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## Russian Freemasonry

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Pierre gradually began to recover himself and look about the room and at the people in it. Round a long table covered with black sat some twelve brethren in garments like those he has already seen. Several of them Pierre had met in St. Petersburg society. At the head of the table sat a young man he did not know, with a peculiar cross hanging from his neck. On his right sat the Italian abbi whom Peter had seen at Anna Pavlovna's two years before. There were also present a very important dignitary, and a Swiss tutor who used to be in the Kuragin family. All preserved a solemn silence, listening to the words of the Worshipful Master, who held a gavel in his hand. Let into the wall was a star-shaped light. On one side of the table was a small carpet with curious figures worked upon it; on the other was something resembling an altar on which lay the New Testament and a skull. Round the table stood seven large candlesticks of ecclesiastical design. Two of the Brethren led Pierre up to the Altar, placed his feet at right angles and bade him lie down, saying he must prostrate himself at the Gates of the Temple.

"He ought to receive the trowel first," whispered one of the brethren.

"Oh, quite, please!" said another.

Perplexed, Pierre peered about him with his short-sighted eyes, without obeying, and suddenly doubts rose in his mind. "Where am I? What am I doing? They are making fun of me, surely? Will the time come when I shall be ashamed of all this?" But these doubts only lasted a moment. He looked at the serious faces of those around him, thought of all he had just gone through and realised that there was no stopping half way. He was aghast at his hesitation, and trying to summon back his former feeling of devotion cast himself down..." *Tolstoy, WAR & PEACE.*

Most of us have read or know about the Masonic sequences in Tolstoy's WAR & PEACE {Part V, Chapters 3 & 4} published in 1868 and, perhaps, although less well known, we have encountered THE POSSESSED by Dostoevsky.

Yet there are other authors such as V.I. Likin, N.M. Karamzin, M.M. Kheraskov, V.I. Maikov, A.N. Radishchev, A.A. Rzhevskii, A.P. Sumarokov and M.M. Shcherbatov who, in the final third of the eighteenth century, were attracted to the Society of Freemasons, joined the fraternity and began to integrate Masonic principles into their writings.

But to mention Freemasonry in the same context as "Russia" usually invokes an immediate reaction of surprise as if our perceptions of the Craft and the milieu of Russia are and always were antithetical.

We all have images invoked by the mentioning of that nation -- salt mines, the midnight knock on the door, bread queues and hunger, the KGB, the Gulags, mind-numbing cold, missiles, the Berlin Wall, pathological sadness, grey skies, grey cities, grey people, hostile, Enemies!

Yet, on reflection, I'm sure we all realised that the blanket term "Russia" we once used to describe the burgeoning nation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with its 8,649,489 square miles and a population in excess of 250 million spread over fifteen constituent republics was more than these mental images. Of course, that "Russia" no longest exists, though I am sure the term will long continue to be used as a convenient tag for the Commonwealth of Independent States. Yet the CIS is as far removed from our mental "Russia" as the old Russian Empire and it is with that Empire that this paper is primarily concerned.

In this paper, I would like to share with you some observations on the founding of Freemasonry in the old Russian Empire and some of the personalities involved.

There is an apocryphal story that the Tsar of Russia, Peter the Great, acquired a knowledge of Freemasonry during a visit to England in 1698 from Sir Christopher Wren. And it is claimed that Peter participated in the formation of a Masonic Lodge on his return to Russia in which he undertook the role of Junior Warden -- which would be typical of the unassuming Tsar Peter.

In spite of the doubt that Peter's English mentor, Wren, actually was a Freemason, the Russians claim Wren founded English Freemasonry. Robert Gould argued that this legendary basis of Wren's Freemasonry could be 'blamed' on Dr. James Anderson's reference to Wren in his Constitutions of 1738 which are irreconcilable with those in his earlier publication of 1723. A.G. Cross, on the other hand, claimed that much of the mythical character of this story stems from Russian reliance on German source material rather than English.

I used the word "apocryphal" when referring to Tsar Peter's Lodge. He is attributed with forming a Lodge with the aid of two intimate friends, Lefort of Geneva and Patrick Gordon, a Scottish Guard, in 1717. Unfortunately for this story, both Lefort and Gordon died in 1699!

But, putting this account aside for the moment, there is better agreement that Freemasonry in Russia began with the flamboyant Lord James Keith (1696 - 1758), a descendent from Scottish nobility, banished in 1715 for his support of the Stuart Pretender. He served in the Spanish Army, before moving to Russia in 1728 with the recommendation of Phillip V, and by the early 1740's was a leading Russian (sic) Army General. The Russian Empress Anna appointed him as the military governor of the Ukraine. But, importantly for our story, Keith was made Provincial Grand Master of Russian Freemasonry in 1740 by the Grand Master of England who also happened to be Keith's Cousin. Captain John Phillips had been appointed to this office for Russia in 1731, but there is no evidence to suggest he ever exercised it.

The minutes of the premier Grand Lodge of England for 24 June 1731 record:

"Then the Grand Master and his General Officers signed a Deputation for our Rt. Worshipful Brother John Phillips Esqr. to be Grand Master of free and accepted Masons within the Empires of Russia and Germany and Dominions and Territories thereunto belonging, and his health was drank wishing Prosperity to the Craft in those parts" (Batham, Transactions, p.34).

The 1738 edition of Anderson's Constitutions records Phillips' appointment as being Provincial Grand Master for Russia only. But, as Cyril Batham points out, the appointment of a Provincial Grand Master in those days did not necessarily indicate the existence of a Provincial Grand Lodge, nor even the existence of a single lodge within the Province, and, indeed, we have no reason to believe that Phillips had any lodge operating in this gigantic Province.

The later appointment of James Keith as Provincial Grand Master of Russian Freemasonry, of course, was only two years after the general suppression of the Craft by the Papal Bull of Pope Clement XIII. It is likely that Keith, as a Jacobite, only paid lip service to the English jurisdiction during the one-year Grand Mastership of his cousin and thereafter influenced Russian Freemasonry towards Germany as the inspirational source for ritual.

One of the powerful influences on Russian Freemasonry was the Rite of Strict Observance. This Rite was sponsored by Baron Karl Gotthelf von Hund (1722-1776), Provincial Grand Master of the Craft in Germany. This system, so-called because of its vows of unquestioned obedience to (unknown) superiors, was based on the myth that Templar secrets had survived the suppression of the Order in 1312 by fleeing to Scotland. It is interesting to note that von Hund, a man of integrity, was convinced that the unknown Grand Master was Charles Edward Stuart. In approximately 1744, von Hund claimed he had been received into the Order of the Temple in Paris in the presence of William, fourth and last Earl of Kilmarnock, who was also Grand Master Mason of Scotland in 1742-1743. Earl Kilmarnock was executed in 1746 for his support of Charles Edward Stuart (Smythe, pp.14-15). So, with these various links to the Stuart cause, you may see the attraction of this Rite to the Jacobean Keith. The Rite as such outlived von Hund by about eighty years.

Another interesting sidelight here was that also in 1740, protocol forced King George II to receive the exiled Keith as a diplomatic representative of Russia.

Boris Telepneff describes Keith as "one of the most remarkable personalities of his time".

In fact, his impact on Russian Freemasonry was such that a song in his praise exists:

*After him [Peter the Great] Keith, full of light, came to the Russians; and exalted by zeal lit up the sacrifice. He erected the Temple of Wisdom, corrected our thoughts and hearts and confirmed us in brotherhood. He was an image of that dawn, the clear rise of which announces to the World the arrival of the Lightseeking Queen [presumably Freemasonry].*

Keith left Russia to take up service with Frederick the Great (King of Prussia and another Freemason) in 1747. There is no evidence as to why Keith left Russia, but it could have been occasioned by the Austro-French coalition which saw Russia as one of the mainstays against Prussia and Great Britain.

Keith was killed in 1758 during the Seven Years' War but his groundwork saw to it that Freemasonry continued to grow in Russia. In 1756 the first Russian lodge to actually be consecrated with a name was formed in St. Petersburg under the patronage of the

Anglophile Count R.L. Vorontsov, Worshipful Master of The Lodge of Silence. The members of Vorontsov's Lodge included many men who later became famous, viz: Sumarkov (author), Prince Scherbatov (Historian), Mamonov (Literary fame), Prince Dashkov, Prince Golitzin, Prince Toubetzky and Prince Meschersky.

That same year (1756) came the first official police investigations of Masonry carried out by the "Secret Chancellery of the Empire" who were investigating the "Masonic Sect" to determine "its foundation, and who constitutes its membership". This had been instigated when rumours began circulating about Freemasonry's foreign and seditious plans.

It is necessary to give background here. Peter the Great had dragged a feudal, agrarian Russia into the 18th century with education reforms, the construction of a navy, a few wars to push things along and a shake up of the bureaucracy based on a European model. This included advancement in the civil service by examination and demonstrated ability rather than by purchase or seniority. Russia's isolation and parochialism was hard to beat and two factions arose. The Westernizers who argued Russia could learn from the West. And, in a way they were correct. Russia was in a unique position to abstract from the West all those ideas and processes that had undergone centuries of trial and error, research and development in the West, adopting the latest concepts after due trials and refinements that had been test bedded in the West. In opposition were the Slavophiles who counter claimed that they were doing very nicely until Peter messed it all up. This Slavophile notion continued for centuries and, in fact, when Karl Marx was contacted by the Russian dissidents in the late 19th century, their argument (and poor old Karl tended to agree with them to keep them happy... after all they seemed to have been the only ones to have read his manifesto!)..the argument was that the innate, rural Muzhik of Russia -- the peasant serf and his accidentally socialist way of life in sharing everything was the model from which Europe could learn, and not the other way around! Mind you, anyone who associated with a Muzhik deserved everything he got along with fleas, starvation and more terminal diseases than you could shake a stick at.

This first investigation exonerated the Craft by finding that its membership was defined as "nothing else but the key of friendship and of eternal brotherhood", the reigning Tsar (Peter III who was later assassinated by his wife Catherine the Great) appears to have joined the movement, and a number of lodges were founded at places where the Tsar would reside -- St. Petersburg, Oranienbaum and so on. It may be imagined that the Emperor did not like to travel to meetings and, considering the state of the Empire's roads in the Spring thaw, who could blame him? Remember, this is primarily an agrarian society.

But there was no real organisational structure to the lodges... that is until Ivan Pertfil'evich Elagin [or "Yelaguin" according to Telepneff and Batham] (1725 - 1793) appeared.

Elagin was an extraordinary bureaucrat, wielding considerable power during the Reign of Catherine the Great who ruled Russia for 34 years -- 1762-1796. Catherine had a great deal of confidence in Elagin and sometimes signed her letters "Mr Elagin's Chancellor". Elagin was also tutor to Grand Duke Paul and one of the first Slavophiles.

Catherine found the English form of Russian Freemasonry quite acceptable and complimentary to the dilettantish atmosphere of her court. However, Elagin admitted that he had turned to Freemasonry in the 1750's out of boredom, curiosity and vanity. He was also attracted by the secrecy of the proceedings and by the hope of meeting high-ranking Russian courtiers and statesmen. Elagin initially perceived no other purpose in Freemasonry than providing a venue whereby discrete meetings could be arranged in order to exploit the friendship of fellow Lodge members for his worldly affairs. He wrote in his memoirs that he found the ceremonies "incomprehensible... strange (and involving) actions .. deprived of sense" and the rituals were full of "unintelligible symbols and catechisms unrelated to reason". (see Grinwald, p.22).

In 1762 a Templar Rite of Melesius sprang up, founded by a Greek Freemason and superposing four High Grades on those of the Craft. It seems to have lasted twenty years; but in 1765 there came a revival of the Strict Observance Rite which dominated Russian Freemasonry.

In 1771 the Engraved Lists of the Grand Lodge of England recorded as #414 their first lodge in Russia -- Perfect Union (or Peace and Union) in St. Petersburg. It should be emphasised, however, that although this Lodge had been entered on these lists at the date of the granting of its Constitution (1 June 1771), it had been active in Russia prior to that date. The Masonic position in Russia became even more complicated in 1771 with the introduction from Germany of the Zinnendorf System -- a Christian order of Masonry but a curious mixture of the three Craft degrees and various knightly orders.

On 28 February 1772, Elagin was made Provisional Grand Master of Russia by the Grand Lodge of England, a position he held until 1784. He was only the third Provisional Grand Master the Grand Lodge of England had appointed. For all his initial qualms as to the relevance of the Masonic ceremonies, he soon added to the rituals so that they became somewhat exotic. He argued that the exotic rituals were justified on practical grounds as substitutes for the rites of the Church. He described a Freemason as "A Free man able to Master his Inclinations...(and able) to Subornidate his Will to the Laws of Reason."

By 1774, Elagin's lodges had a membership of over 200 made up of Russian nobles and foreign diplomats and members from all levels of the civil and military service. In that year, five Russian Lodges were added to the Grand Lodge of England's Lists:

# 466 -- Nine Muses, St. Petersburg

# 467 -- Urania, St. Petersburg

# 468 -- Bellona, St. Petersburg

# 469 -- Mars, Jassy, Moldavia

# 470 -- Clio, Moscow<>

The list of members published by Telepneff (AQC Volume XXXV) emphasises two important points:

**(a)** Under Elagin, Russian Freemasonry, with the exception of one or two more-or-less foreign lodges, consisted of the members of the best Russian families who were shaping the destiny of Russia not only at court and in the various government departments, but also in the military and in artistic achievements.

(b) From their position, character and activities, they were sincere and serious about their commitment to Freemasonry.

The following year, a man who was to become one of the most influential Russian Freemasons joined the Craft. Nicolai Ivanovich Novikov joined Freemasonry in 1775 through Elagin's St. Petersburg lodge, although he refused to submit to the initiation rituals Elagin was using. Novikov was a prodigious organiser as we will see in a moment and one who opened paths of practical activity for the sedentary aristocracy.

There is a character in Russian literature named Oblomov who spends all his days in bed because he can't decide what actions he should undertake first. Mind you, his ideas of action centre about eating, drinking and women. This was an extreme example of the lethargy infecting the aristocracy.

Novikov was a member of the exclusive Izmailovsky regiment (the regiment that had put Catherine on the throne of the Russian Empire) and of Catherine's Legislative Commission. He wrote that he was dissatisfied with Elagin's rituals: that he felt many Russians were playing "Mason" like a child's game. What had become known as "Elagin's System" for the ritual was based on fundamental imitations of English Freemasonry with peculiar and artificial admixtures from other systems. For example, during initiation, or "ordeal" as Elagin called it, the candidate's shirt was covered with blood and his blood literally mixed with that taken from the attending brethren. (Telepneff, AQC XXXV, p.271).

"(Elagin) introduced, or at least authorised the introduction of other degrees, seven in all, the first Craft degrees, followed by:

40 -- The Dark Vault  
50 -- The Scotch Master  
60 -- The Philosopher's Degree  
70 -- Spiritual Knighthood."

(*Batham, Transactions, p.37*)

Elagin defined the Order as:

"The preservation and transference to other generations of some great mystery which has come to us from the most ancient ages, even from the first man, and from which mystery may depend the fate of humanity, if in his benevolence to all peoples God would design to open it to the whole world".

For Elagin, this was not only Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, but a mystical doctrine seeking the secret and precious tree of life; the fruits of which we were deprived when exiled from Eden.

But within a year, Novikov had sent Russian Freemasonry into its second and more intense phase by breaking with Elagin's dreamy and mystic quest and founding a new lodge with Moscow as its spiritual centre.

Moscow became the centre for all those opposed to Catherine at this time. The population of the city was somewhere around 400,000 -- twice that of St. Petersburg, and this made it the only city large enough to entertain the illusion of centralised control and uniform national culture for the entire disparate empire. Foreigners found Moscow uncongenial -- grey, bleak, unsmiling. The narrow streets, self-contained suburbs and its historical and geographical closeness to the heart of Russia made it forever suspicious of new ideas.

Under Novikov, Russian Freemasonry turned from the casual, fraternal activities of Elagin's "English" Masonry to the highly dedicated and esoteric orders of Scottish Masonry, introducing closer bonds of secrecy and mutual obligation, special catechisms and vows and new Quasi-Oriental costumes, and rituals. Freemasonry became the first ideological class movement of the Russian Aristocracy and opposed to the atheistic ideas permeating into Russia from France.

To understand the unique religious influences acting on Russian Freemasonry, it is necessary to make a brief explanatory divergence.

Russia had been converted to Christianity very late in history... in fact not until the 10th century -- in 986 AD.

Kiev was the obvious capital as it grew up around the major river obstacle (a series of rapids) in the Dnieper leading to Constantinople. Moscow was a collection of wooden huts at this time...something that didn't change very much even when it DID become the capital and which led to periodic urban renewal occasioned by catastrophic fires.

A few centuries earlier, river pirates had forced the locals around Kiev to request mercenary help from the Varangians -- a Scandanivian tribe who came all the way down the river systems from the North, defeated the pirates and immediately took over running the country. Prince Rurik was the first ruler and founder of one of the only two families ever to Rule Russia -- the Rurik's and the Romanov's.

A descendant of Rurik, Prince Vladimir was ruling in Kiev at the time of the conversion of the Rus. He had secured his throne by killing all his brothers. But his grandmother, Olga had earlier converted to Christianity and applied pressure on her grandson to do likewise.

The Primary Chronicle (the Russian version of The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or the Icelandic Kalevala) tells us Vladimir not only had seven wives, but three hundred (!) concubines at Vyshgorod, 300 at Belgorod and 200 at Berestovo. One wonders how he had the time to become the consummate soldier and administrator he really was.

But, being a good grandson and seeing political advantages in conversion, he considered the available options and saw four contenders: Islam, Judaism, the Church of Rome and Byzantine Orthodoxy. So he sent representatives to all four to investigate and have the contenders argue their case.

Well, as a grown man he didn't think much of circumcision, so Judiasm was out. Actually, when he asked the Jews why they had been expelled from Jerusalem, they replied:



"God was angry at our forefathers and scattered us among the gentiles on account of our sins".

Vladimir could see no promise in the faith of a dispersed people.

Nor was Prince Vladimir impressed by the Islamic abstention from alcohol. In fact, his emissaries found Moslem worship to be "frenzied and foul smelling". The Islamic contenders claimed that Mohammed would give each man 70 fair women. With 800 concubines, Vladimir was doing very well, thank you, in this department.

However, rather than being the also-ran in this contest, Orthodoxy's church service and beautiful churches made a deep impression. (The representatives were shown that most beautiful of all Orthodox temples, the Hagia Sophia).

Again, from The Primary Chronicle:

"The Greeks led us to the buildings where they worship their god and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on Earth. For on Earth there is no such splendour or such beauty and we are at a loss to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty."

Obviously a clear winner since they found no comparable glory in the Roman Church. It may also have helped that women were separated during the service so Vladimir could get some rest! The real point was that concrete beauty and not abstract ideas conveyed the essence of the Christian message to the Rus.

So the Rus were converted en masse in a universal ceremony. But with Christianity came the realisation that their country really had no glorious history. No cultural heritage. So somewhat amazing accounts were derived that insist that, for example, St. Andrew visited Moscow on his way to Rome from Palestine; that Russia was settled by the descendants of Shem and so on.

There also arose the semi-mystical concept of The Third Rome which was a very powerful influence in Russia. This argues that Russia is the repository of the true faith. The three Romes are Rome itself as the First, Constantinople as the Second after the shift in the Church to the east and the fall of Rome in 410 AD, and, as foretold in Revelations, the Third Rome will never be since its creation/foundation heralds the Final Days. Moscow as the Third Rome was an important influence in Russia after their conversion and the fiasco of the Third Crusade in which the western knights attacked Constantinople in a fit of rage and never even got to the Holy Land. Byzantine Orthodoxy had lost the ball on the one yard line and Russia had picked it up!

Also Russia saw itself (and still does) as the saviour of Europe. Offering itself as a sacrifice so the rest of Europe may be protected. Russia was invaded by the Mongols, by Napoleon and by Hitler -- all with horrendous loss of life and, perhaps justifiably, they claim their sacrifice saved western Europe. Of course there are problems here since Napoleon for one had defeated most of western Europe before the battle of Borodino. Nonetheless, these ideas reinforced the concept that Russia somehow had acquired a holy mission.

But at the time we were talking about, the typical member of the Russian intelligentsia still longed for the cultural antecedents of other European nations. So Novikov derived a rich pre-history based on St. Andrew who he argued had brought Christianity to Russia before St. Peter's visit to Rome.

The Westernising trends for Russia begun by Peter the Great, reached a zenith with Catherine. She was a cultural vampire, sucking up selected pieces of European culture and she especially drew to her court out-of-context aspects of the French Enlightenment. It may be said that the Russian psyche was such that the spark to evolve a Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert or Montesquieu could never have arisen in Russia.

In the West we have an image of melancholy Russians -- manic depressives to a man. On a whole, that is accurate. The HUGE spaces and absolute loneliness of the Russian forests engender a smallness in individual Russian mentality. Look around, and you can't see the forest for the trees.

In 1756 Russia had entered into a new diplomatic and cultural alliance with France. On her accession to the throne Catherine wrote:

If the gain is not great in commerce, we shall compensate ourselves with bales of intelligence.

So it was, that by the 1770s and 1780s, the Russian aristocracy under Catherine's influence found themselves at the crossroads of their religion and Voltairianism (Vol'ter'ianstvo) by which they meant Rationalism, Scepticism and a vague passion for Reform.

Catherine was thirty-four, Voltaire was seventy. His Philosophy of History had the unprecedented sales' figures of 3000 copies sold in St. Petersburg within a few days of its publication. He quickly became the official historian of the Russian Empire and a kind of saint for the secular aristocracy. Voltairianism became the ruling force in Western Culture much as Latinism had done in the fifteenth century.

Voltaire led the Deists of the French Enlightenment. Their approach to religion was ambivalent at best. They argued that the only valuable elements in Christianity were those identical with the teachings of the great philosophers. All else was nonsense. The Jews of the Bible, the so-called Chosen People, were primitive peasants with little culture (a sore point here in Russia for reasons outlined above) and with bad morals, thieves and murderers. The Church Fathers were little better; they were ignorant, superstitious, power-hungry, quarrelsome men. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, was a collection of incoherent maxims and improbable stories celebrating crimes and absurdities.

They did believe in a Supreme Being -- but one who had created the Universe and retired. Thereafter the whole thing continued to operate by immutable laws. Miracles, for example, were impossible as they violated of the laws of nature.

Changes in the Slavonic Church ritual had already lead to a major schism some hundred years earlier. You may recall the trauma when the Latin Mass was replaced by the Mass in English. Well, in Russia an almost similar revision caused many to simply split away

and follow the old ways -- The Old Believers -- who were prepared and did die for their beliefs. To us the changes seem insignificant, invoking the name of Jesus twice instead of three times, reducing the number of genuflections you must make and so on. But one Old Believer, Avatum, lived for 40 years in a hole in the ice as a protest. Others burnt themselves alive in their churches and so on.

But even those who followed the new church rituals were increasingly anxious to dissociate themselves from the agnosticism and superficiality of court life. They found in the Swedish system of Freemasonry a chance for inner regeneration and for a re-discovery of inner truth and the lost unity of the early Christian church.

Why Swedish?

Cross points out that the primary era of English influence on Russian Freemasonry was between 1770 and 1776. By 1770, there were at least twelve major lodges in Eastern Germany and the Baltic. This was to rapidly spread to Prussia and Russia. For example, in 1761 there had been a Field Lodge formed in the Russian Army which, at the time, had its Winter quarters in West Prussia and its head-quarters at Marienburg.

King Guastav III of Sweden gave Swedish Masonry a special stamp of respectability by freely flaunting his masonic ties in 1776 during a state visit to St. Petersburg and won the patronage of Grand Duke Paul -- a famous Russian patriot, historian and political rival to and personal enemy of Catherine. This led to a linking of Russian and Swedish Freemasonry into one system when, in 1778, the Moscow Lodge of Prince Troubetskoy joined the Swedish System. Novikov closed his Petrograd Lodges and transferred their activities to Moscow.

Swedish Masonry at this time had nine grades and a secret tenth group of nine members... Commanders of the Red Cross. The strict observance and mystical-military nature of this had appeals in Prussia and by a kind of cultural osmosis spread to Russia. Members of the Swedish groups generally adopted new names as a sign of their inner regeneration and participated in communal efforts to discover through reading and meditation the inner truth of Christianity. I've explained the special role and relationship Russia saw for itself in Christianity. The Russian aristocrats saw this system as a vehicle whereby they could fortify their realm against incursions of the reformist ideas of the French Enlightenment.

On 25 May 1779, a Swedish Grand Provincial Lodge of Russia was officially opened according to the Swedish ritual and thereafter vied for supremacy with the Grand Provincial Lodge of Elagin. Efforts to unite all Russian lodges under one system and one grandmaster (the Duke of Sudermania, brother of Guastav III -- had failed when Elagin refused to hand control of Russian Freemasonry into foreign hands. The two Masonic systems therefore remained separate. Fears were aroused that the Swedish-directed lodges of strict observance were Jesuit-inspired, Catholic and absolutist in tendency. It was their political implications, however, rather than their esoteric aspects which alienated some Russians and many moved to Elagin's system.

In 1782 secret societies were prohibited by the Russian government, but Freemasonry was not included in this decree. Yet, in 1784 Elagin decided to close all lodges under his jurisdiction due to increased political pressures from the Crown.

More importantly for the Russian Freemasons, Prince Gagarin, a friend of Catherine's son Paul, founded links to the Berlin Lodge Minerva and brought back with him to Russia the teacher of occult lore Johann Georg Schwartz. Schwartz, a Transylvanian by birth, had arrived in Moscow in 1779 to take up a post as professor of German in the gymnasia of Moscow University, a post probably secured through his Masonic connections (see Madariaga, *Russia in the Age...*, p.522)

With Novikov, Schwartz immediately began to transform Russian Masonry. They formed the first secret society in Russia (The Gathering of University Foster Children) and tried to integrate Masonry with the Russian higher educational system. Schwartz was made inspector of a seminary established to train teachers for the expected expansion of Russia's educational system.

Novikov founded his own weekly satirical journal 'Truten' (The Drone) in which he voiced the increasing dissatisfaction of the native Russian nobility with Catherine's imitation of French ways and her toleration of social injustice. In the first issue, Novikov posed a question destined to be the central preoccupation of the Russian Intelligentsia movement. Confessing he had no desire to serve in the army, civil service or at court, he asked what could he do for society?; adding by way of explanation that to live on this earth without being of use is only a burden to it (see Pipes p.256).

His solution was to turn to publicistic and philanthropic work. He and his friends took over the moribund Moscow University Press and transformed the institution itself into a centre of intellectual ferment. The university then had less than 100 enrolled students who listened to uninspired lectures in German and Latin. Novikov organised a public library to be associated with the University and between 1781 and 1784 published more books than had appeared in the entire previous 24 years.

By 1791 the number of readers of the official University gazette rose from 600 to 4000.

Novikov set up the first two private printing presses in 1783. The next year he established the first joint-stock insurance company and organised a surprisingly successful nationwide famine relief system along with the first private insurance company. He published a regular journal *Morning Light* in which he sought to impart the philosophical basis of the classical thinkers. He also wrote a considerable number of books ranging from children's tales to history.

In all his writings, Novikov's principal target of attack was the "vice" he identified with the Russian 'aristocratic' qualities of idleness, ostentatiousness, indifference to the sufferings of the poor, immorality, careerism, flattery, ignorance and contempt for knowledge. In comparison, his "virtues" were industriousness, modesty, truthfulness, compassion, incorruptibility and studiousness.

The University Press made a considerable profit from Novikov's translations program. Works translated included Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of Old England* (a work commissioned by Catherine herself), Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Rousseau's *Emile*, and Grotius' *Discourse Against Atheism* (translated by Archbishop Ambrosius of Moscow). For his part, Novikov's literary output included contributions to a number of periodicals, some with a pronounced Masonic slant, others catering to the developing interest in economic or cultural affairs designed to place informative rather than

diverting literature in the hands of the noble and burgher families. These included such publications as *Gorodskaya i derevenskaya biblioteka* ('Town and Country Library') or *Poko yushchisya trudolyubets* ('The Busy Man at Rest') or his popular series for children *Detskoye Cheniye*.

But Novikov also held a passionate interest not only in editing and publishing, but in distribution and took a prominent role in the development of the book trade throughout provincial Russia.

At a time when the production of most of the provincial printing presses were unable to find a commercial outlet, censorship records show Novikov's publications were on sale in a number of important provincial towns from Archangel to Tambov, from Nizhniy Novogorod to Irkutsk. Madariaga (Russia in the Age...p 523) has argued that these provincial towns were nearly all towns in which there were Masonic lodges, often under the direction of the Moscow Masons, and many of those who supervised and supplied the book stores were active Freemasons.

With Novikov's organisation of a supporting program, by 1780, he and Schwartz had a number of wealthy patrons. They formed a *Sientificheskia* ("secret scientific") lodge named Harmony Lodge. This was dedicated to returning Russian society to Christianity. In 1782 the lodge formed a "fraternal learned society" with translators to publish selected foreign books. 21 of the 35 society members were drawn from Schwartz's seminaries.

Schwartz, unfortunately, fell under the spell of the Prussian Rosicrucian leaders, Johan Christoph Wollner and J.C.A.Theden, and was initiated into the Rosicrucian Order during a trip to Germany in 1781-1782, and was now empowered to set up his own province of the Order in Russia. Like Novikov, Schwartz had become disillusioned by the charlatanism present in some of the Masonic orders at that time.

On his return to Russia, Schwartz reorganised Harmony Lodge into a Rosicrucian centre, subordinated to Wollner and Theden. Schwartz had been empowered to recruit Freemasons and direct their activities, sending to his superiors in Prussia an annual report on newly admitted brethren and ten roubles for each new recruit. At the Willhelmstadt Masonic Conference in 1782, Schwartz secured the recognition of Russia as the eighth province of European Freemasonry under the grandmaster of European strict observance Freemasonry, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick. Thus, though apparently affiliated to strict observance European Freemasonry under Duke Ferdinand, Schwartz's circle was in fact and possibly without the knowledge of most of its members, subordinated to the Berl in Rosicrucians. The post of provincial grandmaster for this eighth province was vacant, and it was hoped that Grand Duke Paul might occupy it. But Schwartz became chancellor of the Rosicrucians, and de facto head of an expanding network of provincial lodges. He alone knew the full list of Rosicrucians and only the masters of the sixty lodges eventually founded knew that Rosicrucianism was the central purpose of this system.

Largely due to his ascetic self-discipline of so-called healthy food, cold showers and so on, Schwartz died in 1784. He was 33! So much for the healthy life style!!

A new grand Master for the Rosicrucians (Baron Schroder) arrived from Germany to take over Schwartz's role, and numerous young Russians thronged the opposite way to Berlin hoping to unravel the "secret".

Originally, the Fraters of the Blessed Order of the Rosy-Cross were pledged to the relief of the suffering, to attempt the cure of diseases free of charge and to found hospices and retreats from the world for like-minded individuals. They spent their lives in search of truth, the knowledge of man and his possibilities and his relationship with other planes of existence beyond the material world.

These noble aims were quickly corrupted and added to so that by the 1680s members were now "scientific dabblers", chemical philosophers, alchemists and astrologers. Any educated person could find a place under the Rosicrucian banner. Primarily they sought the universal solvent (what to keep it in?) the universal cure or remedy and, of course, the transmutation of base metals into gold.

The movement died out in Europe during the Thirty Years' War but, for the Russians, science always had an attraction beyond the material gains it promises. Couple this with a mystical background and you may see what attraction this had for the budding intelligentsia in Russia.

Gradually the so-called "knightly" degrees fell into disuse and the work of the Russian lodges became centred entirely on the Rosicrucian Order. In 1786 Prince Frederick William, a practising Rosicrucian, became King of Prussia, and a bewildering profusion of occult fraternities flooded into a receptive Russia.

It was argued that the world was the supreme temple of Masonry. Rosicrucianism was the final level for which the earlier Masonic degrees were mere preliminaries. To attain this level, one had to flee the rationalism of the Enlightenment. The true task was to find the Light of Adam through inner purification and the dedicated study of the hieroglyphics of nature.

This idea that the world is some huge Rosetta Stone awaiting deciphering by the elite is not new. It goes back to Early Christianity and clearly evident in the 8th century writings of the Venerable Bede.

Schwartz had transformed the casual moralism and philanthropy of the early Russian Freemasons into a seductive belief that heaven on Earth (remember the words of the representatives from Prince Vladimir in the Hagia Sophia?) could be realised through the concentrated efforts of elite thinkers.

Novikov became increasingly uneasy about this turn to the occult which had overtaken Russian Freemasonry. In the late 1780s he proposed the formation of a purely Christian and philanthropic order. His increasing interest in the religious traditions of Old Russia permeated his publications with a kind of quasi-religious appeal and he adopted the Old Believer form of counting dates from the Creation rather than from the birth of Christ. He antagonised Catherine by criticising the Jesuits in 1784, accusing them of being a political order thus betraying the monastic ideal. Novikov had portrayed the Jesuits as faithless, power-seeking, aiming to set up a state within a state. His work, in fact was what many 'enlightened' mind considered to be an objective account of the Jesuits.

As the Jesuits' benefactress, Catherine stepped up her attacks on Novikov by writing three anti-masonic plays in which Freemasons were represented as charlatans and deceivers who, like Count Cagliostro, promised their victims philosophic gold, the elixir of life and contact with the world of spirits. Catherine also closed down the Masonic printing presses and finally had Novikov arrested in 1792.

These attacks were not limited to Novikov but included other Russian Freemasons such as Alexander Nicolaevich Radischev. Radischev wrote what is argued to be the first anti-Tsarist book -- A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow. He was sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to exile in Siberia. He was later pardoned by Catherine's son Paul and died in 1802. These attacks were part of Catherine's general disillusionment with the French Enlightenment in the wake of the French Revolution which she took as a personal attack. As an enlightened despot, Catherine felt that the French had bit the hand that had fed them.

Certainly her opinions and distrust of the commoners seemed justified when, in March 1792, Gustav III, albeit an enemy of Catherine's, had been assassinated.

On 10 August 1792 the French monarchy was overthrown and the royal family imprisoned. In France in September that year approximately 1,200 people were massacred, most of them ordinary citizens of no political importance. The French armies were starting to successfully sweep through the Rhineland, annexing territory as they went. In January 1793, the execution of Louis XVI made Catherine physically ill. As an indication of the depth to which Catherine now rejected the French, in March 1794 the sale of French calendars which adopted the new revolutionary neo-classical chronology were banned. France had become a country of ravening beasts knowing only how to pillage and kill. The wave of executions and purge trials of each wave of revolutionary leaders was not to be seen again until Stalin's trials of the 1930's.

The publication in 1797 of a well-received denunciation of Continental Freemasonry by John Robinson (1739 -- 1805) didn't help the Craft. It was called Proof of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati and Reading Societies. This work had gone into 5 editions within one year of its first publication. It appears Robinson had been initiated into Freemasonry in 1770 before going to Russia as private secretary to Admiral Sir Charles Knowles. As with the other Masonic "Exposures" such as Three Distinct Knocks et cetera, Robinson's work contains interesting (albeit coloured) insights into the activities of eighteenth century Russian Freemasonry -- including what appears to be a Lodge for women!

All this simply reinforced Catherine's concept that Freemasonry was anathema to her continued governing of the country.

Catherine's attitude towards religion was based on toleration through indifference. She had been born a Lutheran, educated by Catholics and Calvinists and welcomed into the Russian Orthodox Church when she married the Tsar. While she was deeply suspicious of the Jews and sectarian extremists, she generally ruled without offending or persecuting other religious orders. She welcomed the intellectual and teaching abilities of the Jesuits and the agricultural expertise of the German pietists. The sects were left alone as long as they recognised her authority.

The later years of Catherine's reign were marked by increasing desperation in the religious communities. Monks fled the monasteries for ascetic settlements and a tribe of wandering prophets toured the outer edges of the Empire.

An extremist group called the Skoptsky arose. As a religious protest and as a purification ritual they would castrate themselves in public. Along with the self-burning Old Believers, and the Flagellants, the Skoptsky should not be seen as a masochistic curiosity. The acts were seen as a new baptism into the elect of the world to come and as a sacrificial atonement for the redemption of a fallen society.

Realising that her rule had aroused popular religious sentiment against the crown, she saw Freemasonry as having the potential to foster a concealed political schism in Russian society.

There is little direct evidence of the political opinions of the Moscow Rosicrucians, though by their behaviour one can deduce that they were not necessarily interested in political change so much as in social reform by means of philanthropy. The austere and high-minded Freemasons rejected Catherine's blatant disregard for the rules of Christian marriage, which contrasted so strikingly with the seeming domestic bliss of the ever-faithful Grand Duke Paul. Novikov, for instance, displayed portraits of the grand ducal couple on the walls of his country house, and the Freemasons sang hymns of greeting to Paul.

*In you Paul we see  
A ledge of heavenly lore.  
In your wonderful union  
We read the sign of the angel.  
When you are adorned with the crown  
You will be our Father.*

*(Madariaga, Russia in the Age. pp.529-530)*

Was Paul a Freemason? He denied it, but was certainly attracted to some aspects of mystical religion, possibly even to the occult. There was no "Pauline" Party per se, but a general trend in society against Catherine consolidated around her son, Paul. Paul was not adverse to criticising his mother's politics, but stopped short of real sedition.

It seems odd that Catherine should suppress a group supporting loyalty to the sovereign and teaching morality and a belief in God. But Freemasonry had involuntarily become associated with personal enemies of the Empress.

\* First was her late husband, Peter III, who had been favourably disposed towards the Craft and Catherine was hostile to any favourites of the late-emperor.

\* The Russian Freemasons were aligned to Germany and Frederick the Great was the arch enemy of Catherine.

\* Russian Freemasonry was based on Russian Orthodoxy and opposed by and opposed to the Jesuits -- Catherine's favourites.



\* Russian Freemasons were vitriolic in their opposition to the French Enlightenment.

\* Freemasons in Russia had the support of Grand Duke Paul, who was now an open, personal enemy and political opponent of the Empress.

\*> Novikov's charity and famine relief was believed to be for ulterior political purposes.

The Swedish ambassador, Count Stedingk, wrote that Catherine "felt a truly feminine repulsion towards Masonry". The Empress also had been bitterly hurt when that other paladin of Freemasonry, Gustav III, had attacked her "atheistic and idolatrous' school program".

To the Empress, Freemasonry (which she tended to lump together with Martinists and Illuminati) represented "one of the strangest aberrations to which the human race had succumbed," a strange fad among males only that she scorned as "a mixture of ritual and childish games." Indeed, in 1785-6 she publicly ridiculed its practices and practitioners in three crudely satirical comedies, *Obmanshchik* (The Deceiver), *Obol'shchennyye* (The Deluded) and *Shaman Sibirskiy* (The Siberian Shaman). She could not understand why Novikov, a prosperous nobleman who had retired from state service to become the Empire's pre-eminent private publisher, subscribed to such a bizarre doctrine.

Novikov and Catherine had "fought" a duel of words in the pages of the literary journals. That which Novikov lashed as a 'vice', she preferred to treat as human weakness and called him intolerant and bilious. Novikov responded in more temperate language, but had the temerity to criticise the Empresses' command of the Russian language. This unprecedented exchange between sovereign and subject would have been unthinkable one generation earlier. Catherine and her friends continued to support Novikov's projects throughout the 1770's.

Her amused tolerance had shifted towards overt opposition to the Craft after the 1779 visit to St. Petersburg by Count Cagliostro (the Sicilian Giuseppe Balsamo). It is Cagliostro she satirised as "Kalifankerstan" in *The Deceiver* in which he is shown as embezzling gold from his victims.

Moscow had a reputation for gullibility and chicanery, volubility and prodigality -- all vices Catherine felt could be capitalised upon by the Martinists and exploited for their own ends.

It was not especially difficult to channel Catherine's distrust of the "absurd society" of Freemasonry, although the next step in the attack was not aimed at them specifically. Her confessor was in frequent correspondence with Peter Alekseyev of the Moscow Archangel Cathedral. Via this channel, Catherine was informed of the large volume of religious works being churned out on secular printing presses in defiance of the official (lucrative) monopoly of the Holy Synod Press. On 27 July 1787, Catherine prohibited the printing of all prayer books, church books or religious works except those being produced by the authorised presses.

It was found that in Moscow alone, 313 titles of religious works had been published by secular presses (166 of these by Novikov).

In September 1788 Catherine, having studied the reports of the ecclesiastical censors, ordered the return of 299 of the 313 titles to their owners, but banned the other 14 and decreed that future requests to publish religious works by submitted to the Synod. Of the fourteen titles banned, eleven had been published by Novikov. It must be emphasised that they were not banned on political grounds, but on religious objections. As a result, Catherine determined not to renew Novikov's lease on the Moscow University Press when it should expire in 1789.

Novikov had left St. Petersburg in 1779 when he took up a ten year lease on the Moscow University Press. Here he established two private printing presses and a secret press on which Russian translations of the classics of mysticism and alchemy were printed. Yet it was not necessarily these Masonic activities that first attracted Catherine's attention. In 1784, Novikov had published two school textbooks breaching the exclusive licence of the Commission on National Schools which owned the lucrative monopoly on all text books. Novikov claimed he had been authorised by the governor-general to print the books, but was ordered to withdraw and destroy all copies although he was compensated.

In December 1785, Governor General Bruce and Archbishop Platon were ordered to inspect the books published by Novikov, to ensure they contained no "ravings", "stupid lucubrations" or "schism". Platon was also asked to determine Novikov's Christian beliefs.

The Archbishop not only voiced his confidence in Novikov, he reported that:

"I pray the Lord to let us find another Good Christian such as Novikov, not only in your flock and mine, but in the whole world" (see Grinwald, p.26).

The moral opposition to Catherine and what she stood for may explain Platon's ambivalence. In spite of his disapproval of Masonic "occult" literature, he probably felt closer to Novikov and his Masonic friends than to the secular "enlightenment" of Catherine, particularly in the field of education.

But Platon listed twenty-three of Novikov's books which he believed sought to introduce religious error. For instance, he found one title, *On the Ancient Mysteries and Secrets of All Peoples*, praised pagan rites found sinful by the Church and declared th at the Church derived its ritual and sacraments from paganism. Yet of the twenty-three, Catherine eventually banned only six -- all of them Masonic in content.

After the appointment of the new chief commandant for Moscow in February 1790, Catherine began increasing administrative pressures on Freemasons although no definite command of prohibition was issued.

Panicked by the excesses of the French Revolution, she wrote that the Masons were at the forefront of a new *Raskol* -- a schism -- in Russian society.

Evidence for this came in the form of a report of an unauthorised book treating religious matters from the perspective of the schismatic Old Believers sect. With clear "evidence" of past publishing transgressions, Catherine ordered both Novikov's Moscow residence and provincial estate searched for copies of the book or others like it.

Although he had been given a "comprehensive and immediate" command to carry out this search on 13 April 1792, Prince Prozorovskii, a former general notorious for his blunderbuss approach to civil affairs, waited eight days (until Catherine's sixty-third birthday) before sending officials to carry out the Empresses' command. The search party did not find the offending title, but discovered other prohibited books and several clandestinely published Masonic titles. Novikov and his books were escorted by a company of hussars to the Schlisselburg Fortress for interrogation.

It should be noted that Catherine had planned Novikov's arrest at a time he was out of Moscow. She had to keep moving him around since in every city in which he was jailed, popular support for him soon arose. Suspecting a conspiracy of fanatical "Martinists", well-financed and well-connected noblemen with ready access to the newly expanded medium of public expression, the Empress sought to forestall Novikov's martyrdom (by suicide or otherwise) and to squelch negating publicity by keeping his associates in the dark and silencing any imitators. Count Rrazumopusky wrote that Novikov was a poor man plagued by piles and besieged as if he was a city.

It has been suggested by some authors that Novikov was hounded until some valid reason could be found to arrest him in order to stifle his independent social and publishing activities. Yet the evidence does not support this. The only works of his that were banned were those Masonic titles judged by Archbishop Platon to be "harmful" seven years earlier.

Catherine's special animus against Novikov is difficult to understand. It is true that he had made satirical attacks against the throne in his journals during the 1770's and his social activities tended to be independent from the control of the Crown. He had engaged in large-scale charitable activities on borrowed money, to help both landowners and serfs during a famine. But while Catherine's distrust was fed by the enormous sums of money Novikov seemed to be able to call upon and dispose in these charitable works (he had debts in excess of 700,000 roubles), she continued to subsidise his journals and his schools founded by his Masonic friends in St. Petersburg.

Novikov was never tried, but the accusations against him were listed in the sentence eventually pronounced. He was charged with holding secret meetings at which people swore submission to the Duke of Brunswick; he was accused of corresponding in cipher with Wvllner (who was a Prussian Minister) and with attempting to lure a "Certain Person" (presumably Grand Duke Paul) into becoming a Freemason. He was condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment in Schlisselburg. But was allowed to take with him his private physician (the Rosicrucian M.I. Bazayansky) and his servant. The entourage was allocated one rouble per day for their keep (cf. 3 kopeks for ordinary prisoners).

Catherine's arrest of Novikov marks the end of her flirtation with the Enlightenment. Against the background of the French Revolution, the assassination of Gustav III, and the imagined threats to her own life, the existence of a group, orchestrated by her enemies (the Prussians) apparently with seemingly unlimited financial resources, inspired by Masonic tenets which could range from extreme egalitarianism to alchemical and occult "lucubrations" and apparently ready to dethrone her in the interests of Paul, may have seemed a more real threat to the ageing Catherine than can be appreciated today.

Yet Catherine's treatment of Novikov, notably the severity of his punishment compared to the leniency with which others among the Moscow Rosicrucians were treated, is somewhat inexplicable. Certainly, Paul believed himself to be partly responsible for Novikov's harsh treatment and one his first acts on accession to the throne was to have Novikov released.

It is true, however, that other Freemasons who were "punished" (N.Trubetskoy, I. Lopukhin and I Turgenev, for example were merely rusticated on their country estates) had not been directly involved in the efforts to enlist Paul into the M<sup>A</sup>sited Paul on behalf of Novikov, escaped scott free. Madariaga (Russian in the Age...p.530) has suggested that this may be due to the fact that Trubetskoy et al were members of the highest aristocracy and Bazenov was too lowly.

A number of booksellers were arrested, interrogated and released with a warning. Some 20,000 copies of the mainly Masonic works confiscated when Novikov was arrested were burnt in 1793.

On Catherine's death in 1796 the situation for Freemasonry changed. Paul I not only abolished all prison sentences imposed on Freemasons (in including Novikov) but rewarded, protected and even consulted them on State affairs although Freemasonry remained officially prohibited. In 1797 an edict had been passed forbidding secret meetings and, although Freemasonry was not specifically mentioned, Paul elicited a promise from all Worshipful Masters not to open any lodges. It has been suggested that this may have been due to certain rivalries between Masonic Templar degrees and the Maltese Knights. Paul declared himself Grand Master of the Knights of Malta on 16 December 1798. (See Speth AQC VIII, p.232).

Novikov returned to Moscow, but his publishing days were over. He died on 31 July, 1818, aged 74. Yet he lived to see some of the Russian Freemasons rise to become outstanding generals against Russia's enemies such as Turks and Napoleon. Men such as Alexander Suvorov and Mikhail Kutuzov and some of the world's greatest authors such as Alexander Pushkin.

Alexander I (1777-1825) succeeded Paul after the latter's assassination on 11/12 March 1801. Alexander annulled the decree prohibiting all secret societies and became an initiate of the Craft. Dormant lodges were revived and new ones established. Those members of the Craft still attached to the spirit of mysticism that had permeated Russian Freemasonry under Novikov and Schwartz appear to have been especially active at this time.

Christian mysticism was in vogue and imparted a significant influence on fashionable society in St. Petersburg. The Rosicrucians opened a lodge (Neptune) in Moscow in 1803. A new Grand Lodge was formed in 1810.

Russian Freemasonry began to move in opposite directions -- a Conservative movement represented by the St. Petersburg and Moscow mystics and a Liberal one following French fashions and ideas (again!). A third "force", the revival of the strictly Christian Swedish Rite, reinforced the autocratic regime with its support of Autocracy and Orthodoxy.

Yet, in 1810, the Ministry of Police demanded the leaders of Russian Freemasonry produce their constitutions and rituals. As a result of this investigation, a member of the Lodge United Friends (also General Lieutenant aide-de-camp of the Emperor) was appointed Minister of Police. This was perhaps more subtle than it first appears. If the government wished to investigate Freemasonry, but also respected oaths of secrecy, who better to investigate them than a Minister of Police who was also a Freemason?

At the beginning of 1812, a Book of Constitutions had been prepared for the guidance of Freemasons. The thrust of the contents was clearly in patriotic support of the Tsar. Under these rules, none but Christians of Russian nationality were to be admitted to high office in the Craft and at the head was to be a Prefect, not responsible to his brethren, but to the Minister of Police and the Emperor himself. This was, perhaps, in opposition to the Swedish system. The Grand Lodge had now become dominated by the strict autocracy of Alexander and his Police Minister.

Following the defeated Napoleonic Armies back through Europe, the army of Tsar Alexander I was exposed even more to European ideas of freedom and reform. In 1814, 571 Russian Freemasons (including 62 Generals and 150 Colonels) met with their French brethren in Paris. On their return, the ground swell against the autocracy continued to consolidate.

While the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Forces during the Napoleonic Wars, Prince Michael Kutusov, was a prominent Freemason along with many of the high-ranking officers (all of whom had served their country with distinction), Tsar Alexander became increasingly influenced by Prince Metternich who was convinced the Craft in Russia now harboured highly suspicious members of secret political organisations.

Strong political elements had certainly penetrated the lodges. Masonic equality was misunderstood and attracted into the Craft men who were resolved to unite against class privileges and to end the autocracy with emancipation. Telepneff (AQC XXXVIII, p. 36) writes that conclusive proof exists that a dangerous political element had entered Russian Masonry.

In August 1815 the Grand Lodge Astrea was formed with a predominant German character and Russian Freemasonry began to lose its national characteristics. Its Statutes and Rituals (in French) occupied 154 pages. Also that year, a Swedish Provincial Grand Lodge was formed in Russia to work the Swedish Rite which regarded the so-called "higher" degrees as the acme and perfection of Masonry (see Batham, p.61). Astrea confined its attention to the three Craft Degrees and left its member lodges free to work whatever additional degrees their members wished. By 1818 there were about 1300 Russian Freemasons of whom about 1000 lived in St. Petersburg and met in twenty Lodges.

Signs of internal discord and corruption were becoming apparent. Within five years, no less than five different Rituals were being used in Lodge procedures. Igor Andrevich Kusheleov, Lieutenant General and Senator, Deputy Grand Master of Astrea in 1820, presented the Emperor with a report on Freemasonry.

The conservative Kusheleov's ideal was the Swedish Rite as originally introduced into Russia. He disapproved of the "modern" innovations destroying true Masonic doctrines

and saw a danger of the Lodges becoming nests of "Illuminati" with revolutionary ideals. Kusheleov's attempts to restore the original ideals in Astrea were vigorously opposed by members holding Masonic and political ideals different to him. He saw his duty to Freemasonry and the government was to report what he felt was a danger.

His closeness to Freemasonry and high position within the Craft carried considerable weight with the Emperor. (See Telepneff AQC XXXVIII, pp.41-59 for a translation of Kusheleov's Report).

Kusheleov recommended that Freemasonry be placed even further under the control of the government or, alternatively, that all lodges be permanently closed.

The lodges had been constantly under police supervision and the Emperor must have been aware of the latest undesirable tendencies and doubtful membership of a number of lodges. In 1822, Count Gaugwitz (a Prussian Mason), like Kusheleov apparently distinguishing between useful and harmful Masonry, presented the Emperors of Russia and Austria with a memorandum strongly advising the closure of the lodges in the two countries, although the King of Prussia was extending his protection to all Prussian lodges.

Nine months after the presentation of the Kusheleov Report, on 1st August, 1822, Alexander I closed all Masonic lodges in Russia with the exception of Lodge Ovid, because it had been transferred to the Rumanian Jurisdiction. There must have remained an underground movement since the five Decembrist leaders are said to have been Freemasons and the Decembrist incident did not take place until 3 years later.

That Freemasonry continued in spite of the ban seems likely since Nicholas I, successor to Alexander I, confirmed the decree prohibiting Freemasonry on April 21, 1826.

It is wrong, however, to consider Russian Freemasonry perished from an external blow. Without healthy social growth, a dynamic vitality and clearly-defined aims, Russian Freemasonry was self-defeating. Clearly nineteenth century Freemasonry in Russia possessed none of these virtues. Political aims, albeit laudable and well-intentioned, and members admitted into lodges who had no concept of true Masonic aims or ideals set the fuse for self-destruction. The official moves were inevitable.

After this time, even the word Freemason was erased from the dictionaries. As evidence of this let me quote from the diary of a Soviet official.

*One day in my native Russian village when I was 6 years old, grandmother Nadezhda berated me for riding our ancient palomino with a hackamore instead of a bridle. "Some Day you'll get yourself killed" she grumbled, "running round like a wild FRY MUSSON!"*

*Who was FRY MUSSON, what sort of monster was he? I had no way of knowing and I was not about to find out. In babushka's intonation, it sounded like the name of one of the characters in her stories about demons and other 'unclean ones' who for some reason always became active on nights I had done something wrong.*

*When I was 14 and in the 5th grade, I again heard that long-forgotten mysterious word. This time it was pronounced in German-accented Russian as FRIEMASSON. Our History teacher was lecturing on the era of Frederick the Great and the 7 years war. "At that time," he elaborated "there appeared in Western Europe a mysterious group of people who called themselves FRIEMASSONS. Nobody knew who they were or what their aims were. One thing, however, was known -- they preached peace and equality among people."*

*In Russia in those days of my childhood, peace and equality among people were not exactly household expressions so the teacher cut short the lecture, leaving Freemasonry hanging in the Air."*

But at the time when Alexander issued his ukase banning the Lodges, a cache of information remained in the Rumzantev Museum in Moscow. These works allowed Tolstoy (who was not a Freemason) to thoroughly research the subject and make his character of Pierre Bezukhov a Freemason in *War and Peace*. In fact, the descriptions of Freemasonry are such that D.K. Chamberlain has used the information in Tolstoy's novel to reconstruct a Russian initiation ceremony.

[You will note Tolstoy's consummate skill as a storyteller. He has captured a small scene within that scene quoted at the beginning of this paper; a scene with which we today must all be familiar -- that unneeded prompt from the floor of the lodge regarding procedure.]

At the beginning of 1906 about fifteen members (primarily Kadets -- members of the Constitutional Democratic Party) joined Lodges in France. On returning to Russia, they formed two Provincial Lodges -- The Polar Star in St. Petersburg and Regeneration in Moscow. Both were opened in May 1908 by representatives from the High Council of the Grand Orient of France sent especially for that purpose. Other French Provincial Lodges were in these cities and at Kiev and Nijni-Novgorod.

As Russia moved towards a more pluralistic society in tune with rapid industrial developments, unchanging Tsarist policies were clearly incompatible with the needs of Russian society. Peasant revolts, worker demonstrations and revolutionary movements accelerated. A bewildering array of unrealistic artistic and philosophic concepts arose in the disquieting, yet exhilarating milieu of brooding disaster. Romantic perspectives were broadened by philosophers attaching naturalism and claiming to possess the ability to penetrate the banality and ugliness of day-to-day life at all social levels and to express the inexpressible.

The earlier revolutionary movements of the Populists and Nihilists were rejected and a trend developed among society to introduce innovations into a modernised Christianity. The common factors among the diverse attempts to instill a new religious consciousness were a dissatisfaction with the atheism of the preceding generation and a sense of the coming apocalypse. Freemasonry co-existed with Hinduism, Buddhism, Spiritualism, Alchemy and Magic. Atheism was now fashionably out-of-date and of questionable social taste, almost offensive in a contemporary society that accepted fads of an extraneous nature (such as barefoot dancing) with gusto and enjoyed a wide infatuation with poets worshipping art for art's sake, Aesthetes, Demonists and Mystics. Ancient,

correctly-performed rituals acquired a greater importance than the fulfilment of moral commitments.

For a period of time prior to the first Russian Revolution (1917), the Grand Orient of France (considered irregular since 1877) attempted to recreate its own style of political Freemasonry in the last days of the Russian Empire. As early as 1908, Polar Star Lodge in St Petersburg and two other lodges (in Moscow and Warsaw respectively) followed the Grand Orient's political agenda.

In 1909 the authorities became aware of the revitalised existence of these lodges and their activities went underground until 1911. These "activities" were not Masonic per se but allied towards the abolition of the autocracy and establishing a democratic regime. It was almost as if Russian Freemasonry was intent on reliving the exact events which had led to the demise of the Craft in their country one hundred years before.

Gradually, however, this again began destroying Russian Freemasonry. The Craft was quickly regarded as a nest of atheistic revolutionaries and/or a formidable centre of Jewish organisations designing against Christianity and ready to overthrow any lawful government and foster any revolt.

In 1911, Masonic meetings were resumed on a more judicious basis. That year, the Grand Orient of France acknowledged the creation of a new "Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia". Due to their affiliation and overt political activity, this "Grand Lodge" (sic) was not recognised by Freemasonry's Regular Jurisdictions. By 1913-1914 there were about forty "Lodges" operating but with increasing political disputes raging between their members who belonged primarily to the Constitutional Democratic Party (the Kadets). On the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, twenty-eight lodges existed.

"An independent lodge of the so-called Martiniste Rite was formed among the entourage of Czar (sic) Nicholas II under the name of 'The Cross and the Star'. Nicholas was said to have been a member of this lodge, which suspended its work in 1916. Other Martiniste lodges opened ... 'Apollonius' in St Petersburg (1910), 'St John' in Moscow (1911), 'St Andrew' in Kiev (1912). A very curious lodge existed among the Russian Navy League, calling themselves 'Philaletes'; beside philanthropic and intellectual work, it pursued a political aim in opposition to that of the Grand Orient lodges, namely the support of the monarchy of Nicholas II. Probably this movement arose in connection with the Paris branch of the Swiss Order of the Chevaliers 'Philaletes' which established two lodges in St Petersburg: 'The Pyramid of the North' and 'The Star of the North'. Both pursued studies of mysticism and symbolism." (Boris Telepneff, *An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry*, cited by Angel.)

With Russia losing the war against the Axis powers, and food riots rapidly spreading throughout Petrograd and Moscow, on March 2, 1917 the Tsar abdicated in favour of a provisional government under the initial control of Prince Lvov. On July 16, Alexander Kerensky, a Freemason and one of the Kadets, acquired control of the provisional government. Kerensky hoped to restore order in the capital and opened discussions both with General L.G. Kornilov and the Socialist factions in the government. But rumors spread that Kornilov was marching on Petrograd intending to halt any such discussions or rapprochement with the Socialists by force of arms. Amid this confusion, Lenin, who



had returned from exile with the help of the Germans, made his momentous move and the Bolsheviks seized control of the government and the country during the night of October 24-25. Kerensky fled the country.

After October 1917 most members of the existing Russian lodges who could went into exile and formed lodges in Berlin and in France. The Russian Civil War lasted four bitter years. By 1920, a wave of Russian intellectuals, dignitaries, proferssors, scientists, doctors, artists, laywers and White Russian Army officers who had fled to France had joined Polar Star and four other Russian Grand Orient lodges operating in that country. The regular French Grand Lodge picked up many of these Russian emigrees and initiated them into such lodges as the Anglo-Saxon Lodge in Paris. At one time there were six Russian-speaking lodges in Paris. It was hoped that Russian Freemasonic traditions could be restored and eventually returned to their homeland. But the number of Russian Lodges in France was subsequently reduced to two -- Astrie Lodge #10 and Vox Ucrainae #117 -- both practising a Russian version of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Russian and Ukrainian respectively (See Grinwald p.28). These lodges remain active at the National Grand Lodge residence at Neuilly. In December 18, 1993, the Rossiya Consistory #563 was revived by the Ancient band Accepted Scottish Rite of France Supreme Council of the 33o in Paris as prescribed by the Supreme Council of Lausanne in 1922.

The Scottish Rite Supreme Council of the Grand Lodge of France (later recognised as that of the National Grand Lodge of France after the former became irregular during the 1960s) was entrusted with the orderly formation of a future Grand Lodge of Russia by the Supreme Council of Lausanne in 1922. The regular Freemasons of France hosted Russian lodges as early as 1923, the first of which was called Lodge Astrea, after the Grand Lodge which had closed one hundred years earlier. Telepneff argues that Freemasonry continued to operate in Russia "to the present hour" which was 1922 when this particular article was published in AQC (Volume XXXV).

In 1920, The Queensland Freemason carried a "Declaration of Principles" from "members of the great administrative Committee of the G.L. of Ukraina" (sic). The declaration had been made to "acquaint all the regular Masonic authorities in all countries th at the members of the just and perfect Masonic Lodge 'Stus Andraeus Praevocatus', at the Or. of Kiew (sic) in solemn constituent assembly, held at the Or. of Kiew (sic)" on September 18, 1919, decided and proclaimed the existence of a superior, independent Masonic authority within the limits of the democratic Republic of Ukraina (sic) under the name of "The G.L. of Ukraina St. Andraeus Praevocatus within their H.Q. at the Or. of Kiew" (sic).

The communique goes on to outline the basic tenets of Freemasonry and closes with a request to all regularly constituted "G.C.Ms of all rites in the World" for recognition as a "superior Masonic authority and an independent power within the boundaries of the Republic of Ukraina (sic), and to appoint their guarantors of mutual friendship". The note closes with the statement that, until its own "statutes, general rules, rites and mementoes shall have been drawn up, the G.L. of Ukraina (sic) will make use of those of the G.L. of France".

As a brief aside relating to the Ukraine: "In 1900 the first Ukrainian Masonic Congress was held, and on January 17 the Grand Lodge of Ukraine was first formed. In 1919,

during the brief existence of the independent pre-Soviet Ukrainian Republic, the Grand Lodge of the Ukraine proclaimed its existence, uniting seven principal lodges (which corresponded with the seven districts of the nation). It was said to have had 6000 members. Prior to the new republic's fall to the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1920, the Ukrainian grand Lodge entered into fraternal relations with the Grand Orient of Italy, and sent delegates to other countries. The unfortunate advent of the Bolshevik regime forced the Ukrainian lodges to go into retirement once again." (Boris Telepneff, An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry, cited by Angel.)

At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow 1922, a resolution was passed which required all Communists belonging to the Fraternity to sever their connection without delay or leave the Party. Leon Trotsky called Freemasonry "a bourgeois ideological conception contrary in its principles to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and tending to establish a state within a state". No Communist who had been a Freemason could be appointed to a Party post during a two-year-period after such severance of relationship. Yet Maxim Gorky, widely known to have been a Freemason, continued in favour with the new regime.

In 1926, a Russian Freemason named Astromov who was less concerned with orthodox Craft Freemasonry than he was in Rosicrucianism, wrote to Stalin, requesting him to legalise Freemasonry in the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, Stalin continued to believe that Leon Trotsky was an enthusiastic Freemason (in spite of Trotsky's comments at the 1922 Congress related above) and ordered Astromov's arrest. Astromov had founded lodges in Leningrad, Moscow, Tiflis and Kiev. He and thirty other Freemasons (including all the officers of the four lodges) were imprisoned. Astromov died shortly afterwards aged 76.

In 1929, Pierre Mikhailovich Kaiser, Professor of Oriental Languages at the Moscow Institute, and two other Freemasons were executed by a firing squad after an agent of the NKVD discovered that Masonic meetings were continuing in secret. (Batham, Scottish Year Book, p.64).

Did Freemasonry, as such, continue in any active form? Some Masonic researchers/writers would have us believe so.

Zelchenko refers to "V.V.Arnold's" interrogation by State Prosecutor Vyshinsky during Arnold's trial on 23-30 January 1937 and points out a number of anomalies in Arnold's testimony with regard to his connection to Freemasonry. By selectively choosing his references from the trial transcript, Zelchenko implies that Arnold's "Freemasonry" was alive and well (sic) in the U.S.S.R. at that time.

Unfortunately not so. If you look further at those transcripts, you will not only see that anything Arnold said must be ignored, but that he joined (or so he said) the Craft in AMERICA and the reference adds nothing to understanding the presence or not of Freemasonry in the U.S.S.R. during the late 1930's.

It is interesting, however, to look at Arnold and his trial as an insight into the Purge Trials of the 1930's. On a trip to the city of Prokopyevsk in 1934, the car carrying Molotov went off the road, its right wheels landing in a ditch. None of the passengers were hurt in any way. But the incident subsequently provided grounds for a trial

claiming an assassination attempt had been made on Molotov's life. The ditch became a ravine and the chauffeur was claimed to be in the pay of Trotskyites and dedicated to assassinating Molotov. Arnold was the chauffeur.

In thirty pages of trial transcript we learn that Arnold had been born in Petrograd and acquired three surnames by the age of seven. He wandered to Finland, Germany and Holland while in his teens and to Norway and England during the First World War (under yet another surname). He was conscripted on his return to Russia, but deserted and jailed for six months. Conquest (p.158) points out that the Prosecutor has considerable trouble at this point in the trail in sorting out Arnold's names, ranks, the regiments in which he served and so on. It seems Arnold managed to steal some railway passes and made it to New York under yet another name via Vladivostok. In the U.S. he claimed he joined the army (though he could not speak English) and it was in America that he enrolled as a Freemason (as well as a member of the Communist Party of the United States). Twenty three pages of this farrago goes on and on. The only incriminating evidence brought out is that he concealed his Masonic connections from the Party. He was shipped to Russia with a group of American specialists being sent to Kemerovo. After serving as an office manager in Western Siberia, as controller for water transport, working in a commercial department, then in charge of a "telephone system", Arnold contacted the Trotskyites in 1932 after being dismissed from his job for anti-Soviet remarks.

In short, nothing the poor dupe said can be believed. He was shot in 1941.

But whatever these later motives, one hundred years earlier, Russian Freemasonry had gone through its important stages of development and persecution under Catherine.

Catherine's attacks on Freemasonry were, perhaps, more acute than she realised. Freemasonry had established links to other broader disaffected elements and, while the Craft was neither political nor religious, it had a profound influence in both these areas. The lodges filled that niche in the culture of aristocratic Russia previously held by the monasteries. Lodges provided islands of spiritual intensity and cultural activity within the bleak autocratic environment. Thus it is not surprising to find the five leaders of the Decembrist Revolt (so called because it started on Christmas Day) in 1825 were all Freemasons.

Baigent and Leigh in *The Temple and the Lodge* imply (p.264) that Masonic involvement in this Revolt was the cause of the ban on all lodges. But you will note that the interdict had been in place at least three years before that incident in St. Petersburg's Senate Square.

The Russian intellectuals believed that there was such a thing as TRUTH and in search of it they joined higher Masonic orders and researched Western ideas with a special intensity. Foreign books became akin to sacred objects that were thought to contain redeeming powers or the way to redemption. This failure to decode nature was ascribed to their own fallen sinfulness.

The most important assumption that can be identified in eighteenth century Masonic Russian literature (see Baehr) is that knowledge inevitably leads to virtue and hence that all sin and error result from insufficient comprehension of oneself, of nature and of

God. The Freemasons sought this knowledge (premudrost') through the Lodge, which they called the Temple of Knowledge (kram premudrosti), and through concerted efforts towards self-knowledge.

The flight to the occult, to arcane sources of medieval alchemy, the Jewish Kabala and the Egyptian "mysteries" for this knowledge was partly due to their virginal enthusiasm for these ideas and a sheer lack of background in philosophical thought.

In Russia, the Freemasons were seeking a solution to an external human quest: an escape from the banality, mortality and immorality of life in their milieu. Freemasonry was seen as an alternative to the "profane" life of Catherine's Court by ritually constructing a sacred place where men could overcome death and be reborn to a better, more satisfying life.

In attempting to spread this ethos, there was the inevitable turn to or involvement in the politics of the nation. This brought suspicion and, ultimately, punitive action from the authorities.

There is an entrenched belief that Communism (as personified by the Soviet Union) is the antithesis of Freemasonry and whenever a country falls to Communist influence, the Craft is banned. This is partly true -- Cuba being a notable exception. But let us also remember that the Craft was persecuted and banned in some European nations long before the rise of the Soviets.

In Poland the Three Brothers Lodge had been established in 1729 and The Virtuous Samaritan Lodge in 1737. Both of these were suppressed in 1738 by the Papal Bull of Pope Clement XIII. Catherine the Great had participated in the Partition of Poland in 1772 and took the leading role in the further partitions of that unhappy country in 1793 and 1795 (see Berendt). The Grand Lodge of Poland (independent of the Grand Lodge of England since 1769) had become extinct in 1772 with the First Partition. The National Grand Orient of Poland had reformed in 1784 only to be dissolved with the Third Partition in 1795. Lodges formed during the Napoleonic Wars were closed in 1813 with the fall of Napoleon although certain charitable aspects of the Craft's work continued until 1815 when part of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was incorporated into the Russian Empire with limited autonomy. The 1821 decree by Tsar Alexander I sent Polish Freemasonry into limbo until Polish independence in 1918.

Another example is Hungary, where Freemasonry (consisting of the Strict Observance Rite which arrived c.1760 and other lodges following foreign constitutions) was suppressed by Royal edict in 1795 and the Craft was only re-established in 1867. By 1917, there were some ninety-one lodges operating. I am pleased to see that the Craft in Hungary, banned in the 1950's by the Communists, has been revived. On 27 December 1989, the Grand Lodge of Austria joined their Hungarian brethren in "Rekindling the Lights " and consecrated the Symbolic Lodge of Hungary with the Installation of a new Grand Master and his officers.

It is interesting to note that The Bulletin for 10 September 1991 carried a report that one of the coup leaders against Mikhail Gorbachev, Valery Boldin (Gorbachev's closest personal aide who kept his schedules and guarded his door against unwanted visitors)

was found to have an extensive library of anti-Masonic works and books dealing with "convoluted Masonic conspiracies like those favoured by right-wing extremists".

The January 1993 edition of Emessay Notes of The Masonic Service Association of the U.S. carried an exciting news item that the Grand Lodge of Alaska was pursuing the challenge of introducing Masonry to Eastern Russia. With the relaxation of travel between "Russia" (Siberia) and the U.S. side of the Bering Sea, the Alaskan Grand Lodge is seizing the opportunity to initiate new friendships with their neighbours. The Alaskans, however, are under no illusions as to the difficulty of their project. Inflation and economic conditions in the C.I.S. make it impractical to establish new lodges in the Eastern C.I.S. under Alaskan jurisdiction at this stage. Grand Master John H. Grainger has made a number of visits to Magadan and made plans to tour Eastern Russia in 1994. Magadan is a small sea port on the northern shore of the Sea of Okhotsk west of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The Alaskans have instigated a program of providing information about the Craft to potential candidates.

Emulation in its issue for 2 September 1993, carried an article which reported that, on September 8, 1992, regular Freemasonry returned to the Russian Empire as Grand Master Michel Garder of the National Grand Lodge of France (GLNF) and his Grand secretary, Yves Trestournel, witnessed Moscow University professor and Worshipful Master George Dergachev install the officers of Harmonie Lodge #698 as his first act in their new lodge hall in the Russian capital.

The hall itself was a converted apartment within Moscow, and the Freemasons who met that evening doubled their numbers to twenty-four, as they initiated a group of enthusiastic men into the fraternity, two of whom had previously been members of an irregular Grand Orient of France lodge. Perhaps as early as 1988, the Grand Orient had been creating lodges left and right throughout eastern Europe since the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In relation to the ceremonies enacted by Harmonie Lodge, Actualities (the newsletter of the Grand Loge Nationale Francaise) had earlier stated:

"It is necessary to remember that, in similar missions, discretion is paramount. We do not understand here in what framework they have been able to work in order to be protected, but this working was effective thanks to the experience of Colonel Garder and of the Russian Brethren, who persevered throughout the grey period.....

"Twelve uninitiated men saw the light thanks to the working of the ritual of Lodge Astree, carefully preserved for just such an occasion as this".

Harmonie Lodge began meeting once a week after this, making plans to start an information campaign to attract worthy candidates to the regular Masonic fraternity with the hope of creating additional lodges in St Petersburg, Moscow and Novosibirsk.

A year later, in September 1993, the GLNF consecrated its second constituent Lodge in Russia in St Petersburg and has subsequently consecrated two other lodges. Looking to the future, the name "National Grand Lodge of Russia" has been registered with the Ministry of Justice in Moscow.

The GLNF began appealing to other regular Grand Lodges to aide in consolidating these gains in Russia by asking for regular visits by experienced Masons to offer instruction and ensure regularity. The GLNF has proposed a joint venture with United States Grand Lodges prepared to visit and has proposed to offer financial assistance to Freemasons prepared to visit Russia for these purposes.

The four lodges in Russia are:

**Harmonie Lodge**, #698, Moscow. [meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6:30pm]

**Gamaioum Lodge**, #801, St Petersburg. [meets on the third Wednesday of each month.]

**Lotos Lodge**, #802, Varonej [meets on the second and third Tuesdays of each month.]

**Nouvelle Astree**, #803, Moscow. [does not have a fixed date as of this article.]

*Conclusion:* Probably nowhere else in Europe did Freemasonry play such a significant a role in the development of the cultural life of three or four generations as it did in Russia. This may be due to the predominantly Feudal/Agrarian milieu and the lack of an originality in Russian culture; it may also reflect the absence of Orthodox works in theology written in a lay style and vocabulary and the dearth of sufficient intellectual and emotional stimulation to satisfy a more discriminating audience.

Much of higher order Freemasonry in Russia was strangely applicable to a revolutionary tradition. Here you had a small circle of men, meeting regularly to further a common corporate goal with a love of higher justice, ritual and reading and a tendency to see moral, spiritual and aesthetic concerns as part of one higher concern. These and not the government chanceries or universities were the main channels for creative thought. This left a permanent, if ambiguous, legacy of moral intensity.

In conclusion, let me say that, while the Romanovs succeeded in snuffing out the candles of the light of Masonry, they did not extinguish the spark that had lit them.

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## **Glossary of People**

*"SG" refers to the identification number assigned by Stanley Gibbons.*

### **Count Alexandre Vasilievich Suvorov (1729-1800)**

SG 967-968 (1941), SG 1601 (1950), SG 1605 (1950), SG 2031 (1956)

Military leader who fought against the Turks. Member of Lodge Aux trois Etoiles, St. Petersburg. Later joined the Lodge Zu den drei Kronen.

### **Aleksander Sergeevich Griboyedov (1795-1829)**

SG 1095-1096 (1945), SG 1824-1825 (1954), SG 2319 (1959)

Poet and Statesman. In 1816 he was a member of the Lodge United Friends. He studied at the University of Moscow, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in addition to a Law Degree.

### **Andrei Nikoforovich Voronikhin (1759-1814)**

SG 2492 (1960)

Architect, took part in building Kasohoky Cathedral in St Petersburg. In 1802 was made Professor of Architecture. Initiated about 1780 in a Lodge of the Swedish system,

passed in a Lodge of the English system and, in 1786 was a member of the Lodge Perfect Concord. In 1810 he was raised in the Lodge United Friends.

**Ivan Petrovic Kotljarevsky (1769-1838)**

SG 3700 (1969)

Member of the Lodge Amor de la Verite, Poltava, Ukraine. He was Secretary and Orator of the Lodge 1818-1819.

**Aleksej Gravrilevic Venecianov (1780-1847)**

SG 1914 (1955)

Painter, members of the Academy of Plastic Arts. Initiated in March 1821 in the Lodge of the Dying Sphinx, St Petersburg.

**Mikhail Ilarionovich Kutuzov (1745-1813)**

SG 1138-1139 (1945)

Field Marshall. He was initiated in the Lodge Zu den drei Schluseln, Ratisbonne in 1779, and later a member of the Lodge Trois Drapeux, Moscow and the Lodge of the Dying Sphinx, St Petersburg. He was initiated in the Seventh Degree of the Swedish system. He served in Poland between 1764 and 1812.

**Vasilij Ivanovic Bazhenov (1737-1799)**

SG 1507-1508 (1949)

Architect, studied at Moscow University; member of the cabinet under Catherine II. Designed the Imperial Palace of the Kremlin. Member of Lodge Latone, St Petersburg.

**Kondraty Fedorovic Ryleev (1795-1826)**

SG 1675 (1950)

Author and Poet. As an officer he took part in the Campaigns of 1814-1815 and later worked at the Court of Justice, St Petersburg. He was initiated in 1820 in Lodge Etoile Flamboyante and kept the Documents of the Lodge after Masonry was outlawed in Russia in 1822. He was hanged with the other five leaders of the Decembrist revolt on 13 July 1826.