be set up to keep the most important liturgical objects.<sup>45</sup> Finally, on November 21, 1878, Rezanov, the deputy chief architect, presented the final design to Alexander II. “[S]tarting from the Cathedral’s main west entrance, along the northern part of the passageway there will be depictions of battles which took place during the Patriotic War inside Russia together with decrees proclaiming the start of the war and appeals to Moscow and to the Russian people to organize militias. In the vestry there will be the decrees about driving the enemy from Russia and about erecting in Moscow, the ancient capital, the



Cathedral of Christ the Savior to pay to honor the city of Moscow and all Russians. Along the south side of the corridor, beginning with the vestry and running all the way back to the main west entrance of the Cathedral will be depictions of battles that took place abroad, in Germany and in France, concluding with the taking of Paris and the decree announcing the overthrow of France and establishing peace in all of Europe. . . . Thus, a person coming in the main entrance of the Cathedral will see the beginning of the War and its end--the invasion of Russia by Napoleon and the subjugation of Paris--and as they leave the Cathedral the words of Emperor Alexander I: 'I will not lay down my sword while a single enemy soldier remains within my realm' and the decree proclaiming Napoleon dethroned and declaring universal peace throughout Europe."<sup>46</sup>

Ton could not abide the Commission's proposal to eliminate the east section of the passageway. The Commission members suggested that the story of the war begin not at the entrance but at the credence table, i.e., as far as possible from the point of entry, and that it end at the vestry far into the passageway on the opposite, south side. This would have destroyed not only logic and freedom of movement about the church-museum, but its meaning as well. Excluding the east part meant excluding tablets containing the decrees of thanksgiving to the Almighty and ordering the erection of the Cathedral as well as the tablets displaying Vitberg's and Ton's designs for the church. The Synod, on the other hand, favored Ton's plan.<sup>47</sup> Placed in the lower passageway were all 177 marble plates describing the battles from 1812 to 1814 together with texts of the decrees and with the plans for both cathedrals. The circular passageway had been preserved.

In the lower passageway there were placed twelve icons in cases with subjects relating to the most important events of the war. Thus the idea of immortalizing the war in a symbolic or allegorical art form was realized, although on a much more modest scale than originally proposed.

The walls and floor of the passageway, like the rest of the Cathedral, were covered with rare marble. Their designs echoed that of the central part the church. The socles were labradorite, the frames of the doors porphyry. The floor of the Cathedral, including that of the upper and lower passageways, was inlaid with precious stone of various types, labradorite, Shokshino porphyry, and Italian marble to create elegant and beautiful patterns. In front of the iconostasis seven steps led up to a solium which was demarcated by bronze grillwork.

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior is well documented in engravings, lithographs, photoengravings, and postcards published in mass editions in the early twentieth century. Photographs of the interior and of the murals of the central part of the Cathedral are also preserved. What the church plate and furnishings looked like, however, is not known. A few designs for these items contained in a volume kept in the architectural section of the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg convey a sense of their variety and beauty. They played an important role in the Cathedral as an elaborate functioning religious institution. Orthodox theologian and philosopher Pavel Florensky feels that it is impossible painlessly, without inflicting damage, to separate even one element “from the entire organism of church ritual, a synthesis of the arts, an artistic medium in which and only in which the icon finds its true meaning and can be contemplated as true artistry. . . . In terms of church principles, everything is interwoven. Church architecture, for example, takes into account everything, no matter how small, for example, the ribbons of bluish incense that twist about the frescoes and wind around the posts of the dome. Their motion and intertwining almost infinitely expands the architectural space of a church, mitigating the aridity and rigidity of its lines and, as if fusing them, sets life itself into motion. But this is only a small, and relatively monotonous, part of church ritual. Let us remember the plasticity and the rhythm of movements of the liturgical celebrators, for example, during censing . . . about

the play and interplay of the folds of precious fabrics, about the fragrances, about the special fiery winnowing of an atmosphere ionized by thousands of burning candles. Recall further that synthesis in church rites is not limited to the sphere of decorative art. Rather, into its ambit is drawn vocal art and poesy of various kinds, which by itself constitutes aesthetic musical drama. Everything is subordinate to a single goal, to the sublime cathartic effect of this musical drama, and therefore everything is coordinated with everything else. Without this it is nothing or at best false.”<sup>48</sup>

The boundary between architecture and applied art in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in many ways was imperceptible. The church’s furnishings, especially permanently attached items, reflected the building’s architecture on a small scale. The same could be said about every barrier, balustrade, and grating, of which there were many, and also about the chandeliers that illuminated the interior. As noted above, the Russian-style ornamental décor was the work of the talented architect Lev Dal’. Its bright colors and gold background corresponded to the settings of the church plate and other church paraphernalia. Many architects participated in the design of the Cathedral’s various objects and furnishings. The pattern of the magnificent mosaic floors inlaid with various varieties of precious stone in both the central part of the Cathedral and the passageways was closely linked to the configuration of the bronze grating. In the center of the sanctuary additional bronze grating surrounded the solium and formed balustrades in the gallery arches. A bronze Russian-style balustrade, an extension of the Cathedral’s architectural and ornamental décor, bordered the balcony of the main dome, the work of Ton’s assistant Semyon Dmitriev.

The Cathedral, as every Orthodox church, had a Bishop’s Stall [*gornoe mesto*] near the altar on the east wall. Because of the Cathedral’s high status this throne was a magnificent and elegant one made of marble. Designed by architect

Viktor Kossov, the Stall was at the same level as the altar area's socle and blended perfectly with it.

In describing the interior of the Cathedral mention has been made of the gold background of the ornamental décor, which harks back to early Russian icon painting and the mosaics of old Russian churches. In the color gamut of the Cathedral's interior, gold, the symbol of divine light, played a major role. The decorative parts and the tent roof of the iconostasis were gilded as were all the balustrades, all the lighting fixtures, large and small, the candelabras and candlesticks. They filled the Cathedral's interior not only with light but with a wondrous radiance, a glow.

To illuminate the central part of the Cathedral three chandeliers each holding 120 candles (designed, most likely, by Rezanov) were originally proposed. However, in the modeling stage the design was changed. The largest chandelier held 148 candles arranged in three tiers and was hung in the large gallery arch of the west wing. Two like it, but smaller in size, each with 100 candles in two tiers, hung in the large arches of the north and south wings of the Cathedral. In each of the eight small gallery arches of the west, north, and south wings hung chandeliers with 43 candles. The lofts were illuminated by additional chandeliers. To increase the amount of light in the center of the Cathedral, the design called for placing candlesticks along the entire perimeter of the balustrades. Candelabras were mounted as well on the balustrade's posts. The Chopin bronze foundry in Petersburg manufactured almost all of these lighting fixtures.<sup>49</sup>

Various service-related items designed by the architects were executed by Russia's finest manufacturers. Vestments came from Sapozhnikov's, special editions of books and sacred objects from Ovchinnikov's, Khlebnikov's, Postnikov's, and Chichelev's establishments. The tabernacles, thuribles, patens, and crosses designed by Dal' were striking. The ceremonial Scriptures of the main

altar had a gilded setting adorned with enamel art studded with precious stones. The book was exhibited at the 1882 All-Russia Art and Industrial Exhibition in Moscow.<sup>50</sup> Master craftsmen of Pavel Ovchinnikov's factory made the front cover. Its motifs recalled those of the Cathedral's iconostasis and elaborate entrance doors. In the middle was a decorative arch containing a cross with a crucifix done in enamel. At the tips of the cross were depictions in bas-relief of the Epiphany, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Lord and of the Annunciation. In a band along the edge were depictions of the twelve Apostles.

Ovchinnikov's craftsmen also executed Dal's design for the main altar's large ceremonial cross. Gilded, it had an enamel depiction of the Crucifixion at its center with amethysts at each corner. For the side altar dedicated to St. Nicholas, the Ovchinnikov factory made a tabernacle gilded in the old way and mounted on a pedestal of Shokshino porphyry.<sup>51</sup> Traditionally, the small tabernacle in Orthodox churches where the Sacraments for distribution to the sick are kept resembles a small church or chapel. Dal' did not deviate from the canon: his tabernacle was in tent style crowned by an onion-domed chapel richly decorated in bas-relief.

Gold with enamel was a combination often found in art objects produced in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the Cathedral of Christ the Savior these materials were used both for large items, such as the main iconostasis or stand-alone candle holders, and small ones. Other designs besides those of Dal' included architect N. Putstsolka's ceremonial gilt and enamel dikerion, or double candlestick symbolizing the dual nature of Christ, divine and human, (the dikerion is used by bishops and other hierarchs when blessing worshippers) and a gilded thurible for the main altar by architect R. Shmelling decorated with precious stones and enameling. The censer intended for daily use had bas-reliefs only.

Thuribles, usually kept in the altar area, are used for censuring with frankincense, a custom that originated in Old Testament times. Censuring, about

which Florensky writes so poetically, symbolizes worshippers' respect and reverence for the altar and icons. The ritual expresses the wish that the prayers of worshippers be fervent and revered, rise gently to heaven, like the smoke of the incense, and that God's grace will shield believers, again like the smoke of incense.

Summing up, it should be noted that Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior together with St. Isaac's Cathedral in Petersburg were the first in a series of grand memorial church artistic ensembles erected in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Religious art of this period was strongly influenced by Christ the Savior's distinctive national-historical scheme. The example of the Cathedral was pivotal to the plans for and building of St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Kiev, the Church of the Resurrection of Christ of the Spilled Blood in Petersburg, that city's Memorial Church of Christ the Savior commemorating the sailors who perished during the Russo-Japanese War, and memorial Orthodox churches located abroad in San Stefano (now Alaşması), Turkey and in Sophia, Bulgaria (in memory of the Russo-Turkish War), and in memory of the 1813 Battle of the Nations at Leipzig.

No less substantial were construction innovations introduced during the extended time it took to build the Cathedral. The domes of the towers were formed from frames of metal ribs attached to huge metal rings at the base. The domes were gilded using an electroplating process developed by a foundry in St. Petersburg. After the domes and the roof were completed, lightening conduits, designed by Moscow University physics professor Mikhail Spassky, were installed. They constituted a system of copper strips connected to the outside of the metal domes and roofs that ran through the downspouts down to the Moskva. The iron pipes of the downspouts were located inside the walls of the Cathedral in special channels which led to the subterranean floor; a second set of pipes led through a large underground duct to the river. To heat the Cathedral, in place of

the iron pneumatic furnaces originally planned a system of twelve furnaces of fireproof brick was installed. The furnaces could be heated to very high temperatures and held their heat far longer than cast iron ones. To avoid dampness stucco was not applied directly to brick but by a “detached” method. Holes were bored into the brick walls, wooden stoppers driven into them and into these, in turn, were driven metal spikes. The spikes were wound with tinned wire to form a mesh which combined with hemp formed the base for a mixture of cement and pozzolana. The result was a hard, durable layer separated from the wall by space that allowed air to circulate. To reduce pressure on the foundation’s four heaviest pylons, reverse arches were constructed between them. The weight of the building was distributed on piers carefully positioned along the beds of the arches.

The original plan was to complete the Cathedral in 1880 to coincide with the five-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kulikovo, the four-hundredth anniversary of the lifting of the Tartar Yoke, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of Alexander II. However, since Alexander was crowned in 1856 rather than 1855, the consecration of the Cathedral was scheduled for 1881. Alexander’s assassination that year by members of the radical People’s Will movement necessitated another change in date. Only in 1883 was the Cathedral of Christ the Savior formally consecrated. One of the longest and most grandiose of Russian building endeavors had finally come to an end. The cost to the state treasury was 15,123,163 rubles and 89 kopecks, an enormous sum for that time. The progress of construction in any given year was determined largely by the amount of the money the state treasury was able to supply. Until 1862 it supplied annually 300,000 rubles. That amount was reduced in subsequent years, and then it increased anew to 517,000 rubles in 1875, 500,000 in 1878 and 1879, reaching its apogee of 700,000 rubles in 1876 and 1877.<sup>52</sup>

The consecration of the Cathedral in 1883 marked the beginning of a new period in its existence, one that would last not quite fifty years. In that year it began to function as one of the principal cathedrals in Moscow, second in importance only to Uspensky Cathedral nearby in the Kremlin.

<sup>1</sup> “*Khram vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*,” *Zhurnal dlia chteniia vospitannikov*. . . , p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> “I. S. Kitner, V. A. Shreter, A. I. Rezanov (an obituary),” *Zodchii*, St. Petersburg, 1888, pp. 33-35; N. N. Vrangeli’, “*Katalog starykh proizvedenii iskusstva, khраниashchikhsia v Akademii Khudozhestv*,” *Starye gody*, 1908 (supplement), p. 52; A. P. Zhirkevich, *Akademik N. M. Chagin* (Wilno, 1911), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> “L. V. Dal’ (an obituary),” *Nedelia stroitelia*, St. Petersburg, 1878, p. 67; M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 143; E. I. Kirichenko, “*Problema stilii na stranitsakh zhurnala ‘Zodchii’*,” *Arkhitektura SSSR*, 1972, No. 2; \_\_\_\_\_, “*Problema natsional’nogo stilii v russkoi arkhitekture 70-kh gg. XIX v.*,” *Arkhitekturnoe nasledstvo*, 1976, Collection 25; T. A. Slavina, “*Akademik L. V. Dal’ i ego rol’ v razvitiu istorii i teorii russkoi arkhitektury*,” *Arkhitektura: Sbornik trudov Leningradskogo inzhenerno-stroitel’nogo instituta*, No. 109, Leningrad, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> RGB OR, f. 90, k. 3, d. 19, ll.1, 7, 9; k. 3, d. 20, l. 66, ff.

<sup>5</sup> “*Khram vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*,” *Zhurnal dlia chteniia vospitannikov*. . . , p. 114, TsGIA, f. 1284, op., 341, d. 86, l., 470 and 470 ob.

<sup>6</sup> “*Materialy dlia istorii russkoi tserkvi. Peregiska Moskovskogo mitropolita Filareta otноситel’no khrama Khrista Spasitelia*,” *Chteniia v Moskovskom obshchestve liubitelei dukhovnogo prosveshcheniia*, 1882, May, p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>9</sup> *Illustrirovannaia polnaia populiarnaia bibleiskaia entsiklopediia. Trud i izdanie arkhimandrita Nikifora* (Moscow, 1990), p. 578.

<sup>10</sup> *Russkii arkhiiv*, 1882, kn. II, v. 3, pp. 153-154.

<sup>11</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 96-97.

<sup>13</sup> RGB OR, f. 90, k. 1, d. 3, l., 12.

<sup>14</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-101.

<sup>15</sup> *Materialy dlia istorii russkoi tserkvi*. . . , p. 138.

<sup>16</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>17</sup> N. A. Ramazanov, *Zhivopisnyi plafon g-na Markova v khrame Khrista Spasitelia* (Moscow, 1866:offprint from the newspaper *Sovremennaia letopis’*), pp. 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>20</sup> The author is indebted to the curators at the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg for permitting her to access these sketches.

<sup>21</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 92-93.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>30</sup> *Otdel arkhitektury Muzeia Akademii Khudozhestv v S.-Peterburge*.

<sup>31</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-121.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-131.

<sup>35</sup> *Otdel arkhitektury Muzeia Akademii Khudozhestv v S.-Peterburge*.



<sup>36</sup> P. N. Petrov, *Sbornik materialov dlia imperatorskoi Akademii Khudozhestv za sto let ee sushestvovaniia*, Part III (St. Petersburg, 1866), pp. 258-259.

<sup>37</sup> RGB OR, f. 90, k 1, d. 5, ll. 39-40 ob.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, d. 20, ll. 27 ob.-28

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 28.

<sup>40</sup> St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Sevastopol is the point of reference; Ton had drawn up the original plans for it. The Cathedral commemorated the defense of Sevastopol, and the admirals who had perished during the war, P. S. Nakhimov, V. A. Kornilov, and P. M. Lazarev were entombed there.

<sup>41</sup> RGB OR, f. 90, k 1, d. 20, l. 24.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. l. 2,4 and ob.

<sup>44</sup> Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, p. 79

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>46</sup> RGB OR, f. 90, k 1, d. 20, l. 25 ob.-26.

<sup>47</sup> The following document helps one understand the crux of this matter:

“A Report to the Commission for Erecting in Moscow the Cathedral in the Name of Christ the Savior by Its Chief Architect.

“On March 30<sup>th</sup> my Deputy, Privy Councilor A. I. Rezanov forwarded to me a proposal he had received from His Highness, the Honorable Vice-President of the Commission, Baron M. L. Bode-Kolychev, based on a resolution of the Commission of March 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, 1879, directing my Deputy to draw up a new plan for placing the inscriptions in the lower passageway that would take precedence over all previous resolutions regarding this matter. It calls for placing the [inscriptions for] battles from the doors leading to the credence table along the north part of the corridor and continuing along its south and west parts up to the very doors of the vestry. My Deputy was present at the session of the Commission on March 1<sup>st</sup> and had the honor of explaining how the inscriptions would be placed. He heard objections from several members of the Commission. A decision was announced by His Highness, the Honorable President of the Commission, Prince V. A. Dolgorukov, and entered on the register of His Highness, the Honorable Vice-President by Baron M. L. Bode-Kolychev with the honorable members agreeing to present this design for review to His Imperial Majesty with a separate opinion from the Commission along with notice about the abrogation of earlier Imperial decrees and about the absence of an enactment regarding the placement of inscriptions beyond the credence table. As a result of that opinion and the decision of the Commission attended by my Deputy on March 1, he and I created a large-scale sketch of how the inscriptions could be placed. Accompanied by an explanation and signed by us both, it was submitted to the Commission by my Deputy with his report of March 19<sup>th</sup>, bearing the number 65. The plan, explanation, and report, I believe, were heard by the Commission on March 24<sup>th</sup>, since in the report **my Deputy for the second time** directed the attention of the Commission to the need for presenting this design to His Imperial Highness for the following reasons: First, the matter of cutting the inscriptions must be resolved now, for the work of inscribing and gilding of more than 80,000 letters for the inscriptions will require no less than a year . . . even if there are no fewer than thirty marble workers, letterers, and gilders assigned to do this. Otherwise the work will not be completed on time.” Ton continues, “I have stated twice, and I state ‘**a third time**’ that on November 21, 1878 His Imperial Majesty, on entering the passageway appointed for the credence table, asked: ‘Will direct communication from here to the other parts of the passageway be possible?’ This meant that the inscriptions, already defined, would have to be placed in a manner that would permit direct communication with the credence table. The same reasoning is found in the decrees of Emperor Alexander I and in the designs for the Cathedral of the Savior of 1817 and 1839. A further such indication would appear to have been made in the last decree of 1814 by His Majesty. . . . Upon leaving the altar area, the Sovereign deigned to inspect the sketches on display of a general cross-section of the Cathedral and its main iconostasis, and as well the proposed list provided by the Military Research Committee showing the arrangement of the inscriptions on marble plaques along the walls of the passageway. Having responded ‘Fine,’ His Highness then turned to those present and said: ‘This is how one will view the inscriptions in the passageways.’ If the Commission chose not to hear out the explanation of my Deputy nor heed the exalted words of His Majesty, the fault is not that of the architects. I am not in a position to repudiate my earlier declarations to the Commission. My Deputy also cannot do this nor can he draw up a new design which is in any way contrary to the explanations of His Imperial Majesty. In view of all this, I would hope that the Commission agrees with my conclusions. And thus I must humbly report to the Commission that neither I nor my Deputy are in a position to subscribe to the new design for placing the inscriptions without the proper decrees and details of their placement starting from the credence table and continuing

without interruption to the vestry, for two reasons: 1) that His Imperial Majesty has made known how the inscriptions along the passageway and in the sacristy should be arranged, and 2) because we not only misapprehend but we also cannot comprehend the thinking of the Commission in proposing that the inscriptions about battles start at the doors of the credence table, that is, at the far end of the passageway.

“According to the teachings of the church the credence table represents the shelter and the crèche in which Christ lay and the place where the shepherds and Wise Men worshipped Christ, bringing him gifts even though they were yet to be enlightened by the truth of Christian faith. Christ Himself brought to the credence table his bloodless sacrifice of thanksgiving, the sacred bread (communion bread), to which in accordance with the rules of the Ecumenical Councils believers should have unimpeded access. The vestry should be an even more open space since it is for the use of deacons and others who serve the church, where they shed their outer, everyday clothing and footwear (galoshes, fur coats, cassocks, walking sticks, and umbrellas) and change into the clothing needed to conduct divine services. There should be no question about the significance of the **sacristy**, which should be open for all to see the church’s treasures. Not finding in church statutes any prohibition for the entry of lay people into the area of the credence table and vestry and sacristy, I fail to understand why the Commission takes the position **‘that these areas not be accessible to all persons visiting the Cathedral’** and, **‘this having been stated, what has been written in edicts and plans these areas is not valid, and because of this the proposal to locate all of the inscriptions in the lower passageway of the Cathedral cannot be implemented.’** His Highness’s order states that sections of the lower passageway are to be reserved for the credence table, vestry, and sacristy, and nothing is stated about placing anything on the walls. Also, in the pastoral letter of the Moscow metropolitanate penned by the late Leonid, Bishop of Dmitrov and subsequently Archbishop of Rostov and Yaroslavl, forbidding believers’ entry to the credence table and vestry (not to mention the sacristy) is not a subject discussed. In a pastoral letter of the most learned and most reverend Filaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, it is stated merely ‘that according to rule 69 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the sanctuary, i.e., the place where the altar is located, can be entered by the Tsar, but by no lay person.’ Metropolitan Filaret indicates only that the presence of lay people is prohibited in the Holy Altar. He says nothing at all about the credence table, vestry, and sacristy. Indeed he could not, knowing well the rules of the church. But if it is demonstrated that the honorable members of the Commission . . . are more erudite, competent, and possess greater authority from their knowledge of the church’s canons than Metropolitan Filaret, even then without His Highness’s command it would be impossible to heed their instructions about this aspect of the Cathedral’s construction.

“I have served the world of Russian art for almost 60 years and I have built more than 60 churches during my lifetime. I enjoy a certain degree of European authority, as does my Deputy who has served 21 years in the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts as professor and deputy rector of the architecture section and who was appointed my Deputy by His Imperial Majesty in charge of decorating the Cathedral being erected according to the taste of His Majesty and not that of members of the Commission who do not possess a formal education in art. We are unable to be guided solely by their directions in erecting the substantial building of Cathedral of Christ the Savior, and we consider that submitting to these directions would be contrary to the oath sworn by us in the name of our Lord to glorify Him with His Art. Doubtless, the enlightened members of the Commission will agree, and therefore I most humbly request that the Commission present its design for arranging the inscriptions in the lower passageway accompanied by an explanation to His Imperial Highness for him to review.

Chief Architect  
Privy Councillor  
Konstantin Ton.”

RGB OR, f. 90, k 1, d. 20, ll. 41-42.

<sup>48</sup> P. A. Florenskii, “*Khramovoe deistvo kak sintez iskusstv*,” *Stroitel'stvo i arkhitektura Moskvy*, 1988, No. 6, p. 18.

<sup>49</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-152.

<sup>50</sup> G. G. Smorodina, “*Zolotoe i serebrianoie delo Moskvy rubezha XIX-XX vekov*,” *Muzei*, 10, Moscow, 1989, 61.

<sup>51</sup> M. Mostovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 163, 165.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 186-191.

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**Illustration Captions**

- Page 88* Cross section variant of Ton's plan for the Cathedral. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitel'ia v Moskve*).
- Cross section of the Cathedral with sketches of the murals in the east end, 1875.
- Page 90* Interior detail of the Cathedral's main iconostasis area proposed by Ton and drawn by Viktor Kossov. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- The originals of the drawings on this and subsequent pages, although signed by Ton as chief architect, represent the work of various architects and designers.
- Page 91* Icon case. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Interior of the Cathedral. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitel'ia v Moskve*).
- Page 92* Wall and gallery murals in the central and side sections of the Cathedral drawn by Lev Dal'. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Mural designs for the Cathedral's interior ("The Last Supper" to the right) drawn by I. Rezzantsov. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 94* Draft versions of portions of the design for the iconostasis, 1850's. Pen and ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 95* Draft versions of mural designs for window openings, 1850's. Pen and watercolor on paper.
- Page 96* Gold décor of the iconostasis (left). Wall murals and décor proposed for the main iconostasis (right) drawn by Semyon Dmitriev. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 98* Photograph of the main iconostasis of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior taken in the early 1930's.
- Page 99* Interior of the Cathedral drawn by Ton, March 1861. Pencil sketch on paper.
- Page 100* From left to right: "The Presentation of the Virgin Mary," "The Presentation of Christ," and "Christ's Baptism" painted by Timofey Neff. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitel'ia v Moskve*).
- Page 101* From left to right: "The Holy Trinity," "Descent of the Holy Spirit," and "Exaltation of the Cross" painted by Neff. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts,

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- and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 102* “The Annunciation” painted by Fyodor Bronnikov. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 103* “The Birth of the Virgin” painted by Bronnikov. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 104* “The Last Supper” in the Bishop’s Stall area painted by Genrikh Semiradsky. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 105* “Descent from the Cross” in the main altar area painted by Vereshchagin. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 106* Detail of the main dome of the Cathedral (left).  
The east side of the main dome (right). The Lord God of Sabaoth depicted by Aleksey Markov. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 107* Decorative band of the main dome (left) painted by Nikolay Koshelov.  
Grillwork of the gallery in the main dome (right). Paintings by Pyotr Basin. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 108* The north arm of the cross (left).  
In the northeast niche (right), Vereshchagin’s “The Veneration of the Shepherds.” Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 110* “The Transfiguration,” painted on the northeast pylon by Yevgeny Sorokin. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- In the northwest niche, Vereshchagin’s “St. Sergius Blessing Dimitry Donskoy.”

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- Page 111* “The Resurrection,” painted on the northwest pylon by Sorokin. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 112* The south arm of the cross. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 113* “Holy Apostle John the Evangelist,” painted on the southeast pylon by Sorokin. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- “The Ascension,” painted on the southeast pylon by Sorokin.
- Page 114* In the southeast niche, “The Homage of the Wise Men” painted by Vereshchagin.
- Page 115* Design detail of the Cathedral’s central area (the west arm of the cross). Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 116* One of the small domes above the side altar dedicated to St. Nicholas (in the south end of the Cathedral). “The Word Made Flesh” painted by Koshelov. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 117* “The Descent of the Holy Spirit,” painted on the southwest pylon by Sorokin. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 118* Design of the interior wall facing and bronze grillwork of the Great Entry Gate of the Cathedral drawn by Dmitriev. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 119* Design of the royal throne area drawn by N. Petrov. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 120* Cathedral of Christ the Savior with Loganovsky’s sculpture sketched by Ton. Pencil.
- Design of the mosaic flooring. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 121* Design for the Bishop’s Stall in the main altar area drawn by Kossov. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Bronze balustrade in the gallery of the main dome drawn by Dmitriev. Ink and watercolor on paper.

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- Page 123* One-hundred-twenty-light chandelier in the Great Vault of the Cathedral drawn by Dal'. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 124* Tabernacle for the side altar dedicated to St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, processional torch, and ceremonial cross drawn by Dal'. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 125* Ceremonial two-branched candlestick (dikerion) drawn by N. Putstsolka and candleholder next to the gilded icons of the main iconostasis drawn by N. Lionov. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 126* Everyday and ceremonial thuribles drawn by R. Shmelling. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 127* Paten drawn by N. Putstsolka. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 128* Sketch of the façade and cross section of vaults, pylons, pendentives, and the support ring of the Cathedral's main dome. Ink and watercolor on paper.
- Page 129* Cross section of the main dome drawn by I. Rakhau.
- Design model of the main dome. Photoengraving by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisanie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).

## CATHEDRAL LIFE

1883-1931

*“Today by God’s grace and the Church’s blessing this majestic cathedral is opened for prayer and sacred commemoration.”*

(Excerpt from the edict of Alexander III issued on the day the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was dedicated<sup>1</sup>).

### **Prints of Moscow and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior**

The short life of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was no less dramatic nor less eventful than the story of its planning and construction. The Cathedral “entered” Moscow twice. The first time was in 1858, when the scaffolding was removed from the façade and the edifice became visible in toto, in all its glory, from the foundation to the crosses on top of its domes. No building exists without a natural landscape, man-made site, nearby structures. Edifices become part of a city or natural landscape in various ways. Some are merely an addition, forming part of a neutral background. Others organize their landscape and urban setting. They form a new world within a historical milieu by virtue of their creation, alter this milieu, forging new ties and realigning its points of reference, visibly transforming familiar views and panoramas. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior belonged to the second category of buildings in a powerful sense. It changed the historic center of Moscow, altering its familiar, characteristic look. And this was only the first incarnation of the giant church. It entered a second time a quarter of a century later, in 1883, when it was dedicated and became an active church.

The twenty-five years between the visual entry of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior into the life of Moscow and its formal dedication was a period of intense transformation and development in Russia’s ancient capital. A great deal changed:

the social composition of the city as the country's social and economic life progressed, the types of occupations, the composition and size of the population, the look of the city, the kinds of buildings that defined it. The Cathedral was freed of its scaffolding on the eve of the greatest reforms in the history of Russia: the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the introduction ten years later of municipal self-government. The second period of its existence is associated with post-reform Moscow and the changes that occurred in the 1860's and, especially, the 1870's.

Moscow's distinctive profile has been recorded in printed form for centuries. Prominent in depictions of Moscow from the 1840's to the 1860's is the Cathedral of Christ the Savior flanked by images of structures typical of pre-reform Moscow. This is Moscow of the post-conflagration era, where palace-like buildings erected in the second half of the eighteenth century, characterized by belvederes and rounded corners with colonnades, combine with early nineteenth-century private residences with porticoes, pediments, and garrets. All cities, especially large ones such as Moscow, are composed of structural strata; some buildings are distinctive because of their location, others for hierarchical relationships with surrounding structures. Every city has both shared characteristics and characteristics all its own. Outstanding edifices or groups of buildings together with their settings--the topography of the area or natural landscape—combine to form a set of indicators defining the unique profile of each city. They are its symbols: in Moscow, Red Square and the Kremlin; in St. Petersburg the Winter Palace, the Peter and Paul Fortress, the Admiralty, and St. Isaac's Cathedral; in Nizhny Novgorod the kremlin, renowned monasteries, and its famous fair. The least enduring structural aspects of a city are those associated, as a rule, with large-scale buildings such as residential and public buildings that must adhere to building codes and conform to zoning regulations. In between are structures that define the community's status, whether those of a capital city, provincial, district, or town center or village or rural



settlement. The bigger the municipality, the greater the number of attributes it will have of lesser cities and towns it encompasses. Thus, Moscow and St. Petersburg had areas denoting their status as capital cities and also areas associated with provincial and district cities, in the case of Moscow with settlements of even lesser significance.

The two capitals of Russia, Moscow and St. Petersburg, embody different concepts of what constitutes a capital. St. Petersburg symbolized a new Europeanized Russia, Moscow Russia's ancient historical and cultural roots as is evident in eighteenth-century depictions of the city. After having endured the dramatic consequences of the 1812 war, however, Moscow ceased to be merely a repository of ancient tradition; it became the historic center for all of Russia. Moreover, the war meant that the "original capital city" got a new architectural look as the city was re-planned and rebuilt. While old Moscow continued to be popular in graphic representations of the post-conflagration period, artists creating them and publishers issuing them in mass editions were careful to include a mixture of accents, a synthesis of old and new. Together with the historically formed milieu of the city with its complex relief were joined magnificent, grand architectural ensembles belonging to the Moscow restored after the fire of 1812. Especially popular were depictions of the renovated Red Square, the newly created Theater Square, and the Alexander Gardens. The change is striking. The rich iconography of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior combined both of these traditions in Moscow's illustrated chronicle. Immediately after the scaffolding was removed, the Cathedral became one of the city's most popular sights, a unique symbol. In all depictions of Moscow it was obligatory.

Depictions of Russia's urban landscape date from the sixteenth century. They are "panoramic" or bird's-eye views which combine the layout of a town or city with details of individual buildings, groups of buildings, squares, and streets.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries large, open-ended panoramas were produced, the artist in effect rotating himself to accommodate what was depicted. They are quite different from general views which survey the city from a single point.<sup>2</sup> The creators of the earliest panoramic depictions of Moscow, including open-ended ones, were all non-Russians. The work of Cornelis de Bruijn, (1702), Jan Blikland (1707), and Pieter Pickaert (1707-1708) began a tradition that continued uninterrupted until the early twentieth century. The points from which one depicted--and later photographed--Moscow were defined in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When these points were far removed from one another, the connection between them more often than not was the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, at first the site of the future Cathedral, later the edifice itself. Thus, the Cathedral became part and parcel of popular views of Moscow.

Peter the Great chose the vantage point for de Bruijn's panorama of Moscow. It stretches from Menshikov's Palace to Sparrow Hills and displays the area lying between the Novodevichy and the Danilov Monasteries. Blikland's panorama employs the same southwest approach. Pickaert's panorama presents Moscow differently. It depicts the formal façade of the city that faces the Moskva. The panorama starts at the Stone Bridge--that is, at approximately the point where the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was erected--encompasses the Kremlin and Kitay-gorod, and ends with Shvivaya Gorka. Pickaert's perspective was one of the most popular. The same could be said about the nineteenth-century panorama of Zamoskvorechie created by a minor government official named Kalashnikov; it begins at the Foundling Home by the mouth of the Yauza River and ends at Prechistenka Street and includes the site of the future Cathedral. Kalashnikov's panorama is the first of a long series of panoramas and views from the Kremlin. It presents a different view of Moscow, one that became popular with artists and later

photographers, and it also spells the end of open-ended panoramas. Next chronologically is a panorama with Spassky Tower as its starting point done in the 1830's by Auguste Cadolle and published as a lithograph. This is the first closed panorama of Moscow. Building outward from a central point, it displays nearly a 360-degree area.<sup>3</sup>

Besides panoramas, urban landscapes, Moscow's among them, were produced, initially for travel accounts published by foreign visitors (Adam Olearius's *A Trip to Muscovy and Persia* [1633-1639] was the first). In the eighteenth century sundry views of Moscow and its noteworthy buildings began to appear. Significant among these are two sets of miniatures based on sketches by the well known Russian engraver and graphic artist Mikhail Makhaev. One is devoted to triumphal arches, the other to buildings in the Kremlin. Two of these, "The Kremlin from the Moskva" and "The Kremlin from Beyond the Stone Bridge" include the future site of the Cathedral.<sup>4</sup>

The heyday of popular engravings of Moscow date from 1799 when a set of views created between 1794 and 1797 by Delabart first appeared. The subjects as well as the points of depiction were both carefully chosen and, an important innovation, large format sheets were used, making the engravings suitable for interior décor. Many of Delabart's views subsequently were imitated, even copied by Russian and foreign entrepreneurs.<sup>5</sup>

In 1824 cheap popular prints of Moscow's urban landscape, depicted in sets or as separate pictures, were first published. They showed structures absent from previous prints: the Bolshoy Theater, the Sukharev Tower, and the Foundling Home, for example. Moreover, they represented the work of Moscow's first urban landscape artists. The 1824 series also initiated the practice of producing individual illustrations of prominent edifices of early and contemporary city architecture, a practice that was to have far-reaching consequences for both the

subjects and the way in which they were depicted. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior, for example, became a favorite subject in cheap popular prints depicting Orthodox saints.

But this is all prehistory to the role played by the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the graphic print annals of Moscow. That story begins in the 1840's and 1850's, when the Cathedral became a central object in pictures of the city, featured in all types of city landscapes, whether panoramas or picture sets, in album illustrations or individual prints. The Cathedral made its appearance in representational art at the time prints enjoyed wide distribution at all levels of society, a time when urban landscape as a genre experienced robust development.

In reproductions for mass distribution, the Cathedral and its surroundings, while not quite fantasy-like, do not look realistic. The reason for this is that the Cathedral, which was still in the process of being built, was included in the urban landscape of Moscow as if it had already been completed. As noted above, it was only freed of its scaffolding in 1858. However, in drawings from the late 1840's and early 1850's it was pictured as if it had been fully erected.

Views of cities from the 1820's and 1830's often included structures in the process of being completed as if they had already been built. This was especially true of extremely important structures, for example, St. Isaac's Cathedral which was still far from complete in views of St. Petersburg. At the beginning of the 1850's a panorama of the Kremlin and Zamoskvorechie was created based on sketches drawn by Dimitry Indeitsev. The panorama starts at the Kremlin's Nikolaevsky Palace and Spassky Gate and moving clockwise portrays Zamoskvorechie, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the Kremlin's Borovitsky Gate, and ends with a depiction of Cathedral Square in the Kremlin. The panorama was published on ten sheets and is more than five meters in length. Sheet 8 according to the legend depicts the Church of Christ the Savior as seen

from the Kremlin. Since the Cathedral was not yet free of its scaffolding, its representation was guided in part by the architect's plans and in part by the artist's imagination.

Indeitsev's panorama was destined to live a long life. Appearing in many editions, it was copied by the self-taught artist Sergey Kudryavtsev and issued in 1865 by Aleksey Morozov, a publisher of cheap prints. It was so successful that the publisher put out additional versions in 1867, 1868, 1871, and 1874. Another publisher, A. P. Rudnev, issued the panorama in postcard form; it too went through several editions. In 1855 and 1856 Rudnev also published a series of lithographs with views of Moscow that included a view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and of the nearby Stone Bridge. This collection enjoyed enormous popularity and was republished several times. The cover of a series of engravings published in 1860 in St. Petersburg, entitled *Moscow and its Environs* (published by Henkel and printed by Golovin with lithographs by F. A. Brockhaus of Leipzig), displayed the Cathedral of Christ the Savior prominently. The Cathedral was also depicted on one of the twelve engraved sheets with the new Stone Bridge in the center (each sheet had nine illustrations, a central one surrounded by eight others).<sup>6</sup> In 1856, during the coronation of Alexander II, an artist named Miller created one of the last sketched panoramas. He used Indeitsev's vantage point.<sup>7</sup>

Writers and poets rhapsodized about Moscow, creating a verbal equivalent of its visual chronicles. Curiously enough, they described Moscow from the same vantage points and devoted their attention largely to the same objects as did the print artists. In his enormously popular book, *Moscow and the Muscovites*, Mikhail Zagoskin describes several of these views: from Poklonnaya Gora, from Sparrow Hills, from the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great, from the knoll of the Kremlin, and from the Neskuchny Gardens on the Moskva. "In the way thousands of the Sun's rays concentrated in a single point by passing through a glass will

ignite fire,” writes Zagoskin, “in Moscow all the different aspects of our national physiognomy merge into a single national image. . . . In Moscow you will find in abbreviated form all those elements that comprise the vital civic essence of *Russia*, that huge colossus which has St. Petersburg as its head and Moscow as its heart. . . .” Zagoskin is enraptured by the old capital’s panoramas which captivate “with their sumptuous beauty and marvelous variety. The shallow Moskva and the thread-like Yauza are not especially remarkable as rivers, but oh, how picturesque are their banks!” Entering Moscow from Sparrow Hills is “[l]ike an enchanted opera: the scenery on this vast stage changes every minute; at every new turn, in each crook of its hills Moscow acquires a new look.”<sup>8</sup>

Zagoskin describes Moscow shortly after construction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior began. For N. Skavronsky, author of *Sketches of Moscow*, published in 1862 shortly after the scaffolding was removed, the Cathedral artlessly personifies both the significance and vitality of Moscow. “On the one hand Moscow is aboil with hustle and bustle, rows of stalls and shops and intense activity. . . . Yet there are secluded back streets preserved in Moscow which bring to mind far-off, god-forsaken corners of Russia. This divergence, for example, is represented by Zamoskvorechie which contrasts with other parts of the city. Instead of variegated, noisy, diverse scenes, down and away from St. Basil’s, removed from the distinctive view from the bridge over the Moskva of all of the Kremlin’s cathedrals, towers, notched walls, palace, and bell tower, instead of the magnificent panorama of the Moskva, framed by the Foundling Home and by the Cathedral of the Savior, instead of all this hustle and bustle, one sees an original and rare picture, the huge, distinctive, and utterly fascinating city that is Moscow, the Moscow of Ordynka, Polyanka, and similar places which are reminiscent of a provincial center, or, perhaps, the main street of a district town.”<sup>9</sup> So, in addition to interest in Moscow’s inimitable, national qualities, which prints of the city and

its popular urban landscape testify to, interest in the Moscow phenomenon also found expression in writing of the time.

As the Petersburg period in Russian history was coming to an end in the nineteenth century, there was an upsurge of interest in Moscow. The problem of Russia's historical future was interpreted not only in terms of Russia versus Europe, i.e., East versus West. Moscow and Petersburg became equally capacious symbols. Everyone writing about Moscow compared it to Petersburg. The poet Konstantin Batyushkov devoted individual essays to the two Russian capitals. Mikhail Lermontov wrote about Moscow. Nikolai Gogol, literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, writers Apollon Grigoriev and Zagoskin, journalist Nikolai Grech, and other, less well known and obscure writers such as Dmitry Zavalishin and Skavronsky wrote about Moscow and Petersburg, or rather about Moscow with an obligatory mention of Petersburg. Interest in the Moscow phenomenon permeated *all* types of writing.

The various types of graphic material representing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior with rare unanimity fix on the single most distinguishing characteristic of the church, namely, the way in which it towered over surrounding buildings, whether the Church in Praise of the Mother of God located nearby, residential buildings on the Moskva, or more distant churches and bell towers. This distinctive characteristic of the Cathedral is underscored in the panoramic view of Moscow by engraver Iosif Sharleman which uses Zamoskvorechie as a vantage point. Sharleman depicts the northern part of the city, from the Cathedral in the west to the Foundling Home in the east. The depiction of the city's architectural ensembles is unique, the panorama an analogue, rare in graphic art, to the Byzantine style in architecture which the Cathedral exemplified. Sharleman created his panorama before the scaffolding had been removed from the Cathedral. This is evident from both the look of the Cathedral and from the faulty depiction of

the Stone Bridge. The piers of the bridge are those of the old “humpbacked” Stone Bridge of 1687, the pavement that of the new bridge. The new Great Stone Bridge was constructed in 1859, a year after the scaffolding was removed from the Cathedral. Its metal flooring, like that of the Moskva Bridge built in 1838, did not have a rise in the middle; it was at embankment level, no higher than the Cathedral’s base.

The disparity between the scale of the Cathedral and the buildings closest to it was a conscious, deliberate device designed to convey a sense of the special role of the edifice. The outsizing of residential buildings and numerous Moscow churches and bell towers gave evidence that it was an out-of-the-ordinary structure, a cathedral church whose dimensions symbolized its greatness.

It is important to bear in mind that Moscow was still a relatively small city at the beginning of the 1830’s when the Cathedral’s was planned and even at the end of the 1850’s when the scaffolding was removed. The official boundary of the city ran from the Kamer-Kollezhsky Earthwork along a line delineated by squares the names of which modified the word “*zastava*,” meaning gate or barrier: Rogozhskaya, Kaluzhkaya, Sepukhovskaya, Pokrovskaya, and Krestovskaya. The Cathedral was placed on a rise near the Kremlin so that it could be seen from all the high points on the outskirts of the city. It would also be visible many versts away to anyone approaching Moscow from the south or southwest. Exaggerated scale and huge dimensions were by no means limited to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior or Ton’s edifices or churches in the Russo-Byzantine style. Rather they emerged late in the neoclassical period. The designs for the Cathedral by Alexander Vitberg and his competitors and for St. Isaac’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg corroborate this. Against the background of the one- or two-, and rarely three-storied buildings of Moscow, the Cathedral must have been truly staggering to most Muscovites.



Commentaries from the time invariably characterize Moscow's life in the 1850's, before the great reforms, as patriarchal. The city "was a center of Slavophilism . . . and the hotbed of what was held to be a purely Russian trend in thinking. These feelings were especially ardent at the time, during and immediately after the Crimean campaign. . . . In Moscow the old way of life was then still very much in evidence. Moscow lacked an influential, controlling officialdom; it lacked a bureaucracy and military cliques. There was still a strong sense of 'gentry,' serfdom, and a heavy patriarchal feeling. Although at times the class sense was mild, at other times it was rigid, staunch. . . . While religiosity could be said to have attained a high level of development, the superficial side of it prevailed, the unconscious, unquestioning fulfilling of rites and obligations. . . . Great sums were donated to churches and monasteries, and, more commonly, legacies were designated for them. Moscow's merchant class, by this point large and powerful, had barely entered the arena of social life; it was cordoned off, pursuing spiritual and material goals of its own making."<sup>10</sup>

In many prints, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is depicted against the background of the old Stone Bridge. A contemporary, Nicholas Vishniakov, left the following account of the latter:

"The Great Stone Bridge was built with a hump in the middle and was steeply pitched from the banks of the river. A main thoroughfare for carriages, paved with cobblestones, ran through the center of the bridge and on the sides, about two sazhen wide, there were passageways for pedestrians. These were paved with flagstones and were separated from the thoroughfare in the center and the river on the other side by stone parapets. I was fond of walking along these passageways; to do so it was like being flanked by two walls. . . . Viewed from the embankment, the bridge had an imposing and distinctive mass. It was an interesting monument to an earlier time . . . . In 1859 the old bridge was

demolished and replaced with the unoriginal one now there. It was one of the first things to happen during the reign of Alexander II. At the time it was said that it would have cost too much to repair the old bridge. However, the underpinning of the old bridge was so solid it could not be readily dismantled and had to be blown up with gunpowder.”<sup>11</sup>

The colorful environs of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior figure prominently in the memoirs of the period. The memoirs describe the milieu of old Moscow and they shed light on structures near the Cathedral. “On the bank of the Moskva,” recalls Ivan Slonov, “at the Great Stone Bridge, a low one-story masonry building housed The Stone Bridge Baths. On the river side of this building a closed passageway had been added that led to a winter bathing pavilion on the river. When there were hard freezes, many of its patrons would run from the baths to the bathing pavilion, plunge into the river, and then run back to the baths. I bathed there in the winter many times. . . .

“The wharf of the Association of Moscow Fishermen was located opposite the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on the Moskva. Here fishermen would gather like members of a club in a small hut on a wooden float which would have many boats tied up to it.”<sup>12</sup>

Yet another colorful detail: “On this side of the bridge, on the left [the author is describing it from the viewpoint of Zamoskvorechie] right next to the river in a dirty two-story building was located the Wolf Valley Tavern, notorious as a den for all sorts of shady types. It was said that robbery and murder occurred there, that bodies were thrown out right under the bridge. . . . Thus it was considered risky for a solitary wayfarer to walk across the Stone Bridge on dark nights!” (When the Cathedral was dedicated, this building along with other structures was razed.)<sup>13</sup>

By the 1840's the Cathedral was already being depicted as completed. In Paris, Bernard Lemercier, using sketches drawn by an artist named Weiss, printed a multi-subject sheet with the Kremlin at its center surrounded by fourteen separate pictures including the Cathedral and the Alekseev Monastery.<sup>14</sup>

For the dedication of the Cathedral Church engraved sheets were published, including a magnificent one done by the young artist Apollinary Vasnetsov, later famous for his paintings of old Moscow. Cheap popular prints and posters, some quite attractive, colorful sheets with explanatory text surrounded by a decorative border were published as well. Sometimes they included depictions of the emperors as the builders of the Cathedral together with its architect.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander III's edict ends with the same words (cf. p. 20) used in the one issued in 1812 by his grandfather, Alexander I, in which the latter pledged to build the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

<sup>2</sup> S. A. Klepikov, "Moskva v graviurakh i fotografiakh (*Opyt bibliografii pechatnykh al'bomov i serii*)," *Gosudarstvennaia biblioteka im. V. I. Lenina. Trudy*, II (Moscow, 1958), pp. 113-115.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 116-117.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> M. N. Zagoskin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, V (Moscow, 1898), pp. 5, 12, 25.

<sup>9</sup> N. Skavronskii, *Ocherki Moskvy*, vyp. 1 (Moscow, 1862), pp. 20-22.

<sup>10</sup> N. V. Danilov, "Moskva. Piatidesiatye i shestidesiatye gody XIX stoletia," *Moskovskaia starina* (Moscow, 1989), pp. 26-27.

<sup>11</sup> N. P. Vishniakov, "Iz kupecheskoi zhizni," *Moskovskaia starina...*, p. 286.

<sup>12</sup> I. A. Slonov, "Iz zhizni torgovoi Moskvy," *Moskovskaia starina...*, p. 211.

<sup>13</sup> N. P. Vishniakov, "Iz kupecheskoi zhizni," *Moskovskaia starina...*, p. 287.

<sup>14</sup> S. A. Klepikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 125, 156-157, 161.

### Illustration Captions

*Page 135* Bird's eye view of Moscow. Steel engraving by Mottram after a drawing by Sharleman, late 1860's.

*Page 136* Colored lithograph of a drawing by D. Strukov published by the Rudnev Press in Moscow, 1856.

*Page 137* Colored lithograph after a drawing by an unidentified artist published by the Rudnev Press in Moscow, 1867.

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*Page 139*      Panorama of the Kremlin and Zamoskvorechie from the Tainitsky Tower.  
Lithograph after a drawing by Dimitry Indeitsev published by Éditions Datsiaro in  
Paris, late 1890's.

Piroshki seller in Okhotny Ryad.

## **Dedication of the Cathedral**

The dedication of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was originally planned for 1881 to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Alexander II's coronation and the twentieth anniversary of the Great Reforms. On March 1, 1881, however, the Emperor was mortally wounded by a bomb thrown by a member of the People's Will terrorist organization and died within a short time. The death sentence which members of this radical group plotted for nearly two decades had finally been carried out.

Alexander III, Alexander II's son, ascended to the throne. The date Alexander III's reign began differed from that of his official elevation to imperial rank, for he was not crowned until May 1883, two years after his father was slain. The Cathedral's dedication was rescheduled to coincide with this all-important state event, which by tradition took place in the Kremlin's Uspensky Cathedral. Neither coronation nor dedication corresponded to events in the 1812 war, be it the Battle of Borodino, the French army's departure from Moscow, the expulsion of foreign troops from Russian soil, or the taking of Paris and capitulation of France. By this time events of the war with Napoleon had retreated into the past, become history, and there was a new perspective, one in which the Cathedral of Christ the Savior had become a national church, symbolic of Russia as a whole. It was almost as if the Cathedral deemed the spiritual and ideological primacy of Uspensky Cathedral unacceptable. Christ the Savior's significance in the architectural scheme of Moscow and the fact that the date of its dedication correlated with the crowning of two emperors constituted undeniable evidence that the Cathedral had become Russia's preeminent church. It was a view that developed while the church was being built. Increasingly, the Cathedral came to embody and symbolize Russia as a nation-state, its primacy predestined in the

hierarchy of Moscow's and of Russia's main churches. Representatives from all parts of Russia participated both in Alexander III's coronation and in the Cathedral's dedication ceremony. One could say that in a symbolic sense all of Russia participated in its dedication.

Edicts by Alexander III issued on the occasion of his coronation and the dedication of the Cathedral have as a common denominator the memory of Alexander II's assassination, an act which was calculated to "blow up" Russia, incite revolt, and radically change its social structure. The memory of his father's assassination never fully deserted Alexander III. He drew his own conclusions about this tragedy, especially in light of the fact that it coincided fatefully with the very day on which preparations for making Russia a constitutional monarchy were finally completed. The son's personal drama at the loss of his father in many respects turned into, if not a tragedy, at least a serious drama for Russia. Thoughts about how reforms and liberalization engendered terror haunted the Emperor, and his policies in many respects were the antithesis of those pursued by his father.

Alexander III developed his own brand of counter reforms. Declarations about public calm, stability, law and order acquired the significance of official slogans. The edict issued the day of his coronation was a programmatic statement:

"In accordance with God's wish in placing on Us the crown of Russia's Ancestral Tsars and having been anointed with Holy Oil, We pray with all Our heart to the Lord Almighty of Tsars and Tsardoms for His blessing on this sacred day and hour. . . . May He strengthen with His almighty Holy Spirit Our rule and may He grant Us wisdom and strength to pacify all rebellion, increase order and promote truth, enlighten the people in the articles of faith, assure a sense of duty and adherence to the law at every level, observe the rights of each subject and preserve the general safety, [and] exalt the prosperity and glory of Our Fatherland.

. . . »<sup>1</sup>

In the edict issued ten days later for the Cathedral's dedication one finds similar sentiments about peace being salutary and how the Cathedral was built as a monument to peace following a bloody war. Its words could be understood both literally, i.e., as a monument to the 1812 war, and figuratively. Three years before Alexander II's assassination, war with the Turks had resulted in the liberation of Bulgaria. The words reflect a topic being discussed in the press and elsewhere, which the edict's authors could not help but have in mind, namely, that the assassination threatened public order.

“[F]illed with thankfulness to God for Saving the Fatherland, Our Grandfather, Alexander the Blessed, now at rest with His Maker, undertook to erect in Moscow, the city reborn from ashes, a church to Christ the Savior in eternal memory of the unparalleled zeal, fidelity, and love for Faith and Fatherland for which in difficult times the Russian people exalted themselves, and to venerate Divine Providence whose intervention saved Russia from the ruin which threatened it. For seventy years the Monarchs of Russia have devoted unceasing attention to bringing this idea into fruition. . . . Today by the grace of God sanctified by the blessing of the Church this majestic cathedral is opened for prayer and for sacred commemoration. This blessed event, long awaited by all the people, has come to pass during the radiant days of Our Divine Coronation among the sons of Russia faithful to Us and to the Fatherland who have gathered from all parts of Our Lands to bear witness to the whole world of the sacred and indissoluble union of love and mutual loyalty from times immemorial which has bound the Monarchs of Russia to their loyal subjects.

“[M]ay this Cathedral be for all future generations a monument to Our Fatherland at a time of severe trial, a monument of peace after a brutal fight undertaken by the meek and pious Alexander not for conquest but for the defense of the Fatherland against a menacing enemy. [M]ay this church in the wish of its

founder stand for many centuries, and may the gratitude of succeeding generations with their love and emulation of their forefathers' valor be the thurible censuring its Divine Altar."<sup>2</sup>

The consecration of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior occurred on one of the twelve major Orthodox festivals, the Feast of the Ascension, which celebrated both Christ's earthly and heavenly existence. Detailed descriptions of the consecration ceremony have been preserved. Like the foundation-laying ceremony decades earlier, it was celebrated as a national event.

On May 26, 1883, the bells of the Cathedral were rung for the first time. "At 8 A.M. from the bell towers of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior the peal began, proclaiming to Moscow that at last the long-awaited day had arrived, the day the Cathedral which had taken a half-century to erect was to be dedicated. While the bells sounded, holy water was sanctified by Misail, Bishop of Mozhaysk and Vicar [Bishop Suffragan] of the Moscow Eparchy." The events of the day embraced the entire city. Before the sanctification of holy water, the icon of the Smolensk Virgin, an icon linked firmly with the history of the Patriotic War of 1812, was brought to the Cathedral from the Novodevichy Convent. No fewer than four additional processions with miraculous icons were to make their way to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior: the icon of the Iberian Virgin from the Iberian Chapel, the icon of St. Alexis the Metropolitan from the Chudov Monastery, the icon of Our Savior from the Davydov Hermitage, and from St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg the icon of the Kazan Virgin. These processions first came to Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin where the clergy who had brought the icons awaited the procession from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Clergy from all of Moscow's many deaneries (*soroka*), except for that of Nikitsk, also made their way to Uspensky Cathedral together with Edinoverie (conformist Old Believer) clergy and clergy from all educational institutions. The clergy wore ceremonial



vestments sewn especially for this festive occasion. Meanwhile, the Cathedral's icons of the Birth of Christ, of St. Nicholas, and of St. Alexander Nevsky were readied for procession.

At 9:30, following sanctification with holy water, the Cathedral's bells rang again to announce that the dedication had begun. At 10 o'clock Metropolitan Ioanniky arrived and the entrance prayer was read. Then, before the reading of the canonical hours, from the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Prechistenka Gate (subsequently razed) emerged clergy from the Nikitsk Deanery; they too were clothed in ceremonial vestments sewn especially for the dedication. Crossing the square, they stopped before the main entrance to the new Cathedral. Its doors were opened, and from them emerged His Grace, Bishop Misail, with area clergy and the Synod choristers bearing banners and carrying the three Cathedral icons. The procession made its way to Uspensky Cathedral where sacred relics were to be received. It moved along Volkonka and Mokhovaya Streets through the Kremlin's Trinity Gate and emerged on Cathedral Square. The procession was led by those bearing banners. Upon reaching Uspensky Cathedral, the clergy of the Nikitsk Deanery and of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior entered and those holding the banners of all the deaneries and of the Kremlin's monasteries lined up along Uspensky's west parvis.

The return procession followed a different route. It moved through the Kremlin's Borovitsky Gate and then proceeded through the third Alexander Garden along the embankment of the Moskva and past the Church in Praise of the Mother of God (located next to Christ the Savior, subsequently razed). The order was somewhat different with the banners of Christ the Savior and of the Kremlin's cathedrals and monasteries in front followed by the icons from the Christ the Savior, the icons of the metropolitans, and the miraculous icons. The clergy of

Moscow and the clergy of the Moscow Eparchy, some 800 persons in all, then followed.

Slightly after 10, before the procession wended its way back to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the Emperor arrived on horseback accompanied by the Empress and Grand Princess in a landau. The imperial family followed the same route as the procession. All along the way, from the Borovitsky Gate inside the Kremlin to and all the new Cathedral troops were posted, 45 companies from 45 regiments, 14 squadrons, 14 regimental music groups plus a full complement of students from Moscow's two military schools, the Alexandrov and Cadet Infantry Academies. Seven batteries, three on the ground and four mounted, were set to fire the salute. "When His Imperial Majesty approached, the troops saluted, the national anthem, 'God Save the Tsar,' was played and the Emperor was greeted with cries of 'Hurrah!'" Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, written especially for the dedication ceremony, was then performed.

At the west entrance to the Cathedral the imperial family was met by Ioanniky, the Metropolitan of Moscow, members of the Construction Commission chaired by Moscow Governor-General Vladimir Dolgorukov, Chief Architect Alexander Rezanov (Ton had died in 1881), and Deputy Chief Architect, Semyon Dmitriev. The dedication ritual in part echoed that of the foundation-laying. The Metropolitan delivered a formal address. "All over Christendom," he stated, "there are innumerable churches dedicated to the true God, and God in His glory resides in them all. But among this multitude of churches only a few possess special significance as monuments to extraordinary events, events that inspired their creation."

Next, the Cathedral's altar table was consecrated. The procession arrived and sacred relics were placed before the icon of the Savior and candles were lighted. At 11:15 while Moscow's bells rang out, the procession circled the church

and an archpriest aspersed its walls. For the dedication the Cathedral was surrounded by a high wooden dais carpeted in red. On it stood standard bearers holding the banners of various regiments and area clergy in new golden vestments with banners from all of Moscow's many churches. At a certain remove from the dais stood lines of soldiers and behind them crowded bystanders observing the festive ceremony.

Eye-witness accounts attest to the fact that the spectacle was indeed memorable. It was a gorgeous day. The bright sun in the blue sky shone on the gold of the banners, the gold of the clergy's vestments, the scarlet carpeting of the dais, and the green leaves of the trees. The armaments of the regiments participating in the ceremony glistened in the sun. The festive sound of bells filled the air.

After the procession ended and the altar had been consecrated, everyone in the Cathedral led by the Emperor knelt as the bells rang, cannon were fired, and "*mnogaya leta*" ["Long Life,"] was proclaimed three times. Then came the most solemn moment of all, the beginning of the divine liturgy. The choirs of the Holy Governing Synod and of the Chudov Monastery sang. Standing to the left of the choir area and participating in the liturgy were those few veterans of the 1812 war still alive.<sup>3</sup>

The building of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior acted as a stimulus for improving the areas adjacent to it. The banks of the Moskva were faced with stone. The Bolotny (now Repin) Square architectural ensemble was created on the opposite side of the Moskva and a set of commercial shops for selling flour designed by Mikhail Bykovsky were built there as well. The Great Stone Bridge had been built in the middle of the century—it was timed to coincide with the removal of the scaffolding from the Cathedral--in part because of there was

concern that the old bridge blocked the view of the Cathedral from the Moskva Bridge and the Kremlin.

In a series of posters and engravings the most memorable aspects of the dedication are reproduced: the religious procession, the troops arrayed around the Cathedral, the magnificent first liturgy performed in the Cathedral by a large number of clergy in the presence of the imperial couple and persons of high rank associated with the Court. After the dedication, regular services were held in the Cathedral and the church soon began to play a vital role in the spiritual life of the old capital.

<sup>1</sup> “*Moskovskie vedomosti*,” 1883, No. 134, May 16, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> “*Moskovskie vedomosti*,” 1883, No. 145, May 27, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

### Illustration Captions

- Page 140* Placard issued for the consecration of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Mechanical press, Moscow, 1883.
- Page 141* Religious procession during the consecration of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior viewed from the Prechistenka Gate, 1883. Woodcut by D. Ryzhov after a drawing by Yakov Turlygin.
- Page 142* Religious procession during the consecration of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, 1883. Print after a drawing by Apollinary Vasnetsov.
- Page 144* Emperor Alexander III. Print by an unidentified engraver of a photograph by S. L. Levitsky, late 1880’s.
- The newly consecrated Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow from the May 26, 1883 issue of *Gattsuk’s Gazette*. Photoengraving of a woodcut by D. Ryzhov after a drawing by Vasnetsov.
- Page 145* Consecration ceremony in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior with His Imperial Majesty Alexander III present. Illustration from the journal *Niva*, 1883.
- Page 146* Cathedral of Christ the Savior (north façade). Tinted photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., Moscow, late 1890’s

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View of Moscow from a bell tower of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (in the foreground the Church in Praise of the Virgin). Photograph by A. Reinbot and Co., St. Petersburg, late 1890's.

## **A Monument Erected to Alexander III**

The story of how the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and its milieu evolved not only provides evidence of the Cathedral's importance but also attests to the efficacy of the official policy of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" developed by Minister of Education Sergey Uvarov. The assassination of Emperor Alexander II elicited a backlash. Pro-monarchy attitudes mushroomed, ushering in a virtual storm of building projects to memorialize the martyred emperor. One manifestation of this "boom" was the large memorial to Alexander II erected inside the Kremlin's walls. The early death in 1894 of Alexander III, the ruler most wed to the idea of Russian nationalism and Russian-style architecture, whose "unenlightened absolutism" in no way impeded the rapid growth of Russian capitalism, also gave cause to erect monuments.

Moscow's monument to Alexander III was funded by money contributed by the general public. By May of 1897, 165,003 rubles and 20.5 kopecks had been collected, a colossal sum for so short a time, and contributions were still coming in. Grand Prince Sergey Alexandrovich, Moscow's Governor-General (assassinated in 1905 by a member of the Social Revolutionary Party), asked Ivan Tsvetaev, founder of what is now the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts (originally known as the Museum of Replicas), to choose a site for this monument. The notion that the monument should represent all of Russia informed his choice. "The site," he observed "should be one of the most visible places, a place most visited by the city's residents and its visitors." Tsvetaev analyzed various locations. He began with the Kremlin, concluding that existing space there was crowded, consisting mainly of courtyards and that "monuments having historical and national significance should not be erected" in courtyards. He then considered the city's main squares--Red Square, Resurrection Square (now Revolution Square), the

square in front of the Governor-General's Residence on Tver' Street (which later was named Soviet Square when the Residence became Mossovet, the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies), and the square of the former Kolymazhny Palace, where the Museum of Fine Arts now stands. (The Moscow Municipal Duma donated the latter parcel for the future museum in 1898, the year after Tsvetaev submitted his proposal for the monument to Alexander III.)

Besides searching for the right location, Tsvetaev also pondered the matter of what type of monument to erect. Tsvetaev rejected the idea of constructing a memorial church since it had already been decided to build a church dedicated to St. Alexander Nevsky on Moscow's Miuskaya Square to commemorate the liberation of the serfs (the church, still not completed by the time of the 1917 Revolution, was razed in the 1930's) and a memorial church honoring Alexander III would necessarily be dedicated to the same saint. Tsvetaev also rejected the idea that part of the Kremlin wall be torn down to make room for a new memorial church: "[T]his would cause much distress though perhaps not expressed openly."

Tsvetaev proposed a sculptural monument to Alexander III and argued that the public area in front of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior would be the most appropriate site for it. Tsvetaev's argument was well-reasoned. He rejected the idea of erecting the monument on Red Square in front of the History Museum or on Resurrection Square because of the hustle and bustle of these two locations. Theater Square, since it was dedicated to the arts, also seemed inappropriate to him. It was the place for monuments to writers, artists, actors, famous people in the arts, scholars--but not emperors. The square in front of the Governor-General's residence was suitable but better sites were available. Kolymazhnaya Square, in Tsvetaev's opinion, was appropriate in most respects. It was where the Museum of

Fine Arts was to be built, but “how could a monument to a sovereign be erected on the spot where recently there had been a prison for persons facing exile?”

From Tsvetaev’s point of view the area in front of the Cathedral had unquestionable advantages. It was spacious, yet neither too big nor overcrowded with people. Erecting the sculpture there should not cause financial or administrative problems. Moreover, the Cathedral, completed during Alexander III’s reign, had immediately become a national shrine. After all, a monument had been erected to Nicholas I in front of St. Isaac’s Cathedral in St. Petersburg during whose reign that substantial edifice had been built. “Sovereigns,” wrote Tsvetaev, “thus appear as intercessors for their people before God and act as eternal reminders that there is no higher school or moral precept than God’s church and, lacking such precepts, life in Russia would hardly be right and proper.”<sup>1</sup>

Other views, however, were voiced regarding the monument to Alexander III and where it should be situated. Tsvetaev mentions them only in passing. The most popular of these, based on Alexander III’s well-known affection for antiquities and for Moscow, was to erect the monument in the Kremlin proper. It was suggested that it take the form of a statue, a memorial church, or an almshouse, or even a museum of Russian antiquities and that it be situated near the monument to Alexander II on the parade grounds next to the Spassky Gate, a site Tsvetaev rejected.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, Tsvetaev’s argument was deemed persuasive by Moscow’s Governor-General, and in due time a sculptural monument was erected at the site he had chosen. It was created by one of the most talented and productive Russian masters working in the area of monumental art at the time. Michael Opekushin (1838-1923) had created the famous monuments to Alexander Pushkin on Pushkin Square in Moscow, on Pushkin Street in St. Petersburg, and in the city of Kishinev,



Moldavia, a monument to Mikhail Lermontov in Pyatigorsk, to Karl Ber, 1792-1876, natural scientist, founder of the science of embryology and one of the founders of the Russian Geographical Society in Tartu, Estonia, and a monument to Count Nicholas Muraev-Amursky in Khabarovsk in the Far East. Opekushin also sculpted the monument to Alexander II unveiled in the Kremlin in 1898. Destroyed after the Revolution, until recently it was mentioned only in passing.\*

The monument to Alexander III was dedicated on May 30, 1912. The ceremony importantly coincided with events of great importance to Moscow, the centennial of the 1812 war and the festive opening of the Museum of Fine Arts, named for Alexander III, which took place the following day.<sup>3</sup> The monument depicted the Emperor seated on a throne dressed in full imperial regalia, holding a scepter and orb and wearing the crown and the royal mantle of a monarch. The right end of the mantle draped onto the pedestal of red granite (all the sculptural parts were executed in bronze). On the pedestal was inscribed: “To Our Pious, Autocratic, and Exalted Sovereign, Alexander Alexandrovich, Emperor of All Russia, 1881-1894.” The granite pedestal rested on a massive red granite base. At its corners were mounted double-headed eagles, larger-than-life, with outstretched wings. The base, raised on a three-stepped socle, was decorated with coats of arms.

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\* Opekushin was also active in the area of decorative arts, creating items made of silver, often in collaboration with architect D. N. Chichagov, for Pavel Ovchinnikov, one of the finest Russian jewelry manufacturers at the time. Opekushin also designed table and floor lamps, vases, decorative boxes, and he produced façades for townhouses and suburban homes, sculpted fountains for winter gardens and décor for walls, fireplaces, and Russian tiled stoves (Cf. I. M. Suslov, *A. M. Opekushin. Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* [Verkhne-Volzhskoe kn. Izd., 1968], pp. 33-36, 46, 48, and 55-64.).

During the construction of the monument various enhancements were made to the larger site. Granite balustrades and a grand staircase leading to the water were constructed on the side of the Cathedral facing the Moskva. A low wall of grey granite was built around the monument to set it off and emphasize its independent value.

Significantly, Opekushin and Prince Pyotr Trubetskoy (1867-1938), sculptor of the equestrian monument to Alexander III placed at the center of the square opposite the Moscow Station in Petersburg, despite the fact that they differed in their respective artistic proclivities and belonged to different generations, and, despite any compositional convergences and the lack of convergence in their choice of dress for the Emperor, were nonetheless of one accord in their treatment of his image. Opekushin's Alexander III is first and foremost an emperor and Trubetskoy's a more private person (his Alexander wears the "Russian" military uniform the Emperor himself had introduced), yet in both sculptures emphasis was placed on characteristics inherent to Alexander III as an individual and to his reign which personified static, immobile, and ponderous qualities. They echo the characterization of him by one of the individuals who proposed a memorial museum of antiquities in the Kremlin and viewed the Emperor as a person "who for us embodied the image of a seventeenth-century tsar."

The monument's unveiling and dedication was a far more modest ritual than the consecration of the Cathedral. The ceremony commenced with the firing of cannon from the Kremlin's Tainitsky Tower. Soldiers were arrayed in formation around the monument. A religious procession emerged from the Cathedral led by the Metropolitan accompanied by royalty as the bells of nearby churches pealed.<sup>4</sup> At the foot of the monument a service of thanksgiving was sung with everyone present on bended knee. When eternal memory to Alexander III was proclaimed,

rounds were fired and the Preobrazhensky March played before the draping was removed. The Metropolitan aspersed the monument with holy water, proclaimed long life to Russia's troops and her loyal subjects, and then returned to the Cathedral.<sup>5</sup> In the evening the city as well as the monument was illuminated.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently, a proposal was approved to build an edifice symbolically tied to the Cathedral, namely, a museum commemorating the 1812 War. “[A]djoining the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the Museum in essence will be an addition, a reminder of the role the Cathedral plays as a national monument.” To determine the best site for the museum, the Construction Committee enlisted the help of Alexander Pomerantsev, the architect who had designed the elaborate shopping complex on Red Square (now GUM) and the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky commemorating the emancipation of the serfs. Pomerantsev agreed with the Committee that the Museum of the Patriotic War of 1812 should have “a close ideological bond with the Cathedral.” He came to the conclusion “that ideally the Museum should be constructed on one of the axes of the Cathedral, in front of its square. . . . The Museum building should be built in the grand manner, yet it must be separate, not pushed up against the Cathedral. The square proposed for this monument to the heroes of the Patriotic War must not be congested, nor should the building make it so.”

The Committee accepted Pomerantsev's proposal to erect the museum opposite the north façade of the Cathedral on Volkhonka Street next to the new Museum of Fine Arts.<sup>7</sup> Thus, around the Cathedral of Christ the Savior a museum ‘town’ began to take shape and this, in turn, bolstered the church's significance as a memorial-museum. Realization of the plan to erect the Museum was deferred indefinitely when war broke out in 1914. The October Revolution of 1917 put an end to this project once and for all.

<sup>1</sup> I. V. Tsvetaev, *Zapiski o meste dlia pamiatnika imperatoru Aleksandru III* (Moscow, May 23, 1897), pp. 1-6, 10-18.

<sup>2</sup> S. Belokurov, *O pamiatnike v Moskve imperatoru Aleksandru III* (Moscow, 1901), pp. 3-7, 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Gr. Shamshin (V. V. Chamborant), *Tsar'-mirotvorets imperator Aleksandr III i otkrytie pamiatnika v Moskve* (St. Petersburg, 1914), p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *Vysochaishe utverzhdennyi tseremonial torzhestvennogo otkrytiia i osviashcheniia pamiatnika Aleksandru III v Moskve*, b. m., b. g., pp. 1, 3.

<sup>5</sup> B. Kandidov, *Kogo spasal khram Khrista Spasitelia* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1931), p. 42

<sup>6</sup> *Vysochaishe utverzhdennyi tseremonial, ... p. 6*

<sup>7</sup> TsGALI [Central State Archives of Literature and Art], f. 68, op. I, d. 883, 1909-1910 gg., l. 3-4.

## Illustration Captions

- Page 148* Imperial Pavilion at the unveiling of the monument to Emperor Alexander III.  
Divine liturgy being celebrated at the unveiling of the monument to Emperor Alexander III, May 30, 1912.
- Page 150* Emperor Nicholas II reviews the honor guard on the day of the unveiling of the monument to Alexander III.  
Standard-bearers present the colors, Moscow, 1912.
- Page 152* Emperor Nicholas II surveys the monument to Alexander III on the day of its unveiling, Moscow, 1912.
- Page 153* Monument to Emperor Alexander III adjacent to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, designed by architect Alexander Pomerantsev and sculpted by Mikhail Opekushin.
- Page 154* Emperor Nicholas II, Empress Alexander Fedorovna, and members of the royal suite near the Cathedral of Christ the Savior during the centennial celebration of the Battle of Borodino, Moscow, 1912.
- Page 155* Religious procession during the centennial of the Battle of Borodino, Moscow, 1912.  
Medals struck for the unveiling of the monument to Emperor Alexander III in Moscow.
- Page 157* Monument to Alexander III and Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph from a postcard published by Granberg and Associates, Stockholm, early twentieth century.

## The Life of the Cathedral

In the 1860's and 1870's cityscapes fell out of fashion in the realm of illustrative art and, increasingly, urban life was documented by photography. Moscow and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were favorite subjects for mass produced items like "open letters," as postcards were then called. The Cathedral was omnipresent as well in commercially produced photo albums which tended to be expensive and therefore less common. The earliest of these, published by the large photography firm of Scherer, Nabgolts, and Company, serves as a record of the Cathedral's transformation into a symbol of the ancient capital. And it did not take long for the Cathedral to become a familiar Moscow landmark.

The tradition of publishing panoramas of Moscow was born anew in the art of photography. Quite early, in 1856, the first photographic panorama of the city, of Zamoskvorechie, was taken from the square in front of the Great Kremlin Palace.<sup>1</sup> Circular panoramas were revived. The one most familiar, taken from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, was issued by Scherer and Nabgolts in a hardbound, boxed edition of sixteen sheets. A second panorama, forming a complete circle and published by the same firm, came out in 1890 at the time the monument to Alexander II was being erected in the Kremlin. This panorama began with the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and continued in a clockwise direction. Published as an album of twelve sheets under the title *Moscow Viewed from the Tsar's Courtyard in the Kremlin*, the photo of the Cathedral is one of the best ever taken. An expressive composition from a felicitous vantage point, the photograph evokes thoughts about connections in time, about Moscow's originality and its inimitable architectural landscape.

There are innumerable photo albums of Moscow bearing titles such as 'Souvenir de Moscou,' 'Moscow,' and 'Views of Moscow' that include pictures of

the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. That so many were published attests to their extraordinary popularity. For example, in *Moscow: Forty Photoengraved Views of Moscow and Its Environs* (St. Petersburg: Babkin Press, 1896), six of the “views” show the Cathedral. Naturally, the Cathedral was present in all publications about Moscow’s churches, among them an album with the unusual title *Moscow, Cathedral of Russia, and the Kremlin, Its Altar*, published in the late 1890’s in Moscow, the work of a photographer named Matveev.<sup>2</sup>

Following the Great Reforms of the 1860’s Moscow changed radically, so much so that change became characteristic of life in the ancient capital. Everyone writing about Moscow at the time makes note of this. One, struck by the sense of renewal in the city after a five-year absence, wrote: “Moscow . . . was almost unrecognizable to me; its overall appearance had changed so much. The city looked almost European. Just riding into Moscow on a train (I think from Kolomna, but it could have been Ryazan) left me with strong impressions. Moscow has been both transformed and renewed significantly. It’s as if there’s been a sharp about face over the past five years. Everything has a new feel to it. The streets are the same, and it’s not that many new buildings have been put up, but the old Moscow is gone. Just as a person’s face, immutable and still young, displays a new expression that completely alters it, an expression that comes from an internal, spiritual change, the overall look of Moscow has changed imperceptibly. . . . A line has been crossed: old, pre-Reform Moscow has lived out its days, become history. But, of course, internally and externally, especially externally, much of the past remains.”<sup>3</sup>

Changes in the outward appearance of Moscow were not evident until the 1870’s. In 1872 the Polytechnic Exhibition took place in Moscow. Timed to coincide with the two-hundredth anniversary of Peter the Great’s birth and the

tenth anniversary of the Great Reforms, the exhibition was intended to convey a sense of modern Russia, i.e., Russia since the reign of Peter the Great, and to demonstrate Russian achievements during the previous decade. The exhibition was organized not by the government but by Moscow University's Society of Nonprofessional Natural Scientists, Anthropologists, and Ethnographers and was the first of its kind to be held there. It is hard to overestimate the significance of this exhibition for Russia's cultural development and Moscow's architectural and building history. Its exhibits inspired the creation of both the History Museum and the Polytechnic Museum, museums of world-wide significance.\*

In the 1870's construction in Moscow increased rapidly, surpassing all previous building activity except for the restoration efforts that followed the 1812 fire. Over the course of time, the building surge intensified and the structures being put up increased in size. These efforts fall into three periods, the 1870's, and, separated only by short breaks, the building booms of the 1890's and the early twentieth century before World War I.

Renewal of Moscow's center began in the 1870's in connection with the opening of the Polytechnic Exhibition. Unlike building projects of the 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's, which were concentrated in the ancient heart of Moscow, in the Kremlin (the Great Kremlin Palace and the Armory) or near it (the Cathedral of Christ the Savior), and the renewal of churches and bell towers along the historically formed system of vertical lines, construction in the 1870's involved large squares. Old ones were redone and new ones created. The Russian-style frame buildings of the Polytechnic Exhibition of 1872, located in all three Alexander Gardens, on the Moskva's embankment, in the Kremlin, and in part of Varvorskaya Square, set a precedent with far-reaching consequences. Like them,

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\* A site was chosen in the Alexander Gardens for a third museum, devoted to agriculture, and a competition for its design announced. Financial support was not forthcoming, however, and the museum was never built.

the History and the Polytechnic Museums were built in the Russian style, and this was the principle followed in redoing the system of squares and adjoining streets near the Kremlin and Kitay-gorod created after the 1812 fire. Between 1870 and 1890 Red Square was completely transformed, the Russian style replacing the empire one. On Resurrection Square a building for the City Duma was erected in the Russian style. Tredyakovsky Lane was designed in the Russian style, except for part of a building that faced Nikolskaya Street. The look of Kitay-gorod's streets and lanes and of the main commercial streets near it and those leading to the railroad stations, the Petrovka, Kuznetsky Most, Tverskaya Street, all underwent rapid change. The first five-story buildings appeared.

More striking still were changes resulting from the building booms of the 1890's and the early 1900's, especially those of the latter. The volume of construction in those years, the speed and the change in the appearance and size of structures were truly remarkable. Buildings increased in size and grew in height. New types of buildings appeared: railway stations, arcades, public buildings, and, in the early twentieth century, department stores, playgrounds, stadiums, and movie theaters. The specialization of entire areas changed, especially those on the city's outskirts. In the 1860's the Moscow railway network was formed. Near its stations industrial areas sprung up.

While changes resulting from the reforms of the 1860's would become evident only toward the end of the century, one early Moscow researcher could state with confidence that the three post-reform decades were a "golden epoch" for the city, a time of continual growth and economic and cultural progress. "[Moscow] has the finest city government in Russia, a model school system that provides universal instruction, municipal museums, excellent hospitals, and a large number of specialized schools and institutions of higher learning. It is beautiful



and its public services and amenities are comparable to any in Europe. All of this was created during those three post-reform decades. And, while all of this was going on, Moscow, like the bogatyr in a bylina, woke up from its eternal slumber and shed its distinctive but superannuated style, a style unsuited to the contemporary pace of life, and ‘Europeanized’ itself. But it has not become a banal, *common European* city. It preserves much of its character in its psychology and in its sense of creativity. . . . Although Moscow acquired much of its grandeur and wealth in the final decades of the nineteenth century, it did not succumb to this; rather it created a special, distinctive existence all its own.”<sup>4</sup>

One might add that Moscow was able to change without losing its inimitable “Muscovite” and Russian qualities. How was this possible? First, the fundamental landmarks, the two lines of ancient fortification, the Kremlin and Kitay-gorod, together with a large number of churches were preserved. Second, the ‘culture’ of new buildings was deliberately oriented not toward destroying the old but toward continuing what was and preserving its national flavor. This principle was expressed in a two ways: first, old Russian architectural traditions were revived when new churches, bell towers, and building ensembles were created; second, in city planning the new was designed to complement the old. The primordial beauty of the city’s natural landscape was carefully preserved. Everything that contributed to the charm of Moscow, the picturesque quality of its relief and its magnificent panoramas, was left untouched.

The area surrounding the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was improved as well as renewed. Large new public buildings, such as the Museum of Fine Arts on Volkhonka, were nearby, also substantial multistoried residential buildings such as the Pertsov Building (now No. 1 Soimonovsky Lane), others situated at the beginning of Ostozhenka and Obydensky Lane and yet more buildings on the

opposite bank of the Moskva. Then there was the Vodootvodny Overflow Canal, the Einem candy factory complex, the Kokorev Hostel, and the low-cost apartment block built by the Bakhrushin Brothers. Because of its huge dimensions, the characteristic silhouette of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was imprinted on the network of streets adjacent to it.

In comparing photographs of Moscow that include the Cathedral of Christ the Savior to engravings from an earlier time, it is obvious that the Cathedral embodied a unique principle in Moscow's life and in Russian culture. Whether centered on the Cathedral and the Kremlin and taken from the side of the Moskva Bridge from the Yauza, Shvivaya Gorka, from the Alexander Gardens, from Mokhovaya Street (Pashkov House, the old building of the Lenin Library), from the corner of Znamenka (now Frunze) Street, or from the Church of the Sign these photographs are all basically identical; they differ only in small details and by the processes used to produce them. The crowds differ; various types of people are shown. In photographs taken at the end of the nineteenth century there are horse-cars and steamboats, which of course are not present in lithographs from the middle of the century. Electric lights appear, and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, trolleys and even bicycles and automobiles, but these in no way alter the principal subject. Blending skillfully with the unique look of the city, identifying with the Kremlin, the Cathedral quickly becomes a symbol of that uniqueness in these representations.

The picturesque quality of Moscow is preserved in panoramas of the city from the beginning of the twentieth century. It is this that made Moscow famous, made it one of the world's most beautiful cities, a city that elicited the admiration of Russians and foreigners alike. The doyen of Moscow historians, Ivan Zabelin, could write: "How freely the outskirts of Moscow sprawl with settlements and

dachas. With a locale so beautiful, Moscow is rightfully considered one of the most picturesque cities in Europe. A traveler, especially an artist, seeing it for the first time finds this beauty not only in the sweeping panoramas of the capital but also in every little side street, whether that side street peeks out at the Kremlin or looks directly at one of these panoramas. The beauty of Moscow's location is enhanced by the numerous original, ancient, often ecclesiastical structures which make it so distinctive, spacious, and incomparable that all other cities of Great Russia refer to themselves as 'nooks' of Moscow. 'Our city is but a nook of Moscow' is said in Yaroslavl and in Tver and everywhere there is a need to define a beautiful location and the beautiful buildings of an old city in terms of Moscow.

"Existing in the East and doing business constantly with the East, Moscow could hardly be expected to express herself physically by following the Western model. Moreover, in terms of her faith and political principles she was not part of the West . . . . Upon close examination, however, Moscow's Eastern look is not Eastern at all but rather a fully original creation, an expression of Russia as a whole. In old Russia people considered churches to be the embodiment of the greatest beauty, and in Moscow there were so many churches that one could not count them all ('forty times forty'). There is beauty not only in Moscow's location, but in the varied, ornate, and unique architecture of her churches with their golden domes and slender bell towers, and in those lofty chambers of tsars and boyars. . . . Foreigners, ambassadors and envoys from the West who in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries approached Moscow from Smolensk along the Mozhaysk Road were enraptured when they reached Poklonnaya Gora and before them opened the truly entrancing panorama of the city and the beautiful, surrounding areas between Sparrow Hills on the right, the three hills on the left, and a vast meadow or the entire field of Khodynka. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

That Zabelin is writing about Moscow at the dawn of the twentieth century is striking. He describes a Moscow that has preserved in its architectural makeup the beauty of nature and has naturally incorporated widely scattered Russian cities in its urban plan. Expansiveness is the quality reflected here, an innate characteristic preserved despite changes in epoch and style. Proof of this can be found in album views of Moscow both from Poklonnaya Gora on the Smolensk Road and from Sparrow Hills in which the mighty mass of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior looms over innumerable church domes and bell towers as well as in photographs taken from the Cathedral.

More precise information perhaps is in order. To Muscovites the most familiar Poklonnaya Gora or Bowing Hill is the one on which Napoleon waited to receive the keys to Moscow. But it is only one of *three* Poklonnaya hills. “In the nineteenth century there were two others, one to the south beyond the Moskva on the Serpukhov Road, another to the northeast on the Troitsk or Yaroslavl Road. Both were on the paths frequented by pilgrims going south to Kiev and northeast to the Troitse-Sergiev Monastery. The first was crossed by pilgrims going to worship the miraculous saints of the Monastery of the Caves, the second by those who went to venerate Saint Sergius of Radonezh. It was on these hills that pilgrims and travelers bowed (in olden times) and made the sign of the cross in the direction of the churches of Russia’s ancient capital that were visible to them, and it was where they bid farewell to family and friends accompanying them. On returning safely to Moscow they would bow reverently as if before a sacred object. This is why these hills were known among the people as the ‘bowing’ hills [in Russian, *poklonnye*]. The Poklonnaya hills were places of meeting and leave taking. . . . In the history of Moscow the Poklonnaya hills were marked by important events. On the Sepukhov hill with their hosts stood Kaza-Girey and on the Mozhaysk Highway

(Smolensk Road) Olgierd, the Lithuanian prince, Władysław, the Polish king, and Napoleon.”<sup>6</sup> With the advent of rail transportation the hills lost their significance and people forgot about two of them. The one on the Smolensk Road was remembered because of events in the war of 1812.

During the brief existence of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Moscow continued to elicit the admiration of foreigners. Earlier they journeyed to Russia’s old capital on horseback or in horse-drawn carriages and at the beginning of the twentieth century by train. “I’ve been in four of the five parts of the world, but I’ve never seen anything like the Moscow Kremlin. . . . In Moscow there are some 450 churches and chapels, and when their bells begin to peal, the air in this city of a million-strong is atremble. From the Kremlin a vista opens up onto a sea of beauty. I never would have imagined that a city like this could exist. The whole place is variegated with green, red, and gold domes and there are spires everywhere. Looking at the mass of gold [the domes of the Kremlin’s cathedrals and the gigantic dome of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were gilded.—*E.K.*] against the bright blue sky everything else pales; it was like something I once may have dreamt about. . . . Oh, how I hope to be able to see Moscow again!” So wrote Knut Hamsun.<sup>7</sup>

Besides commenting favorably on the spaciousness of the Russian urban landscape, many travelers also noted Moscow’s polychromatic quality, the abundance of bright, joyful colors, and, of course, the glitter of gold. Golden domes, a tradition that never waned in Russia, experienced a second birth at the turn of the twentieth century. At that time, in addition to gilded and multicolored domes, decorative multicolored mosaic tile compositions were widely used on exterior walls in church architecture.

To conclude this discussion of the prominence of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in views of Moscow, who could be a better final witness than writer Pyotr Boborykin (1836-1921), one of the city's greatest connoisseurs. Boborykin's descriptions echo the vibrant impressions produced by photographs that include the Cathedral, even to one who never laid eyes on the church. "Moscow is so rich in views that one could enumerate at least a hundred points in the city proper and in its environs from which equally attractive--though not necessarily equally extensive-- panoramas open up. Climb any bell tower and, without fail, a bright and multicolored picture unfolds before you. Even if you're just riding along a street or you happen to find yourself on the incline of a boulevard, a vista will open before your eyes from above and below, a vista that beguiles. . . . [T]he most extensive and vivid view of Moscow is that from the top of the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great, one that is familiar to all foreigners. You stand there as if in the middle of a circle. Walking around its upper platform, you can survey the panorama of the ancient capital in all its glory. It is hard to say which side is more picturesque. You look at the Moskva and Zamoskvorechie. Even the frame of this picture is incomparable! The Kremlin wall and, rising above it, the broad esplanade in front of the [Great Kremlin.—*E.K.*] Palace and then the parapet . . . the parks laid out below, the tower and merlons, and also the two embankments, the Moskva River Bridge and the Stone Bridge, and then Zamoskvorechie all suffused on a sunny day with a pinkish haze. . . . and still further, barely visible, are the city's outskirts, fields and ditches, and the narrow horizon coalescing with the vault of heaven. On the right, your eyes are struck by the colossal cap of the Cathedral of the Savior above its yellowish-white box. The Cathedral was set down not long ago on a beautiful square from which descends an elegant stairway only a tiny bit smaller than the illustrious steps of the Jardins du Trocadero in Paris. It has assumed a

special place in the panorama of Moscow. One could even say that it almost attracts too much attention when the city is viewed from a distance, from the far side of the River. But from the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great the Cathedral area, which has become one of the main adornments of Moscow, blends with the overall view of the majestically resplendent river embankment. In all of Western Europe there is not a single church which can be viewed so closely and is as grand and as beautiful as the Cathedral of the Savior.

“If you look to the right out onto the broad riverbank of the Moskva . . . there’s only one outlying district to be seen. Between the concentric lines of the boulevards, of Sadovaya and the walls of Kitay-gorod and the Kremlin swarms a colossal anthill. . . . From the Crimean Bridge, from where the road that crosses Crimean Lane and runs along the Zubovsky and Smolensk Boulevards to Smolensk Square, to the right, just beyond the embankment rises up the Cathedral of the Savior. . . . There is a partial ellipsis remaining still, namely, the environs of Kitay-gorod near the Kremlin. They start at the Cathedral of the Savior, and then their variegated roofs form a thicket, their distinctive houses standing out rather than the churches. Next to the Cathedral is the early seventeenth-century Church in Praise of the Virgin, its modest dimensions contrasting sharply with the huge mass of the Cathedral. How enormous the Cathedral seems. Diagonally across from the Cathedral one sees the old building of lordly construction which houses the Golitsyn Museum. Down a little to the left on Predtechensky Boulevard [an error. It should be Prechistensky.—*E.K.*] is the house of Sergey Tretyakov, Moscow’s former mayor, with its lattice-work roof.”<sup>8</sup>

Panoramas viewed from the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great and from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were deemed the most informative and impressive by everyone who wrote about Moscow. They were, one might say, panoramas of

panoramas. Until extensive construction began on the outskirts of the city and churches and bell towers suffered wholesale destruction in the 1930's, the picturesque quality of Moscow was preserved. One of Russia's most inspired poets and eminent connoisseurs of Moscow, Apollon Grigoriev (1822-1864), compared the urban milieu of Moscow to that of a growing plant. He wrote of the stunning originality of this "village-city, monstrously fantastical and yet like a plant bushing out luxuriantly as it spreads."<sup>9</sup> Grigoriev discerned an organizing principle in Moscow's church-related buildings: the strict hierarchy of these structures. In this context an especially important role was played by the Kremlin and by the various monastery ensembles. To corroborate his observations, Grigoriev describes the view of Moscow from the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great: "Readers who have visited Moscow, ascend with me to the top of the Kremlin's bell tower from which the southeast, southern, and the southwest parts of Moscow unfold in a huge semicircle. The view of Moscow from up here is very familiar, much like that from Sparrow Hills. . . .

"The panorama is varied and vast, striking in its variation and vastness, yet it contains familiar and prominent points riveting to the eye. To the left in the far distance one sees the two huge bell towers of the Novospassky and Simonov Monasteries. These are old monasteries, akin to crown jewels that take form in a huge urban 'plant', or, if this analogy seems artificial, constitute what might be called 'medallions' within its loops. The aptness of this analogy is less important than its essence, and its essence, viewed without prejudice, is without question valid. The old layers of the city tighten the loops with the bracelet-monasteries that make the lines, the former Alekseev Monastery, which I still remember, where the Cathedral of the Savior now towers, the Novinsky Monastery, now razed, and the Nikitsky, Petrovsky, Rozhdestvensky, and Andronikov Monasteries.



Burgeoning towns nearby are also tightened by the band made from a loop on the horizon where the eye rests on monasteries, the Novospassky, Simonov, Don, and Devichy.

“I direct your attention to the far points of this horizontal line because in the pre-Petrine, rhythmical expression of our scribes who spoke of being ‘drawn’ to them is evident a side of the city that possesses a special look and character. Inside the city the monasteries no longer attract people the way they doubtless once did. Indeed, the loop of Kitay-gorod has ‘medallions’ of its own, namely the Znamensky and Bogoyavlensky Monasteries; Zamoskvorechie and the Taganka are ‘drawn’ partly to the Andronikov and partly to the ‘New Savior’ Monasteries. The monasteries’ characteristics are preserved, perhaps more than before. . . . The special nature, the special color and smell of life in the southeast end of Zamoskvorechie ‘draws’ it to the Simonov Monastery, and the special character of the southern and southwestern ends is ‘drawn’ to the Don Monastery.”<sup>10</sup>

The role played by monasteries and churches in Moscow’s center, gradually lost during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was assumed by the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the southern, southeastern, and southwest parts of the city. This grand edifice became the organizing kernel, the central attraction among buildings in these areas. Although in some ways merely an amendment to views and panoramas of Moscow, the Cathedral nevertheless had a great impact on the area immediately surrounding it. It is hard now to imagine how the vista formed by Mokhovaya Street (from the wooden pavement of the Manezh), Sivtsev Vrazhek, Volkhonka, Prechistenka, Ostozhenka, the present Marx-Engels Street, and a series of other streets and lanes was completed by the Cathedral, and viewed from the direction of Antipiev Lane how the ionic-columned portico of the Museum of Fine Arts looked with the Cathedral in the background.

The notion of a street leading to or ending at a church is an enduring trait of Russian urban planning. A Russian Orthodox church is always built so that it can be seen in its entirety, in other words, as a free-standing church. This contrasts with the tradition of Western Europe where churches fit in with surrounding structures and display only the principal or one of their side façades. The medieval church or cathedral of a western European city is seen from the perspective of a narrow street, and it rises up suddenly before one's eyes. More often than not the building's emotional and artistic effect relies on the unexpected, on the contrast in dimensions between a small space tightly packed with other buildings and the church which seems particularly large by comparison. Russian churches are seen from afar and often serve as orientation points for travelers, orientation points not only in the literal, worldly sense, but also in the spiritual sense, being moral orientation points. The road leads to a church. . . . A street in an old Russian town almost always led to a church; a church invariably was visible at the end of the street or where the street turned.

According to another accepted characteristic of Russian town planning in all epochs and styles was that from a crossroad, a rise, or from a church another church or several other churches could be seen. One church, as it were, passed the baton to the next. As you progressed down a street various scenes opened before you, one after another. In each of them a church completed the view of the street, was in your field of vision. An abundance of churches was the norm. "Forty ties forty." Sometimes wide or principal streets led not to one but to several churches. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Church of the Sign, for example, were both visible at the intersection of Znamenka, Mokhovaya, and Volkhonka Streets and could also be seen together with the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit

at the intersection of Prechistenka Street, Prechistensky Boulevard, and Volkhonka Street, and so forth and so on.

Over time the immediate surroundings of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior changed. Beautifully laid out flower gardens appeared, a new embankment was built along the river with parallel stairways and balustrades leading down to the water, and handsome street lamps were installed. All of these helped shape the architectural ensemble of the area. The street lamps in front of the Cathedral were the first in Moscow to use a new type of illumination—electricity. A number of memoirs speak of the huge impression made by these lights. Special trips were made just to see them. I. E. Bondarenko, who would enjoy success as an architect, recalling his student years at the Moscow Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in the late 1880's writes: "On the wide main streets there were gas lights, on remote streets and lanes, kerosene ones. Electric illumination had hardly been introduced, and we considered it a special treat to walk from the School to Diusso's Hotel on Theater Square and look at the two galvanic arc lights there . . . and at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior there were the tall Yablochkov System streetlights with a bluish-violet light."<sup>11</sup> Nicholas Teleshov in his *Notes of a Writer: Remembrances and Tales about the Past* writes: "I've lived my entire eighty-eight years in Moscow and I remember how different it used to be. The streets were lighted by oil lamps and later kerosene ones and later still by gas. To see electricity, or as it was then called, 'Yablochkov's Illumination,' all of Moscow rushed to see a couple of lights put up for trial purposes on the Stone Bridge as if they were witnessing a miracle."<sup>12</sup> Teleshov recorded these memories in the 1930's when references to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were hardly de rigueur. Historian Mikhail Bogoslovsky has documented the changes in type of street illumination. Before 1862 lamps lighting Moscow burned hempseed oil.

After that date they used alcohol, and after 1865 kerosene and gas. In 1868 there were more than 3000 gas lights burning in the city.<sup>13</sup> All of these types of illumination were used at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior before the appearance of electric lamps on its grounds.

New modes of urban transportation changed the look of Moscow and the Cathedral's environs. Next to carriages and coachmen in the early 1870's appeared tracks for horsecars, which were called "the *konka*," and in the early twentieth century tracks were laid for streetcars. The spread of water mains and sewer pipes changed the look of many of Moscow's squares; the need for fountains to supply the public with water disappeared. The look of sidewalks changed. Next to cobblestones and sidewalks made of flagstone asphalt surfaces began to appear.

Yet Moscow in the second half of the nineteenth century still preserved the traditional custom of "keeping one's own horses." And not just rich people, but those of ordinary means as well kept horses. "And on 'outings' class distinctions were maintained, distinctions dating back perhaps to statutes of Catherine the Great's time which dictated rules for outings for each social group. Members of the first guild had the right to ride with a pair of horses, those of the second guild with only one horse. Members of the merchant class drove primarily with one horse, sometimes sporting thoroughbred trotters. The nobility rode with a pair of horses in coaches and carriages with coats of arms on the doors and liveried coachmen sitting on the boxes. People who liked to go out paraded not only highbred horses and elegant carriages but also handsome coachmen. Tall, strong, and, most important, *portly* coachmen were valued. The coachman's uniform increased the natural corpulence of this individual. He would wear two kaftans, one under and the other outer, and in winter also a sheepskin coat and an outer kaftan with a fur border. In addition, special pillows would be strapped under the

kaftan on his back and chest to increase his corpulence, and perhaps also to protect him from accidents in case the horses bolted. To complement his dignity and handsomeness, a coachman inevitably also had a full, broad, and bushy beard and a loud, preferably deep, voice for shouting ‘Hey, there!’ or ‘Watch out!’ at pedestrians crossing the street.

“There were also professional distinctions in the type of carriage used. Famous doctors who commanded large fees in the summer rode about in coaches and in the winter in sleighs with a high backs pulled by a pair of horses. The vehicle in which the doctor rode and the fee he received were linked. The higher the fees, the superior the conveyance, a coach ‘n pair not unusual. The size of the fee for a first visit or an occasional one could be predicted by the conveyance: a light carriage with one horse, three rubles, with a pair, five rubles, a coach, ten rubles. There were one-horse and paired-horse ‘sleighs with a top’ with a cover like those of droshkys and barouches. In sleighs of this sort rode archimandrites of male monasteries, abbesses of female ones, and other ‘monastic authorities.’ The higher clergy’s goings out still retained then all the trappings of the eighteenth century: a team in tandem with a postilion on the first pair, full harness, and the horses in blinders. The Metropolitan drove about in a coach with six horses in tandem, the two adjutant bishops then customary in Moscow, of Mozhaysk and Dmitrovsk, in coaches with four horses.”<sup>14</sup>

“The ‘*konka*,’ the public carriage of the horse-drawn railway, was distinctive in many ways. The *konka*’s car had an open ‘upper level,’ that is, seats on the roof reached via narrow spiral staircases front and back where only male passengers were permitted. The car was pulled along the rails by a pair of horses wearing blinders driven by a whip-waving coachman who stood on the back platform and tugged on a cord to ring the warning bell suspended from the roof. For trips that

involved hills a second pair of horses with a boy postilion was hitched in tandem with the pair pulling the car. The postilion wore a brown uniform coat with light-colored buttons, and during the summer a dark blouse. In particularly steep and difficult places, for example, from Trubnaya Square to Sretensky Boulevard two pairs of draught horses would be hitched on. The coachman and postilions would whip them long and hard and, only after much coercion, accompanied by loud goading cries and much bell-ringing, would the car ascend the hill . . . . It should be noted that the horsecar was a means of communication far more democratic than the present day streetcar and public bus. All sorts of ordinary Muscovites rode in it, although people of means, especially the Moscow aristocracy, did not.”<sup>15</sup>

Before the appearance of mechanized transport, the number of professional cabman was huge. They were either “light-duty,” that is, serving vehicles that carried passengers, or, what was much more common, “carters” who were engaged in hauling goods between various points on the railways. In 1901, when the concession for the horse railway expired, the Moscow City Duma began the extensive, systematic work of converting the municipal railroads, as they were referred to, to electric traction. The first trolley line was laid in 1898 along Malaya Dimitrovka Street.

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was visited by throngs of people. Church played an enormous role in the life of pre-revolutionary Russia. There was a rhythm to religious holidays and church attendance; church bell-ringing accompanied the life of Muscovites from birth till death. No wonder that Moscow was celebrated for its “forty times forty” churches. Everyone who wrote about Moscow, about its life and customs invariably mentions the enduring traditional relationship of the common people and merchants to the church. The following narrative about the mores of the merchants, members of the middle class, and

craftsmen by a mid-nineteenth-century memoirist is illustrative: “Indeed nothing has changed with regard to the church; customs are observed with the same strictness as in the past. The whole family goes to vespers and matins and to liturgies on feast days and on Sunday. Deviations from this obligation are permitted only in rare instances, for sickness or for urgent business that brooks no delay.”<sup>16</sup>

In the ranks of merchants and among members of the working class matters of faith were firmly entrenched. New churches were constantly being built or completed and, in addition to the practice of unfailingly strict, regular church attendance, there was a set of faith-related customs. “It was rewarding to watch the Zamoskvorechie merchants ride out every morning on their horses to the ‘city.’ The merchants . . . lived for the most part in their own houses, and it was customary to nail a copper crucifix or an icon over the gates to these houses. The merchant rode out through his gate, bared his head and crossed himself. When he reached his shop, he got out of his carriage and again crossed himself before an icon, or icons which, as I noted earlier, were displayed in every shop. In the evening, after closing and locking his shop, the merchant, surrounded by his shop assistants and menials would again cross himself before an icon after which he bowed in three directions as if taking temporary leave of the place where he spent the greater part of his life. Old Muscovites, in general, when walking or driving past churches would stop and cross themselves.”<sup>17</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century shopping arcades and department stores no longer displayed icons in the way the old rows of shops did. But according to the testimony of authors writing about the life of Moscow on the eve of the World War I and the 1917 Revolution, Moscow’s mores were no less distinguished by religious fervor and God-seeking than before. “Often this

religiousness took the form of a deadly pedantry and soulless observance of rites, it gave the people and their customs the sheen of idealism, humanity, and Christian love, though perhaps only superficially. This is true even in our own utilitarian and practical times. In many parts of Moscow even now exist ‘parishes’ about whose forced revival or, more accurately, increased influence so much is being said and written.”<sup>18</sup>

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior quickly became one of the main centers of Moscow’s religious life. Regular services were conducted there, and its feast day celebrations were the most elaborate in Moscow. Christmas, observed on December 25<sup>th</sup> in accordance with the old calendar (January 7<sup>th</sup> according to the Gregorian one), was the patronal festival. It was on that day in 1812 that Napoleon’s troops were expelled from Russia’s borders and, until 1917, the day on which the victory over the French was commemorated. In accordance with Alexander I’s proclamation of 1813, on Christmas Day a thanksgiving service was conducted in all of the capital’s churches “in remembrance of the deliverance of Russia in 1812 from the invasion of the enemy.” The following is a description of this service from 1905: “The divine liturgy, which began at ten o’clock in the morning, was sung by His Eminence Metropolitan Vladimir, the Reverend Archimandrite Fathers Serafim, Aristarkh, Alipy, the Cathedral’s Archpriest P. I. Kazansky, and its other clergy together with the melodious voices of the Cathedral Choir. The Cathedral’s side areas, galleries, and passageways overflowed with worshippers, the central area was filled with representatives from all levels of Moscow society. During the liturgy Their Imperial Highnesses, the Most August Moscow Governor-General and Commander of the Moscow District Troops, Grand Prince Sergey Alexandrovich, and his spouse, Grand Princess Elizabeth Fedorovich, entered the Cathedral together with members of their suites. The



thanksgiving service followed the liturgy. During the singing of '*Tebe Boga khvalim*' a salute was fired from cannon positioned on the Moskva's embankment. The service ended with proclamations of long life to the Tsar, 'eternal memory' to Alexander I and the participants in the Great Fatherland War, and long life to the Russian Army. . . . During the service, masses of people filled the Cathedral's square to overflowing."<sup>19</sup>

No less festive were nameday celebrations held in the Cathedral's side altars dedicated to St. Nicholas and St. Alexander Nevsky. Nicholas and Alexander were not only the names of Russian emperors, they were also the names of the two saints who were the patrons of the planning and building of the Cathedral. The rituals were the same as those used for celebrating Christmas. In the early twentieth century such services were led by well-known church hierarchs such as Nikon, Bishop of Sepukhov and subsequently of Vologda, Moscow Metropolitans Vladimir and Macarius, and Serafim, Bishop of Mozhaysk. "The Synod Choir sang. When '*Tebe Boga khvalim*' was being sung, a salute of 101 blank shot was fired from guns in the Tainitsky Tower."<sup>20</sup> In 1913, when the three-hundredth anniversary of the House of Romanov was celebrated, worship services in the Cathedral were conducted with especially great solemnity.

Photographs of the Cathedral taken from the river side show a permanent "Jordan" made out of stone. The "Jordan" was used for sanctifying water for Epiphany, one of the most important of the twelve great Christian feast days. Here is a description of this ritual as performed in the Kremlin's cathedrals: "On this feast day, following a formal liturgy, there was a religious procession of great solemnity from the cathedrals to the banks of the Moskva to sanctify the water, to a specially built 'Jordan,' a wide hole in the ice beneath a white, transparent tent.

Over the hole a service was conducted by the church hierarchs and a cross was submerged in the icy water as a choir sang and church bells boomed and pealed.

“A great number of people always attended this celebration, though only a few could be accommodated near the ‘Jordan.’ The rest crowded on the embankment behind an iron grating and looked down at the icy river, the white tent, the clergy in their gold brocade and miters and listened to the choir singing and the bells ringing. When the celebration was over and the procession had made its way back to the Kremlin’s cathedrals, one or two lovers of strong sensations would throw off their fur or sheepskin coats, undress, and, stark naked, plunge for a second or two into the icy water.”<sup>21</sup> There are many descriptions of this custom. One, from the pen of a tradesman, explains that the frigid plunge had to do with local beliefs: “In general, a religious frame of mind, unconscious yet instilled with old ways, customs, and traditions held firm among the simple folk. An example is the custom of plunging into the ice-hole in the Moskva on the day the water is sanctified for Epiphany, January 6. It was how one cleansed oneself of sin, and it was done by those who had been mummers during Christmastide, that is, who had covered their faces, participated in ‘the masque.’ Muscovites loved to disguise themselves, especially the merchants, and it was not unusual to meet troikas on the streets carrying mummers riding to the homes of friends. Workmen would also wear disguises but less elaborate, simpler ones.”<sup>22</sup>

Muscovites’ lives, their diversions and also their diet changed in accordance with the church calendar. So much has been lost never to reappear. It is not easy to imagine Shrovetide and Easter carnivals, the latter which took place on the Virgin’s Field, now Bolshaya Pirogovskaya Street. It is also not easy to imagine the embankment between the Moskva River and Ustinsk Bridges on the Sunday eve of Shrovetide when it was being transformed as *rozvalnis* (low, wide sledges)

drew up laden with tubs of sauerkraut, pickled cucumbers, dried and pickled mushrooms, and various Lenten foods to supply booths being set up for the coming week. A huge market operation was launched, called “The Mushroom.” This market opened early on the “first Monday in Lent.” On the same day the character of church services and bell ringing changed. On that Monday, the first evening of Great Lent, “[i]n the bell towers the peal would begin, and slow, thin, mournful sounds hung over Moscow. They were not at all like the usual tones. In churches priests in black cassocks with white tabs, went down on their knees three times to proclaim ‘Lord God and Ruler of my existence....’

“During the first week of Lent all entertainment and music were prohibited. In terms of public places where people could meet one other, it appeared that only the bath houses were functioning. At the end of this first week of strict observance, on so-called ‘Gathering Sunday,’ in the Kremlin’s ancient and historic Uspensky Cathedral [and in all other cathedral churches.—*E.K.*], brightly and festively illuminated by its many chandeliers and with a hierarch celebrating, the solemn annual ‘Rite of Orthodoxy’ was conducted. Accompanied by the young singers in the Synod Choir, priests wearing brocaded cassocks and vestments emerged from the altar area. Archdeacon Rozov, so famous in his time, vested entirely in gold, with his luxuriant, shoulder-length hair, stalwart and mighty, in the middle of the Cathedral crammed with well-dressed people, in a booming voice would solemnly and shatteringly reproach apostates, heretics, and all those who failed to observe Lent, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, in the immortality of the soul, and who denied the divine origin of the tsar’s authority. There might be as many as twelve such categories, and the Archdeacon would conclude each of them by proclaiming in a deep, bellowing bass: ‘Anathema!’ The Archdeacon’s voice rattled the glass, and the tiny flames of the church candles

would quiver. The priests surrounding the Archdeacon would respond in loud, deep bass and sonorous tenor voices with an ominous chorus of ‘Anathema! Anathema! Anathema!’”<sup>23</sup>

Moscow was also transformed on Palm--in Russia “Willow”--Sunday. On the Friday and Saturday before, during the sixth week of Great Lent, Red Square would change completely. The area between the Spassky Gate and the History Museum would become home to the huge “Willow Market.” On Willow Sunday, toward evening the market would come to an end, and the strict observance of the final week of Great Lent—Passion Week—would begin. The following Sunday was the greatest Orthodox feast day, the Resurrection of Christ, Easter, was celebrated and following it the festive Easter Week. The women of the household prepared food to mark the end of the period of fasting: fluffy kuliches, clotted curds, and sweet paskhas, and decorated eggs. Almost every year during Easter Week an “enchanted” flower exhibition opened in the Manège. “Gardeners tried to outdo one another, organizing shows still recalled fondly half a century later. The colossal interior space of the Manège would be entirely filled with flowers and flower beds, decorative plants, redolent with delicate and diverse aromas. Since this happened in the early spring, when there was still dirty and wet melting snow about, the impression this extraordinary oversized flower garden made was one of rapture.”<sup>24</sup>

Not infrequently, Easter coincided with the breakup of ice on the Moskva and a rise in the river’s water level. When the snow melted quickly, flooding changed the appearance of the area around the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Suddenly the Cathedral was on the bank of a vast river. “Crowds of Muscovites would come to observe the flooding. Here and there the River would overflow its banks, inundating the sidewalks and pavement of a street and then advance even

further. There were years when the water crested just short of the Tretyakov Gallery. The Vodootvodny Overflow Canal, or as it was commonly called ‘the Kanava,’ stretching from the Small Stone Bridge to Zatsepa Street, would overflow its banks every year and flood many adjoining lanes....”<sup>25</sup>

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior formed an integral part of the activities that swirled about it. On the southern outskirts of Moscow, from the Smolensk Market on the Garden Ring Road the Cathedral was clearly visible. The Market, which has long since disappeared, was famous in old Moscow. “What Muscovite is not familiar with the Sunday fairs at the Smolensk Market and at the Sukharev Tower? Feast your eyes on the lively scene of peasants, craftsmen, small-time peddlers hawking various wares, and others at these fairs where the trade in boots, hats, caps, mittens, and ‘fabrics’ is concentrated. . . . If you’re a native Muscovite, you’re quite familiar with these fairs. Next to the latest works of literature you may find sundry household goods. Here is a Japanese vase which has become disfigured over time and meerschaum pipes and pistols of some famous maker such as Lazarini and snuff boxes, little busts, chibouks made from cherry wood, clocks, pictures, and so on--in a word, all sorts of ‘curios’ can be found at every turn.”<sup>26</sup>

In Moscow at the turn of the twentieth century there were countless small-time traders peddling all sorts of goods, everyday minutiae. They disappeared by mid century never to return. Like bell ringing and hoof beats, they were common visual appurtenances of the city. They produced its normal, integral background sounds. Hawkers “with loud voices cried out about their wares in a slight singsong. Each ware had its own distinct motif or ‘voice.’ Who legitimized these motifs and when are unknown, but over the course of many years they were observed so exactly that from the cry alone, not hearing a single word, one

unerringly knew what ware the hawker was offering or, if a peasant in a cart, that milk was being sold, or cranberries, onions, potatoes, or coal, or if ambling along, in no hurry, with a sack over his shoulder it was an old ragman who picked up any piece of trash, castoff clothes, goods. . . . There were also ice cream vendors with tubs on their heads. The tubs were filled with pieces of ice, and stuck into the ice were two big tin cans with lids, one containing plain ice cream, the other chocolate-flavored.”<sup>27</sup>

There was a special group of sellers who offered *sbiten'*, a hot drink made with honey and spice. In the winter a large number of them could be found wherever people gathered, especially near the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. “*Sbiten'* vendors would stand by the Moskva and Stone Bridges. The vendors looked like oddly armed people. On one side of them hung a bunch of kolaches, on the other a pouch with pieces of coal, and on the front of them held by a specially constructed device in the shape of a bandolier was a series of thick glass tumblers, glasses for hot *sbiten'* that didn't burn your hand. The *sbiten'*-vendor also held a round samovar with a handle. *Sbiten'* was sold for a kopeck a glass and was made from syrup. In earlier times, *sbiten'* was prepared according to a special recipe: part honey, part St. John's wort, sage, orris root, ginger, cayenne pepper, and other spices.”<sup>28</sup>

We could spend a great of time describing various aspects of the colorful life, irretrievably gone, which once swirled in and around the Cathedral. The Cathedral was erected in an area that had been settled in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries largely by noblemen and government officials. Then later in the nineteenth century middleclass people settled there in large numbers, among them members of leading Moscow merchant families--the Tretyakovs, Shchukins, Morozovs, Khludovs, and Alekseevs. Across the way from the Cathedral the

Museum of Fine Arts was erected. In the Cathedral's immediate proximity were found the Rumyantsev Museum and Library (on Mokhovaya Street, the former Pashkov House, now the old building of the Lenin Library), and the complex of edifices comprising Moscow University which expanded greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century and occupied almost two large blocks. The Moscow Conservatory was located not far away, and next to it the Synod Choir School and the Manège which served as a place for exhibitions and various other public events.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Moscow, Russia's old capital, its million-strong population second only to that of St. Petersburg, continued to be a city of great social contrasts. Traditional Moscow ways of life, colorful and patriarchal, were associated almost exclusively with ordinary people and petty merchants, and they were gradually disappearing, devolving haphazardly into mass public urban culture. At the lower rung of the social ladder were the people who clustered about the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, on its stairways and porches--wanderers, yurordivy [holy fools], poor, sick, and crippled people, pilgrims. Almshouses have been attached to parish churches from time immemorial, and the tradition of poor people clustering about churches has ancient roots. An authority on morals and manners of yesteryear and author of two books that are now attracting new readers, *Old Petersburg* and *Old Moscow*, Mikhail Pyliaev (1842-1899) writes: "The Orthodox Church has been the guardian and benefactor of the poor, those who suffer, and invalids from time immemorial as is evident from the records of church law-courts under Grand Prince Vladimir (958-1015). Such persons are considered the church's people; the sacred church porches and narthexes serve them as dependable refuges and asylums, their meager huts, sheds, and cells adjoin the walls of churchyards. In seventeenth-century Moscow the

poor were divided into those belonging to the cathedrals, the monasteries, and the patriarch, those who were wanderers, and those of the almshouse, the last abiding in almshouses built near churches. The first builder of such hospices was Patriarch Joachim (1674-1690).” Foreigners visiting Moscow in the sixteenth century observed that “Muscovites always look after the poor to whose care everyone contributes according to his income. They are clothed, fed, and taken into people’s homes.”<sup>29</sup> The custom endured; the poor in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth were still accorded the same treatment—and, it should be noted, there was also a continuing presence of “professional” poor people.<sup>30</sup>

On the banks of the Moskva and on the Cathedral’s embankment in particular another picture emerges as well. Before the 1917 Revolution, the Moskva was a river of work. Along it moved barges delivering freight to various retail and wholesale businesses concentrated along its banks, to Red Square, Kitaygorod, and the island between the Moskva and the Overflow Canal. People used the Moskva as a means of transportation. Along it were public baths and bathing sites, some located at the Stone Bridge very close to the Cathedral.

“Several public baths were located on the Moskva. Besides the Sukonnye Baths beyond the Stone Bridge, on the embankment near the place where the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was later erected were old public baths owned by a merchant named Goriachev. In the 1880’s they were called the Kamennovskie Baths. These baths were noteworthy because they had a covered passageway which led to bathing pavilions you could use in the summer months to wash yourself in the Moskva. And this brings to mind the many summer bathing pavilions on the river. Most of them were located near bridges, the Stone, Moskva, Crimean, and Krasnokholmsky Bridges, the Borodino Bridge in Dorogomilov, and



the Ustinsky Bridge.”<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century next to the bridges elegant wooden pavilions in *style moderne* were erected by the Society for Saving Drowning Persons. In winter the frozen Moskva became an avenue along which pedestrians strolled and people rode horses. There were always a lot of people on the embankment of the Moskva near the Cathedral. In the summer people out for a stroll often rested there, sitting on benches, in the winter children were pulled on sleds.

Not only did the life of the Cathedral constitute an integral part of the religious life of Moscow; it was part of the city’s cultural, social, and political life as well. On May 18, 1880, even before the church was consecrated, a Cathedral society of standard-bearers was established to aid clergy in conducting memorial services. The Cathedral’s educational and charitable activities, customary to Orthodox parish churches, were broad in scope. Striving to strengthen faith and morality among the public, its clergy created a special Cathedral library and established close ties with the publishing arm of the Troitse-Sergiev Lavra. Publications of the Lavra, such as *Troitskie listki* [Trinitarian Leaflets] and *Luch dukhovnyi* [Spiritual Ray], and *Troitskie tsvety* [Trinitarian Blossoms] were distributed to pilgrims. Educational endeavors supplemented the Cathedral’s spiritual and moral work. Various types of excursions were conducted, among them excursions organized by the Commission on General Education Courses for Workers created in 1902 thanks to the efforts of Dimitry Trepov, Moscow’s Chief of Police, and Metropolitan Vladimir. In October 1903, the Commission formally requested that workers be permitted “during non-service time” to tour the Cathedral and acquaint themselves firsthand with its venerable appurtenances “as much and in what fashion [the Cathedral’s dean] deems reasonable. The aforementioned workers will come to the Cathedral on Sunday and feast days in

groups of fifteen to twenty-five.”<sup>32</sup> Tours “by worker-auditors enrolled in general education courses of Moscow’s notable churches, monasteries, museums, and galleries” were incorporated into the curricula. In 1912 the Cathedral was the object of a large number of excursions organized in connection with the centenary of the 1812 war. The excursion and educational activities of the Cathedral reached their apogee in that year. Not only Muscovites and residents from other parts of Russia came to the Cathedral. As one of the most important sights of the ancient capital, it was visited by foreign diplomats and by heads of state during official visits.

Events specific not to the Cathedral edifice itself but rather to the country’s great cultural achievements, its special celebrations and anniversaries also found expression in Cathedral life. In 1891, the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Saint Sergius of Radonezh was solemnly observed. From September 21 of that year, for four days preceding the actual anniversary celebrations, from Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, and other cathedrals and monasteries a religious procession with icons and banners moved on foot to the Troitse-Sergiev Lavra [where St. Sergius’ relics are kept] to the ceremonial ringing of all of Moscow’s bells and the intoning of psalms.<sup>33</sup>

April 26, 27, and 28, 1908 were designated by writer Vasily Rozanov (1856-1919) as “Gogol Days in Moscow.” April 26 on Prechistensky Boulevard at the Arbat Gate a monument to Gogol was unveiled (sculpted by Nicholas Andreev; the monument is now located in the yard of the house where the writer died on Suvorov Boulevard). That same day in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior a special service was held. The two events became one, a single holiday celebrating Russian culture, or in Rozanov’s words: “A second great monument to a great writer, second only to Pushkin. Now it is Griboyedov’s turn. The next monument will be

to him, or there should be a collective monument to the Slavophile movement and to Slavophiles, to this great Moscow phenomenon, to a great Moscow intellectual movement. . . . The liturgy for the repose of the soul in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior flowed solemnly and beautifully, as do all services conducted by high-ranking members of the clergy, and it was an orderly service. People didn't crowd, no one was knocked down. It's now twelve o'clock, and everyone has hastened to the monument."<sup>34</sup>

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior is linked indissolubly with one of Russia's greatest singers and the first Russian to be given the title "Grand Archdeacon," Konstantin Vasilievich Rozov (1874-1923). Rozov was an outstanding representative of a large and extraordinarily significant stratum of Russian culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that few people are acquainted with. He personifies music and singing, one of the most important areas of Russian religious culture of the time. Composers of religious music, Pavel Chesnokov and Alexander Kastalsky, wrote for Rozov and dedicated works to him. He sang with the famous Moscow choirmasters and directors Pavel Chesnokov and Nicholas Danilin. Rozov's singing career in Moscow began at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Later, when Rozov was invited to be senior archdeacon in the Kremlin's Uspensky Cathedral and sang with the Synod Choir, he continued to sing in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, participating in many festive services conducted there, including those related to the observance of the centenary of the 1812 war. When Uspensky Cathedral was closed in 1918, the great bass participated regularly in services conducted in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. From then until his untimely death in 1923 Rozov continued to sing in the Cathedral.

There is firsthand testimony of the impression produced by this unusual, handsome man whose voice was both beautiful and mighty. “March 7/20, 1921. Went today to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior for the ‘Rite of Orthodoxy.’ Mass and the special rite lasted from ten till two. The Patriarch himself celebrated with a large group of clergy. Rozov was the most important archdeacon. His voice is extraordinary and in that huge church resonated with all its might without sacrificing the beauty of its timbre and overall musical quality. The Cathedral was filled beyond capacity. The service was decorous and full of splendor, in the way things used to be.”<sup>35</sup>

A celebration unique both in the history of Russian culture and Russian Orthodoxy took place in the Cathedral in 1921, namely, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Rozov’s service to the church in Moscow, when the Patriarch bestowed on him the rank of “Grand Archdeacon.” Nikita Okunev recalls: “September 19 (Old Style) . . . vespers, prayer services for, presentation of icons and other gifts in tribute, and speeches about the anniversary drew more than fifteen thousand people to the Cathedral. Many simply could not get in. It was crowded like on Easter. The Patriarch arrived, the Metropolitan, and several bishops, and too many other clergy to count. (It was said that there were no fewer than 150 of various ranks.) Two huge choirs sang. . . . Pavel Chesnokov directed them . . . and Nicholas Dalinin. . . . There were famous artist-solists, Petrov and Stepanova among them. All the famous Moscow deacons were there as well, led by Mikhail Kuzmich Kholmogorov, who in a voice no less mighty than he whose anniversary was being celebrated proclaimed that on the occasion of the anniversary Rozov had been given the title of “Grand Archdeacon” by the Patriarch. Apparently this was something done in the eastern patriarchates.

“At Rozov’s funeral service, the Dean of the Cathedral, Nicholas Lyubimov, stated ‘there has never been such an archdeacon,’ that there will never be another like him, he was a Grand Archdeacon not merely in rank but also in talent. I fully agree. I mourn his untimely end in a double sense, for with his departure into eternity has departed as well a special type of Moscow archdeacon, one who can only be described and sketched with so much love by a Leskov or a Repin. The last of the Mohegans!”<sup>36</sup>

Analogous testimony comes from a colleague, a former pupil of the Synod Choir School. “In the early part of the century there were four things in Moscow not to be missed: The Moscow Art Theatre, the Bolshoy, the Tretyakov Gallery, and the Synod Choir. It was hard to obtain tickets for the two theaters, but to compensate for this the Tretyakov Gallery and Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin were open to everyone. In the Cathedral the Synod Choir sang together with the extraordinary Archdeacon Rozov. The most celebrated singers of the time were Shalyapin and Kachalov, yet Konstantin Vasilievich Rozov was the great favorite in Moscow. And why not? Moscow was a city of singers. Every church and place of worship were distinguished not only because of their clergy but also because of their melodious choirs and sonorous deacons. . . .”<sup>37</sup>

A book-length memoir about Rozov was published by his daughter, Lyudmila. The following is an excerpt:

“Father was extraordinary in appearance. Nature endowed him with stateliness and charm. But most striking of all was his voice. It was marvelous, in timbre basso-profundo, true bel canto, a unique sound without any wheezing or ‘warbling.’ Connoisseurs of rare voices in Russia were entranced by the Rozov’s singing talents and invited him to Moscow. There he acquired broad public

recognition. During that period he participated in all of the special services conducted in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

“September 19, 1921 is a date especially memorable to Muscovites. This was the day on which the twenty-fifth anniversary of Archdeacon Rozov’s sacred service to the church was solemnly observed. The huge Cathedral of Christ the Savior, which held thousands of people, was filled beyond capacity. The service did not begin for a long time. Patriarch Tikhon, who was to lead the celebration, was delayed. That day Konstantin Vasilievich was named ‘Grand Archdeacon,’ the first time such a rank was used by the Orthodox Church. After Metropolitan Trifon conferred his blessing, a celebration in honor of the person being feted took place, a concert performance of spiritual music by famous artists of the State Bolshoy Theater and Orthodox Church Choirs of Nicholas Dalinin and Pavel Chesnokov.

“Among the numerous greetings and addresses from various churches, organizations, and admirers of the talent of Konstantin Vasilievich was one that read: ‘To Uncle Kostya from a grateful Moscow. . . . On this day marking your twenty-five years of service before the altar of our Lord, we with heartfelt faith in the Creator and with boundless gratitude to you, His servant, recall the pious rapture that your service, suffused with true faith, has afforded Moscow. In recent time there has not been a single celebratory liturgy conducted in the capital where the mighty, spirit-inspired voice of the Patriarchal Archdeacon did not glorify the Lord. But at the same time, we the residents of Moscow cannot help but note also your pure, brotherly love for the lay folk who have bestowed on you the name “Uncle Kostya,” a name arising spontaneously from their very hearts. The name of Konstantin Vasilievich Rozov may be known throughout the Orthodox Rus’, but

“Uncle Kostya” will always remain in the hearts of the residents of Moscow and its immediate environs. . . . A deep bow to you from these grateful Muscovites. . . .’

“Congratulatory greetings also came from the workers of the Kremlin, from the workers and staff of State Plant No. 2 (formerly the Bromley Brothers Tool and Dye Works). From the Moscow Art Theater, over the signature of Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vasily Nemirovich-Danchenko came the following words: ‘Please accept our greetings as admirers of your mighty voice and sensitive talent on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of your career. We especially value your willingness to bring your gift to the stage of the Moscow Academic Art Theater by graciously singing parts in the productions of Byron’s *Cain* and Aleksey Tolstoy’s *Tsar Fedor Ioannovich*.’

“Especially high esteem for my father’s voice was expressed in anniversary congratulations from his colleagues at Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin: ‘[Y]ou introduced to the liturgy so much beauty, magnificence, and solemnity that at every opportunity lovers of church festivals from all ends of white-walled Moscow thronged to hear you. . . . [A]ll equally succumbed to the irresistible magic of the mysterious charms of your mighty talent, which you did not ignore, did not bury in the earth, but magnified by personal effort and untiring work, perfecting a beautiful and lofty gift bestowed by God. . . .’

“In his remarks on that special day, Konstantin Vasilievich expressed his sincere gratitude to those present for attending and then stated: ‘I am from the Volga, and beg you sincerely to succor those who are starving in the Volga area, my homeland. . . .’ The entire collection taken up at the concert was donated to the government for this purpose.

“In the brief span of his life that remained, my father, now Grand Archdeacon, conducted liturgies in the many churches that invited him to do so.

He also performed as a soloist at the Moscow State Kapella and gave concerts in various cities, performing programs of both secular and religious songs.

“Father was remembered warmly by people of various generations. The Russian artist Pavel Korin called him ‘Our National Hero.’ For the centenary of Konstantin Vasilievich’s birth, in 1974, the Moscow Patriarchate erected on his grave in the Vagankov Cemetery a cross of white marble with the simple inscription: ‘Grand Archdeacon Konstantin Vasilievich Rozov.’”

Social upheavals and wars in the early twentieth century affected all of Russia’s Orthodox churches including the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Sermons were delivered and liturgies performed with the aim of preventing civil disorders. In the summer of 1915, on July 8, with the Russian army in retreat, a series of religious processions and public prayer services took place on Moscow’s squares. In the city’s churches and in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior a special collection was taken up to help support the army. Much was done as well to aid the wounded. Money for this purpose was gathered in special collection boxes, and two hundred field hospitals were set up and dedicated by the Moscow Orthodox Infirmary Mission. Priests from Moscow’s churches, including those from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, conducted special services for soldiers in the reserve battalions and for those who had been wounded.<sup>38</sup>

During the late teens and the early twenties Moscow underwent a metamorphosis similar to that described by Ivan Belousov, recalling Moscow in the late 1860’s. The city changed, but not the buildings. The people on the street were different, there were new means of conveyance, new signs, the style of life had been altered. . . . This is evident not only in the photographs of such well known masters as Yuri Eremin, V. Pavlov, and Alexander Rodchenko but also in those of unidentified individuals who took pictures for their own private albums.



In almost all of these photos the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is photographed from traditional points, and it looks solemn and majestic. One photograph, however, leaves quite a different impression. Taken from the opposite bank of the Moskva, the viewer sees not the Cathedral proper but its reflection in the water--and only the top part with the domes. The watery reflection gives one the impression that the Cathedral is dissolving; the impression is that of a fleeting, spectral world. Moreover, the sharp line of the river bank and figures of people fishing are the most prominent things pictured. An everyday scene becomes a symbolic representation of the Cathedral in its final days.

An equally unexpected impression is produced as well by photographs of the Cathedral taken from the Moskva River Bridge and the Kremlin embankment. There is a sense of doom in them, of a sad, dying world, infinitely far removed from the showy, majestic perspectives in photographs taken before the 1917 revolution. Artistic devices acquire emblematic value. Here the effect is achieved by exaggerating what is in the foreground. Its quotidian nature and straightforward humility in a strange way bring to mind the neo-realism of Italian cinema. In one photograph, spring or late autumn, the Moskva is free of ice, but snow lies on its banks. Lost in the snow are tiny figures of people, particularly small in comparison to the embankment which, shot from below, descends mighty and broad to the river where a woman is rinsing her washing on the shore. In the background far away are visible the domes of the Cathedral. They are small in comparison to the grand descent of the pier. This is a Moscow which is departing, a Moscow that has yet to physically disappear and continues to exist as if by inertia against a background of diurnal, ordinary life.

Some of the best photographs depicting the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the years after the revolution are those taken by Alexander Rodchenko (1891-

1956), the avant-garde artist of the 1920's and early 1930's. This multi-gifted person worked as a painter in oils, print maker, an advertising artist. He designed dishware and textiles, books, furniture--and he was a very talented photographer. Photography led this energetic, initiative-taking master to filmmaking. Rodchenko initially called himself a film poster artist. Later he would collaborate with Dziga Vertov (1896-1954) in the latter's famous documentary "*Kino-Glaz* (1924)."

Rodchenko began his professional career as a photographer in 1927. He took part in an exhibition organized by the Society of Friends of Soviet Film with a photo series on the theme of the city: a courtyard on Myasnitskaya Street, a Moscow building, the Bransk Railroad Station, the Moskva, on the Moskva and Kropotkin embankments. With his spouse, fellow artist, like-minded person, and friend, Varvara Stepanova, as collaborator he produced a number of photo albums, one of them called "From Merchant to Socialistic Moscow" (1933). Rodchenko the photographer was as spectacular an artist as he was as a designer. He introduced to photography a new type of art, a reformulation of his experience from working with Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930) on the satiric posters of "Okna ROSTA," in *Lef* [*The Left Front of the Arts*] and *Novyi Lef* [*The New Left Front of the Arts*] and in many other journals. Rodchenko's photographs are one of the crowning achievements of the cubist and cubo-futuristic aesthetic with its stated aim of novelty, its apologia of the city and of motion. Rodchenko not only became one of the first and most outstanding photographers of this new style in art, but he also formulated the principles of artistic expression in photography that reflected this new creative sensibility: "[T]he most interesting angles of contemporary photography are from above looking down and from below looking up--and from all other points except 'from the navel.' The modern city with its multistoried buildings, special factory buildings, industrial plants, and other

structures, two- or three-story store windows, the streetcar, the auto, lighted and expansive advertisements, all of this has willy-nilly changed the norms of visual perception. Only the camera seems capable of reflecting contemporary life. . . . To summarize, in order to train people to see things from new vantage points one must shoot very familiar objects from completely unexpected angles and in unexpected positions, and take pictures of new objects from various vantages in order to convey a complete impression of a subject.”<sup>39</sup>

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior attracted Rodchenko’s attention probably because it was one of the best known and most frequently photographed subjects. To his credit, he displayed the Cathedral as no one before him had done. He found foreshortened perspectives and unexpected angles from which to photograph it, and, perhaps more importantly, he created a substantive and completely novel interpretation of something that bordered on being too familiar. The photographs of the Cathedral executed by Rodchenko constitute a magnificent example of how an artistic credo can be realized. The usual representative-souvenir depiction, one that corresponded to the church’s status as one of Moscow’s main historic sights, so familiar from prints and lithographs of pre-revolutionary times, vanishes. The symbolism, the excitement of Rodchenko’s photographs is entirely different. For one thing, the Cathedral is all but absent from his photographs. It is never pictured in its entirety; it ceases to be the great object that dominates Moscow.

Rodchenko’s album of Cathedral photographs shows fragments of façades, staircases. It is difficult to recognize them right away, but that is not the artist’s objective. Fragments of the façades of the Cathedral, shot from unusual, novel angles—from below and along the diagonal—are transformed into a distinctive, heroic symphony of a world soaring upward to nowhere, rearing, toppling, collapsing, losing its stability. Extraordinarily effective also are expressive views

shot from a radically foreshortened perspective of the Cathedral's staircases. The moving rhythms of the sharp black and white lines in a way parallel Sergey Eisenstein's famous sequences of the Odessa Steps in the celebrated film "*Battleship Potemkin* (1925)." A photomontage pregnant with symbolism is created. It conveys the disposition of people experiencing not only the horrible tragedy of World War I but also of the revolution, which Rodchenko served with his art. "We, the artists of the left worked with the Bolsheviki first," he wrote proudly in his diary. "This is something no one can take from us, it is something one can only intentionally forget. And we had to pull by the hair artists of the 'World of Art' and the 'Union of Russian Artists.' We were the first to mount Soviet displays, we made *Soviet* posters, banners, standards, we the ex-futurists and formalists."<sup>40</sup>

In Rodchenko's album there are also photographs that reflect the Cathedral's troublesome fate, one showing the snow-encumbered embankment and others chronicling the destruction of the monument to Alexander III. None of them simply validates a fact; each forces one to stop and meditate, each inspires thought.

<sup>1</sup> S. A. Klepikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130, 166-169.

<sup>3</sup> N. V. Davydov, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 43.

<sup>4</sup> G. Vasilich, "Moskva 1850-1910" in *Moskva v ee proshlom i nastoiashchem* (Moscow, 1912), Vyp. XI, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> I. E. Zabelin, "Moskva" in R. Kumov, ed., *Moskva i ee zhizn'* (St. Petersburg, 1914), pp. 207-209.

<sup>6</sup> N. Poliakov, *Moskvichi doma, v gostiakh i na ulitse. Rasskazy iz narodnogo byta* (Moscow, 1858), pp. 160-164.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in R. Kumov, ed., *Moskva i ee zhizn'*, pp. 228, 230.

<sup>8</sup> P. D. Boborykin, *Panorama Moskvyy* in *Moskva i ee zhizn'*, pp. 211-212, 216, 218-219.

<sup>9</sup> A. A. Grigor'ev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vyp. I (Moscow, 1915), p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> TsGALL, f. 964 op. 3, d. 23, l. 61.

<sup>12</sup> N. D. Telešov, "Moskva prezhe" in *Moskovskaia starina...*, pp. 426-427.

<sup>13</sup> M. M. Bogoslovskii, *Istoriografiia, memuaristika, epistolariia* (Moscow, 1987), p. 115.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> N. P. Vishniakov, *op. cit.* in *Moskovskaia starina...*, p. 280.

<sup>17</sup> I. A. Belousov, "Ushedshaia Moskva" in *Moskovskaia starina...*, pp. 363-364.

<sup>18</sup> G. Vasilich, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> *Moskovskie tserkovnye vedomosti*, 1905, No. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Moskovskie tserkovnye vedomosti*, December 13, 1915. Cited by B. Kandidov, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

- <sup>21</sup> N. D. Teleshov, *op. cit.*, p. 444.
- <sup>22</sup> I. A. Slonov, "Iz zhizni torgovoy Moskvyy" in *Moskovskaia starina...*, p. 344.
- <sup>23</sup> N. D. Teleshov, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-449.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 460.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 460-461.
- <sup>26</sup> Poliakov, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25, 29, 31.
- <sup>27</sup> Teleshov, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-463.
- <sup>28</sup> Belousov, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
- <sup>29</sup> M. I. Pyliaev, *Staraiia Moskva*, St. Petersburg, 1891, pp. 418-419.
- <sup>30</sup> Slonov, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.
- <sup>32</sup> B. Kandidov, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.
- <sup>33</sup> S. G. Semenova, *Nikolai Fedorov. Tvorchestvo zhizni* (Moscow, 1990), p. 88.
- <sup>34</sup> V. V. Rozanov, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: "Sovetskaia Rossiia," 1990), pp. 335-336.
- <sup>35</sup> N. P. Okunev, "Iz 'Dnevnika moskvicha,'" *Nashe nasledie*, 1991, No. 1, p. 153.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.
- <sup>37</sup> A. P. Smirnov, "Velikii arkhid'iakon," *Nashe nasledie*, 1991, No. 1, p. 150.
- <sup>38</sup> B. Kandidov, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.
- <sup>39</sup> Cited by L. F. Volkov-Lannit, *Aleksandr Rodchenko risuet, fotografiruet, stroit* (Moscow, 1968). Information about Rodchenko's creative life is also taken from this volume.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

### Illustration Captions

- Page 158* Cathedral of Christ the Savior viewed from the Kremlin. Photograph by V. Petrov, early twentieth century.
- Page 160* View of the Kremlin from the Cathedral's embankment. Postcard photograph published in Hamburg, late 1890's.
- Page 161* Central municipal electrical generating station at Vinno-Solyarnoy Place.
- Displaying the colors at the Moscow River Yacht Club. From *Moskva na rubezhe vekov* (Moscow, 1901).
- Dock of the Yacht Club. On the right is the Einem (now Red October) Candy Factory. Postcard photograph from the end of the nineteenth century.
- Page 162* Early twentieth century photographic view of Moscow on the Cathedral side from the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great.
- Page 165* Moskva River embankment. Photograph by I. Barshchevsky, 1899.
- Moscow's Stone Bridge (with horse car in the foreground). Postcard photograph published by P. Fon-Girgenson, 1920's.

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- Page 167* Photographic view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior from Obydensky Lane, late 1890's.
- Photographic view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior from Gagarin Lane, late 1890's.
- Page 168* Cathedral of Christ the Savior with the entrance to the Museum of Fine Arts in the foreground. Photograph by Yuri Eremin, 1920's.
- Page 169* Mokhovaya Street in Moscow showing the Rumyantsev Museum (now the Lenin Library). Postcard photograph (no publisher indicated), early 1900's.
- Page 170* Photographic view from the Cathedral's steps of the Church in Praise of the Virgin by Eremin, 1920's or early 1930's.
- Photographic view of the Kropotkin embankment and the Kremlin from the Cathedral by I. Pavlov.
- Moscow viewed from Poklonnaya Gora and from Sparrow Hills. Postcard photographs published by the Worldwide Postal Union of Russia in the early 1900's.
- Page 172* Cathedral of Christ the Savior viewed from the northwest. Postcard photograph published by Ivan Selin, early 1900's.
- Page 173* Photographic view of Moscow, ca. 1900.
- Church of Nikola Streletsky (1682) at the corner of Znamenka Street and Volkhonka Street. Photograph from the journal *Illiustrirovannaia Rossiia* published in Paris from the 1920's to the 1940's.
- Page 175* West entrance to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Anonymous photograph, early 1900's.
- Englishmen survey Moscow from a walkway on the roof of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph from the journal *30 dnei*, # 7, 1928.
- The Moscow visit of Peter I, King of Serbia (reigned 1903-1921).
- Page 176* Snow removal on the Cathedral's embankment. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., 1922.
- Page 177* Winter stroll near the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

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- Snow removal on the Cathedral's embankment. Photograph from the Moscow journal *Prozhektor*, 1928.
- The Cathedral's embankment. Photograph by Alexander Rodchenko, 1920's.
- Page 178* Photograph of a Moscow policeman, early 1900's.
- Christmas postcard published by N. Martyanov, Russian Bookstore, New York, late 1890's.
- Page 179* Moscow in winter, Prechistenka Street (misidentified as Ostozhenka). Postcard photograph published by Fon-Girgenson.
- Prechistenka viewed from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co., 1903.
- Page 180* "Christ Jesus" by Neff, in the main iconostas of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co. (from *Istoricheskoe opisaniie khrama vo imia Khrista Spasitelia v Moskve*).
- Page 181* Service at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (undated). Photograph from the archives of the Studio of Documentary Films.
- Page 182* Ice floe on the Moskva. Postcard published by Kampel, Moscow, early 1900's.
- Congratulatory postcard published by Dubrovitts, Moscow, early 1900's.
- Page 183* Easter in Moscow. Photograph by A. Mazurin from the archives of the Russian Photography Society, early 1900's.
- Page 184* Arbat viewed from Smolensk Square. Postcard photograph, early 1900's.
- Smolensk Market, Moscow, early 1900's.
- Postcards with photographs of "Russian Types."
- Page 186* Kropotkin embankment and the Kremlin viewed from the steps of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph published by MKhK, Moscow, 1925.
- On the steps of the Cathedral. Photograph from *30 dnei*, # 7, 1928.
- Kropotkin embankment during high water. From Sidorov's *Moskva* (Berlin, 1928).
- Page 187* Stairway section and electric lights at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, 1930.

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- Page 188* Collector of donations for the Cathedral; Poor people seeking alms; Parishioners. Photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Page 189* Pilgrims from the postcard series “Russian Originals” published in the early 1900’s.
- Page 190* Flooding in Moscow. Photograph from Sidorov’s *Moskva*.  
Ice fishing on the Moskva. Photograph from Sidorov’s *Moskva*.
- Page 191* New detachment of Red Army officers. Photograph by A. Samsonov from *Prozhektor*, June, 1929.  
Moscow in winter. Photographic view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior from the Kremlin by M. Slonov, 1920’s.
- Page 193* Photographic view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior from the northwest side by Slonov, 1920’s.  
Amateur photograph of a spit in the Moskva River, 1920’s or 1930’s.  
View of Moscow from the front of the Cathedral. Postcard photograph published in Moscow in the 1920’s or 1930’s.
- Page 194* K. B. Rozov (1874-1923). In 1896 Rozov was appointed as a deacon at All Saints Cathedral in Simbirsk. His service in Moscow began at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Later he was made senior archdeacon of Uspensky Cathedral. After the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate (and the closing of the Kremlin’s churches), Rozov was given the rank of patriarchal archdeacon.  
Rozov’s father, Vasily, a rural pastor, with son Konstantin.  
Rozov with his mother, Maria Khrisanfovna, and brother Nicholas.
- Page 195* Salutatory address to Rozov from the People of Moscow.  
Academic Philharmonia poster advertising a Chesnokov-Rozov concert.  
Apropos of Rozov’s death, in the diary of Pavel Chesnokov, composer and professor at the Moscow Conservatory, appears the following sad note: “May 16/30, 1923. Kostya [Rozov] has died. ‘My dear friend, may you rest in peace.’”



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Chesnokov dedicated works to Rozov. One of these, “*Spasi, Bozhe, liudi Tvoia,*” was first performed at the Cathedral’s anniversary celebration, September 19, 1921.

The great art of K. B. Rozov is now again available. In 1990 the record firm “Melodiya” released a disk of his performances.

*Page 197* Photographic view of Moscow from the Moskva River Bridge, from Sidorov’s *Moskva*.

Fishing on the Moskva. Photograph by N. Vlasievsky from *Prozhektor*, 1928.

*Page 198* Informal photograph of a ramp leading down from the bridge to the Moskva (undated).

*Page 200* Steps of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph by Rodchenko, late 1920’s.

*Page 201* Portions of the Cathedral’s façades. Photographs by Rodchenko, late 1920’s.

*Page 202* Cathedral of Christ the Savior viewed from the Kremlin. Photograph by Sherer, Nabgolts, and Co, 1883.

## **The All-Russian Church Council and the Ordeal of Patriarch Tikhon**

The second half of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior's brief existence was stormy and tense, a time of revolution, civil war, and government agitation. For the Moscow Eparchy, in fact for all of Orthodox Russia, the Cathedral became the locus for portentous events related to changes brought about by the revolution. In February 1917, Emperor Nicholas II abdicated and the Provisional Government came into power. Suddenly, the long-expressed desire to renew and restructure the life of the Church could be realized, and preparations were begun for an All-Russian Church Council. The Church's administrative structure began to change as notions of self-government manifested themselves. Parishes became self-governing, as did entire eparchies. The result? Disliked hierarchs were displaced, sent into retirement, and episcopal sees--Chernigov, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, Tver, St. Petersburg, and Moscow--became vacant.<sup>1</sup> At the Cathedral of Christ the Savior a special eparchial convention assembled to elect a new metropolitan. The election took place on June 21, 1917. The two strongest contenders for the post were Tikhon, Archbishop of Vilnius and Latvia, and Alexander Samarin, erstwhile Ober-Procurator of the Holy Governing Synod who had garnered respect for his efforts to dispose of Rasputin. Tikhon carried the day, receiving the majority of votes cast in the final tally: 481 out of 800.<sup>2</sup>

In ceremonial events that subsequently occurred at the Cathedral—and there were many—Tikhon (1865-1925) played an active role. As metropolitan of the most important eparchy in Russia, he presided over the All-Russian Church Council which convened on August 15, 1917.<sup>3</sup> He was one of the three leading candidates for the patriarchal throne, and on November 5, 1917 was duly proclaimed “Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.” The future metropolitan and

patriarch, born Vasily Ivanovich Belavin, was a prominent Church figure. While serving as a bishop in San Francisco, California, he successfully brought together representatives of all persons professing to be Orthodox, not merely Russian emigrants, created a divinity school that functions to this day, and introduced the notion of organizing national American Orthodox councils. The first such council was dedicated to “spreading Orthodoxy to all nations, in all languages, worldwide.” In 1907 Tikhon returned to Russia, first as pastor of the Eparchy of Yaroslavl, later of the Latvian one. Tikhon’s views on the future of the Russian Church informed his responses to an official inquiry about reforming the church initiated by the Synod in 1905. Tikhon felt it was important to reestablish the Moscow patriarchate and that the Church’s eparchial administration should be reorganized with an eye to “reviving” missionary activity, fighting heresies, providing “pastoral leadership,” and encouraging the participation of laymen in parish life. He also felt strongly that the clergy and Church in general needed to be better integrated into the social and political life of Russia, something he worked hard to implement once elected patriarch.<sup>4</sup>

As Metropolitan of Moscow, Tikhon’s fate became closely intertwined with that of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. From August 1917 until September 1918 he presided at the sessions of the Church Council. Its opening ceremony took place in the Cathedral. It was attended by the premier of the Provisional Government, Alexander Kerensky, who had come from Petersburg with Mikhail Rodzianko, chairman of the State Duma. Representatives of many social organizations were also in attendance. Following a liturgy conducted by Tikhon, Protopresbyter Nicholas Lyubimov delivered a speech about the peace-making role of the church in a time of social unrest. “Our Mother Russia, our Russian fatherland, is indeed perishing. It has not been overwhelmed by a fierce external

enemy as much as possessed from within by false doctrines, disbelief, revolt, and social disorder. Where can one find refuge from the storms that plague Russia daily and deliverance from the grave ailments that beset her? Where else but in the church of Christ. It alone can and must serve as a peaceful and hopeful haven for those who are shaken and for all who suffer. It must provide spiritual healing for everyone and never cease doing so.” Salutations addressed to the Council were then read, most of them echoing the sentiments of the Protopresbyter, and expressing the hope that the Church would become the most active national organization working to prevent further bloodshed and end social discord.

The Council functioned as a political force. It collaborated with the Provisional Government, responding directly to the most dramatic events of the time, many of them tragic. The Church Council was the first body of its kind to assemble in more than two hundred years. For the first time in memory the Church was attempting to determine set policy and define the nature of its activities. That the Church Council convened in the Cathedral demonstrated that Moscow was the Orthodox capital and that the Cathedral of Christ the Savior Russia’s most important church.

The Russian Church did much to stave off the catastrophic events that would eventually precipitate a bloody civil war. The Cathedral’s worshippers received copies of an appeal approved by the Church Council on September 1, 1917, “Concerning the Fratricidal War Threatening the Fatherland.” At sessions of the Council the question of the Church’s relationship to the Constituent Assembly was discussed. One contingent of representatives was opposed to taking a stand with regard to elections for this body. However, in the end the Council representatives declared their support for the Assembly in a special appeal to the faithful:

“Faithful Orthodox of Russia! In the name of the Church of Christ the Council begs you to come to your senses, take stock of yourselves, cast off your mutual hatred and quarrels, and stand up for Russia. . . . The public’s conscience is bedimmed by teachings contrary to Christianity. Unprecedented blasphemy and sacrilege is rife.”<sup>5</sup> A substantial role in this change was played by the clergy of the Cathedral. Its sacristan, Alexander Khotovitsky, declared that if the Council refused to publish the appeal it would “spell disaster for the Orthodox Church and the respected authority of its priests. . . .”<sup>6</sup> Efforts to stem the spontaneous uprising of the Petrograd workers were, however, unsuccessful. The Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd on October 25, 1917 (Old Style). At two a.m. the following day the Winter Palace passed into the hands of the Revolutionary Military Committee. The Provisional Government was deposed. Its members were arrested and dispatched to the Peter and Paul Fortress. In Smolny Institute the Petrograd Soviet convened.

On the very first day after the Bolsheviks seized power “a regime of severe repression [was established], one which was directed not so much against the bourgeois as against representatives of the democratic right wing. . . . The press was also subjected to repression. Starting October 27, only one newspaper, *Petrogradskii listok*, was allowed to publish. All Menshevik and Social Revolutionary (SR) newspapers were shut down.”<sup>7</sup> The encroachment on democratic freedoms did not go unanswered. At the meeting of the All-Union Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), Lenin acknowledged that “in the name of freedom of the press there had been a Cadet [Constitutional Democrat] uprising; war had been declared in Petrograd and Moscow.”<sup>8</sup> Battles broke out in Moscow on October 27, 1917. The next day at a plenary session of the Church Council, Metropolitan Tikhon, as its chair, issued the following announcement:

“Tomorrow in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 10 A.M. followed by a prayer service for the return of peace to our native land. I ask that hierarchs and clergy participate. If circumstances permit, there will also be a religious procession. I propose to the Holy Council that homage be paid to the memory of those true sons of our native land who have sacrificed their lives for the good of the Fatherland.”<sup>9</sup>

Fighting had already begun, however, and the procession did not take place. A Cadet uprising on November 2 in Moscow was suppressed. The following day, apropos of the cessation of military action, a service of thanksgiving was conducted at the Cathedral. On November 5, three days after the transfer of power in Moscow to the Revolutionary Military Committee, an event of great importance in the history of the Russian church took place in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior: a patriarch was elected.

The idea of restoring the patriarchate, abolished by Peter the Great early in the eighteenth century, had been in the air for years. The subject of extensive discussion in the early twentieth century, it acquired special urgency as the revolutionary events of 1917 unfolded. Reviving the patriarchate was viewed by the clergy as a way of buttressing the Church during a time of social and political instability. The Cathedral’s clergy lent robust support to the idea; it was the main reason for calling the Council. In one of this assembly’s first sessions Cathedral Sacristan Khotovitsky called for the restoration of the patriarchate and urged the assembly to do so without delay. Speaking on September 25, 1917, he emphasized the need for creating a supple, well administered ecclesiastical structure, one capable of acting effectively under circumstances that inevitably would become more and more complex. Such a structure could only be created by a patriarch. “Our country is fragmenting, its outlying districts are disintegrating, internal ties

are weakening, yet the Church remains stratified. Unification is urgently needed.”<sup>10</sup>

Radical events that occurred in late October and early November of 1917 in Petrograd and Moscow accelerated the pace of this discussion. On November 4th a plenary session passed a motion offered by Khotovitsky proposing that an election be conducted to choose a patriarch the following day. Three candidates for patriarch were nominated: Antonii, Bishop of Kharkov (receiving the most votes), Arseny, Bishop of Novgorod, and Moscow Metropolitan Tikhon. Fate decided: it fell on Metropolitan Tikhon whose election was formally celebrated.<sup>11</sup> The election marked the beginning of the final, tragic stage in Tikhon’s life and that of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. By choosing a patriarch, the Church affirmed its right to an independent existence, throwing down the gauntlet to those in power. Opposition and conflict commenced immediately after the Bolshevik victory in Moscow.

On November 10, 1917, on Red Square next to the Kremlin wall a burial ceremony was held for victims of the Revolution. It marked the beginning of the famous Revolutionary necropolis in that wall. The church rite, the “normal” burial service, was not used. The Church Council deemed this “an insult to the Church and disrespectful to all that is sacred.” Two days later the Cathedral of Christ the Savior the Church responded. Collective prayers were offered for all of those who had perished in the October fighting in Moscow regardless of their political affiliation. The Council’s invitation to the service concluded with the following admonition: “Confess and enjoy the fruit of repentance. Abandon the senseless and dishonorable dream of the teachers of false doctrine who call upon you to realize a worldwide brotherhood by means of internecine war. Return to the path of Christ Our Savior.”<sup>12</sup>

Once the Constituent Assembly was disbanded in mid-January, the church was the sole antagonist of Soviet power with an intact organization which, despite signs of crisis and ossification, continued to be respected by the general populace. The opposition between the church and the new regime, understandably, intensified when free speech and other democratic rights were abolished, people were crushed and persecuted on the basis of their social class or standing, churches defiled and priests murdered. When it was learned that the Soviet of People's Commissars was preparing a decree to separate church from state, Patriarch Tikhon felt compelled to act. On January 19, 1918 he composed and published a pastoral letter that became famous. In it he anathematized the murderers and wasters of Russia and called upon the faithful to take a stand among the ranks of spiritual fighters.

Tikhon's letter is reproduced here in its entirety. Attention should be paid to the note at the very end: "Those present during the composition of this letter suggested that the tone of the letter be softened. The Patriarch gave careful thought to this, crossed himself, and signed the letter, stating: 'I am prepared for any suffering, even death, in the name of Christ's faith.'" On January 20, 1918 the second session of the Council opened with a reading of Tikhon's letter. By evening word of it reached Petrograd. Close to midnight, at a meeting of Sovnarkom [SNK, or Council of People's Commissars] "A Decree Concerning Freedom of Conscience and Church and Religious Societies,"<sup>13</sup> approved in advance by the Commission of the People's Commissariat of Justice, was declared official policy.

The Church Council gave its full approval to Tikhon's letter. Here again, clergy of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior played a crucial role. Alexander Khotovitsky, one of the first to speak, delivered a long and passionate speech



emphasizing that the Cathedral's clergy would strive to make the letter "as fruitful as possible." The Cathedral would become "one of the foci" of mass public heroism, or so he averred: "The Cathedral was erected in memory of 1812, a year in which Russia seemed predestined to perish. In these grave times let us bring this holy among the holiest of Russian church edifices closer to the heart of the people. May we emulate the spirit of those Russian heroes honored in battle by reviving among the people a sacred desire to stand up for our native church and our native land which is embodied in them and to which the majestic Cathedral of Christ the Savior so vociferously speaks. Do not present circumstances predestine the Cathedral for the role of Cathedral of the Savior for our entire land? Let it become *the* All-Russian Church Pulpit! . . . [L]et the voices of the best preachers be heard here, and may voices of the best singers echo here. . . . And at the required hour may the austere word of forgiveness to the enemies of the church issue from the lips of our Most Holy Father here!

"The dead Russian land will be resurrected. Sacrifices will not be made in vain! The Patriarch will not be deserted, nor will we, for the people are on our side. They yearn for heroic exploits no less than we. They already ask our counsel about how to save the Fatherland. The time has come for this Sacred Council, following the example of the Most Holy Father, to be prepared to sacrifice, to tell the people how they should act and whom they should follow."<sup>14</sup>

In the evening of January 25, 1918, after discussing the Patriarch's letter, the Council unanimously passed "A Resolution apropos of SNK's decree on the separation of church and state:"

"1. [T]he decree concerning the separation of church and state, while pretending to be a law about freedom of conscience, is actually a malicious

encroachment on the entire structure of the Orthodox Church, an act of unabashed persecution.

“2. Participation either in the promulgation of this statute hostile to the Church or in attempts to implement it is not compatible with membership in the Orthodox Church and those guilty of these actions invite retribution, including excommunication.”<sup>15</sup>

On January 26, 1918, Kievan Metropolitan Vladimir was brutally murdered. In response, the Council declared that the Church and its clergy were under attack and addressed an appeal to the people. The appeal ends with the words: “Have courage Holy Rus’! Go to your Golgotha! The Holy Cross, an invincible weapon, is on your side as is the Heavenly host, the zealots of God’s Glory. All the saints are with you. . . .” Both documents, the resolution and the appeal, were published in the form of leaflets and distributed by the clergy of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior during liturgies and processions.<sup>16</sup> The following day, January 27, 1918, the Council approved the text of a new prayer “For the Salvation of the Orthodox Church.” “Discord and disorder envelops us,” it reads, “murder and bloodshed, enmity and malice grow to extremes.” The priests of the Cathedral read this prayer during daily celebrations of the liturgy.<sup>17</sup>

At the February 26, 1918 meeting of Sovnarkom, following a discussion about the contingencies of governing the country from Petrograd which, as a result of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, was close to the Russian border, Lenin’s proposal to move the capital to Moscow was accepted. The decision was ratified by the Fourth All-Russian Extraordinary Congress of Soviets, and the official train transporting the government to Moscow arrived on March 11, 1918. The following day Lenin ordered that the red flag be raised over the Kremlin, now the seat of government. Access to the Kremlin was restricted, and the Kremlin’s Cathedrals ceased to

function. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior became the principal cathedral of Moscow, the Moscow Eparchy, and of Russia--and the Patriarch's principal place of work.

The day the official train transporting government leaders from Petrograd reached Moscow a liturgy was celebrated by Patriarch Tikhon and other members of the Orthodox hierarchy during which Antonii, Metropolitan of Kharkov, preached and parochial priests V. G. Subbotin and Khotovitsky brought the icons of Christ and of the Virgin Mary from the altar area to the center of the Cathedral. A solemn prayer service was sung in which Archdeacon Rozov took part. Anathema was proclaimed on heretics "who utter defamatory words about our holy faith and rise up against our holy churches and cloisters and encroach on church property," and 'long life' was wished to Patriarch Tikhon, the clergy, and the Orthodox faithful.<sup>18</sup>

The Holy Governing Synod of the Church was also striving also to survive under the extreme circumstances of the time. On February 15 (28), 1918 it passed a resolution urging the clergy to "be firmly on guard during this grave time of persecution, and to encourage, strengthen, and unite the faithful" by prescribing that "in all parish and non-parish churches unions (collectives) of parishioners and other devout persons be organized to defend sacred places and church wealth from encroachment. The unions should have enlightened and philanthropic goals and names. They can be chaired by either a lay person or a priest, but they must not be called 'church' or 'religious' since all church and religious societies have been voided by the new decree of the legal authorities." Leading the plethora of "brotherhoods," "unions of zealots," and "enlightened and philanthropic unions" that soon appeared was the "United Soviet of Moscow Parishes." All these

organizations were destined to share the same sad fate, and many of their leaders would end up in the dock.<sup>19</sup>

On March 11 (24), 1918, the Patriarch approved the establishment of the “Brotherhood of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior” and on May 16 (29) he approved its charter. Announcements about the creation of the Brotherhood, explaining its fundamental goals, were widely distributed among the faithful:

“[The Brotherhood] 1) works to sustain the splendor of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the performance there of divine services; 2) it assists the Cathedral in the fruitful cause of achieving the spiritual triumph of Orthodox Russia.” In establishing these goals the Brotherhood “unites Orthodox Christians at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, that great historical monument to the Fatherland War of 1812. . . . It issues and distributes publications appropriate to these tasks, creates spiritually enlightening libraries, reading rooms, book repositories, church museums, schools, organizes talks, lectures, theological courses, sacred concerts, pilgrimages to holy places and historical monuments. At the Cathedral and under its wing throughout Russia with appropriate ecclesiastical approval the Brotherhood creates educational, philanthropic, and other institutions that correspond to its aims.”

Members of the Cathedral’s Brotherhood were to “a) conscientiously and effectively implant and protect Orthodox ways in personal, family, social, and public life; b) under the banner of the Brotherhood unite one’s servants, family, friends, and acquaintances in order to create a sympathetic community outside the Cathedral; c) guard and defend the Cathedral of Christ the Savior as the battle flag of a united Orthodox public. . . ; d) love one another with the love of the living Christ and provide mutual support with comforting words, wise counsel, and material succor.”

The Brotherhood was created with Patriarch Tikhon as its patron and “under the authority of his deputy, the Archbishop of Mozhaysk and Kolomna.” The honorary president of the Brotherhood was Nicholas Arseniev, Dean of the Cathedral, its *de facto* leader the Cathedral’s sacristan, Alexander Khotovitsky. Because of the breadth of its activities, the Brotherhood was divided into “Spiritual, Historical, Educational, Philanthropic, Children’s Concerns, Business, Artistic, Public Services, Music, Technical, Legal, Pilgrimages, Talks, Concerts, and other sections.” The Brotherhood functioned smoothly. In no time it raised enough money to set up a “Golgotha” in the Cathedral and to have temporary electric lighting installed. The Brotherhood engaged in extensive publishing efforts. Leaflets about the Cathedral recounted the beauty of Moscow, the pride of Russia, the joy of the Orthodox faith. Until its very last days, the Cathedral also stocked and sold many copies of the publications of the Troitse-Sergiev and Pochaev Lavras as well as pedagogical and educational literature. Members of the Brotherhood were considered parishioners. Judging by receipt books, the largest number of the Cathedral’s parishioners lived in the adjoining districts, but residents of Myasnitskaya Street, Varvarka, even Cherkizovo are listed also. The range of individual contributions to the Brotherhood was wide, from a few rubles to ten thousand.<sup>20</sup>

The decree separating church from state put the clergy of the Cathedral and of all the other city cathedrals who received salaries from the public treasury in a difficult material position since it curtailed this compensation. On March 20, 1918 (New Style), the Dean of the Cathedral appealed to Archbishop Iosaf for help in finding resources insofar as “the lower clergy present evidence of the most incredible requests with regard to their maintenance, that they have to depend on the power of commissars who in one instance denied their requests and threatened

the Cathedral with various reprisals, including closing it entirely.”<sup>21</sup> The threat was dire. Policies delineated during the first months of Soviet power designed to set various levels of society against one another and kindle evil instincts in people had reached an apogee; they played a decisive role in the process of dispossessing the kulaks. To stave off the closing of the Cathedral, Iosaf appealed to the participants of an eparchial convention taking place in Moscow, requesting that they provide temporary means until the next convention so that the eparchy’s main church could continue to function.<sup>22</sup> The convention responded favorably to the Archbishop’s request. Later, also at Iosaf’s request, a special collection was authorized in churches of the Moscow Eparchy to support the Cathedral.

The Cathedral’s final decade and a half transpired in an atmosphere of increasingly savage persecution of the Church. Truly tragic statistics for the period June 1918 to January 1919 record the murders of high-ranking hierarchs, priests, deacons, monks, the closing of churches and monasteries and their defilement, the prohibition of religious processions, etc.<sup>23</sup> And this was only the beginning. Terror tactics against the Church were much more severe in 1921 and 1922, during the famine in the Volga region. An unprecedented drought in 1921 threatened the lives of millions of people. The church organized an All-Russian Church Committee to Help the Starving. The practical matter of collecting money began on August 14, 1921, when, after a solemn liturgy in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Patriarch Tikhon appealed to the worshippers to sacrifice as much as they could for those suffering in the Volga region. Six months later, on February 23, 1922, VTsIK issued a decree ordering local Soviets to remove in one month’s time all valuables from churches for use in helping those who were starving. The VTsIK’s resolution was published on February 26 in *Izvestiya*. On February 28, Patriarch Tikhon issued a response in the form of an appeal to believers: “Desirous

of helping the populace of the Volga regions who are dying from starvation to the greatest degree possible, we permitted church and parish councils and communities to sacrifice precious ornaments and objects not used in divine services to meet the needs of those starving. This we communicated to Orthodox believers on February 13<sup>th</sup> of this year in the form of a special appeal, publication and distribution of which was permitted by the State.

“But in the wake of this . . . to render help to those starving, VTsIK has ordered that all precious items be removed from churches, including sacred vessels and other objects used in worship. From the Church’s point of view such an act is sacrilege. . . . We cannot approve the removal of sacred objects from churches, since their use for non-divine purposes is forbidden by the canons of the Ecumenical Church and punished by it as an act of sacrilege. For laymen the penalty is excommunication from the Church, for clergy removal of rank.”<sup>24</sup>

The Patriarch’s message was understood by believers to be a call to action. An attempt to remove sacred objects from churches in the city of Shuia ended in tragedy.\* In many places the authorities avoided compulsory measures. However, that situation changed radically after the meeting of the Politburo TsK RKP(b) [Central Committee, Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] on March 20, 1922 at which a letter composed by Lenin was read. The letter states that such a stand by the Church gave reason to mount definitive and decisive reprisals against it:

“To Comrade Molotov, for the Members of the Politburo TsK RKP(b).

“Strictly confidential.

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\* A particularly severe confrontation between representatives of the new Soviet government and believers on March 18 and 19, 1922 resulting in many deaths on both sides.

“It is requested that under no circumstances should a copy of this letter be made, and that each member of the Politburo [Comrade Kalinin included] should make any and all notes on the document itself.)

“I think that our opponent has made a huge strategic error in trying to draw us into a decisive battle, one that is both very hopeless and very disadvantageous for him. On the other hand, the present moment is not only exclusively favorable for us but also unique: we have a ninety-nine percent chance of complete success in utterly defeating the enemy and ensuring for ourselves a highly desirable position for many decades to come. Now, and only now, when in the starving locales people are being eaten and along the roads hundreds, if not thousands, of corpses lie about, we can (and therefore must) carry out the removal of church valuables with furious and merciless energy, regardless of any opposition.

“[W]e can secure for ourselves a fund of several hundred million gold rubles (one needs only recall the enormous wealth of several of the monasteries and lavras). Without this fund government work in general, economic reform in particular, and the possibility of upholding our position [at the international economic conference] in Genoa especially is unthinkable. To put our hands on several hundred million gold rubles (possibly several billion) must be done no matter what the stakes . . . .

“An incisive writer on statecraft has rightly asserted that if in carrying out a defined political objective one needs to commit a series of cruel acts, they should be carried out in the most vigorous way possible and in the shortest time possible, for the general public will not tolerate protracted use of acts of cruelty . . . .”

To Lenin belongs not only the idea of crushing the Church’s opposition, but also the way in which it should be implemented. To lay hands on Patriarch Tikhon was ruled out at least in the short run; he was already being watched closely.



Again and again the main point is emphasized: “The greater the number of representatives of the reactionary clergy and reactionary bourgeois we succeed in shooting, the better. . . .”<sup>25</sup>

Lenin’s plan for suppressing the church was carried out with the vigor specified in the directive. By September 1922 the value of articles removed from churches amounted to the astronomical sum of 8,000,000,000,000 rubles in the banknotes of that time. One must keep in mind that this was a period of high inflation. In 1920 alone, before the onset of famine, Soviet authorities had managed to remove church valuables worth 7,150,000,000 rubles in various parts of Russia. Less than one percent of these resources was actually used to help those who were starving. Three million poods of grain were purchased for them (the need was 200 million). The resources produced by what had been taken from churches by July 1, 1922 alone would have been sufficient to satisfy the needs of those starving several times over. It would have fed more people than lived in the Volga area for more than a year. According to the reminiscences of an official of Goskhran, the National Depository for Valuables, named Solomon most of the valuables seized by requisition were immediately stolen; only a paltry portion of them reached the State depositories. But the main objective, set by Lenin, had been achieved. A fund of “several hundred million rubles (and perhaps even of several billion)” was created and repressions were underway. A week after Lenin’s secret directive, *Izvestiya* published a list of “enemies of the people.” The Patriarch’s name was first on the list followed by the names of bishops and priests. All over the country mass criminal trials were conducted. According to various sources, 732 persons were convicted of committing crimes by the initial fifty-five tribunals.<sup>26</sup> The Patriarch, also convicted of committing criminal acts, was placed under house arrest. The Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal, meeting at the

Polytechnic Museum, on May 8, 1922 sentenced five members of the clergy to death by firing squad.<sup>27</sup>

Two days after this sentence was announced, efforts to organize “The Living Church” began in Moscow. The movement took its name from the title of a journal put out by a group of clergy who favored collaboration with the Soviet authorities and who were opposed to Patriarch Tikhon and to certain Orthodox practices and traditions. In an appeal published on May 14, 1922, they demanded that a Church Council be convened to lay blame for the persecution of the Church and “to decide the question of [the Church’s] administration. A civil war is being conducted by the upper hierarchy against the government and it must come to an end.”<sup>28</sup> In essence, this appeal represented a repudiation of Tikhon’s policy of opposition to the authorities in matters of faith and church life. At the initiative of the Living Churchmen or, as they called themselves, “Renewers,” a church council was convened on May 3, 1923 in Moscow. It branded “Tikhon an apostate from the true precepts of Christ and a betrayer of the Church” and, citing canon law, declared him stripped of rank as patriarch, priest, and monk and returned him to lay status. “From this day on Patriarch Tikhon is civilian Vasily Belavin.” Three hundred forty-four of the council’s 350 delegates supported the declaration, among them fifty-two bishops. Six bishops abstained. The following day a delegation from the council of this new Orthodox church visited the Don Monastery where Tikhon was living and presented the declaration to him. Tikhon did not accept it, writing on the text “I reject this non-canonical action.”<sup>29</sup>

In the Russian church dual power reigned, a schism had occurred. The Renewers from the outset rendered unconditional support to Soviet power. They sought to pull down the genuinely ‘orthodox’ Church in the hope of gaining control over it. In some instances, when it came to dealing with their opponents,

they even connived to persecute priests. Patriarch Tikhon, while recognizing the new authorities, nonetheless remained independent of them in specific church-related matters. On March 20, 1921 he felt compelled to dispatch an indignant letter to Lenin: “The opening of relics obliges us to defend holy objects from desecration and to speak authoritatively to the people . . . about how they must obey God before man. . . .” Yet in July of that year he also took a conciliatory step, directing to his flock an appeal not to take up arms, not to answer an eye for an eye [in Russian, “blood for blood”].

“My Dear Children!

“To some, the holy gentleness of the Church and our calls for patient endurance in the face of anti-Christian enmity and malice may appear to be a sign of weakness. . . . [T]he shedding of blood always brings about the shedding of new blood, and vengeance, new vengeance. Building on enmity is akin to building on a volcano. There is an explosion followed by a kingdom of death and destruction. We are concerned about the sanctity and happiness of Our Holy Church and its children.

“We shudder at the barbarous acts of our times. . . when, after attempts were made on the lives of our new leaders in Petrograd and in Moscow like a gift of love to them and evidence of devotion and in atonement for the guilt of their malefactors rose the tumuli of individuals not involved in any way with those threats. The senseless sacrifice of these individuals was greeted with rapture by those who should have halted such atrocities.<sup>30</sup> We shuddered, but indeed these actions occurred in a place where Christ is neither known nor recognized, where religion is considered the opium of the people, Christian ideals a harmful vestige, where open and cynical destruction of one class by another and internecine warfare have become urgent objectives.

“For us, as Christians, may this indeed not come to pass.

“Soviet power is still the enemy herein. Evil must be fought by advocating that which is good, by counterpoising to coercion strength of spirit and moral superiority.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1922 the Patriarch was arrested. He was confined to his house for a year. In 1923, two years after publication of this appeal and one month after the council convened by the Living Churchmen, Tikhon and his followers, striving to save the church and end the schism, issued an appeal to believers that reflected profound suffering, *viz.*, a public declaration of their unconditional acceptance of Soviet power: “Our Church decisively disassociates itself from any counterrevolution. A social revolution has occurred. Return to the former order is impossible. . . . The Church recognizes and supports Soviet power, for there is no power that is not from God. The Church offers prayers for the country of Russia and for Soviet power.”

Following the publication of this appeal the Patriarch was released from custody. From that moment the Renewal movement quickly disintegrated. Although the Renewal priests had occupied a majority of the churches in the country, the church-going public did not support them. And publication of the appeal led to a mass return to the bosom of the canonical church by those clergy who had broken with it.

During the night of April 7, 1925 Patriarch Tikhon died. His spiritual testament, published in *Izvestiya* in accordance with the wishes of the deceased, contains an appeal to Orthodox priests living abroad to halt their attacks on Soviet power because of the pernicious effect of those attacks on the fate of believers and “to accept all that has happened as the expression of God’s will. Without sinning against our Faith and Church, without altering anything in either, in a word,

without permitting any compromises or concessions in the areas of faith and worldly relationships, our relationship to Soviet power and the work of the USSR is for the general good and is sincere . . . and we must condemn any association with the enemies of Soviet power and all open and secret agitation against it. . . .

“We are fully confident that by establishing pure, sincere relations our authorities will trust us completely and that in turn will enable us to teach the Scriptures to the children we shepherd, to maintain divinity schools for preparing pastors, and to publish books and journals in defense of the Orthodox faith.”<sup>32</sup>

Theologian and religious philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev has called the position of the Patriarch one of moral martyrdom, averring that by this great moral feat Tikhon saved the Russian Orthodox Church. The truly tragic, frightening sense of Tikhon’s and his successors’ messages, could be understood fully “only by those who have lived in Soviet Russia. . . . The Orthodox Church in Russia is a martyred church. It has followed a Way of the Cross all its own. The Orthodox Church in emigration is not a martyred church, its bishops do not know what martyrdom is. . . . But there is another distinction which is not accepted by everyone. The Orthodox Church in Russia is sacrificial in an entirely different sense and suffers a moral martyrdom that is unknown and often incomprehensible in émigré church circles. The Orthodox Church in Russia in the person of its hierarchs must perform this sacrifice with a palpable sense of beauty and purity. Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Sergey<sup>†</sup> are not separate, private individuals who think only about themselves. The fate of the Church and the Church’s people as a whole is forever in their purview--not their own personal fate.

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<sup>†</sup> Sergey was Metropolitan of Nizhny Novgorod (Gorky) and later of Moscow during the 1920’s and 1930’s. In 1943 he was elected Patriarch. Berdyaev’s comments, penned in the late 1920’s, were prompted in part by a controversial loyalty statement issued by Sergey in 1927 as de facto head of the church.

“An individual can choose personal martyrdom. But this path is not open to a hierarch leading the Church. He must be another’s martyr, bear another’s sacrifice.

“Loyalty to the Soviet authorities by the Orthodox Church means only that the Church will not participate in political battles against Soviet power and will not bless any kind of battle unless it is spiritual in nature. . . .”<sup>33</sup>

During the last two years of his life Patriarch Tikhon did not serve in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Its clergy joined the Living Church, and, consequently, the Cathedral was empty. By the mid-1920’s it had all but expired as a parish. In a building that could accommodate fifteen thousand people rarely more than a dozen parishioners gathered. The Cathedral began to function more as a museum and information center than a religious sanctuary.<sup>34</sup>

In the second half of the 1920’s, in addition to the persecution of priests and believers another danger emerged, namely, the threat to the physical existence of many religious buildings, chapels, churches, cathedrals, and monastic complexes. Not only did services cease to be conducted in them, many of these buildings were closed and remodeled almost beyond recognition, others were destroyed, disappearing without a trace. This ordeal was one the Church of Christ the Savior could and did not survive.

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<sup>1</sup> M. P. Odintsov, “*Zhrebii pastyria*,” *Nauka i religiia*, 1989, No. 1, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> B. Kandidov, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> The date August 15 is cited by M. I. Odintsov in “*Zhrebii pastyria*” ( p. 38). In Kandidov’s book (p. 51) the Church Council is said to have convened on the following day.

<sup>4</sup> Odintsov, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40 is the source of information about Patriarch Tikhon and of citations pertaining to him.

<sup>5</sup> V. Stepanov, “*Tserkov’ na kreste i ee svideteli*,” *Sovetskaia molodezh’*, Riga, 1991, No. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Kandidov, *op. cit.*, p. 53

<sup>7</sup> A. Popov, ed., *Oktiabr’skii perevorot. Fakty i dokumenty*, with an introductory article, “*Khod revoliutsii*” by A. Rozhkov (Petrograd, 1918), p. 288.

<sup>8</sup> *Izvestiia VTsIK*, 1917, 27 oktiabria; V. Stepanov, “*Tserkov’ na kreste i ee svideteli*,” *Sovetskaia molodezh’*, Riga, 1991, No. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Kandidov, *op. cit.* p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>13</sup> The account of events is taken from Odintsov's "Zhrebii pastyria. Stseny i dokumenty iz zhizni patriarkha Tikhona" (*Nauka i religiia*, 1989, No. 4, p. 17). According to Odintsov, on January 19 Tikhon received the following telegram from Petrograd: "The Narkomiust Commission has approved the proposed Decree Concerning Freedom of Conscience. It's only a matter of time before Sovnarkom will adopt it. How should we respond? Reply immediately." Tikhon's letter of anathematization was the response.

<sup>14</sup> Kandidov, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>15</sup> Odintsov, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Kandidov, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Stepanov, *op. cit.*, No. 2, p. 6 (*Po materialam Tobol'skikh Eparhial'nykh Vedomostei*, 1919, Nos. 8-9).

<sup>24</sup> Odintsov, *op. cit.*, No. 5, pp. 19-20.

<sup>25</sup> L. Regel'son, *Tragediia Russkoi tserkvy: 1917-1945* (Paris, 1977). Cited in V. Stepanov, *Tserkov' na kreste i ee svideteli*, No. 4, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> B. Kandidov, *Golod 1921 i tserkov'* (Moscow, 1932), p. 63 (Cf. Stepanov, *op. cit.*, No. 5, p. 6).

<sup>27</sup> Odintsov, *op. cit.*, No. 5, pp. 20-21.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 6, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>30</sup> The reference here is to documents issued in the wake of the attempt on Lenin's life at the Mikhel'son factory in which mass terror is called for, the Soviet republic being declared an armed camp. A few brief excerpts: "August 30 (1918). Communication of the VTsIK about the attempt on the life of V. I. Lenin, President of SNK. We do not doubt that the footprints of right-wing SRs will be found there, footprints of hirelings of the English and the French. We urge all of our comrades to remain calm and intensify their fight against counterrevolutionary elements. The working class will respond to this attempt on the life of its leader by exercising its great might. Its response will be one of merciless mass terror against all enemies of the Revolution. Comrades! Do not forget that only you can protect our leaders. Close ranks tightly and inflict a decisive, fatal blow to the dominant bourgeois. Victory over the bourgeois is the best way to guarantee our leaders' safety. Be calm and be organized! Be vigilant. Close ranks tightly!

President of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Ja. Sverdlov.

August 30, 1918, 10:40 p.m."

*Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, III, July 11-November 9, 1918 (Moscow, 1964), p. 266.

"September 2 (1918). Resolution of the VTsIK on the attempt on the life of V. I. Lenin, President of the SNK. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee expresses its deep feeling of indignation about the vile attempt of an agent of counterrevolution on the life of the leader of the working class and the peasant poor, on Lenin, the most outstanding representative of contemporary revolutionary socialism in the entire world. . . . This unprecedented encroachment on the life of the person who is most precious to the world's proletariat was fostered by the traitorous agitation of renegades of socialism, inspired by the Black Hundreds, and paid for with the gold of English and French imperialists. . . . The All-Russian Central Executive Committee issues a stern warning to all the slaves of Russia's bourgeoisie and its allies, informing them how counterrevolutionaries and their instigators will answer for every attempt on the lives of Soviet public figures and those who stand for the ideals of socialist revolution. To the White terror exercised by the enemies of worker and peasant power, workers and peasants will respond with mass Red terror against the bourgeois and its agents.

Resolution proposed by Ja. M. Sverdlov approved at the September 2 meeting of the VTsIK."

*Ibid.*, p. 267.

That same day, September 2, VTsIK issued the decree which declared the Soviet republic to be an armed camp: "Face to face with imperialism's beasts of prey who strive to suffocate the Soviet republic and tear its corpse to

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shreds, face to face with the Russian bourgeois who have raised the yellow banner of treason and wish to hand over our nation of workers and peasants to the jackals of foreign imperialism, the Central Executive Committee of Workers, Peasants, Red Army, and Cossack Deputies declares the Soviet republic to be an armed camp”.

*Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>31</sup> Regel'son, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-269. Cited in Stepanov, *op. cit.*, No. 3, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Odintsov, *op. cit.*, No. 6, pp. 39-40.

<sup>33</sup> N. A. Berdiaev, *Vopl' russkoi tserkvi* in *Nauka i religiia*, 1991, No. 4, pp. 6-7 (edited by M. N. Odintsov).

<sup>34</sup> Odintsov, *op. cit.*, No. 6, p. 38.

### Illustration Captions

- Page 204* Patriarch Tikhon.
- Page 205* Patriarch Tikhon with a group of clergy.
- Page 206* Four anti-church posters--one on *Page 207*--issued during the Volga-area famine of the 1920's.
- Page 207* Removal of a bell from the tower of the Strastny Monastery. Photograph by A. Shaikhet, 1930's.
- Page 208* Patriarch Tikhon's pastoral letter of January 19, 1918 anathematizing the enemies of the Church and rallying believers to its defense.
- Page 210* Official records of the investigation of Patriarch Tikhon.
- Page 211* Insignia of the "Brotherhood of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior" founded in 1918.
- Folder containing official records of the investigation of Patriarch Tikhon.
- Page 212* Photographic view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior at night, late 1890's.



# **EXPLOSION! THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR DESTROYED**

**1931-32**

*It's over and done. The atheist whip struck boldly  
And Christ the Savior is a heap of bricks.  
Demyan Bedny*

## **Implementing the “Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic”**

The story of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior’s destruction starts almost fifteen years before its physical demolition. Facts, although ostensibly not related to the Cathedral’s demolition but rather to the course of events, lead in an odd yet undeniable way to its destruction. The razing of the monument to Alexander III immediately following the 1917 Revolution and the blowing up of the Cathedral in 1931 were not isolated or chance occurrences; they were the result of cultural, social, ideological, and governmental policies of the new Communist regime, redevelopment plans for Moscow, even of measures taken to ease traffic flow. Both came in the wake of the “Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic” promulgated at a meeting of the Council of People’s Commissars on April 12, 1918 and bearing the signatures of Lenin, Stalin, and Lunacharsky:

“An Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic”

“In commemoration of the great upheaval that has recently transformed Russia, the Council of People’s Commissars decrees:

1) That monuments erected in honor of tsars and their servants having no historical or artistic significance be subject to removal from streets and squares, some to be stored, the rest used to advantage;

2) That a special commission of the people’s commissars on education and properties of the Republic administered by the Fine Arts Section of the

Commissariat of Education be charged with determining, with the concurrence of official artistic consulting groups in Moscow and Petrograd, which monuments should be removed;

3) That this commission be charged with mobilizing artistic forces and organizing a broad-based competition for projects for monuments designed to commemorate the great events of the Russian socialist revolution;

4) That by May Day several of the uglier statues be removed and the first monuments erected for the masses to pass judgment on;

5) That this commission hasten to prepare the city for the celebration of said May Day, replacing signs, emblems, names of streets, and coats of arms with new ones that reflect the ideas and feelings of revolutionary, working Russia; and

6) That regional and provincial soviets of worker, soldier, and peasant deputies proceed with identical work, collaborating with the above-named commission.<sup>1</sup>

The July 17, 1918 resolution of the Council of People's Commissars calling for the "erection in Moscow of fifty monuments to famous revolutionaries, philosophers, writers, scientists, and artists" supplements the "Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic." The two documents form part of an effort to establish a sense of artistic policy in the new Soviet state. Following the February revolution of 1917, a Commission for Destroying Monuments was organized in Petrograd by the Artists Union. A March issue of the newspaper *Russkaya Volya* ran an article entitled "Idol of Autocracy" by the popular journalist Alexander Amfiteatrov (1862-1938) calling for removal of the monument to Nicholas I on St. Isaac's Square from public view as soon as possible. "Turn [this]

most disgraceful monument to the Holstein dynasty\* into molten metal for military purposes or make museum souvenirs out of it for the curious, but go it must! Get rid of it!” Later, when Amfiteatrov edited the satiric journal *Bich (The Whip)*, he repeatedly published drawings and articles reiterating this view, stressing that preservation of monuments to monarchs could only be of interest to those yearning to restore the monarchy and that, in place of these idols, new monuments should be erected that immortalized the great events of the liberation movement and its fighters.<sup>2</sup>

Amfiteatrov’s ideas were vigorously opposed by well-known art critic and artist Alexander Benois (1870-1960), one of the leaders of *Mir iskusstva* (World of Art) group. The logical implementation of Amfiteatrov’s ideas in Europe, wrote Benois, “would result in the greatest imaginable artistic loss.” Benois explained his position as follows: “I am merely defending the artistic and historical value of objects. If a law banishing bad monuments forever from squares were issued, there would be no small amount of work for those who tear down monuments, and lovers of art could rejoice for only monuments reflecting good taste would be preserved. In Petersburg alone there are any number of cases where this would be good. First of all, we should remove the toy Peter the Great in the Summer Garden and the two ‘Peters for Elementary Education’ on the Admiralty Embankment . . . the monument to Glinka in front of the Conservatory and also that shameful one to Pushkin in Pushkin Square, the funny one of Przewalski and his camel and all those wretched busts of great people in the Alexander Gardens. We also should remove Suvorov, Lermontov, the horrible Kronstadt masoleum, and so forth and so on.

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\* A derogatory reference to the Romanov dynasty; Nicholas I’s grandfather, Peter III, who ascended to the throne in 1762, was a Holstein prince.

“The problem is that our revolutionary censors make demands not in the name of beauty but in the name of revolutionary ideals, the logical implementation of which threatens to deprive humankind of the most beautiful objects and to preserve any rubbish solely because it portrays figures deemed estimable.” Thus, in the name of beauty, Benois called for the preservation of the Petersburg monuments to Nicholas I and Peter the Great and also of the monument to Alexander III on Znamenskaya Square as “a monument to a monarchy doomed to destruction. This is hardly a legendary sovereign-hero rushing into space (a reference to the Bronze Horseman, immortalizing Peter the Great which Benois had just described enthusiastically.—*E.K.*), but a horseman who crushes his steed with his ponderous weight. This is truly a monument to a monarch who encouraged an outward show of nationalism and who had such contempt for his subjects that he felt he could control any of their impulses with a bridle of shortsighted, narrowly dynastic obstinacy.”<sup>3</sup> So, it turns out that the introduction of a policy designed to engender good taste in monuments would be no less destructive than determining the fate of monuments by political criteria. Benois sagely notes that replacing monuments was unnecessary and pointless since new ones could be put up without destroying old ones. In Petersburg there was more than enough room for this, even in the city’s center.

The Bolsheviks drew conclusions from heated discussions such as these. The “Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic” contains language about taking down monuments immediately for both political *and* artistic reasons. Curiously enough, many of the monuments Benois condemned because they were in poor taste and violated aesthetics were also removed, and probably not for the good of Russian history. In the final analysis it hardly mattered whether the motives of those who destroyed the monuments were ideological or political or

about beauty and inculcating good taste. As far as the Soviet authorities were concerned, policy in the matter of preserving monuments (and exactly how many should be destroyed) was defined first and foremost by political considerations. Clearly a lack of convergence in political views was what impelled many members of the Union of Artists who had been advocates of destroying monuments after the February Revolution to issue an appeal following the October Revolution. Called simply “To Society,” it includes a plea to take a stand “against Commissar Lunacharsky’s intent to level monuments erected to figures in Russian history,” to join in the Union’s protest against “barbarity elicited by the crudest notions of demagoguery aimed at arousing the masses already wearied by chaos.”<sup>4</sup>

But, in fact, Amfiteatrov’s proposal as well as that of the “Act Pertaining to Monuments Belonging to the Republic” was not so much about pulling down old monuments as it was about replacing them with new ones. The act of replacing symbolized and embodied the victory of a set of ideas, the triumph of one political structure over others. Time and time again Lenin would note the propagandistic and symbolic significance of a place where a new monument had been erected. On May 1, 1919, the Leader of the Proletariat of the World participated in a *subbotnik* to clean up the Kremlin during which a short obelisk dedicated to Grand Prince Sergey Alexandrovich was torn off its base. The Grand Prince, who was Governor-General of Moscow, had perished from a revolutionary’s bomb in 1905. The Old Bolshevik memoirist Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич (1873-1955) recalls that Lenin “went over to the place where the monument had stood and stated loudly to those nearby: ‘On this spot the revolutionary proletariat must erect a monument to the brave fighter Ivan Kalyaev who destroyed one of the most reprehensible representatives of the Romanov family.’ Vladimir Ilich [Lenin],” adds Bonch-Bruевич, “always lent his support to the initiative of the masses, expanding on it

and drawing political conclusions. Vladimir Ilich more than once expressed the thought that a monument should be erected to Leo Tolstoy on that very spot where he was damned and anathematized, directly opposite Uspensky Cathedral, where a monument to Alexander II needed by no one<sup>†</sup> had been erected, to show future generations by this juxtaposition how cruel the Orthodox Church could be and how great our genius-writer was.”<sup>5</sup>

By the same token, a monument to eighteenth-century liberal writer and thinker Alexander Radishchev, the first Russian opponent of autocracy, was erected in front of the Winter Palace in Petrograd. By changing the inscriptions and ornamentation, designer Nikolay Vsevolozhsky transformed an obelisk erected in 1913 to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the House of Romanov in the Alexander Gardens in Moscow into a monument celebrating revolutionaries of the world. Art policy became an extension of official Soviet policy. The unveiling of the monument to the world’s revolutionaries coincided with the first anniversary of the October Revolution and was but one of many related changes that took place at this time. The old seal of Moscow on the City Duma building depicting St. George the Dragon Slayer was replaced by Grigory Alekseev’s relief of a worker and a peasant. On one side of the Duma was inscribed “Religion is the Opium of the People” and on the pediment a medallion was placed with the inscription: “Revolution is a Whirlwind that Casts Away All Those Who Oppose It.” In a formal ceremony Lenin unveiled a memorial plaque on the Kremlin wall executed by Sergey Konenkov with the inscription “To Those Who Have Fallen in the Struggle for Peace and the Brotherhood of Nations.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>†</sup> The monument to Alexander II in the Kremlin was destroyed in 1918. Where it had stood a monument to Lenin sculpted by Venyamin Pinchuk was erected in 1967 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Substituting new monuments for old ones is characteristic of historical cataclysms such as wars and revolutions. The uniformity of this activity renders it archetypal. In the language of philosophers and psychologists, archetypal reactions are primordially inherent in the social consciousness of nations as well as of individuals. They are also a form of self-expression and self-assertion independent of time and place. The archetype in question is invariably one of substitution: the erection of a new sacred object, be it a city, sanctuary or monument, symbolizing a new faith, the victory of new ideas, usually on the spot where old sacred object once stood. The old objects have not merely lost their sacred quality but have turned into anti-sacred objects and, as such, are subject to quick annihilation. The very act of substituting a new monument for an old one acquires symbolic meaning. The general nature of such actions is what makes them archetypal, explaining how and why they conform. When Christianity was introduced to Rus' in the tenth century, for example, it was accompanied by the mass destruction of pagan temples and the construction of churches on those temple sites. "*Perynskii*," the name of a religious hermitage near Novgorod, indicated that a church was built on the spot where there had been a temple to Perun, one of the most revered pagan Slavic gods.

Even more illustrative is the example of *la conquista*, the Moorish conquest of Spain and in its wake the construction of mosques where formerly there had been churches. After *la reconquista*, when Spaniards won back their lands from the Moors, the reverse process occurred: in place of mosques, churches were erected or mosques were turned into churches (the mosque in Cordova, for example, became a Christian cathedral. The famous Hagia Sophia in Constantinople demonstrates the reverse: it was turned into a mosque after the Ottomans conquered Byzantium). The conquest of Latin America by Spaniards

was accompanied by the creation of capital cities in newly created “viceroyalties,” as the administrative and territorial divisions of the Spanish colonies in America were called. The capitals of these viceroyalties were built on the sites of pre-Columbian centers, centers that were razed more often than not for ideological reasons. But there were also practical considerations; churches and monasteries constructed where pre-Columbian temples had stood could make use of the building material from these temples.

In Russia, as a result of the wholesale re-planning of municipalities in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, the medieval settlement as an integral system disappeared leaving hardly a trace. Only fragments and supporting structures in the form of kremlins, monasteries, and churches were preserved. This radical re-planning was dictated both by ideological and practical considerations. The massive re-planning and reconstruction of Serbian and Bulgarian cities in the wake of their liberation from the Ottomans was also dictated by ideology. Eastern in look and character and thus viewed as evidence of the centuries-long Ottoman domination, the layout and the buildings of Sofia and Belgrade, the most important cities of these two young states which had just acquired independence, were consciously and ruthlessly destroyed. In their stead arose completely new cities European in look and structure.

Another clear illustration of archetypal substitution was the restoration of Soviet cities destroyed during World War II. These cities were meant to be not simply symbols of victory, but of a victory resulting from the advantages of the socialist order and the triumph of the new ideology. Stalingrad, Minsk, Orel, Zaporozhe, and many other cities, therefore, were not restored as much as built



anew--even when the pre-revolutionary appearance and layout of the cities could have been preserved. As symbols of old Russia, no one bemoaned their loss.

Now, after more than seventy years of Soviet power, there is a new wave of monument destruction, acts of vandalism with consequences no less dangerous than those of Lenin's "Act" of 1918. In 1990 and 1991 monuments to Lenin were dismantled in both Ukraine and the Baltic republics. In Moscow, after the unsuccessful putsch of August 1991 and Boris Yeltsin's rise to power, monuments to Felix Dzerzhinsky, Mikhail Kalinin, and Yakov Sverdlov were taken down. In the 1950's, Soviet citizens witnessed the removal of monuments to Joseph Stalin after the "Cult of Personality" was unmasked. It happened without noisy meetings, at times it was done with a sense of shame, rarely was it publicized.

Even a brief survey such as this causes one to ponder the relationship of public monuments, whether sculpture or architecture, to political and social upheavals, revolutions. During the early years of Soviet power the fate of monuments was not dictated solely by "naked" politics; the opinion of specialists and the reaction of the community were taken into consideration. However, by the 1930's, in order to satisfy official atheistic policy, some of the most ancient and most beautiful monuments of Russian architecture cropped up on the black list of monuments slated for demolition. A vulgar, nihilistic attitude toward monuments with cultural and historical value became more and more widespread, as did that strong-armed leadership in the arts which was to prove so devastating. In such an atmosphere the opinion of professionals and the community no longer mattered. This approach decided the fate of many fine monuments in Moscow alone. Demolished were Kazan Cathedral on Red Square, the Triumphal Arch, the Krasnye Gates, Sukharev Tower, and dozens of other unique structures.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, II (Moscow, 1959), pp. 95-96.

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<sup>2</sup> I. S. Zil'bershtein and A. N. Savinov, eds, *Aleksandr Benua rasmyshliaet* (Moscow, 1968), p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 65, and 68.

<sup>4</sup> V. P. Tolstoi, *U istokov sovetskogo monumental'nogo iskusstva: 1917-1923* (Moscow, 1983), p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16; V.D. Bonch-Bruevich, "Vladimir Ili 'ich i ukrashenie Krasnoi stolitsy," *Isbrannye sochineniia v 3-kh tomakh*, III (Moscow, 1963), p. 366.

<sup>6</sup> *Istoriia russkogo iskusstva*, II (Moscow, 1957), p. 33.

### Illustration Captions

*Page 218* Southeast view of Cathedral of Christ the Savior from Prechistenka (Kropotkinskaya) Street, 1930.

*Page 219* The Cathedral in its last days, some six months before the tragic finale, 1931.

## Moscow's Monasteries and Churches in the 1920's and 1930's

The destruction of the monument to Emperor Alexander III on the square of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is one illustration of those planned, widespread actions carried out during the early years of Soviet rule. Also demolished in the spring of 1918 was the monument to Alexander II in the Kremlin and the multi-figured memorial to General Mikhail Skobelev, hero of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Only the statues were taken down. The pedestals remained intact for a long time. They were a reminder of those initial manifestations of ideological intolerance and negation toward the former regime. Later, the country's new leaders turned these vestiges into a weapon for use in their ideological battle. On the eve of May 1, 1920, *Izvestiya* contained copy about the traditional socialist holiday's *subbotnik* under the title "The General Plan for the Ornamentation of Moscow" in which the pedestal of the dismantled monument to Alexander III was to play a role. "On the Moskva River near the Cathedral of Christ the Savior a monument to 'Liberated Labor' will be erected on the pedestal of the destroyed statue to Alexander III. Beautification of the site will be carried out by sculptors and artists of the 'Monolith' cooperative. On the bank of the River next to the Cathedral, canon will be mounted to fire a salute at 9 a.m. when the *subbotnik* is scheduled to begin, and again at 2 p.m. when it ends with the laying of the foundation for the new monument."<sup>1</sup>

The site of the dismantled monument was the center of that May 1<sup>st</sup> celebration. Lenin gave a speech in which he made note of the fact that "[a]t the place where once stood a monument to a tsar we now lay the foundation of a monument to 'Liberated Labor.'"<sup>2</sup> Despite its huge significance, the monument was not erected. As was the case with several other monuments considered especially important—monuments to Marx, Sverdlov, Liebknecht, the Paris

Commune--a competition for it was announced. More than twenty-five new monuments, however, were erected in Moscow between 1918 and 1921.

A clearer and more impressive illustration of the replacement archetype was the fate in store for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. To the new Soviet authorities the church was one of the chief symbols of the old faith, of a hostile world, one which they intended to raze “to the ground” and replace with a new symbol: a monument that embodied the ideals of Lenin and the Soviet state. This monument would stand on the ruins of the Cathedral and be a kind of atheistic holy sanctuary.

The destruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was foreshadowed by a series of events. The edifice’s actual demolition was but one of numerous manifestations in what might be termed the second act in the tragedy of the Russian Church. The tale of the famine in the Volga area discussed above constituted act one, and here it was almost entirely clergy were annihilated. During the second act of the tragedy everything was subject to annihilation: clergy, churches, and monasteries.

The process of destroying churches and monasteries began in the mid-1920’s and grew in intensity. The first demolitions, shamefully, were based on an alleged need to widen and straighten streets in order to facilitate movement of traffic. In the middle of 1924, in the Mossovet (Moscow Soviet of People’s Deputies) communal services sector, a commission was set up to coordinate a new plan for the city. Developed by Sergey Shestakov, the plan only minimally took into consideration existing structures. For the purpose of widening streets all buildings located within five to ten meters of either side were removed.

The memorial chapel to St. Alexander Nevsky was an early sacrifice in this overall effort. Situated opposite the National Hotel on Moyseev Square, it had

been erected in 1883 in honor of the victorious Russo-Turkish War. It was designed by architect Dimitry Chichagov, the architect who also designed the Moscow City Duma. The chapel's demolition in 1922 was timed to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>3</sup> Starting in 1923 lists of buildings destined for demolition were regularly compiled by Mossovet. First and foremost on these lists were churches, especially churches located in advantageous, key sites from a city-planning point of view. The list for 1923 has not been preserved, but one that is dated April 1925 has. On it is found the Church of Nikola-Krasnyi Zvon on Yushkov Lane, the bell towers of Kazan Cathedral on Red Square and the Vsekhsviatskoe Edinoverie [Old Believer] Monastery at Rogozhsky Gate, the annexes to the Church of St. Nicholas on Myasnitskaya (now Kirov) Street, the parvis-passageway of the cathedral of the Rozhdestevnsky Monastery, six chapels (at the Kremlin's Spassky and Nikolsky Gates, at the Ilinsky Gate of Kitay-gorod, and near the Church of Kir and Ioann on Solyanka), and a series of secular structures, among them the tent-roof and gallery remaining from monument to Alexander II in the Kremlin. Interestingly enough, in the seventh issue of *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* (*Moscow Construction*) for 1925 the well known artist and art historian Igor Grabar published an article justifying these structures' removal. Dismantling the Church of Nikola-Krasny Zvon (which, miraculously, escaped destruction), he wrote, "promises to provide a significant number of very old large-size bricks needed for restoration work." In 1925 and 1926 on the pages of the capital's periodicals appeared an article by Nikolai Popov, Yu. Korobin, and Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov, editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya*, demonstrating the need for razing the walls of Kitay-gorod, the Red Gates, the Church of the Three Prelates on the Square of the Red Gates, the Church of Flor and Lavr on Myasnitskaya Street, and other structures.<sup>4</sup>

Wed to the tale of the destruction of monuments in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia is the story of the grueling, uneven, and from the beginning doomed struggle for their preservation. The demolition of the Church of Archdeacon Yevpl at the corner of Myasnitskaya Street and Milyutinsky Lane (the present Kirov and Markhlevskaya Streets) serves as an illustration. As time progressed, Moscow and state authorities paid increasingly less attention to the recommendations of professionals from the People's Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) Department of Museums and the Central State Restoration Workshops (TsGRM). In May, 1925 the city's construction bureau, Mosstroi, directed a request to museum authorities for permission to take down the Church so that the Palace of Trusts building could be constructed on the site. Although TsGRM's staff and the director of Glavnauka, Narkompros's central directorate of scientific and scholarly institutions and museums, emphasized the church's great artistic and historical significance, and although another piece of property was proposed for the new building, the State Bureau of Machine Manufacturing Plants and Mossovet insisted on razing the church. Under pressure from these two bodies, in July 1925 the Presidium of VtsIK sanctioned the demolition. The church's parish organization lodged a complaint with VTsIK which delayed this action. The final decision was signed by the secretary of the Presidium, Aleksey Kiselev. The church was demolished, and, as it turned out, for nothing. The Trusts refused to build their Palace on the site because it was too small. And so the practice of groundless demolitions was played out. Individuals who defended the existence of monuments were deprived of their rights; the system which sanctioned these actions proved formidable and unyielding.

The demolition of the Church of Archdeacon Yevpl turned out to be only a prelude. The real offensive against church buildings began in 1927 and 1928.<sup>5</sup> In

the summer of 1926 the housing cooperative of the Zhirkost' Trust [state bureau of the fat and bone-reprocessing industry], having leased part of the Skorbyashchensky Monastery, dismantled the monastery's walls and used the material obtained to construct an apartment building. In the summer of the following year, 1927, the Red Gates, the Chapel of the Venerable Sergey of Radonezh at the Ilinsky Gates, the Church of the Birth of the Virgin at the corner of Stolesnikov Way and Petrovka, and the annexes of the Church of the Grebnevo Mother of God were all dismantled. Here was how Moskommunkhoz, Mossovet's omnibus directorate, responded to an order from Mossovet to tear down nine churches and chapels. The authorities were not in the least embarrassed by the groundlessness of the demolitions--improving traffic flow--nor did they react to protests lodged by engineers and transport workers. In this context the letter determining the fate of the Sretensk Monastery is of interest. Nikolay Popov, the chief of the construction division of VSNKh, the Supreme Economic Council, directed a work proposal to Konstantin Ukhanov, President of Mossovet:

“I await your answer, Comrade Ukhanov:

“You are the boss of Moscow. Direct your attention to Bolshaya Lubyanka Street. On it stands a wreck, called a church of god, in which some Brotherhood associations or other are living and on account of which the street is treacherous, more than one person having been crushed there by streetcars. The street looks crooked at this point because of this ‘baldachin’ and, if it is demolished--and demolished it must be—the street will look entirely different and movement along it will not be obstructed. The street is too congested at this point. In the enclosure surrounding this damnable chapel, used only by cats and mice, there's also a bell tower where a crazy professor (Saradzhiev, who everyone considers our greatest expert on bell ringing) plays religious songs on the bells. Absolutely nothing else

goes on there. In the name of improving the city's services and utilities, as the boss of Moscow you eventually will have to attend to this. . . .

With Communist greetings,  
N. S. Popov”

The reaction of Mossovet to the letter was quick and decisive: “MKKh is extremely interested in improving the regulation of traffic along said street in the quickest way possible. In accordance with this, on March 29 of the present year, the application to the Presidium of Mossovet for permission to demolish the bell tower and fence on the premises of the former Sretensk Monastery which protrude beyond the setback marking this thoroughfare has been reconsidered.”<sup>6</sup>

On December 1, 1925, MKKh staff members Domarev and Ryumin presented to the Presidium of Mossovet a report providing grounds for demolishing ten monuments in 1928: The Church of Paraskeva Pyatnitsa at Okhnotny Ryad, the bell tower of Kazan Cathedral on Red Square, the Ladoga (Irininsky) Church at the corner of Ladoga and Engels (formerly Irininskaya) Streets, the walls of the Sretensk and Strastny Monasteries, the bell towers of the Church of the Annunciation on Tver Street and of John the Baptist on Pyatnitskaya Street, and a section of the von Meck house that jutted out on Myasnitskaya Street. It was decided to take down the buildings of the Zlatoust Monastery, which had been condemned, ahead of schedule. The plan was carried out. All the monuments enumerated were demolished on schedule in 1928. Over and above this, by decision of the secretariat of VTsIK the following churches were dismantled that same year: the Churches of Konstantin and Elena in the Kremlin's Tainitsky Gardens, of Pankraty in Pankratievsky Lane near the Sukharev Tower, and of Nikola na Myasnikakh on Myastnitskaya Street.<sup>7</sup>



In the history of Russia, 1929 was a truly tragic year, for it was in that year the comprehensive effort to collectivize agriculture was begun. It was also a fateful year in the destiny of Russia culture, especially in the area of the humanities. A new, decisive stage in the annihilation of levels of society and of social classes which the authorities deemed unnecessary and objectionable ensued. In addition, unique historic structures were ruined and eliminated. For twenty-five Moscow monasteries 1929 was tragic. Although they had declined since the decree separating church and state was issued, in 1929 these monasteries and their inhabitants met a terrible, physical end. The year 1929 marked a turning point in yet another sense. The method used to destroy buildings changed: now they were blown up. Detonation was first tried on structures in the Voznesenky and Chudov Monasteries in the Moscow Kremlin. "Henceforth the political objectives of the battle against religion are what mattered. The economic interests of business managers, who strove to preserve as much whole brick as possible from dismantled churches, receded into the background. Dynamite became an important ally of the authorities in their uncompromising argument with Orthodoxy. . . . In 1929 not a single monastery in Moscow escaped destruction. The Chudov, Voznesensky, Sretensk, and Skorbyashchensky Monasteries were totally or largely destroyed. The demolition of the Simonov Monastery was in progress, and the Bogoyavlensky Monastery on Nikolskaya Street had been dismantled. At Christmas of that year, VTsIK lent its support to Mossovet's decision to demolish the Nikitin Monastery on Great Nikitin Street."<sup>8</sup>

It was then that the total destruction of Moscow's churches commenced. "The primordial atheism of Communist ideology near the end of the second decade of Soviet power was reborn in an original and also a highly sinister cult. This new perverted religion, which permeated everything and everywhere, declared a war,

unprecedented, against the Russian Orthodox Church. . . . [B]y the end of the 1920's the general populace was ready to accept the official ideology, an ideology that was intolerant of any other outlook. The propagation of militant atheism was undertaken by practically all state establishments, the battle against religion permeated all aspects of life." Leading this campaign, one without precedent in the history of world culture, was the Union of Militant Atheists (SVB). In 1930, a plenum of the Union with satisfaction verified that "Glavnauka recently reviewed the list of monuments subject to preservation from our point of view. Of the seven thousand monuments enumerated on Glavnauka's lists, we kept only a thousand. This marks significant progress."

The epoch of persecution of the Church began with a conference devoted to the subject of antireligious propaganda that took place in June of 1928 sponsored by the agitation-propaganda division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (TsK VKP(b)). In the first half of 1929 more than four hundred churches were closed nationwide. The tempo then increased: in August the same fate befell another 103 churches. At the end of 1929 perhaps the most blasphemous action of the twentieth century was carried out for the first time, an anti-Christmas celebration, a giant outdoor party which was timed to coincide with—and mock--the celebration of Christ's Birth. In Moscow's Gorky Park approximately one hundred thousand people gathered. "[H]ere and there were bonfires of icons, religious books, caricature mannequins, religious coffins, and the like that had spontaneously burst into flame." At the Red Weavers skating rink a show was staged: "Gods and priests rushed about singing religious songs, waving crosses at the five-year plan, and a detachment of soldiers in Budenovtsevs [pointed Red Army helmets] appeared and fired a volley and from their salvos a church caught on fire. . . . The church fire was extraordinarily effective."<sup>9</sup> "In 1930 both anti-

Easter and anti-Christmas campaigns were carried out and also in 1931 under the banner of ‘Promoting an Atheist Moscow and an Atheist Countryside of Collective Farms.’”<sup>10</sup>

“We set ourselves the task,” wrote the leaders of the Union of Militant Atheists, “of closing churches and other houses of prayer in the city of Moscow, in workers’ centers, and in areas where collectivization has taken hold. In addition, we shut down church Soviets. . . .”<sup>11</sup> The following programmatic citation was published in the journal of the Union of Militant Atheists: “The notion of old Moscow, of white-walled merchant Moscow was always connected with the idea of Moscow being the center from which Orthodox-monarchist propaganda was disseminated, Moscow, the city of ‘forty times forty’ churches and innumerable monasteries, Moscow, the second capital of monarchist Russia. Over a long period of time the boyar aristocracy, Muscovite tsars, and Russian autocrats wrung no small amount of resources out of the toiling masses for conferring on the city its well-earned splendor. Implanted on almost every street and byway were priestly nests: churches, cathedrals, chapels, religious and monarchial monuments, the construction of many of which absorbed colossal sums. One need only recall that the cost of putting up the so-called cathedral of Christ the Savior [lower case in the original] came to thirty million gold rubles. . . . That’s the way things used to be. Now things are different. The working class of Moscow in union with the great bulk of the peasantry has made the former hotbed of obscurantism into the center of Russia’s economic, political, and cultural life. Moscow is now the red capital of the Fatherland and of the proletarians of the entire world. . . .”<sup>12</sup>

During this time of antireligious hysteria, of a full-scale offensive on religion and of enthusiasm for atheistic shock work, on July 18, 1931 *Izvestiya*

published the Resolution of the Construction Soviet to build the Palace of Soviets in Moscow on the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

<sup>1</sup> *Izvestiia*, April 30, 1920, No. 92 (939).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, XLI, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> V. Koslov, "Ischeznuvshaia Moskva, U istokov," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 1990, No. 7, pp. 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> V. Kozlov, "Na perelome: Moskovskaia starina v 1925-1926 godakh," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 1990, No. 9, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> V. Kozlov, "1927 god. Pervyi shturm moskovskoi stariny," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 1990, No. 11, pp. 24, 26, and 27.

<sup>7</sup> V. Kozlov, "Khronika rasrushenii. God 1928-i," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 1990, No. 12, pp. 25-27.

<sup>8</sup> V. Kozlov, "Ischeznuvshaia Moskva. Tragediia monastyrei. God 1929," *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 1991, No. 1, pp. 32 and 41.

<sup>9</sup> V. Kozlov, "Ischeznuvshaia Moskva. Moskva bezbozhnaia," *Moskovskii zhurnal*, 1991, No. 3, pp. 66-70; *Antireligioznik*, 1930, No. 5, p. 116, No.2, pp 103-104, and No. 3, p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> *Bezbozhnik*, 1930, No. 4, p. 14. Cited by V. Kozlov, "Ischeznuvshaia Moskva. Moskva bezbozhnaia," p. 72.

<sup>11</sup> A. Lukachevskii, "Itogi III plenuma," *Antireligioznik*, 1931, No. 7, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> V. Mashenko, "Sostoianie antireligioznoi bor'by v Moskovskoi oblasti (Po materialam obsledovaniia Moskovskoi organizatsii SVB k III plenumu Tsentral'nogo soveta SVB). Massy idut k ateizmu," *Antireligioznik*, 1931, No. 10, p. 63.

### Illustration Captions

*Page 220* Kropotkin embankment at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, early 1900's.

*Page 222* Dismantling the monument to Emperor Alexander III. Photographs by Rodchenko, 1918.

*Page 223* Group of newspaper photographers at the dismantling of the monument to Alexander III. Photograph from the journal *Sovetskoe foto*, 1919.

Square with pedestal remaining after removal of the monument to Alexander III, 1931.

*Page 224* Strastny Monastery (founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century), one of many monasteries leveled in the 1930's.

*Page 225* Chudov Mikailo-Arkhangelsky Monastery (founded in 1366).

Voznesensky Monastery dating from the same period as the Chudov Mikhailo-Arkhangelsky Monastery and also located in the Kremlin. The technique of demolishing structures by exploding them was first tested on these two complexes.

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*Page 226* View of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior from the south side. Amateur photograph by Obukhov, 1920's.

Square in front of the Cathedral's west entrance, late 1920's. Photograph by A. Saveliev.

Informal photographs taken for the family album of V. Ozersky, Moscow, 1930.

## **Plans for the Palace of Soviets**

The story of the destruction of Moscow's churches and monasteries, though removed in time, helps one understand how and why the decision to raze the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was reached. This decision was reached at the same time it was decided to erect a special building to symbolize the world's first socialist state. Parallel to that, a need emerged to perpetuate the memory of Vladimir Lenin. Originally these two intentions were separate. Only at a relatively late stage in the plans for the Palace of Soviets did the idea of uniting the two in one mighty edifice evolve. The monument to Lenin, leader of the world's proletariat, would be simultaneously a monument to the creation of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The idea of erecting the Palace of Soviets was conceived at the First Congress of Soviets in 1922. The Congress had adopted the decree creating the USSR, and to commemorate this historic, global event it decided to erect a magnificent House of Soviets. The proposal was put forward by Stalin's close associate Sergey Kirov on behalf of the proletarians of Transcaucasia: "I think that soon there will be a need for more spacious, vaster accommodations for our extraordinary parliaments. I think that we will soon feel that the wonderful music of the 'International' will be stifled under this dome. I think that the moment will soon come when on these benches there will not be enough room for the delegates from all of the republics joining our Union. Therefore, on behalf of workers I propose that our Union's Central Executive Committee (TsIK) without delay begin work on construction of a monument in which a goodly number of representatives of labor can assemble. . . . I think too that the building should be an emblem of the approaching might of communism's triumph not only in Russia but also in the West . . . . Much is said about us, how we wipe the palaces of bankers,

landowners, and tsars from the face of the earth with lightening speed. This is true, and we should erect in their place a new palace, one for workers and toiling peasants . . . we will invest all of our worker-peasant creativity in this monument.”<sup>1</sup>

A directive adopted by the Congress called for the construction of a monument to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, called the House of Soviets, “in the capital of the Union in its most beautiful and finest area.”<sup>2</sup> A little more than a year later, two weeks after Lenin died, *Izvestiya* published a document that would become programmatic. It ushered in the second stage in the decision-making that ultimately resulted in the leveling of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the plan to erect in its stead the Palace of Soviets. On February 2, 1924 in “An Architectural Immortalization of Lenin,” Leonid Krasin (1870-1926), a member of the old Bolshevik guard, put forth a proposal, the realization of which would absorb decades. “The memory of Lenin must and will be immortalized in a whole series of architectural monuments over the entire expanse of our Union,” Krasin wrote. “It will be the work of several generations, but it must be started immediately. . . . The first task is to erect a permanent tomb where the body of Vladimir Ilich now reposes, a tomb more significant for humankind than Mecca or Jerusalem. . . .”<sup>3</sup> He further proposed that, in addition to monuments to Lenin and Yakov Sverdlov, a Palace of Labor be erected in the area where the Continental Hotel, Okhotny Ryad, and the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Narkomat) were located, that Sparrow Hills be renamed Lenin Hills, and that a Lenin Palace be built. Krasin’s article was taken by many architects as a call to action.

Selim Khan-Magomedov, a specialist on Russian architecture of the 1920’s, has published documents that trace the evolution of the idea of constructing the

Palace of Soviets, including, significantly, how its site was determined. A vital role was played by the Association of New Architects (ASNOVA) and especially by one of its leaders, Viktor Balikhin (1893-1953), in both developing plans for the Palace of Soviets and choosing the building site. A note by Balikhin, dated March 2, 1924, includes virtually all the basic tenets of what would become the Palace of Soviets project: to erect a magnificent edifice at the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior which would simultaneously be a monument to Lenin, the Komintern, and the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Balikhin's conception was a direct response to the "social" mandate, for it synthesized Kirov's and Krasin's proposals into a single architectural program.

"For [Balikhin] the ideal place in Moscow was the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. As a historic and artistic monument, the Cathedral had no value. There were no fundamental reasons why the Cathedral was inviolable, reasons that would constitute an insurmountable barrier on the path to realizing this supreme idea. . . . Demolition of the church on Okhotny Ryad in connection with the design for the Palace of Labor was preordained.<sup>4</sup> . . . Demolition of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was in principle no different."<sup>5</sup>

On March 15 Balikhin submitted to *Pravda* an article based on his memorandum. It is suffused with enthusiasm similar to that of Krasin: "There is no worthier way to immortalize the memory of LENIN, no insurmountable barrier to prevent its realization."<sup>6</sup> Balikhin's article, however, was not published. The editor of *Pravda*, Ivan Skvortsov-Stepanov, returned it with a note: "A magnificent structure, but not destined to be built. . . . We expose ourselves to ridicule if we publish declarations such as this which propose that entire blocks be razed . . . including such mammoth structures as Christ Cathedral."<sup>7</sup>



It should be noted that the idea of taking down the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and building the Palace of Soviets in its place came from below, not from Party and governmental leaders or political ideologues. The projects of revolutionary architects of the 1920's were far bolder than those of Party functionaries. And Balikhin displayed an enviable persistence. He was not prepared to relinquish his idea. To realize it, ASNOVA created the Workshop of the Revolution. In an effort to enlist the support of the leaders of the world's proletariat, its members exhibited their design proposals in the Great Kremlin Palace from June 17 until July 8, 1924 during the Fifth Congress of the Komintern.<sup>8</sup>

ASNOVA was officially chartered on July 23, 1923. Its founders were Nicholas Ladovsky, Nicholas Dokuchaev, and Vladimir Krinsky, architectural instructors at the Higher Art and Technical Studios (VKhUTEMAS), and VKhUTEMAS students Aleksey Rukhliadov, A. Efimov, Vladimir Fidman, I. Mochalov, and, significantly, Viktor Balikhin. Ladovsky, ASNOVA's director, was an outstanding architect and architectural theoretician. In 1921, under his supervision and direction, a working group of the Institute of Artistic Culture began to function, the kernel of the future ASNOVA. The key word of the Association's name is "New" which characterized the views of its founders.

ASNOVA was the first architectural organization to tie professional architectural and artistic innovation to Russia's new social goals. Its basic premise was that new, revolutionary architecture should employ the latest achievements in science and technology.<sup>9</sup> New architectural form was not only an expression of radical art and architecture, it was also based on and traced its origins to a political and ideological platform in line with official government policy. Evidence of this can be found in the Association's programmatic statements from the 1920's and

the early 1930's. "Architecture in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat," declares one such document, "must constitute mighty economic-production and be a cultural-ideological factor in the building of socialism. . . ." <sup>10</sup>

Subordination of architecture's social and artistic aims to political ones was facilitated by close interrelationships with organizations as disparate as the Union of Militant Atheists, party and governmental bodies, and architectural and artistic groups. In efforts to realize such aims, those working in the realm of art, in particular members of ASNOVA, brought forward proposals that Party ideologues felt were too radical.

The proposal to build a monument to Lenin where the Cathedral stood at first seemed blasphemous even to atheist communists. To replace a monumental church dedicated to God incarnate with a monument that deified a leader, that is, with a building that would monumentalize a man-god, was not a decision easy to reach. Balikhin was hardly the only person who thought that the Cathedral lacked artistic and historic value. Members of the intelligentsia, especially its older generation, generally held this point of view in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Ton was simply unlucky. Architects with diametrically opposite views and aesthetic biases, for example, Alexey Shchusev, adherent of the neo-Russian style, and Balikhin, representative of the avant-garde in architecture, did not hesitate to condemn Ton's work in terms of aesthetics.

Not until early 1931 did the Soviet government act on Kirov's proposal to create a monument to the USSR. To oversee its design and construction a complex, multi-tiered body called the Construction Commission for the Palace of Soviets was created. The Construction Council at its top reported directly to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. This Council was

given the legislative authority of a governmental organ. Its membership included high Party and government leaders, originally Politburo member Kliment Voroshilov, the secretary of the Presidium of the USSR Central Committee, Avel Enukidze, and the president of the Moscow Oblast Executive Committee of People's Deputies, Konstantin Ukhanov. Vyacheslav Molotov subsequently headed the Council. Parallel to the Council was the Construction Administration for the Palace of Soviets headed by Mikhail Kryukov. Reporting to it was a consultative body, initially called the Temporary Technical Council (VTS), later becoming the Permanent Architectural and Technical Consulting Group, which brought together various specialists: builders and engineers, art experts, architects, painters, sculptors, producer-directors, and writers.<sup>11</sup> The Construction Commission devoted much time and energy to the choice of site and the type of architecture for the future monument. The first, closed preliminary design competition took place from February to May, 1931. It was intended to define the criteria for an open competition. Designs were commissioned from the twelve main architectural associations, among them ASNOVA, and also from several leading architects.

Fifteen designs were submitted. The one from ASNOVA aroused interest. Its principal author was, not surprisingly, Balikhin. The difference was, however, that the ideas hatched by the architect in 1924 now enjoyed the support of Party and government leaders. On Balikhin's team were P. Budo, M. Prokhorov, sculptor Romuald Iodko, scenery painter F. Sevortyan, and M. Turkus. Balikhin was the only one who had completed his professional education; the others were students. The basic tenets, among them the choice of the Cathedral site for the future Palace of Soviets, remained unchanged. The following are excerpts from the ASNOVA team's "Explanatory Memorandum" which accompanied the design:

“Using the basic ideas of our 1924 design, we proceeded to tackle the central problem of how to create a revolutionary image that would express the dynamism of the world’s proletariat in establishing its dictatorship, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We wanted to create an image that would express a heroic epoch of action by the proletariat of the Soviet Union at the forefront of planned socialist construction using new forms of socialist labor. We wanted to design not a static monument but a living, active organism, one defined by parades and mass revolutionary-political celebrations. Parades determined where to build the Palace of Soviets and gave substance to the ASNOVA Team’s planning and helped form its ideas. . . . The Palace of Soviets, it was decided, should be in the shape of a cube (with 100-meter sides). . . . The cube’s flat plane with the figure of Lenin is regarded as the red stratum of the worldwide union of soviet republics on which new republics, building a worldwide USSR, multiply until at the top in crimson burns the date of world revolution, the date of the creation of a USSR of the World.”<sup>12</sup>

Emphasis needs to be placed on one additional aspect, really a principle, of the general idea being discussed here, a principle not declared openly but expressed in architectural terminology: “[T]he objective is to subordinate historic architecture to the new architecture.”<sup>13</sup>

The Cathedral’s fate was not decided immediately. The protocols from sessions of the Temporary Technical Council under Kryukov’s leadership published recently recreate the dramatic chronicle of events leading to its destruction. There were heated arguments at all the sessions that took place from late April until June, 1931. Most of the architects proposed locating the Palace of Soviets in the center of the city; the preferred site was Okhotny Ryad near Red Square. Lenin Hills and Khamovniki were also proposed. The proposal to build

the Palace of Soviets on the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was first put forward at the third session of the Temporary Technical Council by ASNOVA member Andrey Bunin. Although Bunin had not participated in the design competition for the Palace of Soviets, it was clear that he and other members of ASNOVA shared Balikhin's idea. At the fourth session, Kryukov, chief of the Construction Administration, informed those present that Party and governmental leaders serving on the Construction Council were not happy with the preferred site: Okhotny Ryad was too bland. The architects then proposed a site in Kitay-gorod. Balikhin, representing ASNOVA, again was the only one to vote for erecting the Palace of Soviets on the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. At the fifth session the opposition between the architects and the country's leaders sharpened. Voroshilov (via Kryukov) proposed that the architects rethink the matter. The Construction Council was scheduled to meet the following day in Molotov's office in the Kremlin. But the members of VTS continued to favor Kitay-gorod and Bolotnaya Square as sites. The ASNOVA representative again put forward the Cathedral of Christ the Savior with Kitay-gorod as a second option. At the sixth and last session, according to the protocol, the matter was settled: no further discussion would be permitted, and, although the Construction Council had yet to reach a final decision, VTS felt that the tract of land on which the Cathedral was situated was optimal. Accordingly, VTS recommended to architects that the upcoming announcement of the open competition contain language to this effect. Architects, if they wished, could develop a design for another tract but only as an example of a design parallel to the one presented for the area where the Cathedral stood.<sup>14</sup>

ASNOVA's position, which had failed to gain the support of VTS, now received the approval of Party and governmental leaders. On July 18, 1931,

*Izvestiya* published the “Resolution Announcing the Competition for Creating Designs for the Palace of Soviets” on the site of the Cathedral.<sup>15</sup> Besides the official newspaper announcement, another document corroborates the decision to build the Palace of Soviets at this site, namely, a site plan for the area of the future Palace with the floor plan of the Cathedral of Christ inscribed on it. Stalin, Molotov, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, and Nicholas Bulganin signed this plan, dated April 22, 1935. It demonstrates what had been agreed on.<sup>16</sup> To answer the question about how and when this happened, the following memorandum, not published previously, is helpful:

“To the Construction Administration for the Palace of Soviets of the USSR from the Technical Section [NTO] of ASNOVA.

“The Architectural Council of ASNOVA (Association of New Architects) writes to state that, in light of the acceptance by the government of the USSR on June 2, 1931 of the proposal put forward by ASNOVA to erect the building of the Palace of Congresses of Soviets on the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the obligation to propose a site for the Palace of Congresses of Soviets is considered fulfilled by said Council . . . .

“President of the Architectural Council Rukhlyadev,

“Senior Secretary Myslin,

“June 8, 1931.”

Rukhlyadev’s memorandum to the Construction Administration presents compelling evidence of a direct tie between ASNOVA and the Administration and of how ASNOVA’s members persuaded the Administration to deem the Cathedral site most advantageous for building the Palace of Soviets. Rukhlyadev’s memorandum also allows one to date events alluded to in the reminiscences of Boris Iofan (1891-1976), chief architect of the Palace of Soviets. The meeting in

Molotov's office at which it was decided to take down the Cathedral of Christ occurred on June 2nd. Consequently, the inspection of the site by Party and government leaders about which Iofan writes, and several architects recall, must have occurred on June 1, 1931. For, as Iofan writes: "[C]omrade Stalin along with members of the Construction Council for the Palace of Soviets led by its president, Comrade Molotov, visited the site proposed for the structure, that is, the place where the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was located. A large group of Moscow architects were present at the inspection. This was the day on which the site for building the Palace of Soviets was chosen. . . . Comrade Stalin found the area attractive because of its proximity to the Kremlin and its location in the center of the city and adjacent to the Moskva River. Comrade Stalin had reviewed the architects' opinions with great care. Many comrade architects were wary of the area's uneven configuration and its comparatively small size. It is possible that there were also those who inwardly regretted the loss of the Cathedral, although not one of them could have defended it in terms of architectural merit."<sup>17</sup> The fate of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior had been decided. Less than a half year remained till the tragic finale.

The choice of site gradually acquired legal footing in official policy. The particulars were manifested with great clarity because the buildings at issue were not perceived merely as old church and new meeting hall, rather each was a symbol unto itself. The Palace of Soviets symbolized policies formulated at the June, 1931 Plenum of Party's Central Committee. The announcement of the open competition for the design of the Palace was soon to follow. The Plenum endorsed Soviet policy in the areas of architecture and city planning: "Moscow should and will be a laboratory to which people from the entire Soviet Union come to receive building experience," said Lazar Kaganovich in his address to the Plenum.<sup>18</sup> The

future Palace of Soviets would be an example for imitation. It would have its own standards in terms of architectural and artistic detail, location, and the way in which it was to be included in a historically formed urban milieu.

The Palace of Soviets project kicked off an elaborate overarching plan to reconstruct and develop Moscow. Work on the plan, adopted in 1935, ran parallel to the design competitions for the Palace of Soviets and continued after them, during the time detailed plans for the Palace were being delineated. In actual fact, the general plan to reconstruct Moscow and the Palace of Soviet project were so closely intertwined that they were in effect a single process.<sup>19</sup> One might think that, having accepted the nihilistic relationship to historic structures incorporated into the ASNOVA design, the Construction Council would also accept ASNOVA's aesthetic ideology. However, after assessing the fruit of the preliminary competition, war was in effect declared against the architectural avant-garde and the struggle to change the artistic direction of Soviet architecture began. Opposition to the artistic credo of ASNOVA was severe and relentless, and ASNOVA's design was subjected to scathing criticism by the Construction Administration.

After the preliminary competition, three more competitions were conducted during the next two years. For the second—and open--competition one hundred sixty designs were submitted. Twelve had been commissioned and twenty-four came from foreign architects. In addition, one hundred twelve design proposals were submitted. Since no single submission was deemed acceptable, the Construction Council was compelled to publish style desiderata: “Many of the building designs are stocky. They need to be surmounted by a bold, high-rise structure. In addition, the building should have a concluding top part, though temple-like motifs should be avoided. Without prejudging the style, the



Construction Council for the Palace of Soviets feels that attention should be paid to recent high-quality examples of neoclassical architecture while applying the latest achievements in contemporary architectural and building technology.”<sup>20</sup>

A third competition proved necessary, however, before the Construction Council would choose Iofan’s basic design, a stepped, three-tiered mass crowned by a statue of a worker symbolizing “Emancipated Labor.” The monument Lenin had conceived of earlier on the square in front of the Cathedral but never realized was to be embodied in Iofan’s Palace of Soviets. This grand new building was projected to soar to a height a height more than two and a half times that of the Cathedral. Its Great Hall was to have a capacity of 20,000 people, the Small Hall, 6,000. In accepting Iofan’s design, the Construction Council “gave instructions” as to how it should be completed. Iofan’s idea of crowning the building with a statue symbolizing the Palace of Soviets’ purpose was accepted, but the statue would be one of Lenin fifty to seventy-five meters high placed on top of the structure. The statue both reinforced the idea of upward movement, integral to the design, and promised to make the building appear to be a pedestal of the monument to Lenin.<sup>21</sup>

One month later, on June 4, 1933, the Construction Council assigned architects Vladimir Shchuko and Vladimir Gelfreikh to collaborate with Iofan on the Palace building project. In the fall of that year they submitted to the Construction Council for consideration fleshed-out variants of the design. The multi-tiered rectangular variant was rejected, while another variant which placed the statue of Lenin on the central axis of the high-rise portion of the building and increased the building’s height one hundred meters was accepted. The final design, which took into consideration all the comments of the Construction Council, was approved on February 19, 1934.

The design for the Palace of Soviets in place when construction began differed substantially from the one originally accepted: more height and an altered composition. The final design called for a pillar-like edifice. Its dynamism and thrust had moved sharply upward. In place of three, there were now five cylindrical masses rising over a rectangular plinthe. There was a clear predominance of the vertical over the horizontal in all of its elements.

After the Construction Council had approved the decision to crown the structure with a statue of Lenin, a competition was organized for the sculpture. The competition was closed, with twenty-five sculptors invited to participate. Of the designs presented, twelve proposals were subject to final review.

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*Page 238\** Nicholas Vladimirovich Arnold was a descendent of nineteenth-century Russian prose writer Sergey Aksakov. In 1930 he composed the poem, "Cathedral of Christ the Savior." It circulated in hand-written form among Muscovites who revered the Cathedral as a Russian shrine.

The notebook with the author's verses was lent to the author by Arnold's widow.

*Farewell, curator of Russian glory*

*Magnificent Cathedral of Christ,*

*Our gold-domed Titan*

*Shining o'er the capital!*

*In Ton's brilliant conception*

*Your grandeur was plain,*

*O'er Moscow your gigantic crown*

*Burned like a sun!*

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\* The two texts which follow, found on pages 238-241, are inserts.

*Lapse into silence with you echoes  
Of great Borodino,  
Vanished are the marble slabs  
And the names of the brave on them.*

*Kutuzov and Barclay de Tolly,  
Count Vitgenshtein, Bagration---  
On the fields of Mars even Napoleon  
could not tar you!*

*Davydov, Figner, and Seslavin,  
Tuchkov, Raevsky, Baggovut—  
Have these equals in valor?  
Please name them!*

*I pity the artists and architects  
For their great forty-year labors;  
And the thought that cannot be reconciled,  
That the Cathedral of Christ will be razed.*

*On this, Moscow's pride,  
Labored many masters:  
Neff, Vereshchagin, Loganovsky,  
Tolstoy, Bruni, and Vaznetsov.*

*Klodt, Semiradsky, Romozanov,*

*Makovsky, Markov—were the ones  
Who painted the images  
That gave the Cathedral its ineffable beauty.*

*For us nothing is sacred!  
And is not it really shameful  
That the “cap of cast gold”  
Laid on the block under the ax!*

*Farewell, curator of Russian glory,  
Magnificent Cathedral of Christ,  
Our gold-domed Titan,  
Shining o’er the capital!*

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*Page 240* Vladislav Mikosha who shot the documentary film about the razing and detonation of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in 1931 (from the photographer’s personal collection).

*Page 241* Cathedral of Christ the Savior shortly before its destruction photographed from the air by Mikosha (from the photographer’s personal collection.)

From the train I caught sight of the golden dome shining like the sun long before I saw Moscow which is where I was going to take higher education entrance exams.

“The Cathedral of Christ the Savior!” said an elderly woman standing next to me by the window and she crossed herself. The Cathedral dominated the city; together with the Bell Tower of Ivan the Great it formed Moscow’s prime silhouette.

Three years later, I was able to photograph the Cathedral far down below on the bank of the Moskva River through the pontoon of an amphibious plane. I was working then as a cameraman for the newsreel Kinokhronika. Looking at this photograph now, it’s hard to believe that on the spot where the Cathedral stood there’s now a giant swimming pool.

Thinking back some sixty years to the summer of 1931, I remember being summoned by Kinokhronika’s director, Viktor Iosilevich. “Mikosha,” he said, “I’ve decided to entrust you with very serious work, work it would be best not to talk much about, get it? Orders from above.” And he raised his index figure up above his head. Looking me straight in the eye, he said “An order has been issued to raze the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and you’re going to record it on film.”

Somehow I got the idea that he didn’t really believe there would ever be such a monstrous order. I don’t know why, but I immediately asked him: “Are they going to take down St. Isaac’s in Leningrad as well?”

“I don’t think so, but I don’t really know. I don’t know, so here’s the deal . . . starting tomorrow you’ll be working on a film that documents this dismantling project, photographing the entire effort in as much detail as possible, from the time they put the fence up around the Cathedral to the very end, got it? . . . It’ll be a long assignment and I’m counting on you to do a good job. Good luck!”

When I got home and said that they were going to take down the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Mama didn't believe me.

“That simply can't be. The Cathedral beautifies Moscow. It shines over it like a sun. It has magnificent marble sculptures, gold ornamentation, icons, and murals! And so many artists' names are associated with it, Surikov, Kramskoy, Semiradsky, Vereshchagin, Makovsky, Klodt, Loganovsky. . . . And in the lower galleries there's a chronicle in marble of Russia's victories in the Great War of the Fatherland with the names of all the heroes. Why the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was erected in honor of the victory of the Russian military. Russians donated their savings to build it, poor people as well as aristocrats. God forbid!”

At first I simply couldn't do the work. The whole business was so monstrous that I would stand dumbfounded in front of the camera unable to believe what I was seeing. Finally I got a grip on myself and began to shoot. The bronze doors had been thrown wide open and through them precious marble sculptures were being dragged out with nooses. They were then thrown down from the top steps onto the ground, into the dirt. The hands, heads, wings of angels broke off. High relief sculptures split, porphyry columns crumbled. They pulled down the gold crosses from the small domes with steel cables hooked to powerful tractors. The facing of the walls made of priceless marble from Belgium and Italy was pounded by pneumatic hammers and fell to the ground. The unique frescos on the Cathedral's walls were wrecked.

Day after day paramilitary units crawled like a swarm of ants all over the pitiful Cathedral. Only people with a special pass were allowed to go beyond the construction barrier. Before receiving passes my assistant Mark Khatayevich and I had to fill out a long questionnaire and name all our relatives, not only those who were still alive but also those long dead.

The attractive grounds in front of the Cathedral instantly became a messy construction yard with ancient linden trees felled and uprooted, rare varieties of Persian lilac hacked to pieces by tractor treads, and roses trampled into the dirt.

In time the domes were stripped of their gold, walls lost their murals and cold, snowy winds blew through the huge gaps left after the windows had been torn out. The working battalions in their budenovkas then proceeded to sink their teeth into the Cathedral's three-meter-thick walls. The walls offered pretty stiff resistance. Pneumatic hammers broke. Crowbars, heavy sledge hammers, and huge steel chisels failed to vanquish the stone. The walls were made of huge slabs of sandstone that had been bonded with molten lead rather than cement. The paramilitary battalions worked desperately most of November, but the walls didn't yield. Then an order came, the content of which was conveyed to me by a friendly engineer with great secrecy: "Stalin is indignant at our weakness and has ordered that the Cathedral be blown up. He did not bother to take into consideration its location in a large residential area in the center of Moscow. . . ."

Only thanks to the force of a huge explosion--and not just one--was this huge, grand creation of Russian art turned into pile of pulverized stone and debris on December 5, 1931.

Mama cried for nights on end. She was silent about the Cathedral, though once she said: "Fate will not forgive us for doing this."

" 'Us'?"

"All of us. Man is supposed to build. To destroy is the work of the Antichrist."

*Vladislav Mikosha*

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The Construction Council favored the statue design proposed by Sergey Merkurov for the top of the Palace of Soviets. Merkurov created several models of it ranging from 75 to 100 meters in height. The hundred-meter one was deemed optimal. “In accordance with instructions from Joseph Stalin, Lenin is depicted with his hand extended upward, as if making an appeal.”<sup>22</sup> Merkurov’s statue pleased everyone: “The Palace of Soviets, as the mightiest architectural construction ever created in all of world history, must embody socialism’s victories in the battles of the Great October Socialist Revolution, leading mankind toward the bright future of communism. In size and height the Palace of Soviets will surpass the most significant structures of the past: Cheop’s Pyramid in the ancient world (137 meters), Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages—Cologne’s cathedral (157 meters) and the cathedral in Amiens (126 meters), monuments from the Renaissance period—St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome (128 meters high), the mightiest structures of the capitalistic period--the Eiffel Tower in Paris (300 meters) and the tallest buildings of our day—the Empire State Building, the New York skyscraper, which is 397 meters in height . . . .”<sup>23</sup>

The architecture of the Palace of Soviets is a perfect example of the interdependence between an idea and the size of a building, not untypical in Russia. The Palace of Soviets was not only to be the largest building in the world, it was also to host the largest statue in the world, the figure of Lenin. It was to be taller than Statue of Liberty’s 46 meters and Vera Mukhina’s “Worker and Collective Farm Woman” statue that crowned the Soviet Pavilion at the Paris World Exhibition in 1937 (later remounted in front of Moscow’s Exhibition of Economic Achievements [VDNKh]).<sup>24</sup>

The Palace of Soviets was to be a deliberate antipode to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Antipodes or not, the two buildings do have a typological



kinship. The kinship was defined first and foremost by their respective roles as ideological symbols in Moscow's architectural ensemble. A second shared characteristic is how the design competition for each marked a turning point in architectural styles. In addition, the characteristics of both structures were defined by their relationship to an architectural hierarchy and by the ethos that governed their creation, absolute monarchy in the first instance, the totalitarian state in the second.

The artistic and compositional similarity of the two structures, although hardly premeditated, should also be noted. It is not a matter of form but rather of concepts and principles which make for a typological similarity, one that although not obvious is nonetheless undeniable. It is manifest in the notion of erecting a building that would be the largest and tallest structure in the city. Both the Cathedral and the Palace were designed to tower above everything else and be visible from far away. Both were designed to play a prominent role in the urban landscape of Moscow. The statue of Lenin crowning the Palace of Soviets and the five-pointed star located inside the dome of its Great Hall were symbols of a new faith launched in new times. The crosses on the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were replaced by a statue of the leader, depictions of the Holy Trinity and of Christ, found in the arches of the church domes, by a five-pointed star.

There is yet one additional shared characteristic. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior marked the beginning of renewed emphasis on the historic system of vertical urban lines. The Palace's main building and its location in Moscow's center created a new architectural standard in terms of verticality (only in the late 1940's and early 1950's were the first high-rise buildings actually built in the city). The competition instructions issued by the Construction Council called for a design of a vertical, "high-rise" nature, a characteristic of Russian religious architecture,

in particular the well-known Russian bell towers of Ivan the Great in the Kremlin and of the Novodevichy and Yosif-Volokolamsk Monasteries. As noted above, Konstantin Ton used these as guides when he designed the bell towers for the Simonov Monastery. In designing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Ton relied primarily on Muscovite architectural traditions, on monuments in the Kremlin. The Palace of Soviets was to be a tiered, multi-storied tower. In its composition one can detect a *moderne*-like reinterpretation of that same building tradition of separate, tower-like high-rise multi-tiered bell towers. A final similarity between the Palace of Soviets and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is to be found not in Ton's but Vitberg's conception, for it was Vitberg who dreamed of making his Cathedral of Christ the Savior the largest building in the world.

Naturally, there are many cardinal differences between Ton's cathedral design and the one chosen for the Palace of Soviets, related though they are to Russian neoclassical ideas about reorganizing cities on a broad scale. Looking at the long-term plans for the area near the Palace of Soviets, one has the impression that new surroundings were to be created which had nothing in common with the Moscow then in existence. The architects did not feel that the structures in this area constituted a historically established milieu to be accommodated in any way, shape, or manner; they saw them rather as parcels of land on which blocks of buildings they designed would go up. It was as if historical Moscow did not exist, that it was nothing more than available space where one could create a magnificent new ensemble. In their programmatic nihilism, the urban planners of the 1930's outdid the neoclassical urban planners to a significant degree, for, although the historically established network of streets and ordinary buildings held no value for the latter, sacred places did enjoy respect, and, therefore, these fundamental structures--churches, monasteries, kremlins--stayed put, their significance as city

centers preserved. For the city planners of the 1930's this restraint was not a factor. The 1935 plan for Moscow is called a plan of reconstruction, i.e., of perestroika.

There is one additional, curious circumstance worth noting, and that is the shared fates of the designers of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Palace of Soviets, namely of Alexander Vitberg and Boris Iofan, masters of large-scale architectural forms and clearly highly talented individuals. Both remained in the history of architecture as creators of a single grand edifice that was never built. Both fanatically believed that their designs could be realized and continued to work on their projects even when it became obvious that neither would be completed.

On June 1, 1931 Stalin with a group of Party and government officials and a large number of Moscow architects surveyed the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. It was truly a magnificent place. The Cathedral stood on a rise and could be seen from all sides, and it was not far from the Kremlin. Judging by what is known, the decision to use this space for the Palace of Soviets took shape later that day, and what had been viewed only as a possible site for the future building complex with stunning efficiency and expediency acquired the strength of law. From survey to official resolution absorbed no more than twenty-four hours, most likely only a couple of hours. The need for haste probably is explained by anniversaries that were nigh. The year 1932 would mark one hundred twenty years from the time of the Patriotic War of 1812 and the centenary of Nicholas I's decree to erect Ton's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Symbol of old Russia, Orthodox, Christian, bourgeois, mercantile, the national monumental cathedral could not be allowed to celebrate this centenary. Its destruction on the eve of this year was nothing short of symbolic. What is more, two other anniversaries would be

celebrated in 1932: the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution and the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The idea was to highlight the monument to Russia's new leader by starting construction of a grand monument immortalizing these two events. Thus the speedy action by Soviet leaders to whom the ideological advantages of this location were clear. No other place could compete with it, none even bore comparison.

The architects, including those who voted against building the Palace of Soviets at the site of the Cathedral, were forced to agree with the opinion of ASNOVA since Party and government leaders endorsed it, and they were expected to participate in the design process. No one protested. It was not so much fear that made them keep quiet as the conviction that dismantling the Cathedral would not inflict grave damage on Russia's national heritage. In fact, several were sincerely convinced that this action would be beneficial: the removal of a colossus disfiguring Moscow. As noted above, Igor Grabar, artist and restorer celebrated for his work in preserving monuments, spoke in favor of dismantling the Church of Nikola Krasny Zvon in Kitay-gorod on the grounds that the church building, dating from the mid-nineteenth century, possessed no historical or artistic value. Post neoclassical religious buildings, with rare exception, were not deemed worth of preservation by many professionals. Since persons who restored and safeguarded monuments failed to state their opposition to razing the Cathedral, no objections were voiced. For architects and art specialists, the Cathedral represented a nearly century-long decline in architecture. Such a view justified the accusation of connivance in the edifice's destruction by those who in performing their duties should have opposed it. But then too one must keep in mind the fact that by this time opposition had become senseless, useless, and, as history has shown, later, in 1936 and 1937, dangerous, costing, if not one's life, then at least one's freedom.

Only when a special study has been conducted that examines the press of the time, which expressed the official point of view, and also of archival documents relating to the subject will the true state of affairs be known. There was only one instance of protest that is known--from the art world. Doubtless there were others. But at the present only one can be cited, by artist Apollinary Vasnetsov (1856-1933), the younger brother of the famous artist Viktor Vasnetsov (1848-1926) who, like his older brother, was enamored of Russian antiquity, old Russian art. In work done before the revolution as an artist, a master of theater décor and designer of furniture, Vasnetsov was a creator who worked in an original architectural-archeological genre. After the revolution he worked exclusively in this genre. He would study numerous sources and then recreate on canvas images of wooden, white-walled Moscow, a Moscow that had disappeared without leaving a trace. It is possible that this "restricted" art constituted a form of protest, concealing a deliberate civic stand. At the time, Vasnetsov openly and resolutely expressed his opposition to dismantling the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in a letter to *Izvestiya*, that is, to the official newspaper where the competition for the design of the Palace of Soviets had been announced. Vasnetsov, a true believer, was guided primarily by moral and ethical considerations. He protested the dismantling of a national and religious holy place even though he, like other artists of his generation, doubtless felt that architecture from the end of the nineteenth century represented a decline in a once great national art form. One concludes this from the text of the letter itself; the artistic value of the Cathedral is mentioned only in passing:

"I approach the editors of the respected newspaper *Izvestiya* with a request that they publish my opinion as an artist regarding the dismantling of that architectural monument of the second half of the nineteenth century, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Apart from the fact that this monument is public property of

enormous material worth which took more than fifty years to complete, it is also of unquestionably great artistic value. On its walls we see works of such well known artists as Surikov, Semiradsky, Markov, Sorokin, Savitsky, Makovsky, and others. In addition, a large number of sculptural depictions adorning its exterior walls and bronze doors were executed by famous sculptors. Aside from this beautiful and painstaking work, the marble facing of the walls of the interior of the Cathedral is worth saving because of its high quality and finish. To destroy the Cathedral is not difficult, but once a monument representing the architecture and art of an entire epoch has disappeared without a trace, it will be too late to express regret . . .”<sup>25</sup>

*Izvestiya* did not consider it wise to publish Vasnetsov’s letter, for the values it expressed were hardly in line with those of the Cathedral’s destroyers. His appeal on the grounds of material worth and artistic merit, moreover, had no effect. The epic tale of dismantling the Cathedral of Christ is but one of countless examples in the history of mankind that prove that ideas rather than economic considerations are the driving forces in the world. They also determine building policies. Architecture, the most symbolic of the arts, will be forever the most obvious material expression of the ideals and world outlook of an epoch.

It would be, of course, a mistake to think that the dismantling of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior did not encounter opposition among the general public. It should have but did not meet with opposition in the art world. Tragically, not only were members of the intelligentsia involved with the arts unable to muster any opposition, most of them did not feel any need to object to dismantling the Cathedral. Those who fought it were believers and clergy, people on whom the Party and government had declared war, war conducted on a well organized basis with hands empowered by the apparatus of atheism.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dvoretz Sovetov* (Moscow, 1939), pp. 6-7.

- <sup>2</sup> I. Iu. Eigel', "K istorii postroeniia i snosa khrama Khrista Spasitelia," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 1988, No. 7, p. 30.
- <sup>3</sup> L. B. Krasin, "Arkhitekturnoe uvekovanie Lenina," *Izvestiia*, February 7, 1924.
- <sup>4</sup> The reference is to the Church of Paraskeva Piatnitsa razed in 1928.
- <sup>5</sup> S. O. Khan-Magomedov, "K istorii vybora mesta dlia Dvortsia Sovetov," *Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 1988, No. 1, p. 21.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- <sup>9</sup> V. E. Khazanova, "Ot Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsial'isticheskoi revoliutsii do sozdaniia Soiuzs Sovetskikh arkhitektorov (1917-1932)," *100 let obshchestvennykh arkhitekturnykh organizatsii v SSSR* (Moscow, 1967), p. 42.
- <sup>10</sup> V. E. Khazanova, ed., *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury: 1926-1932. Dokumenty i materialy. Tvorcheskie ob'edineniia* (Moscow, 1970), p. 54.
- <sup>11</sup> I. Iu. Eigel', *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- <sup>12</sup> *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury...*, pp. 62-63.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- <sup>14</sup> I. Iu. Eigel', *op. cit.*, "Protokoly, otrazhaiushchie dramaticheskuiu istoriiu vybora mesta dlia khrama Khrista Spasitelia opublikovany byv. sotrudnikom masterskoi po proekirovaniu Dvortsia Sovetov," pp. 31-33.
- <sup>15</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 18, 1931, No. 196 (4403).
- <sup>16</sup> Eigel', *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *SSSR na stroike*, 1931, No. 9. B.s.
- <sup>19</sup> M. I. Astaf'eva-Dlugach and Iu. P. Volchok, *O konkurse na Dvoretz Sovetov*, pp. 225-229.
- <sup>20</sup> N. I. Filiukova, ed., "Dvoretz Sovetov (konkursy 1931-1933 gg.)," *Katalog-putevoditel' po fondam Muzeia arkhitektury* (Moscow 1989), p. 8.
- <sup>21</sup> V. E. Khazanova, "Iz istorii proektirovaniia Dvortsia Sovetov SSSR v Moskve," *Sovetskoe izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo i arkhitektura* (Moscow, 1979), p. 212; *Dvoretz Sovetov (konkursy 1931-1933)*, pp. 8-9; I. Iu. Eigel', *Boris Iofan* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 92 and 96; *Dvoretz Sovetov* (Moscow 1939), pp. 11-12.
- <sup>22</sup> *Arkhitektura Dvortsia Sovetov. Materialy u plenuma pravleniia Soiuzs sovetskikh arkhitektorov SSSR 1-4 iulia 1939 g.* (Moscow, 1939), p. 33; *Dvoretz Sovetov* (Moscow, 1939), pp. 12 and 14.
- <sup>23</sup> *Dvoretz Sovetov* (Moscow, 1939), p. 4.
- <sup>24</sup> *Arkhitektura Dvortsia Sovetov...*, p. 14.
- <sup>25</sup> Muzei-kvartira A. M. Vasnetsova v Furmannom per.

### Illustration Captions

- Page 228* Official document related to the construction of the Palace of Soviets.
- Page 229* Okhotny Ryad, one site suggested for the Palace of Soviets. Photograph from the 1930's.
- Page 230* View of the Moskva and Cathedral of Christ the Savior from an airplane. Photograph from the archives of the Studio of Documentary Films, late 1920's.
- Page 231* Design for the Palace of Soviets. Photograph from the personal archives of architect Boris Iofan.

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- Page 232* Official documents related to the construction of the Palace of Soviets.
- Sketch by Leva Fedotov of the view from a window of the House on the Embankment. Several books have been written about this young man who kept an extraordinary diary from 1935 to 1941, among them Yury Rostsius's *Dnevnik proroka* (Moscow, 1990).
- Page 234* Competition design for the Palace of Soviets from 1933 by architects Vladimir Shchuko, Vladimir Gelfreikh, and Iofan.
- Variant of this design.
- Page 235* Drawing that combines silhouettes of the Palace of Soviets and the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.
- Moscow of the Future: Palace of Soviets. Woodcut by P. Ryabov.
- Page 236* Palace of Soviets Metro Station (now Kropotkinskaya Station), 1930's.
- Page 237* General plan for building the Palace of Soviets on the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, April 22, 1935, bearing the signatures of Joseph Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, and other government leaders.
- Page 238* [see text, p. 300]
- Page 240* [see text, p. 302]
- Page 241* [see text, p. 302]
- Page 242* Workers erecting a fence around the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (still from Vladislav Mikosha's film of the Cathedral's destruction).
- Page 244* Gilded plating being removed from the enormous dome of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.
- Cross from the main dome of the Cathedral being lowered.



(Photographs of the Cathedral's dismantling, 1930 to 1932, are reproduced from negatives preserved in the Palace of Soviet's construction workshop.)

*Page 245* Workers taking down girders supporting the Cathedral's main dome.

Lowered section of the dome.

*Page 246* Workers dismantling the Cathedral of Christ the Savior pose for a photograph.

A silenced bell.

Area in front of the Cathedral where pieces of the Cathedral have been deposited.

Stone blocks from the pedestal of the monument to Alexander III.

## **Blowing Up the Cathedral**

Preparations for dismantling the Cathedral of Christ the Savior began immediately after the official announcement of the design competition for the Palace of Soviets appeared in *Izvestiya*. A three-pronged effort, the first part, which might be characterized as ideological, prepared public opinion for the impending demolition, an action that would be jarring to many, and not only believers. The second part involved specialists from the art and museum world. Research had to be done on the Cathedral's paintings, sculpture, murals, and its furnishings, lighting fixtures, chalices and other objects used in divine worship, and items such as gonfalons, shrouds, and vestments. Artworks with the greatest artistic and historical value had to be described and catalogued before being sent to museums for preservation. The third line of preparation was in the area of engineering. A plan had to be developed for disassembling and leveling the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and nearby structures to ready the site for building the Palace of Soviets. All three efforts occurred during the final, horrible six months of the Cathedral's existence, the period during which it was destroyed.

“In the beginning was the word. . .” and the word was that of atheists spoken long before and without any direct reference to razing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Excerpts from newspapers and journals of 1931 help convey a sense of the tone and content of announcements and articles that shaped the mood for both preparation for and actual dismantling of the Cathedral:

“Atheist Moscow is growing. Religious Moscow is dying. We are still far from being done with religion. ‘Pope’ [a common reference for Orthodox priests] and sectarian are not yet part of the past. These are actual, indignant figures of our day who wage continuous war against Soviet power. They keep rearming, though each year brings them only further disappointment. Last year membership in the

League of Militant Atheists in Moscow alone numbered 146,000. This year the army of active atheists has grown to 200,000.”<sup>1</sup>

“[T]he workers of the ‘Ilich’ Factory in Moscow instructed their Soviet deputies to close the church on Bolshaya Serpukhovskaya Street and transfer the building to a cultural institution. The church has now been refitted for use by the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Economics and Commodity Research.”<sup>2</sup>

Under the banner of “Let’s build a cultural center where there’s been a center of obscurantism,” subbotniks were devoted to demolishing the buildings of the Simonov Monastery where, later, the Palace of Culture of the Stalin Auto Plant (later ZIL) was erected.<sup>3</sup>

When the Construction Council finally determined the site for the future Palace of Soviets, journalists and representatives of the atheist movement began their work. In tune with the near atheistic hysteria at the time, they rhapsodized on the idea of destroying one of the main nests of obscurantism in Russia. One article even featured the crude board fence put up around the Cathedral in preparation for the demolition:

“The attention of tourists now strolling about the former ‘gentry’ section of Moscow who descend onto Volkhonka Street from Prechistenka and Ostozhenka is drawn not to the former estate of grandee Golitsyn nor to the Museum of Fine Arts nor the house of the forgotten author of *Askold’s Grave* [a 1833 historical novel about Kievan Russia by Mikhail Zagoskin], but to a long gray fence put up just a few days ago. The fence heralds the end of the old ‘gentry’ Volkhonka. Just beyond it, quickly and almost noiselessly, the site for the Palace of Soviets of the USSR is being prepared. The Palace’s structure will change the physiognomy not only of Volkhonka Street, but the entire area. From this gentry, museum-like Moscow will emerge a lively center of *soviet* and *socialist* Moscow.”<sup>4</sup>

Within the ranks of atheists a group formed whose main occupation for a time was writing articles and books devoted to the subject. Among them Boris Kandidov stands out in terms of fecundity and drive and his ability to summarize a huge amount of factual material. To his pen belong a series of articles in the journals *Bezbozhnik u stanka* (*The Atheist at the Workplace*) and *Antireligioznik* (*Antireligious Propagandist*) with telling titles such as “The Religion of Imperialism in the cathedral of ‘christ the savior’” where he argues that it is illogical “to consider the cathedral of ‘christ the savior’ a historical monument to the Russo-French War.” (Refusing to use uppercase letters in the name of the Cathedral was a way of scorning the church.) “One must posit that the sum total of monuments to that war only reflect the sum total of historical events in terms of monuments to tsars, the original landowners of tsarist Russia,” it states. “The builders of the cathedral of ‘christ the savior’ did not try to present a true picture of the past. They strove for something else, to create a religious ideological fortress for propagandizing patriotism, chauvinism, and militarism. . . . Everything constructed there aimed to glorify a past war in order to ensure that imperialistic wars could be waged in the future. The cathedral of ‘christ the savior’ was nothing more than a ‘crooked mirror’ of the War of 1812, a mirror focusing the thoughts of the visitor on the monarchist-religious demands of class conciliation. . . .”<sup>5</sup> This, of course, was inadmissible in a country where militant atheism and class struggle had become the official religion. Kandidov pursues the same objective in a 1931 book with the telltale title, *Has Anyone Been Saved by the Cathedral of Christ the Savior?*

Once the first stage in the preparation process--swaying public opinion—had passed, Muscovites were readied for the second act of the tragedy awaiting the national shrine. On July 18, the day the design competition for the Palace of

Soviets was announced in *Izvestiya*, the commission appointed by the Commissariat of Education to determine what was worth saving in the Cathedral began to function. Since only a month remained before the dismantling was to start, the list of museum-quality artworks compiled was not particularly long. Attention was focused primarily on sculpture and paintings; not all of the objects on the list were preserved. The commission's assessment, dated August 18, 1931, reads as follows:

“The commission organized by the Research Section of the NKP [Commissariat of Public Education] after a careful examination of the Cathedral has determined that

“1. Of the twelve bronze doors, only the center ones of the west façade and one set of side doors should be preserved. From the remaining doors the medallions executed by Fyodor Tolstoy should be removed.

“2. All of the high relief sculptures (as groups) should be removed; several that possess artistic significance (for example, David's victory after the defeat of Goliath, St. Sergius blessing Dimitry Donskoy, and others) should be transferred to the Tretyakov Gallery, the Russian Museum, and the Antireligious Art Museum, the rest can be sold abroad for foreign currency. It might be of value to excise one entire portal with its doors and sculpture in tact.

“3. Inside the Cathedral, the depiction of the ‘Last Supper’ executed in copper by artist Semiradsky and the six paintings on canvas by artist Vereshchagin should be removed. Canvas copies should be made of artworks on plaster by artist Semiradsky (4), and, in the upper gallery of the cathedral, of the life of Alexander Nevsky along with Surikov's four paintings, ‘Early Ecumenical Councils.’ In addition, it is recommended that canvas copies be made of one mural by artists Makovsky, Pryanishnikov, Basin, Vereshchagin, and Sorokin.

“4. The chapel-iconostasis and the choir (of marble with icons by Neff) should be preserved entirely and transferred to the Tretyakov Gallery or sold for foreign currency.”

In addition, the commission considered a proposal to transfer twenty named items “among objects of museum value” to the Kremlin’s Armory. Of these only the two wax seals bearing the imprint of the Orthodox synod of 1918, brocade vestments with woven double-headed eagles dating from the beginning of the twentieth century, and “two marriage crowns covered with enamel” from the latter part of the nineteenth century were connected with the Cathedral proper. The remaining items—crosiers, church vestments, and icons—were seventeenth- and eighteenth-century in origin. No mention is made of any object from the huge collection of church plate, furniture, and gonfalons dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, that is, from the time when the Cathedral’s interior décor was created. The commission did not consider these items worth preserving for display in museums. Conjoined with this severe and unjust disposition regarding first-class works of nineteenth-century applied art was the battle against religion and a negative attitude toward architecture and applied art of the previous century. An exception was made only for chandeliers, church hanging lights, and grating (“all of good bronze”). It was recommended that “one specimen of each be left as a model, the rest used as nonferrous metal.” It was also proposed that the two bronze tablets with Vitberg’s designs for the Cathedral be transferred to the History Museum and that Ton’s cross-section drawing of the Cathedral to the Tretyakov Gallery (both were transferred to the Museum of Architecture.—*E.K.*), and that one pair of the “carved wooden entrance doors be transferred to the Museum at Kolomna.” Archival documents contain cost estimates for taking down the high relief sculptures and the statues, including remuneration for labor and

expenses for materials needed—rope, tools, newsprint plus transport costs. There are similar estimates for removing the murals. Many of the items listed were actually transferred to museums, although not necessarily to those designated in the documents. The sculpture removed from the walls of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were taken to the Don Monastery, the architectural plans and sketches were added to the holdings of the Museum of Architecture in Moscow and the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts in Leningrad.

On August 18, 1931, exactly one month after the *Izvestiya* announcement of the design competition for the Palace of Soviets, work on dismantling the Cathedral got underway. The language of the document recording the huge amount of work needed to free the site for the construction of the Palace of Soviets can only be described as dispassionate:

“On August 18 ‘Dvoretstroi’ [‘PalaceConstruct’ workgroup] received the keys of the former cathedral of christ and began to ready the site for building the Palace of Soviets. Preparation entails demolition of the building of the former cathedral and of structures between it and Lenivka Street. In addition, the soil will need to be tested to determine the type of foundation for the future Palace, support enterprises installed, and a railroad connecting the site to the Orkrug [Circle] Line constructed.

“It will be more complex to implement dismantling the former cathedral, for, while the main body of the cathedral is of no artistic worth, it is a rather sturdy structure of brick and iron faced inside with marble that is varied and valuable and outside with plain marble. . . . It will take 600 loads to cart away the valuable marble. The cathedral’s masonry consists of more than 500 million bricks and 30,000 cubic meters of lime. The cathedral’s solid crude masonry foundation is twelve meters thick. . . . In order to remove such a large amount of material from

the site one hundred dump trucks, 200 draft horses, and eight three-car freight trolley trains will have to operate eight hours a day for three months. For construction of the Palace of Soviets more than 2000 people have been hired. A one-hundred kilowatt transformer to operate machinery has been installed. Three more transformers are planned.

“Dismantling efforts have begun simultaneously on the outside and inside of the building. The granite facing, granite steps, street lamps, and the like have been removed from the outside and from the inside the marble floor and the marble [and] granite facing of the walls. . . . In the domes and on the ceilings systems of rope-operated pulleys have been set up. These are being used to move the valuable types of stone, raising and then depositing them on carts. The carts are lowered by winches to the ground where stones weighting as much as three to four tons are loaded by crane into trucks and hauled to a storage area.”<sup>6</sup>

“Cathedral demolition and clean-up of the entire site should be completed by January [1932].”<sup>7</sup>

The valuable parts of the Cathedral were dismantled first: crosses, the gilded sheathing of the domes, bells, the exterior’s sculpture, and the murals inside. Breakup and removal of the basic mass of the building and its rugged foundation was the next task. Then the ground would be tested and preparations for laying the foundation of the Palace of Soviets begun. To all appearances, detonation did not figure in the original plans of the Cathedral’s destroyers. There is nothing about this in the *Dvoretstroi* work schedule nor is it mentioned in an article placed in the *Bulletin of the Construction Administration for the Palace of Soviets* with the title “How the Former Cathedral is Being Dismantled.”<sup>8</sup>

Materials about razing the Cathedral that appeared in the organs of the Union of Militant Atheists have a distinctive ring to them: any assistance rendered



in building the Palace of Soviets is regarded as contributing to the battle against religion, a means of affirming atheism and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat.

“Religious superstition and its lackeys are striving to prevent the Palace of Soviets from being erected. On the sly they are conducting counterrevolutionary agitation against taking down the cathedral of ‘christ the savior.’ Our task is to unmask the class-based nature of these statements and rumors. . . . On the other hand, the former cathedral of ‘christ the savior’ is not an ancient monument nor has it has any significance as a historical or artistic monument. Testimony to this comes even from bourgeois art historians, Viktor Nikolsky, for instance. . . .”<sup>9</sup>

Even before the second competition was over, official bodies had developed a schedule for building the Palace of Soviets. The first issue of the *Bulletin of the Construction Administration for the Palace of Soviets* announced that the Palace would be built in two years: “The calendar developed by the Construction Administration for the P. of S. calls for the dismantling of the former Cathedral of C. the S. to be finished by December 15, 1931, and the site cleared for construction by January 15, 1932. The winter of 1931-1932 will be devoted to laying the foundation of the P. of S. The plans for the future Palace should be in place by mid-February 1932. During the building season of 1932 basic construction work will be completed. During that time as well marble and granite for the project will be obtained and the furniture shops and like operations organized. All of 1933 will be devoted to finishing the exterior and working on the Palace’s interior. At the end of 1933 the Palace of Soviets should be ready for use. Although two years for building the Palace represents a tight schedule, it is within reason and can be adhered to.”<sup>10</sup>

Information about the yet-to-be constructed edifice found its way into the popular press. But, life and plans do not always jibe. Not until February 1933, after a preliminary, second open, and two rounds of a third, closed competition was Iofan's design for the future Palace accepted. And an additional half year passed before this design was given final approval after being extensively reworked by studio collectives directed by Iofan, Shchuko, and Gelfreikh. Much closer to schedule was the start date for dismantling the Cathedral. "[T]he razing of the former cathedral of Christ has been completed and the site is now being cleared"<sup>11</sup> states an official report dated February 1932, which meant that the dismantling process was in full swing the previous fall.

The film chronicling the Cathedral's demolition created by cameraman Vladislav Mikosha records in soul-chilling frames the gradual ruination of this colossal and majestic building. First Mikosha shot the four small domes of the Cathedral and then the main one. The frames of his film can only be called tragic: the fractured top of the giant dome deprived of its gilt sheathing with a rickety cross, the huge metal framework of the dome even in ruins exceptionally beautiful, bringing to mind ultramodern constructions of the twentieth century, the tip of a dome with its cross that has dropped down onto the ground, a bell, silenced forever, thrown down from a bell tower and sunk deeply into the ground because of its weight, huge furrowed blocks of stone. How can one not react emotionally to pictures of stairways deprived of their steps, a statue that has tumbled down to the ground with a rope taut around its neck, marble plaques chronicling the 1812 war torn from the walls?

The Commissar of Education, Anatoly Lunacharsky gave his blessing to leveling the Cathedral, observing that the Palace of Soviets, as a successor to the

Cathedral of Christ the Savior, would play the role of architectural dominant in the ensemble of Moscow:

“Our country, far from being one of the richest, in fact, quite the opposite, fated historically to trail other European countries, in a very short time has become the first to begin an era of socialism; its socialistic foundation is already in place. To every great time corresponds great architecture. It goes without saying that our time is a great time, yet in the course of the last fifteen years we have not been able to mark this great time with serious monumental structures. What we have built to date architecturally has not been felicitous nor has it equaled the greatness of the epoch we experienced.

“The proposal to take down that the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, which because of its enormous mass and its gold dome was a unique focal point when Moscow was viewed from afar (in particular, from Lenin Hills), this proposal was suggested not only because the Cathedral site was judged to be the best place for the huge Palace of Soviets—something we need, a place for the extraordinarily numerous public assemblies that result from our genuine democracy--but also because it will give Moscow a crowning building, give Moscow, the Red Center of the world, a visible architectural center. There are no architectural predecessors, none at least in our immediate entourage....”<sup>12</sup>

There were poets who did not “mourn” the razing of the Cathedral. Demyan Bedny, a poet “conscripted by the Revolution,” in verses lacking any hint of art, attempted to glorify the destruction of this Russian shrine, an event in sync with the times, one that symbolized the relationship of the Bolsheviks to religion and the Russian religious heritage.

*There's a joke going around Moscow:*

*In front of “Christ the Savior” there's some old woman,*

*A devout tattletale,  
She began to pray—"In the name of the Father". . . .  
She didn't manage to get to the end. . .  
To "and of the Son and the Holy Spirit,"  
She could barely get up,  
Looked,  
And waving her hands,  
Grimacing, she's looks like she's gone batty:  
For the Cathedral of "Christ the Savior" it's . . . boom!  
Not a trace  
Disappeared who knows where!  
That's our tempo, right?  
To us joy, but to the aged tragedy  
From such a, if you want to call it, 'cathedral,'  
A rubbishy trace is all that's left.  
How long it took to build. . . !  
. . . Now from this marvel  
There's just a heap  
Of rubbish and bricks,  
That decrepit old wreck no longer an eyesore.  
May it and all that has to do with it be gone!  
Soon where that old jug of a cathedral stuck out  
Will sparkle, filling our hearts with joy,  
The world-scale proletarian tower  
Of a miraculous Soviet palace!<sup>13</sup>*

The explosions Demyan Bedny alludes to resounded on December 5, 1931. They were powerful explosions causing the ground under Moscow to shudder. Long after, a red haze of brick powder that had shot up into the sky hung over the site. Razing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior proceeded significantly slower and with a great deal more trouble than anticipated. In fact, it had slowed to a crawl and, in order to speed it up, “the project to raze the Cathedral of Christ the Savior by using explosives” was devised. Trained specialists figured out where to put explosives in correct amounts. On the reel shot by cameraman Mikosha one sees walls that had taken a half century to build and had stood for a half century more on the Moskva River shake and then fall to the ground.

The dynamiting of the Cathedral was reported in popular newspaper *Vechernyaya Moskva* under the headline “At the Palace of Soviets Site.” The director of the Dvoretstroi conglomerate, Comrade Linkovsky, provided the details:

“At precisely noon the first explosion resounded. One of the pylons which supported the large dome of the building was destroyed. One half hour later a second pylon was destroyed by another explosion, the remaining ones fifteen minutes later. The interior and parts of the exterior walls were brought down by subsequent explosions. The remainder of the building will be demolished in the course of the next few days.

“A tremendous amount of preparation for this work was required. Seismographic apparatuses were installed around the building which were set to register the smallest vibration of the ground. Special ‘hoods’ were constructed to protect against the possibility of flying debris. As a result there was not a single unfortunate accident.

“The building’s material--brick, stone facing—was for the most part not damaged and will be used in various construction projects. In a day or two Dvoretstroi will start removing this building material from the site, a process that will require two months to complete. By early February of next year the site of the Palace of Soviets will have been fully cleared.”<sup>14</sup>

On December 5, 1991, exactly sixty years after the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was brought down by a series of explosions, the newspaper *Moskovskii Komsomolets* published excerpts from the *Reminiscences* of Alexander Leonidovich Pasternak (1893-1982), architect and brother of the famous Russian poet, who lived in those years on Gogol Boulevard, very close to the Cathedral:

“[O]ne day in the alleyway, almost under our windows, they started digging a deep trench, and then they added a square pit to it. We soon discovered that an apparatus for recording seismographic activity had been set up in the pit. We were given advance notice that on such-and-such date and at such-and-such early morning hour before the city had come to life the Cathedral would be subjected to an explosion of such-and-such magnitude. We were afraid that the explosion would mean that stones and pieces from [the Cathedral’s] broken walls might rain down into our yard and onto our building.

“On the appointed morning the explosion did indeed occur. It wrecked the seismograph. I was still in bed and felt everything suddenly begin shaking and rocking under me. This happened again and then once more. I was being jolted; it was as if the bed wanted to leap out from under me—and then everything was still. The earthquake was felt in a big radius around—the explosion was that powerful!

But the bulk of the Cathedral remained whole, just like it was before, a solid cube. . . . Then it was decided to set off an explosion of even greater intensity. At the time designated for this to take place some of the people living in the building,

we among them, got up onto the flat roof to watch. At the moment the blast occurred, our building shook heartily and over the Cathedral rose a huge reddish-black cloud of dust, cinders, and finely broken brick that obscured everything. Slowly, in big undulating puffs it rose upwards and gradually dispersed in the sky like a huge umbrella hanging over the area. Under it a clear space brightened. But what had become of the Cathedral? It had been cut down, reduced to a huge mound of pulverized and broken brick and huge wall fragments, posts, and arches spread all over the place by the incredible force of the explosive wave. Above this mound of pulverized brick, however, towered a corner of one of the Cathedral's walls under a dome that by some miracle had not collapsed. It was as if it had been sliced with a sharp knife. . . . Bathed in the strange, lifeless, and mystical light of a silent moon, it was an overwhelming sight, possessing the magnificent, proud inscrutability of death. The nights were clear and cold with a full moon. Black, all by itself on the bared ground and threatening reproach, this remnant of the Cathedral, of use to no one, towered a long time over the huge empty site. Eventually, even this reminder disappeared. The site was gradually deprived of everything: gardens, staircases, footing, nannies and pigeons. . . . and became an immense vacant lot. . . . In place of something full of life now reigned black earth being crawled over by insect-like gravediggers. Back and forth, hither and thither went trucks of various types and makes striving to even everything out, remove everything, deprive everything of its character, obliterate all traces of a life that had been rendered useless, to haul all that remained to the scrapheap of history. . . .”

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Page 264\* *Daniil Leonidovich Andreyev (1906-1959), son of the famous Russian writer, Leonid Andreyev, and author of Rosa mira (Rose of the World), a book read only in excerpts until its publication in 1991 by “Prometei” Press in Moscow.*

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\* The following text, found on pages 264-265, is an insert.

*The collection Russian Pantheon from which "Stone Elder" is taken (Moscow: "Sovremennik" Press, 1989, p. 90), was written not by a theologian or philosopher but a poet. . . . In one of its sections Andreyev describes a youthful epiphany during a visit to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in which a living tie with the world of Light established itself.*

*The photograph and verses are from the personal archive of the writer's wife.*

### Stone Elder

When, like the ark of ancient belief,  
Shone o'er the capital the Cathedral of Christ,  
Spring under its walls, in its quiet public gardens,  
Was pensive and pure.

Drawn by joyful habit,  
Adolescent custom keeping,  
To patterned flower beds and familiar bench  
I'd come as day was drawing to a close.

In the jasmine bushes birds rang out,  
In flight sketching to golden crosses,  
There the next page of life  
I turned over quietly.

I grew fond of this wingèd hour,  
For sunny verse freed  
White statues in quiet wisdom  
Over the proud plinth, up there on high.



Betwixt the gonfalons, barely seen,  
Lost amidst shining height,  
A prelate, blessed, radiant,  
For me became dear, kind, meaningful.

On a white marble zakomary,  
Simply by means of uplifted hands,  
He kept vigil over billowed ancient streets,  
Protector and secret friend.

My white elder! Fine preceptor!  
Even at my mortal hour I  
Shan't forget your peaceful image  
Hands raised high.

1933

*“This was the first instance of a kind of event which played so huge and important a role in the development of my internal world. It occurred in August, 1921, when I was not quite fifteen, in Moscow, at the end of the day when I was fond of wandering about the city streets, aimlessly daydreaming. I stopped at the parapet of one of the gardens that surrounded the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. . . . Old residents of Moscow recall still the marvelous view from there of the River, the Kremlin, and Zamoskvorechie with its dozens of bell towers and multi-colored*

*domes. It must have been seven o'clock, for the church bells were ringing for vespers. . . ."*

*From Rose of the World.*

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Construction of the Palace of Soviets began in 1937 but was not destined to be completed. By 1939 the foundation had been laid for the high-rise portion, the main entrance, and the side facing Volkhonka Street. However, not long after this, the building, which had barely risen above the level of the foundation, had to be dismantled. After the Nazis occupied the Donbass in 1942, the steel structure of the Palace edifice was taken apart and used in the construction of bridges for a railroad built to supply coal from the north to the central part of the country. Even earlier, at the very beginning of the War, in September and October of 1941, metal structures manufactured for an installation in the city's Luzhniki area had been made into anti-tank "hedgehogs" for the defense of Moscow.

In 1957 the State Committee of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Construction and Architecture and the Union of Architects announced a new competition for the design of the Palace of Soviets. It was to be erected on Lenin Hills. That competition and others in the following two years were not fruitful, and in 1960 further planning for the Palace of Soviets came to a halt. That same year at the site of the former Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the dismantled beginnings of the Palace of Soviets, the enormous "Moscow" swimming pool was opened.

The dramatic history of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is recounted by poet Evgeny Evtushenko in fourteen lines:

*Long, long ago on the spot of the "Moscow" swimming pool*

*stood the Cathedral of  
Christ the Savior.  
The Cathedral was blown up long ago,  
and one gilded dome with a cross  
not split from the explosion,  
lay,  
like the cracked helmet of a Titan.  
Here they began to build the Palace of Soviets.  
And it all ended with the swimming  
Pool,  
from the vapors of which, they say.  
in the neighboring museum  
paint from the impressionists is deteriorating. . .*

Even after its physical demise, however, the life of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, however, continued. It continued in a few fragments and in sketches stored away in museums. The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts received the designs for the bronze doors with Fyodor Tolstoy's reliefs, the Tretyakov Gallery fragments of the murals. Not everyone is aware that many of the murals are restored versions, not originals. Almost immediately after construction of the building had been completed, in 1880, it was discovered that the Cathedral's art had suffered significant damage. By 1885, restoration work was done on the icons because bubbles had appeared on their surfaces. The work, carried out by P. K. Sokolov, a specialist in restoration from the Academy of Fine Arts, failed to produce the desired results. Icons continued to deteriorate and murals began to exfoliate. For advice the Cathedral's administrators turned to Viktor Fartusov, an

expert from Petersburg. He concluded that the bubbles on the icons' surfaces were caused by deep penetrating soot, and he recommended that the cause of this be eliminated quickly so as to avoid even more serious damage. Shortcomings in the heating and ventilation systems were blamed. In 1895, at the request of Moscow Governor-General Karl Mayevsky, an architectural expert from the Committee on Technical Structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was consulted. He seconded Fartusov's opinion and proposed changes to the Cathedral's heating and ventilation. From then on there were ongoing efforts to create and maintain an optimal temperature-humidity regime to conserve the artwork. After much discussion, various proposals were made by the well-known architectural engineering professor Alexander Pavlovsky. A modified version of one of his proposals to redo the Cathedral's heating and ventilation systems was approved. A three-staged implementation of this project was planned for the years 1909, 1910, and 1911.

The artwork in the east end of the Cathedral, in particular Semiradsky's "The Last Supper," was in very bad condition. Exfoliation was so extensive that its total loss was predicted. To save Semiradsky's composition it was proposed that it be reproduced as a mosaic. Subsequently it was suggested that the composition be recreated on a bronze plaque. Semiradsky fell ill and died before starting this work. On November 5, 1905 at a special meeting the possibility of replacing "The Last Supper" with a reiteration by another artist was discussed. The Academy of Fine Arts recommended artist and professor Vasily Savinsky to execute it. Pyotr Stolypin, the Prime Minister, agreed to provide funds for replacing the Cathedral's heating and ventilation systems, and the State Duma approved the request from the Cathedral's officials to conduct a nationwide fund-raising campaign to pay for the new version of "The Last Supper."<sup>15</sup>

Paintings taken from the destroyed Cathedral and sent to museum depositories were almost never exhibited and thus were for all practical purposes unknown to viewers during the Soviet period. A different--in one sense happier but in another sense sadder--fate befell the high relief sculptures from the façades that were saved. Late in 1931 they were transported to the former Don Monastery. Photographs by A. T. Lebedev record the sad spectacle of fragments of these gigantic statues lying on the Monastery's grounds. There they remained until 1948 when architects N. Sobolev and G. Oshchepkov submitted a proposal to reassemble Loganovsky's sculpture on the grounds of the Museum of the Academy of Architecture [then housed in the Monastery]. Three years passed, and then, in 1951, on the east wall of the Monastery work began to assemble the fragments. The work was completed in 1953.

The project to resurrect the sculpture and what was actually restored differ. Sobolev and Oshchepkov envisaged restoration of only three sculptural compositions by Loganovsky. "St. Sergius of Radonezh Blessing Dimitry Donskoy" was to be in the center with "The Meeting with David after the Defeat of Goliath" on the left and "Melchizedek Meets with Abraham and the Captive Kings" on the right.<sup>16</sup> As it turned out, additional sculptures by other artists were mounted and the positioning of Loganovsky's pieces altered. The depiction of David's reception after defeating Goliath was put in the center. To the right of it was placed the only example of work by Ramazanov, a rendering of the patron saint of soldiers, St. George, the canonized prince who in 1238 fell in the battle against Batu under the walls of Vladimir, and to the right of that Loganovsky's composition "Melchizedek Meets with Abraham and the Captive Kings." To the left of the central scene depicting David was placed a sculpture of the Prophetess Mariam, the sister of Aaron, the chief high priest of the Jewish People, and of

Moses, his younger brother, the Old Testament prophet and leader who led the Jewish people out of Egypt. Mariam is depicted offering praise to the Lord for her miraculous deliverance. . . . To the left of Mariam is the multi-figured composition depicting Sergius of Radonezh blessing Dimitry Donskoy before the Battle of Kulikovo, and to the left of that, completing the north band of high relief sculpture, a depiction of Deborah, the prophetess who in God's name called on Israelite Barak to take command of ten thousand men stationed on her orders on Mount Tabor and prepare to battle Jabin, King of the Canaanites.

The sculptures, even though removed from the setting for which they were specifically designed, still make a powerful impression. Loganovsky was a fine sculptor, a genuine monumentalist who was able to combine in his works the idealism of neoclassical art, plasticity characteristic of the baroque (many of the figures and objects are separate from the background and thus are in essence rounded sculpture) with historical authenticity. In the early 1950's, the inside east and west walls of the Don Monastery were turned into a unique type of necropolis. The central portion of the east wall was faced with high relief sculpture saved from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, and set into the north wall were building fragments from the former Makariev Monastery in Kalyazina and the Church of the Annunciation in Yuryevets (window and door casings, some made of tile, portals) which had been submerged as a result of the construction of the Moskva-Volga Canal and dams built on the Volga. Preserved here also are fragments of masterpieces of old Russian architecture in Moscow that had been razed, from the Sukharev Tower, the Church of Uspeniya on the Pokrovka, the Church of Nikola in Stolpy, and the Church of the Annunciation.

The vast majority of the rich Russian heritage that was saved, however, continues to gather dust in cellars, storerooms, and such places. There is no money

for restoration, the conditions needed for preservation work are lacking as are suitable exhibition halls. Thus, unique works of art “keep silent.” Many fine architectural monuments were razed in the frightening twenties and thirties. Too many to count. . . . For so many years the fate of church antiquities was simply lamentable. There was little or no hope for a rebirth of faith, spiritual values, or religious art. Then, in the mid-1980’s, things began to change. Closed churches and monasteries were revived and new parishes opened.

To conclude the story of the first period in the life of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, it is helpful to view the Cathedral’s recent reconstruction, its resurrection from nonexistence and return to new life in the light of Russian history.

After the first edition of this book appeared in 1992, radical changes occurred in the public attitude toward church architecture in Russia and the fate of the Cathedral. A discussion was launched about the possibility of restoring the Cathedral. And now, where the Palace of Soviets was begun but not finished and the “Moscow” swimming pool constructed, the new building of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior has risen, an event inconceivable only a decade ago. The rebirth of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior can be seen as a symbol and sign of change in Russia’s social consciousness.

In chapters where the creation of the original Cathedral was discussed, emphasis was placed on the fact that from the moment the wooden scaffolding was removed, the edifice became an organic part of Moscow’s center, more accurately, of Moscow’s ancient historic center. Even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Moscow was officially a capital city, the second, old capital. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior, therefore, was created not simply to be a new

component in a historic city center, unique in size and significance, but as the principal church in the capital of an empire.

Already, the newly reconstructed Cathedral is an integral appurtenance of Moscow's historic center. As was the case after construction of the first Cathedral was completed, its emergence in a purely physical sense has broadened the historic core of the city. Despite the altered scale of the building and the sharp increase in the height of structures nearby, the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior is nonetheless a basic, anchoring edifice in the ensemble of the capital's center. No less important is the fact that the Cathedral's reconstruction is far from an isolated phenomenon of 1990's Moscow and Russia. Because Moscow is the capital city, stunning new concepts in the realms of architecture and urban planning are being realized.

The rebirth of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is but one link in a chain of recently reconstructed edifices in Russia's capital. The first was the recreation of Kazan Cathedral on Red Square where its predecessor, razed in the 1930's, had been erected in the early seventeenth century, the votive church of Prince Dimitry Pozharsky that memorialized Moscow's ridding herself of Polish and Lithuanian occupiers, the end of the Time of Troubles, and the accession to the throne of the first Romanov. The term "recreation" hardly applies to the new Kazan Cathedral since the destroyed cathedral had been altered over time. The new building reconstructs the original church design.

The erection of Kazan Cathedral was the first step in a program approved by Moscow's government to restore the historic look of the capital. Execution of the plan began, naturally, in the city's most important square, the city's most significant site. The next step was to recreate the Iberian Gate with its famous chapel, a shrine in Orthodox Moscow. Kazan Cathedral and the Iberian Gate,



while not changing the symbolism of Red Square, injected new meaning by changing its points of emphasis. It should be noted that the work being done in Moscow is hardly unusual. At various times and in many countries, periods of energetic recreation occur.

Architectural and urban planning policies in Moscow, on the threshold of the third millennium, and the eve of Christianity's second millennium, can be seen as being akin to official architectural policy of mid-nineteenth-century Russia. Then as now, the Cathedral was viewed as a founding, grand, but far from singular landmark in a new government program in the realm of architecture and urban planning, the former Cathedral of Christ the Savior, as indeed the new one, being an expression of new ideals hostile to the values and artistic preferences of the preceding era.

Historical kinship, however, does not mean they are the same. In the recreated Cathedral of Christ the Savior there is a special nuance: the recreated Cathedral is called on to be not only a symbol of victory in the Patriotic War of 1812 but also of the collapse of the antireligious ideology that reigned so long in Russian society.

The historic center of the capital now strives to express a new concept. Diametrically opposed to the Stalinist reconstruction of Moscow (the 1930's through the early 1950's), it is also an antipode to later state policy in the area of construction and architecture (the 1960's to the 1980's) which emphasized pragmatism, mass building on the city's outskirts, and a nihilistic attitude toward Moscow's historic center. Witness to the last are the Palace of Congresses built in the Kremlin, the new building of the National Hotel on Tver Street, and the enormous Hotel Russia in Zaryadie.

Recreation of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Iberian Gate as well as the rebuilding of Kazan Cathedral with all their extraordinary, unique aspects represent today's Russia. All over the country restoration of closed and disfigured churches is in progress and the building of new churches has begun--and not only of Orthodox churches. As was the case in the mid-nineteenth century, the appearance of the first structures in the Russian style, at first ecclesiastical, later secular, was accompanied by the building of churches that were not Orthodox. At the end of the twentieth century in Moscow and in Russia as a whole, the same thing is happening, and once again the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is the embodiment of epoch-making historical and cultural endeavors.

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*The original, 1992 edition of this book concluded with the following text:*

On November 4, 1990, the feast day of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, one of those churches, razed a half century earlier, Kazan Cathedral on Red Square, was reborn. This monument-church was erected by Prince Dimitry Pozharsky in the mid-1600's in gratitude to God for victory over Polish-Lithuanian troops invading Russia during the Time of Troubles. And, although where it stood there is only a dedicatory foundation stone, the church has been revived. Following a solemn service in Uspensky Cathedral, the foundation stone was sanctified, on it were the words: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is recreated this cathedral church...."

A fund to restore the Cathedral of Christ the Savior has been created. Money is pouring in from all over Russia, and several million rubles have already

been collected. A solemn consecration of its foundation stone has taken place and erection of a bell tower has been officially proposed. This dramatic new strength results from the pain at the loss of this mightiest church in Russia; it is a symbol of spiritual values and a great monument to a great victory. The passionate desire to see again on the site now filled with water the magnificent building that was once a Russian shrine is understandable, restoration of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior a spectacular, grand undertaking. But to rebuild the Cathedral, subjecting church construction to this effort for many years, could result in the loss of much of what still exists. Not only in Moscow but all over Russia in large, small, and medium-sized cities, towns, and villages abandoned churches remain. Not all were destroyed. Some were decapitated, others were disfigured by additions. For a third group only the walls remain, and for a fourth window glass has been knocked out and doors removed. They are in a condition of abeyance and therefore perishing. Other former churches have become storerooms, plants, workshops, stores. They too are perishing because of remodeling, because they have been used negligently, not for the purpose for which they were built. But they exist. It is possible and necessary to restore them while they still can be saved and saved with comparatively little bloodletting. They have to be saved today, for tomorrow may be too late.

Restoration of the Cathedral has rallied a huge number of people. It has acquired symbolic meaning, viewed as an action that will help restore spiritual values in Russia. Yet restoring the memory of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the difficult conditions of the present is at best problematic. One could install on its site a framework-silhouette of the Cathedral to convey its innate greatness or reproduce its look by means of holography. Both of these ideas have been widely circulated in publications. This could be considered temporary. Perhaps, after a

few years, when the social and economic life of Russia has entered a more normal course, when abandoned churches have been resuscitated, parishes formed and secure, it will be the time for a new Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Restoration of the Cathedral will require colossal resources. Indeed, the original Cathedral of Christ the Savior was built not only with money from the public but also with state monies. Information about raising money that appears in one publication and then another is nothing more than a grand illusion. No amount of money from the general public, no matter how large, will suffice for such a grandiose building. Even with the aid of government funds, it took nearly a half century to erect the original Cathedral. Moreover, there are a large number of other, more substantive obstacles. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was built to fit a specific area. The site was spacious, quite unlike the present one. Even though the façades were oriented to natural light, the Cathedral was the central structure in this area. The old Cathedral stood on a rise. Where is that rise now? The beauty of the panoramas opening with the view of the Cathedral depended to a great degree on the structural characteristics of a bridge, the bottom span of which is now aligned with the river embankment. Does this mean that the old Stone Bridge should be restored also? The dismantling of the foundations of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, and later those of the Palace of Soviets, disturbed the natural geologic structure of the site and made it far more complex, if not impossible, to construct a large building there.

Nonetheless, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior deserves to be studied in all its detail and its long-suffering history published. It deserves immortality in the memory of future generations. It has fallen to the present generation of Russians to begin this work, and it is possible that their children will return life to the Cathedral, realizing the words from Alexander I's decree: "May this cathedral

stand for many centuries, and in it may the thurible of gratitude of later generations, together with love of and emulation of the deeds of their forebears make sweet the holy Throne of God.”

<sup>1</sup> *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 18, 1931, No. 297.

<sup>2</sup> *Bezbozhnik u stanka*, 1931, No. 1, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. Chiniakov, *Bratiiia Vesniny* (Moscow, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> “*Volkhonka ulitsa*,” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, September 17, 1931.

<sup>5</sup> B. Kandidov, “*Kul’t imperialisma v khrame ‘Khrista spasitelia’*,” *Bezbozhnik u stanka*, 1931, No. 19, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> N. Linkovskii, “*Na stroike Dvortsa Sovetov*,” *Rabochaia Moskva*, October 12, 1931, No. 282.

<sup>7</sup> *Vecherniaia Moskva*, August 20, 1931, No. 198.

<sup>8</sup> *Biulleten’ Upravleniia Stroitel’stvom Dvortsa Sovetov*, 1931, No. 1, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> B. K., “*O stroitel’stve Dvortsa Sovetov i snose khrama ‘Khrista Spasitel’a’*,” *Bezbozhnik u stanka*, 1931, No. 17, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Biulleten’ Upravleniia Stroitel’stvom Dvortsa Sovetov*, 1931, No. 1, p. 16

<sup>11</sup> “*Ot zadaniia k proektu. Khronika Dvortsa Sovetov*,” *Stroitel’stvo Moskvy*, 1934, No. 3, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> A. V. Lunacharskii, “*Dvorets Sovetov*,” *Stroitel’stvo Moskvy*, 1933, No. 5-6, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> D. Bednyi, “*O khriste na chetvertakakh, o krepostnykh muzhikakh, o stroitel’stve tsarskom i proletarskom*,” *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 31, 1931.

<sup>14</sup> *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 6, 1931.

<sup>15</sup> TsGIA [Central State Historical Archives], f. 1284, op. 229, 1897 god, d. 42 ll. 3, 14-16, 22, 26, 28, 33, 35, 43, 48, 51, i t. d.

<sup>16</sup> GNIMA *im.* A. V. Shchuseva [State Architectural Research Museum Named for A. A. Shchusev], photography library.

### Illustration Captions

*Page 248* Church in Praise of the Virgin (founded in 1705) before being razed.

Cathedral of Christ the Savior decapitated.

*Page 250* High relief sculptures by Loganovsky dropped down from the Cathedral façades.

*Page 251* Removal of Loganovsky’s sculpture from a north niche of the Cathedral.

*Page 252* East entrance to the Cathedral being dismantled (on the right).

Doors of a façade being dismantled.

View of the circular gallery of the second tier.

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- Page 254* Components of the razed Cathedral, marble panels with the names of those who perished during the Patriotic War of 1812. Album photograph of Isaak Eigel.
- Fragment of the high relief sculptural group “David after the Defeat of Goliath.” Still from Mikosha’s documentary.
- Page 255* Commission to evaluate valuables in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Sundry liturgical items. Stills from Mikosha’s documentary.
- Page 256* Cathedral interior during dismantling. Niche with “Homage of the Wise Men” painted by Vereshchagin.
- Page 257* Dismantling the niche containing the painting “Anointing of David by the Prophet Samuel.”
- Page 258* Construction Commission for the Palace of Soviets’ visit to the Cathedral, 1930.
- Page 259* Marble panels with the names of those wounded and killed in the 1812 war.
- Page 260* Blueprint related to building the Palace of Soviets.
- Cathedral of Christ the Savior being detonated, December 5, 1931. Still from Mikosha’s documentary.
- Page 262* Cathedral of Christ the Savior after being detonated. Stills from Mikosha’s documentary.
- Page 263* Cathedral site after the edifice was razed.
- Heaps of crushed stone and waste material is all that remained after the Cathedral was detonated.
- Page 264* [see text, pp. 329-332]
- Page 265* [see text, pp. 329-332]
- Page 266* Design for mounting sculpture from the Cathedral of Christ the Savior by architects N. Sobolev and G. Oshchepkov, 1948.
- Sculpture by Loganovsky, hauled from the Cathedral to the grounds of the Don Monastery, was mounted on one of the Monastery’s walls.
- Page 267* Restoration and mounting of Loganovsky’s sculpture on a wall of the Don Monastery, 1951-1953.

*Page 269* Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Photograph by Reinbot and Co., Moscow, late 1890's.

## THE CATHEDRAL'S REBIRTH

*“Let us revive the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, church of martial glory and Russian spirituality in Moscow where all of the Russian lands gather together!”*

(excerpt from an appeal published by the Fund to Rebuild the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, September 29, 1989)

*“With the twofold objective of rebuilding the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, a historic spiritual Russian treasure, and implementing reconstruction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> tract of block 27 in the Central Administrative Region’s Khamovniki section, the City of Moscow in agreement with the Moscow Patriarchate approves the proposed plan to rebuild the Cathedral of Christ the Savior submitted by Mosproekt-2 in response to the directive from the head of the City of Moscow dated December 16, 1992.*

(excerpt from Moscow City Ordinance No. 463, issued May 31, 1994)

Only a few years ago the thought of reconstructing the barbarously destroyed Cathedral of Christ the Savior was perceived as utopian. Now this has become a reality. Christ the Savior, the principal cathedral church of Russia, was erected by a pleiad of famous architects led by Konstantin Ton over the course of nearly a half century. The new Cathedral has gone up with fantastic speed. Despite the differences in the time it took to build them, the two edifices have much in common. Both were constructed during a period of national consciousness and of reborn Russian spirituality. Both are symbols: the first of the strength of the Russian people in the Patriotic War of 1812, the second of the rebirth of Russia, liberated from a politically nihilistic attitude toward its historic past. The second cathedral, like the first, was built in part from private contributions. For both special commissions were created to monitor progress of construction, quality of artistic decoration, and financing. The artists for both edifices were chosen on a competitive basis; cost was taken into consideration as well as quality. The competitions attracted the most talented practitioners, the resulting masterpieces deemed models of their respective genres.



The principles followed in reconstructing the Cathedral were founded on scholarly research and on experiences gained from earlier efforts. Invaluable help was provided by Vasily Moroz, director of Mospromstroi Company. The methodology employed was developed by leading Russian architects, among them Lev David, Pyotr Baranovsky, Vladimir Libson, and Sergey Podyapolsky. Although the lost edifice was not restored in its entirety, a restoration process was followed, one that minimized invention and arbitrary grouping of missing or poorly defined elements. All of the detail work, colors, and materials correspond to the original. The Cathedral's recreation was painstakingly documented. Extensive historical, archival, bibliographical, and art research had to be conducted. In addition, the role that the restored Cathedral would play in Moscow's urban planning was carefully considered. Restoring the Cathedral acquired a sense of urgency in the effort to recreate Moscow's unique look.

Rebuilding the Cathedral meant that topographical problems had to be tackled. In preparing the site for the Palace of Soviets, the rise on which the old Cathedral had stood had been removed. The architects were faced with the complicated task of restoring the site's relief to ensure that the new Cathedral would be at the same elevation as the old one. They did a creditable job, and, as a result, the restored Cathedral of Christ the Savior, like its predecessor, plays an important role in the urban plan of the city. Located in the center of Moscow, near the Kremlin, at a bend of the Moskva, and, forming the terminus of several streets, it shapes the southern part of one of the city's central squares. An integral part of the river's embankments, it recreates a sense of the area's urban setting in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the process of comparing and analyzing the design documentation of Ton's group of architects, researchers made a number of interesting discoveries.

Photogrammetry and computerized projections helped perfect discrete objects of research. Since the original Cathedral's construction stretched over several decades, many variants of its interior design exist. A thorough analysis of these showed that general architectural decisions about the Cathedral were made by Ton, decisions about its interior by a talented group of architects headed by his assistant, Alexander Rezanov. Virtually none of Ton's interior plans were executed. Everything was redone by these architects, and, as a result, the inside of the Cathedral did not have that dry, heavy, and ascetic look so characteristic of Ton's other churches.

The design documentation reveals that the main iconostasis was *the* organizing principle for the Cathedral's interior space. Thanks to serious scholarly investigations it was possible to restore the main iconostasis with maximal authenticity. Fragments of the original iconostasis were found in the Vernadsky State Geology Museum in Moscow. They permitted researchers to define the nature of the reliefs, the color of the marble, and, in addition, to verify the coordinates of its tiers since columns of Portovenere marble from various tiers of the iconostasis had been preserved. Photographs of the interior of the main iconostasis were also found, and this allowed the builders to reconstruct the marble facing of the altar canopy about which there was no information in the archives. Thus, all parts of the iconostasis are documented, not only by archival sources (the dimensions, shape, and color),<sup>1</sup> but also by photographs and, in part, by "living" fragments. In addition, the color gamut of the iconostasis could be ascertained, and not only of the inlays of multi-colored marble but also of the gold used to inscribe the iconostasis' white marble. The inscribing enabled researchers to identify certain architectural components and ornaments of white marble which over time had lost their shape and tracery because of direct and indirect light from

the windows of the west, north, and south wings.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the carving, color range of the marbles, and shapes of the icon cases installed in the Cathedral indicated that they had been executed at the same time as the main iconostasis, in other words, realizing the architects' idea of their having a direct tie with the main iconostasis and other aspects of the complex interior décor.

In its own way the Cathedral's interior design was part of a single whole, at one with the overall architecture in all its detail. Analysis of the interior revealed that same ornamental motifs were repeated in the carving of the iconostasis, in the art, church plate, and in the cast bronze gates and grillwork. The methodological and scholarly approach taken to restoring the Cathedral made for complex research to determine how the various elements of the interior's decorative furnishings, lighting fixtures, painting, cast and applied art correlated.

The lighting fixtures had a special role. They were an important artistic element in the Cathedral's interior ensemble. The fixtures came in many types and shapes. There were overhead lights (chandeliers), plain candlesticks, seven-light altar candlesticks, brackets for lamps, torches, and vigil lights. Each had several subtypes. More than thirty types could be documented, and there were close to two thousand of these objects in the church. Executed in eclectic styles by the finest masters, they occupy a special place in the history of Russian applied arts. Art historians traditionally have not studied objects such as lighting fixtures, and because of this it was decided not to attempt to restore the eclecticism of the Cathedral fixtures.

Each major stage in the development of art has stylistic attributes of its own which find reflection in decorative applied art and in the art-producing industry. Style periods in Russian decorative art, such as the baroque and neoclassical, have been favored for purposes of appraisal and for knowledge of their special

terminology, but the eclectic with all its many styles and artistic innovations, its fragmentation and multitude of tiny forms has failed to attract the attention of art historians. Only recently has it been reestablished as a stage in the history of artistic styles.

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior occupies a special place in the history of Russian art. The finest architects and artists of the time contributed to its aesthetic realization. Preparation of its lighting fixtures attracted talented designers and representatives of the art-producing industry. Working with various styles, following established traditions, they produced original, distinctive objects worthy of a monument-cathedral. In restoring the lighting fixtures, experts were faced with several problems. They tried to find, without success, examples of the original fixtures that remained intact after the destruction of the Cathedral. The removal of the gilded metal articles and materials from the Cathedral was strictly controlled by the Commercial Administration of the Secret Police (OGPU), bodies with no interest in the artistic value of these items but only in the gold that coated them. Thus, it was hardly surprising that none of these objects found their way into the storerooms of museums or the hands of private collectors. Stripped of their gold, they were delivered to the state's metal-producing arm and smelted.

Finding and using original plans for the lighting fixtures, however, was no less fruitful. The drawings of Rezanov and Dmitriev provide only a general idea of the fixtures' external appearance and decoration. And they are sketches, not fully executed working plans, as is obvious when they are compared to photographs of the finished chandeliers. This is not surprising given the hallowed tradition whereby the master creator or designer provided a basic idea of a building or object of decorative or applied art, leaving the detailed elaboration or realization to

the actual makers, often masters no less skilful who knew all the fine points of their craft.

Another factor to be considered in this context is that in realizing the designs sketched, for example, of lighting fixtures, technical problems would arise and corrections would have to be incorporated. Before large and complex objects such as lighting fixtures could be produced in metal, wooden models were customarily made. The model would be discussed, and any necessary changes would be introduced before the object itself was realized in metal. Unfortunately, the wooden models for these objects, which were stored in the Cathedral for many years, were destroyed sometime before 1900. Often too, in the mass preparation of lighting fixtures, a single example, one of metal, was made with the rest put into production only after further changes for practical or artistic reasons were introduced. The number of candlesticks in the lighting fixtures frequently was increased or decreased. The fixtures must have been produced efficiently because there are no correspondence or design materials related to this subject in the archives; instead there are descriptions of the fixtures, their parts, and dimensions and technical information about how they might be made.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, there are prints, photographs, drawings, and paintings. These present a more authentic, "factual" view of the lighting fixtures rather than intermediate designs which have not the final appearance of the chandelier. Photographs, however, frequently give only a partial impression of these objects; often missing are details and assemblies essential to a chandelier. In such instances, missing details can be determined by comparing the fixtures with photographs of chandeliers or of other objects with similar motifs made by the same master for another church. For example, few photographs, and of poor quality, are preserved of the hundred-candle chandelier manufactured for the

Cathedral by the Chopin factory. But a chandelier for one hundred forty-eight candles made by the same master appears in several good photographs in which many details are visible. Moreover, archival sources indicate that this larger chandelier was the model for several others. Based on similarities between various chandeliers, a unified style was devised for all the large Cathedral fixtures. Close critical analysis and comparison of all available sources made it possible to reproduce these fixtures.

Every detail of the revived cathedral was recreated with great care. One example is the cast bronze entry doors which are adorned with high reliefs. To recreate them an enormous amount of archival and art-related material had to be examined. Every element of the doors, their dimensions, the material out of which they were made, and their technical preparation was studied and documented. On the basis of this scrupulous analysis designs were developed and then used by Zurab Tsereteli to cast the new doors. The methods described here employed to restore the iconostasis, lighting fixtures, and entry doors were applied in restoring all the furnishings of the Cathedral.

Recreating the Cathedral's art work had its ups and downs. The basic concept followed was that used in recreating the other components of the interior décor, that is, maximal proximity to the originals, but the methodology employed was significantly different. In order to restore painted depictions it was necessary not only to know the subjects, coloring, and technique used and to have access to photographs, tracings, sketches, copies, etc. of the murals, but also to know the materials used, gesso and pigments. The authenticity of a restored mural relied on all of these contributing factors. Another criterion is the mastery of a living artist who takes on the task of restoring subjects depicted more than a hundred years earlier. He or she must be able not only to depict a subject but also be sensitive to

the manner in which the earlier artist painted, to think in the way that artist thought. One cannot not be the ‘author’ in the narrow sense of that term, for the ‘author’ died long ago. In attempting to restore a work done in the nineteenth century, the degree to which a restoration specialist penetrated the ideas and mastered the method of a painter of that century determines how authentic the new image is and how well it corresponds to the one that was lost. The academic style of the old masters added complication to this work. Absent from the practical experience of the new artist-monumentalists, it could not be assimilated. Restoration of canvases that had been preserved, understandably, was a far simpler task.

Most of the Cathedral’s murals perished when the great church was blown up. In the process of conducting research, it was discovered that a number of canvases, notably those of Vereshchagin, had been removed before the Cathedral was destroyed. They contained invaluable information about how the art was related in terms of content, color, subject, luster, and the like. Information of this kind was incomplete or absent from the descriptions of the murals found in the archives. Even sketches and studies of art work furnished only partial, intermediate information since, as a rule, they would undergo change in the process of being executed.

These few examples of how recreating the interior décor of the Cathedral was accomplished provides strong evidence of a revival not merely of the Cathedral but also of a scholarly approach to Russia’s historical legacy, recreation of which requires thorough analysis and solid documentation. In addition, research conducted in connection with recreating the Cathedral opened unknown pages in the history of Russian architecture of the second half of the nineteenth century.

As final work continues on the décor of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the Cathedral itself has again begun to occupy an appropriate and worthy place in

the spiritual life of the city. Christmas and Easter liturgies, baptisms of infants, weddings, and funeral services are being conducted there. In the administrative quarters of the Cathedral commissions consisting of lay and clerical persons are at work, discussing and deciding matters having to do with rebuilding the Cathedral as well as tackling the more general problem of Russia's spiritual revival.

<sup>1</sup> RGADA [Russian State Archives of Early Acts], f. 1239, op. 39, d. 313. *O postavke ital'ianskogo mramora dlia glavnogo ukonostasa i o proizvodstve mramornykh rabot (1875-1880).*

RGADA, f. 1239, op. 39, d. 313, l. 13 ob. *Proekt konditsii na mramornuiu rabotu glavnogo ikonostasa.*

<sup>2</sup> TsIAM [Central Historical Archives of Moscow], f. 243, op. 9, d. 1028, l. 1. *O pozolote i raskraske mramornykh ikonostasov.* Denisov, A. M., "Unikal'nost' ikonostasa khrama Khrista Spasitelia," *Moskovskii zhurnal*, #2, 1997, pp. 11-15.

<sup>3</sup> RGADA, f. 1239, op. 39, d., 373. TsIAM, f. 243, op. 9, d. 904, l. 9. TsIAM, f. 243, op. 9, d. 935, l. 303-304, RGADA, f. 1239, op. 39, d. 393, l. 20. RGIA Moskvyy [Russian State Historical Archives of Moscow], f. 243, op. 9, d. 980, l. 328, and RGADA, f. 1239, op. 39, d. 391, l. 2.

### Illustration Captions

- Page 273* Consecration of the cornerstone of the Chapel dedicated to the "Derzhava" Virgin, September 22, 1992. At the ceremony, Archpriest Vladimir Rigin, Head Priest of the Orthodox parish of the reconstructed Cathedral of Christ the Savior, stated: "The Chapel honors the 'Derzhava' Virgin found in 1917, the year in which His Majesty Emperor Nicholas II was deprived of his throne. From that time Russia has been under the protection of the Virgin, and it is important that we not lose Her ability to intercede for us."
- Page 274* Cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Cathedral of Christ the Savior which began in the Kremlin's Uspensky Cathedral. The liturgy was conducted by Aleksey II, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, on January 7, 1995.
- Page 275* Cornerstone-laying of the Cathedral which took place on the feast day of Christ's Birth, January 7, 1995.
- Page 276* Cathedral being reborn.
- Page 277* Easter Even at the site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior's recreation, April 23, 1995. Aleksey II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia was the celebrant.
- Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, and his spouse at Easter Even in the Cathedral, April 14, 1996.
- Page 278* Archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev, the Cathedral's Sacristan, consecrating bells.



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- Mounting the main cross.
- Mounting a bell.
- Page 279* Northwest bell tower against the background of Moscow.
- Sections of the main entry, west facade.
- Main entry, north façade.
- Page 280* Chapel of the “Derzhava” Virgin.
- Page 281* First infant baptism.
- Burial service of writer Vladimir Soloukhin.
- Page 282* Receiving the Holy Patriarch.
- Opening “The Path to the Cathedral.”
- Page 283* Easter Even, April 27, 1997.
- Page 284* Dean of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Aleksey II, Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

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## Chronology

**January 7, 1813 (December 25, 1812, old style)**

On the occasion of the Feast of Christ's Birth Alexander I proclaims that a memorial cathedral dedicated to Christ the Savior will be erected in Moscow.

**October 25 (12), 1817**

The cornerstone for the Cathedral designed by Alexander Vitberg is laid on Sparrow Hills.

**1826**

Nicholas I orders that work on the Cathedral be halted.

**September 23 (10), 1839**

The cornerstone for the Cathedral designed by Konstantin Ton is laid on the site of the Alekseevsky Monastery.

**1858**

The first stage of the Cathedral's construction is completed. The building is freed of its timber scaffolding.

**1882**

The Cathedral is completed.

**June 8 (May 26), 1883**

The Cathedral is consecrated during the coronation year of Alexander III.

**1931**

The Construction Commission for the Palace of Soviets is created. After six sessions, the Temporary Construction Council decides to raze the Cathedral.

**December 5, 1931**

Explosives are used to demolish the Cathedral.

**December 5, 1990**

The cornerstone is laid for a chapel honoring the 'Derzhava' Virgin, precursor of the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

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**January 7, 1995**

Feast of Christ's Birth. The cornerstone is laid for the new Cathedral of Christ the Savior.