

**THE MASONIC THEME IN RUSSIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AT THE END OF
NINETEENTH – THE MIDDLE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES**

by

Yelena Kharitonova

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Supervisor: Professor Alexei Miller

Second reader: Professor Laszlo Kontler

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Abstract

The work considers the Russian historiography on the eighteenth-century Masonic issue from the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century which offers different interpretations of this theme. I will focus, mostly, on the works of representatives of liberal and nationalist-monarchist tendencies in the Russian historiography which most vividly represent both viewpoints on eighteenth-century Russian Freemasonry.

This study will consider Catherine II's reign as a context. In this framework it identifies the particular aims of the authors of liberal and nationalist-monarchist views in using different interpretations of the history of Russian Freemasonry and the activity of Novikov's circle. In the same way it analyzes the range of questions that the representatives of different tendencies posed in their works.

Both representatives of these tendencies had intention to create their own tradition and insisted that Russian Freemasons were the spiritual forerunners of the liberals in the country or had the explicit political goals that undermined the state basis. These authors, built their hypothesis on the Masonic issue and expressed their points of view, to an extent, influenced the public opinion of the Russian society.

Table of contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1. The liberal tendency at the end of the nineteenth-the beginning of the twentieth centuries	9
1.1 The foundation of the liberal tradition in the 1860s	9
1.2 The liberal tradition in the 1890s	11
1.3 The representatives of the liberal trend in the beginning of the twentieth century	12
1.3.1 The work of G.V. Vernadskii.....	13
1.3.2 The work of V.A. Bogolyubov.....	24
Chapter 2. The nationalist-monarchist tendency from the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century	36
2.1 The emergence of the nationalist-monarchist camp after the Russian revolution of 1905	36
2.1.1 The work of G.V. Butmi	38
2.1.2 The work of A. Selyaninov	39
2.2 The Masonic issue in the work of V.F. Ivanov, the representative of the nationalist-monarchist tendency in the first-wave emigration	41
2.3 The continuity of the Masonic theme in the work of B. Bashilov, the representative of the nationalist-monarchist tendency in the second-wave emigration	48
Conclusion.....	59
Bibliography.....	64

Introduction

There is no more complicated issue in intellectual history than Masonic issue, which has intrigued historians for almost two centuries, first of all, because of the mysterious nature of Freemasonry. However, the dearth and difficult access to existing documents, which, in most cases, are kept in private archives, are the chief obstacles for researchers to get a more or less clear idea about Freemasonry. According to Russian mason Count Vilyegorskii, “you can have some knowledge about Freemasonry, but not know Freemasonry itself.”¹ Thereby, the Freemasonic issue has different interpretations in historiography. These interpretations touch various aspects in researching Freemasonry: from political to ideological.

The works of Koselleck and Jacob represent good examples of such interpretations. Koselleck explains the genesis of the Utopian ideas of the twentieth century from the context of the political interaction in which the men of the Enlightenment found themselves in respect to the system of Absolutism in the eighteenth century. According to him, “the eighteenth century witnessed the unfolding of bourgeois society, which saw itself as the new world, laying intellectual claims to the whole world and simultaneously denying the old... It developed a progressive philosophy, the subject of which was all mankind.”² Koselleck attempts to trace the gradual transformation of the free, voluntary associations such as the Masonic lodges and the Republic of Letters from the enclaves of internal exile into centers of moral authority, and eventually into surrogates and even models for political society. In his opinion, as the European bourgeoisie externally encompassed the whole world and in so doing postulated one mankind, it set out inwardly to shatter the Absolutist order.³ Koselleck argues that the eighteenth century can be seen “as the antechamber to our present epoch, one

¹ V.F. Ivanov, *Russkaya Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do Nashix Dney*. (Moskva: Moskva, 1997), 55.

² R. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*. (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 5-6.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

whose tensions have been increasingly exacerbated since the French revolution, as the revolutionary process spread extensively around the globe and intensively to all mankind”⁴. He maintains that at the same time, in the process of social ferment, the bourgeois philosophy of history, the critical offensive of which made its central target the Christian religion, came into being. In his views, “to justify itself at all, the critique of the eighteenth century had to become Utopian. Its ultimate object, the Absolutist State, helped in its way to establish the Utopian view of history upheld by the bourgeoisie”⁵. Therefore, Koselleck’s analysis of the concepts of “critique” and “crisis” lays the basis of a hypothesis, according to which the Enlightenment itself became Utopian and even hypocritical because it saw itself excluded from political power-sharing.⁶

In contrast to Koselleck, Margaret Jacob argues that the Enlightenment ideas gave rise to the foundation of the hundreds of Masonic lodges in eighteenth-century Europe, which were among the most important communes where modern civil society was formed. In her opinion, the lodges became “microscopic civil polities with their own constitutions and laws, elections and representatives, new public spaces, in effect schools for constitutional government”⁷. Jacob perceives that the real Masonic “work” in a lodge should mean that “all things in the universe are renewed and reformed, order is established, the rule and measure of things is understood, duty followed, reason listened to, wisdom comprehended; and mortals, without changing their essence, appear as new men”⁸. In her opinion, the importance of the lodges lay in their ability to teach men, identified by their supposed merit, how to integrate enlightened values with the habits of governance. Emphasizing distinction from other societies, academies, and salons in eighteenth-century

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷ M.C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

Europe, Jacob stated that Masonic lodges existed to promote the virtue of their members. In her words, “Freemasons claimed to be creating perfectly harmonious societies within the lodge. Their purpose was both social and moral. The self-knowledge and education sought by Freemasons cannot be divorced from an idealism that connected the Enlightenment with virtue, in an ethical sense, as well as with personal and social improvement. The key to improvement lay in order and harmony”⁹. Therefore, in her evaluation of Freemasonry, the integral part of the epoch of the Enlightenment, Jacob tries to demonstrate positive Masonic influence on eighteenth-century European societies.

The Russian historiography in the beginning and the middle of the twentieth century, which is the prime concern in this thesis, also offers different interpretations of the issue of the eighteenth-century Freemasonry. The eighteenth century is considered important in Russian intellectual history, because it constitutes a distinct period in the history of Russian culture, which differed significantly from the culture of the previous and following periods. It was an age of apprenticeship in Russia. It has been said that Peter I, during the first decades of the century, borrowed Western technology, that Empress Elizabeth, in the middle of the period, shifted the main interest to Western fashions and manners, and that Catherine II, in the course of the last third of the century, brought European philosophical ideas to Russia, which “represented notably the triumph of secularism” and “emphasized reason, education, and the ability of enlightened men to advance the interests of society”¹⁰, and which were adopted successfully by the Russian educated gentry. This borrowed culture constituted the first phase of modern Russian intellectual and cultural history and the foundation for its subsequent development.¹¹ Another reason of the importance of

⁹ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

¹⁰ N.I. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 285-286.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 286.

eighteenth-century Russian intellectual history in Russian historiography is that one can see the origin of Russian intelligentsia in that time.

As a result of this adopted culture, “Voltaireism”, the philosophical intellectual movement, named after Voltaire, was extremely popular among the Russian nobility who were educated on the basis of French philosophical works, which were spread under the auspices of Empress Catherine II. Another alternative intellectual movement was Freemasonry, which came to Russia again from Western Europe and became prevalent in the second half of Catherine II’s reign. Freemasons banded together with the purpose to satisfy their intellectual needs in the Masonic lodges and rejected firmly contemporary Voltarianism. There was not complete ideological uniformity in these circles, but their members did conceive of their “work” as self-education through reading and through a sort of inner asceticism.¹²

The most prominent among various Masonic trends in Russia was the Rosicrucian circle, which centered around the University of Moscow. The masons, who belonged to this circle, engaged in education and publishing, establishing a private school and the first large-scale program of publications in Russia outside of the government. They contributed heavily to Russian periodical literature. Nikolai Novikov, 1744-1818, perhaps the most active publicist of Catherine II’s reign, led the group, which included several other famous people¹³, whose activity, how it is argued¹⁴, undoubtedly influenced further generations of Russian intelligentsia. Frightened by the French Revolution and displeased by the extremely energetic activity of the Rosicrucian brothers, Catherine II finally dissolved the Moscow circle and prohibited the activity of any secret societies, including Masonic work in Russia. Novikov and his fellow masons’ educational work came to an abrupt end. Not to incur the

¹² D. Tschizewskij, *Russian Intellectual History*, trans. by J.C. Osborne and ed. by M.P. Rice. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1978), 174.

¹³ N.I. Riasanovsky, 294.

¹⁴ R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*. (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

empress's anger, the Masonic lodges in Saint Petersburg and other Russian cities decided to cease their activity of their own will.¹⁵

The Masonic issue was discussed broadly in Russian historiography, and the basic questions: what influence Masonic ideas had on Russian society in the eighteenth century, and what goals and tasks, political or just educational activity, Russian masons pursued, have diverse answers. Hence Russian historiography of Freemasonry is distinguished by two tendencies: liberal and nationalist-monarchist. From the mid-nineteenth century the liberal representatives, such as T.O. Sokolovskaya and T.A. Bakunina, have attempted to prove that masonry in Russia was the progressive current in Russian intellectual thought, which aimed to reform backward Russian society. According to these authors, the chief reasons for the rapid distribution of Freemasonic ideas in Russia, compared with European countries, are that Masonic ideals were the only moral guidance for eighteenth-century Russian society, and masonry was also an extremely popular form of moral education in this time.¹⁶ They argue that the whole work of Russian masons from the first steps to the moment of the prohibition of Freemasonry by Alexander I was dedicated to “the search for truth”, and the single Masonic aim was the spreading among people useful knowledge and brotherly love, which is taught by the true religion, based on the Gospel.¹⁷ Therefore, these authors emphasize that Freemasonry was not just a separate episode, but played the role of an extremely important spiritual factor in the history of Russian social culture. Moreover, some authors of the liberal tendency paid great attention to the publishing activity of Moscow masonry¹⁸, other works are dedicated to either Masonic symbolism and rituals¹⁹, or to the

¹⁵ The work of Masonic lodges was resumed during Paul I's reign (1796-1801) and finally prohibited by the order of Alexander I (1801-1825) in 1822.

¹⁶ T.O. Sokolovskaya, *Russkoe Masonstvo i Ego Znachenie v Istorii Obshchestvennogo Dvizheniya v XVIII-I chetvert' XIX stoletiya*. (Saint Petersburg, 1907).

¹⁷ T.A. Bakunina, *Znamenitie Russkie Masoni*. (Paris, 1931).

¹⁸ A.I. Nezelelov, *Novikov Izdatel' Jurnalov*. (Saint Petersburg, 1875).

¹⁹ T.O. Sokolovskaya, “Obryadnost' Volnix Kameshchikov”, *Masonstvo v Ego Proshlom i Nastoyashchem*, ed. by S.P. Melgunov and N.P. Sidorov. (Moskva: IKPA, 1991). volume 2.

persons, who played a significant role in Freemasonry²⁰, or represent the list of the Russian masons' biographies²¹.

The representatives of the alternative tendency, the nationalist-monarchist, completely reject the Masonic educational and philanthropic activity and argue that Russian masons pursued predominantly their own political goals. Freemasonry is identified with the secret Jewish world organization, striving to establish its dominance over the whole world. The nationalist-monarchist authors, for example, Countess de Tol' and N.Y. Markov, try to disclose the Masonic intrigues against the government and official religion. They emphasize that the culminations of these intrigues were the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French revolution, among others. In their opinion, the main point of contemporary history is not class struggle, but the struggle for the existence of all nations with Judaism and the Freemasonic conspiracy.²² The authors perceive that the collapse of the autocracy in Russia happened because the educated circles of the society were gradually corrupted by false ideas of Jewish liberalism and Masonry, and, step-by-step, Russian culture had been destroyed, and the Russian state system had been shattered.²³ So, in their words, the initiators of all critical situations in Russia were Jews and masons whose activities were directed at the undermining of the autocratic basis of the Russian state and the annihilation of the Orthodox Church.

The present work considers the debates about the Masonic activity during Catherine II's reign between the representatives of liberal and nationalist-conservative tendencies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The aim of the thesis is to argue that the representatives of these two tendencies in Russian historiography, reflecting on Russian

²⁰ V.N. Tukalevskii, "N.I. Novikov i I.G. Shvarts" and N.K. Piksarov "I.V. Lopukhin", *Masonstvo v Ego Proshlom i Nastoyashchem*, ed. by S.P. Melgunov and N.P. Sidorov. (Moskva: IKPA, 1991). volume 1.

²¹ T.A. Bakunina, *Le repertoire biographique des francs-maçons russes*. (Paris, 1967).

²² Countess S.D. Tol', *Nochnie bratya*. (Saint Petersburg, 1911).

²³ N.Y. Markov, *Voyni Temykh Sil*. ("Rapid-Imprimerie", Paris (V), 1928). Vol. 1-2.

Freemasonry, had their own political agendas, which greatly influenced the way they treated the Masonic issue. Because of the enormous amount of works in Russian historiography of Freemasonry, within the limits of this thesis, only those works of the representatives of liberal and nationalist-monarchist tendencies, which, in my opinion, most vividly represent both viewpoints on eighteenth-century Russian Freemasonry, will be examined. Considering the period of Novikov's activity during Catherine II's reign in these works, the thesis will identify the specific goals of the authors of liberal and nationalist-monarchist views in using different interpretations of the history of Russian Freemasonry and the activity of Novikov's circle, and also the range of questions, which the representatives of different tendencies posed in their works. It should be mentioned that not all works which are treated in the thesis are based on archival material and have scientific importance in researching the Freemasonic issue in Russian historiography. Nevertheless, these works are interesting because the authors were also involved in the debates on this theme and took part in shaping Russian public opinion.

The thesis is divided into two chapters. Chapter One considers various liberal traditions in studying the Masonic issue in Russia. However, the main attention is paid to the liberal tradition of the beginning of the twentieth century because in that period there was a boom in the studying of Russian masonry not only of liberal tendency, but also Russian monarchists, who perceived that the Masons were guilty in the existing situation. The works of G.V. Vernadskii and V.A. Bogolyubov are analyzed as representatives of Russian liberal historiography in this time. Their key argument was that the spreading of European Freemasonic ideas in Russia in the eighteenth century promoted as a result the intellectual development of Russian society.

Chapter Two considers the political circumstances in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, the new tendency, the nationalist-monarchist, was established

in Russian historiography of the Masonic issue, which were continued to discuss also in the emigrants' works after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. The books by V.F. Ivanov and B. Bashilov, the representatives of the nationalist-monarchist view of the first and second waves of Russian emigration are the more interesting among them. In contrast to the liberal authors, the representatives of the nationalist-monarchist view use a different narrative interpretation of the Masonic issue in Russia and stress, mainly, the political goals of Freemasonry, besides the educational ones, which the authors of the liberal historiography accentuate.

Chapter 1. The liberal tendency at the end of the nineteenth-the beginning of the twentieth centuries

1.1 The foundation of the liberal tradition in the 1860s

The first chapter examines different liberal traditions in the Russian historiography on the Masonic issue from the middle of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries, and concentrates on the main representatives of these liberal traditions.

The liberal tradition for the study of the Russian Freemasonry of the eighteenth century was founded in the 1860s. The main contribution belongs to the academician A.N. Pypin who was the chief representative of the cultural and historical school of literary criticism. He was interested in belles-lettres with a link to the history of social thought, and was one of the ardent supporters of the ideas regarding overall Europeanization in Russia. Chernyshevskii, the key person in the Russian Democratic camp of 1853, had influenced Pypin's views. However, Pypin did not share the revolutionary idea of the overthrow of autocracy, and he defended the views of moderate liberalism in his works. Furthermore, he criticized the revolutionary methods of the narodnik movement in the 1870s. He emphasized "the influence of the educated classes [the nobility] on the masses"²⁴ and states that without this noble influence the people would not have «moral foundations»²⁵ and would lack of the opportunity to contribute consciously «to the highest interests of the national development»²⁶.

Pypin refined and summarized the previous material on the Russian Freemasonry of the eighteenth century. His point of view on the Masonic issue defined the basic directions in the subsequent research of this theme. He based his works on the archival material and also used the works of German historians and bibliographers of Freemasonry, such as J.G.

²⁴ N. Glagolev, *Pypin Aleksander Nikolayevich*. <http://slovari.yandex.ru/dict/litenc/article/1e9/1e9-4561.htm> (accessed February, 2008).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Findel, F.G. Closs, and others. Pypin put forward the rationalistic tendency in the historiography on Russian masonry. He regarded the mystical side in Masonry as questionable. For him, all that was beyond the scope of rationalistic enlightenment was “charlatanry”²⁷ or “obscurantism”²⁸.

Pypin was the first who covered in his research not only the time of Catherine the Great, but also Alexander I’s reign and the participation of Freemasons in the revolt of the Decembrists in 1825. In his opinion, it was a time of “political and intellectual ferment”²⁹ in Russian society. He perceived the Masonic lodges as an obvious example of this ferment. Unlike the lodges of the eighteenth century, where only the aristocracy took part, people from different social classes were allowed to participate in the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Pypin, “these people were united by the general feeling that society was lacking something, and something should be done.”³⁰ He stresses that this feeling tormented the Russian masons in the eighteenth century too, and it was the great achievement in “society, which did not think and lacked individuality”³¹. He states that in the beginning of the nineteenth century “political liberalism”³² was more clearly distinguished as the new tendency in Masonry. Therefore, considering the rational aspect of the Russian masonry and rejecting any “mysticism” in the Russian Masonic ideology, Pypin addressed the expectations of the society of this period for the development of liberal reforms, which had been started by Alexander II in the 1860s. After the works of Pypin and the book *Novikov as the Editor of Journals* by A.I.Nezelenov as an addition to Pypin’s works, where the Masonic publishing activity is discussed very broadly, it was the twenty-year interruption in the research on Russian Freemasonry.

²⁷ A.N. Pypin, *Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie v Rossii pri Aleksandre I.* (Sankt-Peterburg: Gumanitarnoe agentstvo "Akademicheskii proekt", 2001), 318.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 318.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 359.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 360.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 341

³² *Ibid.*

1.2 The liberal tradition in the 1890s

The resumption of the research on the Masonic issue is linked to the name of V.O. Kliuchevskii who also represents the liberal tradition. He delivered the speech “The memoirs about Novikov and his time” at the session of the Society of Lovers of the Russian literature dedicated to Novikov in the assembly hall of Moscow University on 13th November 1894. This speech was published in the journal *Russkya mysl'* (*The Russian thought*) in January 1895. Kliuchevskii was very popular in the Russian society at the end of the nineteenth century – beginning of the twentieth century. His political views were closed to the views of the right-wing Constitutional Democrats. He was against revolution, and saw his political ideal as a bourgeois state with a representative government and with the collaboration of all classes. Kliuchevskii criticized autocracy in his lectures and articles, but did not question the foundations of the bourgeois system.³³

Kliuchevskii stresses that to understand the historical process, it is necessary to trace the various types of people in the past and create their image, because “the individuals form the permanent units and subsequently constitute more or less complicated historical types”.³⁴ He emphasized the image of the person, such as Novikov, and his role in the history of Russian society. Kliuchevskii linked Novikov’s activity as publisher and the activity of the Muscovite circle to the spreading of education in Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century. In his words, “Novikov played a peculiar and unique role in Russian Enlightenment”.³⁵ Kliuchevskii states that the contribution of Novikov’s circle is “the

³³ V.A.Aleksandrov, *Kliuchevskii Vasilii Osipovich*. <http://www.cultinfo.ru/fulltext/1/001/008/062/105.htm> (accessed February, 2008).

³⁴ V.A.Aleksandrov with introduction to V.O. *Kliuchevskii. Istoricheskie Portrety: Deiateli Istoricheskoi Mysli*. (Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Pravda", 1991), 16.

³⁵ V.O. Kliuchevskii, *Istoricheskie Portrety: Deiateli Istoricheskoi Mysli*. (Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Pravda", 1991), 364.

emergence of public opinion”³⁶ and “the close moral connection between the Muscovite society and Moscow University”³⁷ during the decade of the Novikov’s activity.

Kliuchevskii’s speech did not change the established view on the image and the case of Novikov. However, the resumption of this interest in Novikov’s activity was linked partly with Novikov’s one hundred and fiftieth anniversary and also with the political situation in Russia in the 1880-1890s. This time was characterized as the age of “counterreforms”, which began with Alexander II’s assassination. The new tsar Alexander III’s government curbed the sweeping changes introduced by his predecessor, buttressed the centralization of the Russian state system, and attempted to hinder any development of liberalism and Westernization in the country. New press regulations made the existence of radical journals impossible and the life of a liberal press precarious. The University Statute of 1884, which replaced the more liberal statute of 1863, virtually abolished university autonomy and also emphasized that students were to be considered as “individual visitors”, who had no right to form organizations or to claim corporate representation.³⁸ Thus, in the educated milieu the development of the liberal reforms in the education sphere was considered as the growth of liberalism in the country, and for the Russian society Novikov’s activity in the eighteenth century served a good example of the origin of liberal movement. Moreover, Kliuchevskii’s speech opened the new page in the debates on Russian Freemasonry.

1.3 The representatives of the liberal trend in the beginning of the twentieth century

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a boom in researching the Freemasonic issue in Russia. That boom was not accidental. Unlike liberals, conservatives in the nineteenth century did not attach significance to the issue of Russian Freemasonry. Taking into consideration the existing situation in the country: the Russian Revolution of

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 388.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 391.

³⁸ N.I. Riasanovsky, 392.

1905, the calling of the State Dumas, etc., they reconsidered their position on this issue, and the publications on the theme of “the intrigues of Freemasons” became usual for the conservative press of that period. There were the books by G.V. Butmi, A. Selyaninov, among others, which will be discussed more broadly in the second chapter. The response to these publications was given by liberals who, like their predecessors in the nineteenth century, considered Russian Freemasons of the eighteenth century as their spiritual forerunners and emphasized Freemasons’ contribution to the liberalization of the social and political atmosphere in Russia. The moral searching of Freemasons, the quest for the moral ideal, truth and the meaning of life, were the prime interest of Russian liberal historiography of that time. Opposed to conservatives, liberals strove to show that the Masonic “mystery” did not have a “dreadful meaning”. In their opinion, the aim of Russian masons was “self-perfection” and the improvement of the Russian society in the eighteenth century. The books by G.V. Vernadskii and V.A. Bogolyubov, which will be treated in the present chapter, were a reply to the conservatives’ accusation of Freemasonry at the beginning of the twentieth century.

1.3.1 The work of G.V. Vernadskii

The book *Russian Freemasonry during the Reign of Catherine II* by Vernadskii was published at the beginning of 1917 when the author was a student of Moscow University. Like the majority of the intelligentsia of his time, he adhered to liberal views. Vernadskii stood up for the liberal changes in the country, but he was against extremist methods. At the university, he became a member of the student faction of the Party of People’s Freedom, commonly known as the Constitutional Democrats.

The scholar A.I. Serkov, the author of the encyclopedia on Russian Freemasonry, gives in the introduction a quotation from Vernadskii’s memoirs of where the reasons of the writing of Vernadskii’s work are explained: “I have a choice for my dissertation. By the

advice from my gymnasium teacher, Y.L. Barskov, who persuaded me to take the history of Russian Freemasonry during Catherine II's reign as a thesis topic, and also from my father V.I. Vernadskii, I decided to stop on the theme on Freemasonry."³⁹ Additional information about the choice of the thesis is contained in a letter from Vernadskii to A.B. Khrabrovickii from 30th September 1970, which is also quoted in the encyclopedia. He wrote: "My father [V.I. Vernadskii] was interested in Freemasonry because he was interested in the history of all intellectual currents and also because his grandfather (my great-grandfather) was a Freemason."⁴⁰ According to his words, he was interested in the wide international connections of Russian Freemasonry and in researching Freemasonry within the background of the history of European intellectual life.

In the preface to his work, Vernadskii states that his book is about the history of the development of spiritual culture of Russian society. He poses the question: what was the real meaning of all Masonic associations, their prevalence, and their weight in Russian society? The author places high emphasis on the periodicals and literature published in the 1770s-1780s. He gives examples of several publications, which, in his opinion, had a significant influence on the course of Masonic thought and activity. According to Vernadskii, "the translated books are more important than original ones, because 'the translation is the new fact of the book's life'".⁴¹ However, he maintains that the published books and periodicals circulated not only among masons, but also in all Russian literary society of that time, and, therefore, these publications influenced the formation of Russian thought of that time. The author stresses that the dominant idea of all literature published in that time was that life is chaotic. However, "in the mortal body there is eternal soul, which should be strengthened and enlightened by the principles of the firm morals".⁴² Vernadskii

³⁹ A.I.Serkov, *Russkoe Masonstvo, 1731-2000: Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar*. (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2001), 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴¹ G.V.Vernadskii, *Russkoe Masonstvo v Tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II*. (Düsseldorf: Brücken-Verlag, 1970), xvii.

⁴² *Ibid*, 92.

perceives that these thoughts are close to the philosophy of rationalistic masonry. The moralizing tendency, reflected in the periodicals in the 1760s and 1770s, such as *Utrennii svet* (*Morning Light*), which Novikov published in 1777, and in the translations of the books, such as *Economy of Human Life* by the English poet Robert Dodsli. In Vernadskii's words, from this time "the minor streams of Masonic thought joined in one wide course."⁴³

The author states that the goal of Russian Masonic associations in the 1770s was to grasp "the intellectual laws" and to build the life of one's soul and body on the basis of these laws. He emphasized that in understanding of the meaning of life Russian Freemasonry in the 1770s coincided with "Voltaireanism".⁴⁴ Vernadskii sustains that sometimes Voltaireanism became the synonym of moral nihilism and dissoluteness. However, in his opinion, Voltaireanism attempted to create the new morality, which was, furthermore, developed in Masonic associations. He stresses that people who were devoted to this morality could not be worse regarding the morality than non-Voltaireans, and this new morality, which posed obstacles to "corruptness"⁴⁵, relied not on the authority of religion, but the priority of intellect. According to him, the traditions of the "Stoic philosophy", which attracted attention of educated noble circles, constituted "intellectual morality" for Russian Voltaireans. Vernadskii attempts to explain the logic of secret associations. According to him, "the new morality, which was required by Voltaireanism, was beyond the strength of one man. The author emphasizes that there was only one way to join the people of the new morality, i.e. to create an association. In his words, however, "Russian freethinkers strove to protect their teaching against broad publicity."⁴⁶ So, by his explanation, the first Masonic association was created where the members were almost all

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

Voltaireans who gathered to discuss what they read and thought with somebody who was congenial.

Vernadskii mentions that from the end of the 1770s, Russian Freemasonry accepted the mystical direction, which was reflected also in literature. He stresses that the transfer from the rational tendency to the mystic began from the publishing of the article “About three knowledges – curious, pleasing, and useful” by the Muscovite professor, Schwarz, in 1782 where all the spiritual life of man is divided into three degrees. The first dominated by the intellect; the second by feeling; and the third by revelation.

The author maintains that for masons the Rosicrucian teaching is the highest level to get interpretation of life’s meaning. He pays great attention to the published mystic literature of the Moscow Rosicrucians and states that mysticism was an integral part of Russian masonry and, therefore, Russian society from the mid-1780s. Vernadskii mentions that the enormous mystical literature was created by the efforts of Novikov’s circle. He emphasizes that “all mystic literature [published by Novikov] had the reference to the Holy Scripture”.⁴⁷ The author quotes a fragment from Pozdeyev’s letter, who wrote that “when reading other books, we must not forget about the book of all books, i.e. the Holy Scripture. Other books are like stars, but the Holy Scripture is the sun from which the sensible world gets its energy.”⁴⁸

According to Vernadskii, Novikov’s circle had the task of creating literature for all Russian reading society, not only for masons. He perceives that with this aim “The Translating seminary” attached to Moscow University was created. Nevertheless, in his words, it was not enough to translate and publish a book, but necessary “to create a reader for it”. He accentuates that the Russian public opinion, educated on French enlightened philosophy, was against mystical books, so it needed to persuade the Russian literate circles

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

to read the books published by Novikov. The author mentions Labzin's story about how Novikov convinced his clients to read books with moral content by presenting them to clients. He emphasizes that, according to the convictions of Novikov's circle, when the reader is found, it is important "to give him a spiritual food gradually and carefully", so that "the bright light of truth does not blind the reader and, therefore, he will find the most precious things that the wise books contain."⁴⁹ Vernadskii concludes that the publishing activity of the Moscow Rosicrucian center, i.e. Novikov's circle, was directed towards the implementation of the order's goals. According to him, the printing editions and manuscripts of the circle set out in all towns where the work of the order was conducted. The author emphasizes that "the extremely intimate circle of the Rosicrucian brothers had acquired the enormous influence on the whole course of the spiritual development of Russian society with the help of the strict organization of the order".⁵⁰

Vernadskii stresses that despite the different tendencies in Russian Freemasonry: rational, mystical, etc., all of them had united "in their intention to help to develop the state in the correct direction"⁵¹. In his words, "none of these tendencies excluded the improvement [or salvation] of the society or the state from their activity".⁵² He quotes the fragment of an eighteenth-century speech, according to which, the spirit of the mason required "to organize the happiness of the compatriots", "to improve the welfare of the state", and "to create the public welfare".⁵³ The author also emphasizes that the work over the soul, through which "it can achieve the true welfare and freedom"⁵⁴ is extremely important for a true mason. He underlines that the improvement of estate and economic conditions of life was moved in the background. According to him, on the contrary "the

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

moral discipline of spirit, the self-perfection, and the correction of spoiled morals were brought in the forefront. So to cope with one's passions was the chief aim and basic task of all instructions in lodges and Masonic pocket books".⁵⁵

Vernadskii argues that regarding serfdom, the foremost question of that time, masons also emphasized the improvement of morals. He quotes the speech of a member of Novikov's circle, who stated: "It is hardly possible to clean something with dirty hands. First, one must wash the hands."⁵⁶ However, the author emphasized that masons did not discuss the emancipations of serfs because "despite emancipation it would be impossible to free their soul. Therefore, it would be better to improve the morals of proprietors".⁵⁷ He mentions that O.A. Pozdeyev ardently defended the power of nobility over their serf peasants. "At the end of 1786 during the unrest of peasants in his estate in Vologda, Pozdeyev complained to Lopukhin that 'the Illuminati spirit of independence, spreading in Europe was governed by peasants. The nobles must suppress the smallest sparkles of disobedience, the non-payment of taxes, theft, robbery and all violence.'"⁵⁸ Vernadskii perceives that the efforts of masons were dedicated to this improvement. He gives such examples as the publications by Novikov's circle, at first, of the satirical journals, such as *Truten'* (*Drone*) and *Jivopisets* (*Artist*), where the defects of Russian society were condemned and, thereafter, of the journals with moral context, for example *Utrennii svet*, which was preached in lodges.

The author stresses that, in masons' opinion, one of the consequences of moral education for the rich was helping the poor. That is why, in his opinion, philanthropy played a significant role in the public activity of masons. He underlines that the propagation of the idea of being kind towards somebody was at the center of Masonic speeches. According to

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

him, “if all people search for sensible pleasure, ‘the mason, a friend of all humans, always helps those, who undergo hardships, and sacrifices his own happiness to the public one’”.⁵⁹ However, he emphasizes that Masonic philanthropy was, first of all, for brothers, and, thereafter, it spread to people who did not belong to the Masonic order. In his words, this help consisted “in career assistance”⁶⁰. Vernadskii stresses that, taking into consideration the dominance of most Russian nobles in Freemasonic activity, it is not surprising to find many army and navy officers or government officials in lodges, who constituted the great part of the Russian bureaucratic apparatus. He cites Novikov’s letter where he wrote that “a great deal of nobles in the state”⁶¹ were Freemasons, who were not even mentioned in the official Masonic documents. The author concludes as the Masonic certificate was a promise which provided “to rise on the service stairs”⁶², so whole state institutions were filled by masons. He also states that Masonry in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was widespread not only in cities and towns of Russia, but also in the countryside. He gives an example of the landlord Yakovlev in Rostov uyezd of Yaroslav province, who was absorbed by Masonic ideas and corresponded with masons who lived in cities.⁶³ Therefore, Vernadskii emphasizes the widespread character of masonry and the large role of the Russian nobility who took an active part in Masonic lodges and assisted in the spread of this movement.

The author broadly discusses the philanthropic activity, which was undertaken by the Rosicrucian circle in 1784. In his words, “the charity of Novikov’s circle was demonstrated especially widely in the famine of 1787, when in his estate Novikov distributed grain among his peasants”.⁶⁴ Vernadskii also emphasizes that in 1777 Novikov founded with his friends the journal *Utrennii svet* which had a philanthropic goal. According to him, “the profits of

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

this journal should be deposited in the school fund for poor children in Saint Petersburg. The editors of the journal also thought about the future of the school's students. They proposed to train the students in arts that 'would be useful for the students' livelihood'.⁶⁵ He stresses that after opening several institutions, the Rosicrucian circle set out the main task of their philanthropy and education: the establishment of Friendly Scientific Society. Vernadskii accentuates that on October 1782 the Moscow commander-in-chief, Count Chernyshov, gave permission to masons to establish this society, and even the Muscovite archbishop, Platon, gave his blessing.⁶⁶ The author writes that, besides the educational activity, masons played a significant role in medicine. According to him, "masons took an active part in smallpox vaccination in Russia, and the Moscow Rosicrucian circle also opened a drugstore, the organization of which was an event of large philanthropic meaning because drugstores were the strongest necessity in Moscow and other towns. Moreover, this drugstore, whose main aim was 'the distribution of medication among the poor free of charge', served the poor strata of the population".⁶⁷

Vernadskii touches the question of Masonic politics during Catherine II's reign and emphasizes that in this time there were two public tendencies closely linked to Masonic organizations. In his words, "one of them was the liberal noble policy, which was widespread in the 1760s. This policy has connections with the manifesto of the noble liberties and the Legislative Commission in 1767. The nobility of this time expressed the idea of unrestricted industry and of economic benefits. However, since the mid-1770s the noble conservative tendency predominated. It was the reaction to Catherine's disordered rule that shook the national economy. The figures of the Swedish Masonic system and the Rosicrucian one belonged to this noble conservative tendency".⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

The author stresses that in the Rose Cross Order Novikov was the leader. In his opinion, “Novikov’s personality was tireless and constantly sought for self-demonstration.”⁶⁹ He emphasizes that mostly Novikov had businesses with literary workers, with whom he always tried to be just and tells about the generosity of Novikov who paid “the unprecedented prices for translations”⁷⁰. Vernadskii recalls the price which Novikov paid for the work of a translator, and he confirms Novikov’s kindness.

However, the author mentions that although Novikov was treated as leader in his circle, he was subordinate to Baron Schroder, to whom Novikov sent the reports about “the books which were published in Russian and foreign languages in the public printing-house and in the secret printing-house”⁷¹. He accentuates that “Novikov addressed his Order’s master for daily advice”. Vernadskii gives an example that Novikov asked for permission to “have strict observance” for typographical workers, the most part of whom were “spoiled and drunkards”⁷². He writes that after discord between Novikov and the Baron, Schroder came to hate Novikov because Novikov refused to return Schroder’s money from “The printing company” in Moscow when Baron demanded to get his initial investment back from the company instead of the proportional amount of all the company’s property.⁷³ Therefore, Vernadskii perceives that from this moment Novikov was the only leader in the activity of the Moscow Rose Cross Order.

Vernadskii mentions that, besides the discords between Rosicrucians, the persecutions of Moscow Masonic circle begun at the end of 1784. He gives several explanations of Catherine II’s discontent with Novikov’s activity, which led to the dispersal of the Moscow circle and subsequently to Novikov’s arrest. According to him, masons in Moscow tried to create their charity institution without the empress’s support and even

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 123.

against her will. In his words, “the opening of the school in Saint Petersburg was organized with special solemnity. A strong movement was created around this event, which transformed from the private philanthropy to the public.”⁷⁴ Vernadskii emphasizes that such a turn in the matter was not pleasant for Catherine II, because “the Masonic society apparently tried to capture initiative in the sphere of primary popular education, which, according to the views of the empress, should ‘create the new type of people useful for the state’ and, which was the state prerogative. So the empress’s opposition to the Masonic educational initiative began with her ignorance of Novikov’s undertaking.”⁷⁵ The author stresses that after the empress’s ignorance it was the blow to the publishing work of Novikov and company in 1787 when Catherine II prohibited the printing of books with religious contents in secular printing-houses. Vernadskii writes that the publishing activity of the Moscow circle gradually ceased. He quotes from Lopukhin’s letter, who in 1790 wrote that “the books published now are rubbish and even I am not interested to know about typographical work. They are published just for preservation of the typographical company.”⁷⁶

Vernadskii mentions that Pugachev’s rebellion in 1773-75 was a terrible social threat for the nobility, which changed the policy from liberal to conservative. In his words, “on the one hand, this peasant war strengthened the demand of the consolidation of landlords’ power. On the other hand, Pugachev’s rebellion proved that the projects of the social reforms and the improvement of the social life of the population were inevitable. Those projects were expressed in the Masonic utopias and realized by Novikov during the famine in 1787. Thus, the associates of Novikov approached socialism in some sense; but it was undoubtedly *conservative socialism* (my italics).”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 220.

Vernadskii emphasizes that after Pugachyev's rebellion the French revolution was another shock for the nobles. He gives examples of Masonic correspondence and insists that masons wrote letters where they condemned the French revolution "not only to distract one's attention"⁷⁸. The author emphasizes that the Masonic letters were obvious evidence of their loyalty to the sovereign. He quotes F.P. Klyucharev, who told in 1784 that "obedience, which the highly honorable order requires from us, is the respect to the sovereign, who is the divine representative on the earth. The fulfillment of the civil laws and the love to the homeland originated from this obedience."⁷⁹ And also he cites Pozdeyev's letter to Count Razumosvkii: "Russia is not Poland yet. Russia is still *Tatarshchina* (my italics). It should have the autocratic sovereign, and be supported by a large number of nobles."⁸⁰

Vernadskii argues that the basic point of the Masonic political program demanded "the improvement of society's morals". This point was linked inevitably to the question about the sovereign who must act as an example to his subjects through his behavior. It was stated in one of Novikov's journals that "if the ruling person is just and is inclined to any virtue, he will attract subjects to these virtues too by his example".⁸¹ He insists that all accusations in "the corruption of morals" addressed without doubt the empress. However, the author emphasizes that "the conservative nobility could not do anything besides preparing the adequate candidate for the imperial throne, because the hands of its leaders were tied by fear of new peasant uprising. So these leaders complained in a low voice, shrugged their shoulder, spoke much, but acted little. They hoped to find the just sovereign in the crown prince Paul."⁸²

Vernadskii contends that the relations with the crown prince and his friends in Berlin were the main reason for Catherine II's decision to arrest Novikov and prohibit Masonic

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 226.

lodges in Russia. According to him, “Catherine II searched for a cause for Novikov’s arrest for a long time. The empress probably found this occasion in the correspondence of Moscow Rosicrucians with Kutuzov and Schroder. However, the official cause for arrest was declared in the printing ‘The sufferings of Solovetsk martyrs’ by Novikov.”⁸³

In the conclusion Vernadskii mentions that “after Catherine II’s death Russian masonry, dissolved by the empress, regenerated. In his words, “it is undoubtedly that the principles of spiritual political life, outlined by Russian masonry of the mid-eighteenth century, were reflected in Paul’s rule.”⁸⁴ He insists that “working the rough stone of the Russian soul was the strongest part of all Masonic activity. The new type of ideal man, which was of great importance in Russian noble society, was created thanks to this activity.”⁸⁵ Vernadskii emphasizes that under the influence of the conservative noble groups with their spiritual needs and interests during Catherine II’s reign “Novikov’s circle, which helped to create the Russian public opinion, emerged.”⁸⁶

1.3.2 The work of V.A. Bogolyubov

Another representative of the Russian liberal historiography, V.A. Bogolyubov, in the book *N.I. Novikov and His Time* supports the same opinion, as other liberal authors, about the role of masonry in Russia. In other words, he emphasizes that masonry was the progressive force, which influenced the formation of the Russian intelligentsia’s outlook. When giving the reasons for his interest in this historical period, the author states:

N.I. Novikov’s time constitutes the epoch, in which the Russian intelligentsia originated, together with its ideals of the civic self-determination... This time coincided with Catherine II’s reign. There were extremely encouraging conditions for the intensive work of the critical thought in this time when the beneficial milieu in which this critical thought was developing was shaped, and, in the same time, the nobles became free from the compulsory state service, imposed on them by Peter I, and retained their exclusive right on the serf labor. Freedom and financial security provided

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 247.

the nobility with enough spare time to grasp their position and build the outlook, which justified its privileged position.⁸⁷

So Bogolyubov stresses that Catherine II's reign was the time when "the strong patriotic and national agitation"⁸⁸ was directed at reforming the Russian society. This desire of the society's reformation was linked with the spreading of Masonic ideas in this time.

The author accentuates that the idea of reforming the Russian society, which was reflected in Novikov's periodicals and scientific editions, was the necessary component for creating "the ideal of virtuous and enlightened citizens in the progressive and just-established society"⁸⁹. In his opinion, all progressive strata of the Russian society made every effort to this ideal. He considers that there were two main ways to reach this ideal in the eighteenth century and describes them as follows:

One of them had the belief in the necessity of the development of the human mind and the creation of the rational legislature, which could improve the life of society. Another way indicated that the development of the intellect and the existence of the intellectual enlightened people were not enough because they are not always the moral developed ones. It is important for the individual to regenerate and, thereafter, the whole society would reform. The first way was the enlightened philosophy of the eighteenth century, the various tendencies that were put together under the label "Voltaireism". The second one was the mystical trend of masonry. Both these tendencies were the protest of the progressive thought against the ways in which the feudal state and the church were defined. That is why these ways were not separated at first, and went in parallel, sometimes joined in one course.⁹⁰

Bogolyubov emphasizes that enlightened philosophy was "the repository of the political and social ideas of different shades of radicalism".⁹¹ He poses the question: "What was taken from this philosophy in Russia?"⁹² The author sustains that the nobility, among which the enlightened philosophy was spread, chose only those ideas which could be suitable to justify

⁸⁷ V.A. Bogolyubov, *N.I. Novikov i Ego Vremia*. (Düsseldorf: Brücken-Verlag, 1970), 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 156-157

⁹² *Ibid.*, 156.

their positions. “These ideas promoted the development of the noble liberalism, which was raised by the empress’s *Nakaz* and the Legislative Commission in 1767.”⁹³ He considers that one group of the nobility was satisfied with the ideas of enlightened philosophy, which was “adapted to the Russian reality and gave flavor to uninspiring life. One could be chief-prosecutor of the Holy Synod and at the same time argue that there is no God. One could also propagate the idea of the enlightened philosophy and at the same time penalize one’s serfs”⁹⁴. The author states that in the beginning of Catherine II’s reign, this “honeymoon” of the nobility’s beliefs in reforming the society, “Voltaireanism, advocated by the empress, was the wide river against which masonry was a shallow stream.”⁹⁵

However, Bogolyubov stresses that there was another group of nobility who hoped that power limited oneself in the interests of the gentry. In his words, “however, soon Catherine II realized that her understanding of the philosophical truths did not coincide with the noble and undertook the crucial measures in order to hinder the spreading of new ideas as long as her subjects would reach the empress’s understanding of these ideas.”⁹⁶ He perceives that in this situation masonry appeared with “its program of the improvement of society with the help of reeducation of individuals and gave opportunity to express popular outbursts. Masonic ideals of the universal brotherhood coincided with those that were built by the progressive Russian intelligentsia before the spreading of masonry in Russia. In addition, masonry joined separate impulses in large and broad streams for the sake of a better future.”⁹⁷ The author maintains:

The ability of Russian masonry to accept the best ideas from various European Masonic tendencies, which approached the society towards perfection, made masonry the serious social force. The ideas of the universal brotherhood, the just social order, and moral improvement were already reflected in Russian literature and periodical

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

press in the beginning of the eighteenth century. However, only masonry had the aim to apply their efforts and introduce these ideas in the society. In addition, in the conditions of Russian reality there was another achievement of Russian masonry which was created not by order of the authority, but by desire of the Russian society. It was the first serious organization for the moral education of the society.⁹⁸

Like Vernadskii, who also considers the mystical tendency in Russian masonry, Bogolyubov highlights that mysticism in Russian masonry cannot be considered as obscurantism because the teachings of mystical trend did not oppose the Holy Scripture. In his words, “mysticism was the bridge that allowed people who lost touch with the ancestors’ legacy and at the same time scared by the enlightened ideas’ radicalism, could go forward to the true light of the positive science.”⁹⁹ He states that the main goal of the Masonic enlightened work was the spreading of the true Enlightenment, which was “based on the true religious teaching contained in the words of the Gospel; and the edition of useful books, together with their distribution among the population”.¹⁰⁰

The author considers that the Russian Freemasonry in its development experienced the same steps as European Freemasonry. However, he underlines that there was a significant difference between them. According to him, “despite all their mistakes, which came from lack of knowledge, the searching of Russian masons was always serious and unselfish. From different Masonic “systems” they tried to take only those values which were in concord with Christian moral and broadened the sphere of their Christian activity.”¹⁰¹ He cites the testimonies of Lopukhin and other Rosicrucians, who stated that they “took from masonry all precious things, which were not against Christian teaching. The unselfish aspiration to the Christian virtues was directed to search not for the philosophical stone, but, in the first place, for moral purification.”¹⁰² Bogolyubov also stresses that after the interview with Novikov archbishop Platon informed the empress about Novikov’s religious

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 257.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 252.

convictions: “As before God’s altar and your throne, Your Majesty, I must tell you I pray that not only in my congregation, but also in the whole world there would be such Christians as Novikov”.¹⁰³ Therefore, like Vernadskii, the author emphasizes that Masonic teaching was not contradictory to Christianity, but even the most part of this teaching was based on it.

Bogolyubov frequently accentuates that Russian masons tried carefully to avoid getting involved in politics. He states that there was the prohibition in the lodges’ laws under the threat of a fine of “five rubl’ for the poor if one in the lodge speaks about religion and political issues”¹⁰⁴. The author emphasizes that only one political question about the duty to love the homeland was touched on in Masonic speeches. “For sake of this love, although refuted war as evil, masons proclaimed: ‘Love your homeland and shed blood for it if there is the need in it’”.¹⁰⁵

Like Vernadskii, Bogolyubov emphasizes that Masonic teaching stated that society should be governed by the sovereign, as, according to the masons’ words, “the entire world is governed by God. The rule of the sovereign has divine origin, and if the sovereign has sins, he should be judged not by people, but by God. In his words, Masonic ideas accentuated the absolute obedience to the sovereign in the sphere of all political questions.”¹⁰⁶ He states that masons preferred that there would be laws, before which all must be equal and to which the sovereign should follow. According to the author, however, “these laws should come from the sovereign, and subjects must not demand any constitutional guarantees.”¹⁰⁷ He quotes the words of Lopukhin who called the political theories of the contemporary philosophers “the turbulent striving for imaginary equality and freethinking”.¹⁰⁸ The author emphasizes that even during the interrogation of Trubetstkoy

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 389.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

and Turgenev, who denied their guilt, they “asked the empress’s pardon that they unconsciously draw suspicion upon them partaking unwisely in masonry. At the end of their testimonies they promised to break with masonry not because they were convinced of the deceptiveness of Masonic ideas, but because the authority did not like it.”¹⁰⁹ Bogolyubov also accentuates that despite the authority’s severe persecution, the members of the Ross Cross order had the opinion that “not Catherine II, but her representatives were guilty of the injustices in the Russian society. They put her trust to evil ends. Masons guessed that it is crucial to disclose the bureaucrats’ abuses of power, which were concealed from the empress.”¹¹⁰ He also quotes Kutuzov, who wrote that “it is our fault that we do not try to make our way through insincerity and falsehood surrounding the empress’s throne. She is benevolent and just. If she knows our dispositions, she will stop the persecutions and find out that we are the most loyal citizens.”¹¹¹ The author supports Vernadskii’s view which perceives that masons were devoted citizens in Russian society where, for masons, the monarchy under the strong rule of the sovereign was the most appropriate form of government.

Like Vernadskii, Bogolyubov also emphasizes that masons did not demand the abolition of serfdom, but it was recognized that the proprietor should take care of the interests of his peasants. He stresses that, according to Masonic teaching, “[t]he mason should promote God’s teaching among his serfs. He should be kind and treat them without cruelty.”¹¹² Therefore, in the question of serfdom the author supports the same opinion, which is reflected in Vernadskii’s book that, as masons perceived, it was not time for serfs’ emancipation. They both stress that, in masons’ opinion, one should care about “the moral

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 441.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 406.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 407.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 223.

self-perfection, which would follow the creation of the perfect human society”¹¹³. Vernadskii and Bogolyubov call this process “working the rough stone”¹¹⁴.

The author maintains that in the beginning of Catherine II’s reign, the authorities urged social reform of the society. In his words, so, most people believed naively that these appeals were directed to the extermination of all vices, which were noticed in society. He argues that “Catherine II’s first steps did not destroy this naivety of her subjects. The rigorous accusation of Peter III’s reign in manifestos, the strict actions against bribery and stealing of public funds, and the calling of the famous commission with accompanied pomposity were supported illusions that ‘the Golden Age’ was coming in Russia.”¹¹⁵ He sustains that this situation was favorable for the emergence of independent public opinion. Bogolyubov considers that one spokesman of this opinion was Novikov’s circle. He mentions that until the creation of this circle the ideas of the Enlightenment were absorbed by the high strata in the Russian society and supported by Moscow University. The author gives the example of a member of the university’s authorities, the curator Kheraskov, who tried to awake society’s interest towards sciences by organizing public lectures. He stresses that these undertakings were useless because there was no leader who could organize this activity. In his opinion, Novikov became such a leader who introduced his talent as an organizer, and “soon, the circle of friends who had wide contacts in the Moscow society was established around him.”¹¹⁶

Bogolyubov emphasizes that masons tried to involve Novikov in masonry and, thereafter, gave him a chance to rent the printing house of Moscow University. He mentions that to organize the printing house, Novikov invested 20,000 rubl’, which he got from the sale of his estate. According to him, “it was a huge risk from Novikov’s side, because the

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 194.

organization of the publishing activity was almost fruitless in that time.”¹¹⁷ However, the author stresses that not only masons needed Novikov and his organizing talent, but also Novikov needed masonry which provided him with the basis for expressing his self-consciousness in the necessity of the public service, and for fulfilling his moral duty to assist in spreading enlightened ideas in Russian society.

Unlike Vernadskii, who states that Novikov was deeply involved in Masonic activity, Bogolyubov emphasizes that Novikov was not especially interested in it. He considers that besides his correspondence with masons in Saint Petersburg, “Novikov made few gatherings with the brothers in his lodge. For this he was blamed by Schwarz, Lopukhin, and others.”¹¹⁸ Bogolyubov states that in respect to his Rosicrucian masters, Novikov was guided not by masters’ instructions, but by his own considerations. He gives an example when Novikov got the masters’ order to make a list of all books published in the 1780s, he objected and tried to explain that it was difficult to do, and delayed it. In his words, “in response to the instruction to hand over to Schwarz the typographical activity Novikov also suggested his candidate to manage this business. His competence in this business forced him to rely on his wisdom more than on the leaderships’ instructions.”¹¹⁹ The author sustains that in his letters to Schroder, Novikov regretted his disobedience, but “he did not have a desire to become a weak-willed instrument in the hands of his masters.”¹²⁰

Like Vernadskii, Bogolyubov considers the educated and philanthropic activity of Novikov’s circle. He states that before the emergence of the Moscow circle there was also Masonic philanthropy but it did not have a large scale, in other words, this activity was present only in some lodges whose members made a donation of small sums for the poor.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 329.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

The author emphasizes that only Novikov, who's organizing talent was obvious, could develop it on a large scale. Listing all masons' undertakings in the sphere of education and charity, which are stressed by Vernadskii too, he adds that, besides opening schools, the educational societies, among others, Novikov organized a library in his book shop "to give an opportunity to those who wanted to read, but did not have the possibility to buy books. It was the first public library in Moscow."¹²¹

Considering the reasons for the persecutions of Novikov's circle by the government, Bogolyubov does not differ from Vernadskii's opinion. He stresses that the independent public opinion, which emerged in Russian literary society, was not tolerated by the Enlightenment absolutism, the main idea of whose was to take care of the common good exclusively by itself. In his words, "the authority expressed its understanding of the common good and pointed its principles and limits, in the framework of which the subjects could act, in Catherine II's *Nakaz*, where the ideas of the French enlightened philosophy were articulated. However, with time these ideas ceased, and the defined limits were narrowed."¹²² The author perceives masonry as a private society with tasks, such as the wide enlightened activity, philanthropy, and the organization of the public mutual assistance in the case of famine, and as "the organizing social power with a large sum of money that spread its books 'from Riga to the Don Cossack villages' had a strong influence on Russian society. It was an unprecedented phenomenon in Russian life, which occupied an extremely prominent position, and could not be ignored anymore."¹²³

Bogolyubov also states that Catherine II's rationalistic thinking regarded all mystical and symbolical things with suspicion. In his words, "not understanding it, the empress approached masonry with prejudice, and saw nothing in it besides 'nonsense'".¹²⁴ He

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 334.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 105.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 347.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 353-354.

mentions that “Calioistro’s activity in Russia worsened the empress’s impressions about masons. If the empress previously considered masonry as an absurdity, now she decided that a few cheaters tried to involve naïve people in that play [masonry].”¹²⁵ The author sustains that despite archbishop Platon’s opinion about Novikov’s loyalty, the empress considered Novikov and his friends as “the people of a new schism”, and until the completion of the investigation, concerning the publishing activity of Novikov’s circle, the books, which were printed by Novikov, were identified as harmful, filled with ‘schism’, and the publisher [Novikov] was also accused of ‘cheating of naïve people’.¹²⁶ So Bogolyubov emphasizes that the authority’s first reason for Novikov’s arrest was the charge in the plot of the Russian Illuminates [the Moscow circle] against the government and society. He mentions that “Novikov became the especially important prisoner of State. However, in this time Catherine II did not have the documents which disclosed the Masonic contacts with the crown prince Paul and which would serve as the basis for the most essential accusations against the masons.”¹²⁷

To draw a conclusion about the reasons of the government persecutions of masons, the author definitely rejects the idea that Novikov and his friends took part in political intrigue. In his opinion, according to material that has already been published, “it is evident that the authority could not prove Novikov’s criminal plans against the government, despite all organized measures. There was also no proof that the masons were ‘cheating’ the wealthy.”¹²⁸ He perceives:

One should search for the reasons of Novikov’s severe penalty in his enlightened and philanthropic activity. Since Catherine II had decided to “enlighten” Russian society and paved the way to reflect her “high truth” in the legislature, Novikov’s activity stood in her way. Novikov went ahead of the government and first began to open schools. When “the philosopher on the throne” patronized the spreading

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 355.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 389.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 420.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 456.

of her favorite French philosophy works, Novikov criticized the corrupt influence of this philosophy and began to publish moral and religious books in large numbers. When the authority was sure that the government program took care of the people's prosperity, Novikov found the hungry and organized a broad charity program for the poor. All this feverish activity went in the opposite direction compared with that of the authority. It was saturated by the spirit of the independent social initiative and went out of the limits permitted by absolute rule. Novikov's activity was also unpleasant for the empress because it "burned more and more brightly" when the authority rested on its laurels thinking that it provided people with happiness. The events of the French revolution and the fears of the plot against the government were the reasons for the final prohibition of the activity of Novikov's circle.¹²⁹

Therefore, Bogolyubov concludes that all the misfortunes of the Moscow circle took place because the authority intolerantly observed those undertakings of the society, which went against the government's directions. He stresses that the Moscow circle's broad activity passed the limits that the authority defined for independent social initiative. In his opinion, this was the main point of the empress's discontent with Moscow masonry's undertakings. The author emphasizes that "the absolute rule and the social initiative are unable to coexist everywhere and all the time."¹³⁰ Unlike Vernadskii, Bogolyubov perceives that although Novikov was not especially interested in masonry and did not take active part in Masonic work, he was punished more severely than the rest of the members of the Moscow circle. He mentions that the chief reason for Novikov's penalty is his organizing talent, which was even emphasized by his friends.

Considering the liberal traditions of the end of the nineteenth – the beginning of the twentieth centuries, one can conclude that the views of the liberal representatives on the Masonic issue coincide in some sense. Liberal authors try to demonstrate that Russian masonry was a progressive force in Russian society and that it influenced its spiritual life and gave an impulse for the emergence of the Russian intelligentsia in the eighteenth century. However, there is also a difference between the liberal tradition of the end of the nineteenth century and of the beginning of the twentieth century on the issue of Russian

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 457-458.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 362.

masonry. Pypin tries to explain the Masonic phenomenon from the rational point of view, rejecting the mystical tendency in Russian masonry. With time, it is recognized that “there was another spiritual side in Russian masonry, which was beyond Pypin’s comprehension.”¹³¹ This was realized by Vernadskii and Bogolyubov who attempted to throw out the “old rationalistic approach to this question”¹³², to “revaluate the views, established by Pypin’s school”¹³³, and to “research the complexity of the phenomena of spiritual life in Russian society”.¹³⁴

Moreover, the political situation in the country in the beginning of the twentieth century provoked fervent debates around the Masonic issue. In the book *N.I. Novikov and His Time* Bogolyubov emphasizes that “the vast scale of the revolutionary events, their rapid changes, confused the official circle of European society after the French revolution and could not explain the revolution. However, it was too important event to ignore. That is why the reasons of the revolution were found in the conspiracy of plotters who were considered to be masons. At first, such an explanation was circulated among French emigrants and their supporters in other countries. Soon this version was created and “proved” in literature.”¹³⁵ In Bogolyubov’s opinion, the same situation existed after the Russian revolution of 1905. The liberal authors perceived that the Russian conservatives did not understand the Masonic phenomenon, used the term “masonry” “completely irresponsibly in politics”¹³⁶, and searched for “Masonic intrigue” in those circumstances. Therefore, the works on Russian masonry written in the beginning of the twentieth century were, mostly, the liberals’ attempts to respond to the right-wing authors’ accusations.

¹³¹ N. Berdyaev. “Po Povodu Novoy Knigi o Masonstve”, *Birzjevie vedomosti*, 16 September 1916, #15813. (Klepinina, #238), 130. http://www.krotov.info/library/02_b/berdyaev/1916_09_16_238.htm (accessed March, 2008).

¹³² *Ibid.*, 129.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹³⁵ V.A. Bogoliubov, 369.

¹³⁶ N. Berdyaev, 128.

Chapter 2. The nationalist-monarchist tendency from the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century

2.1 The emergence of the nationalist-monarchist camp after the Russian revolution of 1905

The second chapter of the thesis considers the nationalist-monarchist tendency in Russian historiography, which was established under the influence of the complicated political situation in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the same way it examines the continued discussion of the Masonic issue by the trend's representatives of the first and second emigration waves.

The difficult situation in the country was created not only because of external reasons, such as the Japanese war; but also because of inner causes, which lay very deep in social conditions. There was widespread dissatisfaction among the most diverse groups of the population in Russia during the period preceding the revolution of 1905. In this time, political organizations, whose political platforms originated primarily among the intellectuals, were established. For example, in 1905, the Constitutional Democratic Party, encompassing liberals of different kinds, both constitutional monarchists and republicans, was organized. The radicals formed two parties around the turn of the century: the Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries.¹³⁷ All these parties were united in their desire to reform Russian society. However, there was a gap between the programs of these political parties and the specific needs of the people. For instance, the Socialist Revolutionaries advocated the nationalization or socialization of all land, including that of the peasants, in spite of the fact that the peasants desired only the division of the large estates among themselves. The Constitutional Democrats advocated a parliamentary government after the

¹³⁷ N.I. Riasanovsky, 405.

French or British model, without taking into consideration the peculiar historical background of Russian politics.¹³⁸

The deepening crisis of the autocracy through the early years of the 1900s also mobilized the right to political action. The right-wing political organizations assumed a variety of names, but all represented the basic conservative policies articulated in the publications of the right. They staged demonstrations in opposition to the revolution and in support of the autocracy.¹³⁹ The most famous among these monarchist organizations was Union of the Russian People.

The resistance from the nobility's side, the lack of the initiative from the direction of the authority, and its indecision were, mainly, the factors in the success of the revolutionary groups in the Russian revolution of 1905. After the revolution, the government realized that it must make concessions in the matter of political reform to alleviate the situation. On August 19 an imperial manifesto created an elective Duma with consultative powers, but failed to satisfy the educated public and the masses. The revolutionary movement culminated in an enormous general strike, which has been described as the greatest and most successful strike in history because it paralyzed the essential activities and forced at last recognition of the immensity opposition causing Emperor Nicholas II to capitulate. On October 30, he issued the October Manifesto that made the Romanov Empire a constitutional monarchy. Afterwards there was the period of four Dumas. With the Third Duma under control, the government could develop its own legislative program. First, it should resolve the troublesome question of dealing with the aftermath of the revolutionary spirit of 1905. So Petr Stolypin, the newly appointed prime minister of Russia, pursued a policy of "pacification" and reform. "Pacification" meant an all-out struggle against

¹³⁸ G.V. Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 263.

¹³⁹ H. Rogger, "Conclusion and Overview" in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. J.D.Klier and S. Lambroza. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 225.

revolutionaries.¹⁴⁰ His policy was supported by the majority of the conservative members of the Duma.

The whole revolutionary period was accompanied by the beating of Jews, liberals, and other intellectuals by squads, known as the “Black Hundreds”, who were supported by the extreme-right party, the Union of the Russian People. The main target of their violence was the Jews, the pogroms against whom were both a product of the revolution and a form of reaction, which were welcomed by those defenders of the autocracy who had come to identify and denounce Jews as the spearhead of the radical opposition.¹⁴¹ The conservative press was full of anti-Semitic articles in this period.¹⁴² At the same time the attempt to link Masonic activity to the Jews was made by nationalist-monarchist writers. In their works they often referred to French writers, who tried to prove that the French revolution happened as a result of Masonic clandestine activity.¹⁴³ Russian nationalist-monarchists attempted to reveal the “real reasons” of the revolutionary situation in the country, meaning, in their opinion, that the true origin of this political circumstances were the Judaic-Masonic covert activities.

2.1.1 The work of G.V. Butmi

Among the writers who tried to reveal this activity was G.V. Butmi, one of the ideologists behind the creation of the Union of the Russian People, who together with P.A. Krushevan, an anti-Semitic publisher, took part in the falsification of the anti-Semitic document *Protocols of the Wise Elders of Zion* in 1906. Besides “the disclosure of the

¹⁴⁰ N.I.Riasanovsky, 413.

¹⁴¹ H. Rogger, 339.

¹⁴² The paper *Bessarabets*, published in Kishinev, ran articles and editorials that were nothing more than anti-Jewish diatribes. Articles with such headlines as “Death to the Jews!” and “Crusade against the Hated Race!” stated Jews should be fired from municipal jobs to make room for non-Jews and warned Jews to renounce Judaism and convert. Also the conservative and anti-Semitic newspaper *Novoe vremya*, published by A.A. Suvorin, attributed the whole revolutionary movement to a pernicious Jewish spirit.

¹⁴³ E. Nys, *Idées modernes: Droit International et Franc-Maçonnerie*. Bruxelles, 1908.

program of the world domination by Jews”¹⁴⁴, Butmi was also engaged in research of the Masonic lodges’ activity. “Masonry”, he argues, “is a criminal organization, whose activity is directed to the extermination of people’s belief in God, love to homeland, loyalty to the state, and respect to oneself... In Russia the activity of masonry was directed against the Church and State, and found its support in Judaism”.¹⁴⁵ The same idea is reflected in the book *Cabbala, Heresy, and Secret Societies* edited by G.V. Butmi. The author states that the book’s task is to prove that the secret organizations of the Christian historical period appeared under the influence of Jews and were only instruments to achieve their goals. He also emphasizes that “Freemasonry is the latest unit of the whole chain of the secret Jewish organizations”¹⁴⁶. In the author’s opinion, “the secret teaching of the universal Jewish union of Freemasons developed not from stonemason’s unions, but from the secret societies, which had the mission to preserve and pass the pagan and Judaic false doctrines through centuries”¹⁴⁷. He perceives that “the chief aim of Freemasons’ universal union is the creation of a temple, which is not material, but symbolical. It calls for the Judaic dominance and is built by Christian architects who know neither the basic plan, nor the final goal of this mystical building”¹⁴⁸.

2.1.2 The work of A. Selyaninov

In the same period, the book *The Secret Power of Freemasonry*, published by A. Selyaninov, generated considerable resentment among the liberal representatives of Russian historiography¹⁴⁹. Here the author also attempts to prove the connection between masonry and Judaism. He argues that Freemasonic associations exist openly, and it is absolutely clear

¹⁴⁴ O. Platonov, *Naslednik Slavofilov: G.V. Butmi*. <http://www.rv.ru/content.php3?id=6187> (accessed March, 2008).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ N.L. Butmi, “Introduction” to *Cabbala, Eresi i Taynie Obshchestva*. Saint-Petersburg, 1914. <http://www.rusprav.org/biblioteka/butmi1.htm> (accessed December, 2007).

¹⁴⁷ N.L. Butmi, *Cabbala, Eresi i Taynie Obshchestva*. Ch. IX.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ See: N. Berdyaev, 128.

that masonry is guided by power, the prime aim of which “is definitely to obtain the tolerant attitude toward masonry, and thereafter, this secret power carefully acts to disseminate anti-Christian ideas among the newly converted members in lodges”.¹⁵⁰ Selyaninov emphasizes:

...In France, revolution and masonry are the same like in Russia Judaism and revolution... If one argued that the triumph of Judaism is linked to the revolution in the whole world and the establishment of the world republic, it would shed a lot of light on the French revolution. The Jewish spirit is anti-Christian and antimonarchist. Only the republican form of government allowed the domination of Jews under the native population. If one presumed that the power, guiding masonry, is the same Jewish power, it would be easy to understand the role of masonry in the French revolution, which was anti-monarchist and anti-Christian, and, at the same time, Freemasons were extremely devoted friends of the Jews.¹⁵¹

He concludes that “this secret power, which created masonry and spread it throughout the Christian world with the help of its naïve servants, Englishmen, and now dominates the whole Christian world and leads to its ruin, begun from Catholic countries, is the secret government of the Jewish nation!”¹⁵², which attempts also to subjugate Russia using “propaganda, deception, falsification of public opinion, and gradually training minds in the direction necessary for masonry”¹⁵³ and with the help of “naïve workers lulled by socialist utopias”¹⁵⁴. Explaining the workers' participation in the revolution, the author perceives that “masonry does not restrict itself in methods”¹⁵⁵ and “uses proletarians in demonstrations against the authority in certain moments. The root and power of socialism in all its forms are concealed in masonry. That is why Masonic and working issues are tightly intertwined.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, Selayninov and Butmi express the general point of view of the nationalist-monarchists that Judaic and Masonic activities, which are closely linked, conduct harmful propagation by means of lectures, meetings, etc., and try “to kill in citizens the religious and

¹⁵⁰ A. Selyaninov, *Taynaya Sila Masonstva*, Saint-Petersburg, 1911, Ch. 1(IV).
http://book-read.ru/libbook_92834.html (accessed March, 2008).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Ch. 1(XXI).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, Ch. 3 (XXIV).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Ch. 1 (VII).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. 1 (X).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Ch. 1 (VII).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Ch. 1 (X).

patriotic feelings”¹⁵⁷. So, in their opinion, these activities have an anti-Christian and anti-state character.

2.2 The Masonic issue in the work of V.F. Ivanov, the representative of the nationalist-monarchist tendency in the first-wave emigration

In 1917 the situation in the country was aggravated again as a result of the prolonged First World War. At the same year there were two Russian revolutions, during which the Provisional Government came to power, and, thereafter, was replaced by Bolsheviks. Though the Soviet government was able to establish its control over a stunned Russia with almost incredible rapidity, it could not completely eradicate all the potential sources of opposition that were organized and gradually established interconnections. Some of the opposition groups in time became strong enough to engage in open revolt.¹⁵⁸ So civil war broke out in Russia, which lasted until November 1920 and finished with the victory of the Bolsheviks.

Although individual Russians made their way abroad as early as 1918, the mass exodus began only in 1920 when the White army was defeated. A massive evacuation was undertaken from a Black Sea port to Europe. Many Russians also fled to Harbin and Shanghai in the Far East, which already had large Russian populations to maintain the railway to China.¹⁵⁹ The Russian emigration was united in terms of the necessity to overthrow the Soviet government as soon as possible, but could not agree on the question of which form of government would be established after the collapse of Bolshevik power. There were three groups. On the far right were the monarchists, who demanded a total restoration of the Ancien Regime; in the center was the *nepredreshenchestvo* (non-predestinationist), a group of political emigrants, who agreed to determine the form and

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Ch. 4 (XI).

¹⁵⁸ G.V. Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, 302.

¹⁵⁹ J. Glad, *Russia abroad: Writers, History, Politics*. (Tenafly, NJ: Hermitage publishers; Washington, D.C.: Birchbark Press, 1999), 105.

nature of the new government after the overthrow of the Soviet government; on the left were those who recognized the February 1917 revolution and who were willing to accept some of the changes introduced after 1917.¹⁶⁰ So there was no single center that could unite the Russian emigration.

These discords among the emigrants were also reflected in the historiography. The nationalist-monarchist tradition of Russian historiography on the Masonic issue was resumed, and now represented by emigrant extreme right authors. In their publications, authors of different political views tried to answer the most important question in this time: what were the main reasons that led to the Russian revolutions in 1917? In the opinion of the nationalist-monarchist authors, to find an answer to this question is crucial because “it is impossible to treat disease not knowing the cause of this disease. In addition, the struggle with the social evil will be useless as long as the causes, which produced this catastrophe, and the actual initiators of the revolutions will be found out.”¹⁶¹ This point of view of the nationalist-monarchists was also supported by V.F. Ivanov, who was a banker in Petrograd before the revolutions of 1917, and subsequently took part in the creation of the provisional Northwestern government on the Estonian territory during the civil war. His candidature as a minister of the Interior was rejected by other members of the provisional government because of his radical conservative views, and, as a result, he was appointed Minister without Portfolio in this government. After the coup in Vladivostok in 1921, Ivanov was the Minister of the Interior in the provisional Far-Eastern government of the brothers Merkulovs, which was formed on the territory occupied by the White army in 1922. With the collapse of this government, Ivanov emigrated in Harbin where he was one of the activists of the emigrant monarchical association.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 348.

¹⁶¹ V.F. Ivanov, 29.

Already in emigration in 1934, Ivanov's book *The Russian Intelligentsia and Freemasonry: from Peter I to the Present* was published. Among other nationalist-monarchist representatives' publications, this book is more interesting because it considers not only the latest period of Russian history, but also attempts to cover the history of Freemasonry from the time of Peter I's reign to the moment of the book's writing. In the work, Ivanov stresses that "it is important to investigate the causes of the catastrophe in Russia [the revolutions and civil war] now, and the instigators of this catastrophe should be found not for vengeance, but because we must leave the wrong road and return to our historical roots."¹⁶²

In the book Ivanov again expresses the opinion held by the Right when the First World War broke up. In other words, they argued that an alliance with Germany better fit the conservative and monarchist principles of the Russian Empire than an alliance with republican France and democratic Britain.¹⁶³ So, according to Ivanov, one of the reasons of the Russian catastrophe is the orientation of Russian liberals to the "democratic countries", which led the Russian empire to war, and subsequently to revolution. He emphasizes that "the Russian liberals and democrats, educated on Western Masonic ideas, hoped that 'the defeat of the extreme conservatism in Europe', i.e. the monarchical Germany, might bring the triumph of the democratic principles, political freedom, parliamentarism, and, maybe, a democratic republic."¹⁶⁴ Who is guilty in the war, and the following political events in the country? He believed it was "the liberal, radical and socialist progressive intelligentsia, who had struggled against their own people for the sake of Masonic ideal on the basis of the

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶³ E. Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 23.

¹⁶⁴ V.F. Ivanov, 42.

slogan ‘Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood’; it was the instigator of the great revolt in Russia.”¹⁶⁵

Like his nationalist-monarchist predecessors in the beginning of the twentieth century, Ivanov perceives that, having a single aim, “masonry supports the principles, which were declared by the French revolution in 1789. The revolutionary program’s basic points remain immutable, i.e. the struggle against church, religious morality, family, the national state, and the reeducation of society according to Masonic principles.”¹⁶⁶ In his opinion, while “religion, nation and monarchic states stand on the path leading to the establishment of Masonic Eden on earth and hinder the joining of all nations in one union, the struggle of Freemasonry against these historical institutions is inevitable.”¹⁶⁷ He emphasizes that to fulfill the capture of political power and reeducation of the society as its urgent task, “masonry attempts to embrace all spheres of social life in modern states as a result of its propaganda.”¹⁶⁸ The author concludes that “the single aim of masonry is the destruction and the replacement of Christian culture by a Masonic world, based on atheism and materialism.”¹⁶⁹

Ivanov states that the outlooks of other ideological movements, not Masonic, should be served as examples for Russian society, such as the Eurasian movement¹⁷⁰, National Socialism, and fascism, which was welcomed with enthusiasm among the emigrant supporters of the extreme monarchist views, who hoped that the oncoming war would bring the end of Bolshevism. He appeals to “greet any awakening of healthy nationalism in other

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ The Eurasianism movement was founded in 1921. Believing in the need for an authoritarian social structure based on religion, the Eurasians’ view was a traditional Russian concept which went back centuries to the idea that Russia was the “Third Rome”, i.e. the doctrine of the Orthodox Church in Moscow, and that the selfish, individualist West had much to learn from the ideal of Russian communality. Peter the Great, with all his forced Westernization, was viewed as having got Russia off her special, unique path. While the Eurasians did not reject Western civilization altogether, they had little use for the “fetish of technical progress”.

countries. We should greet fascism and racism as a vigorous reaction against the wild outburst of dark powers.”¹⁷¹ However, Ivanov emphasizes that “the new European tendencies cannot be the symbol of belief and the program of our national rebirth. The Russian people must gather not under fascist banners, but under the holy flags, on which the everlasting words are inscribed for us: ‘Orthodoxy, Autocracy and the Russian monarchy’. We, the Russians, should go our distinctive way.”¹⁷²

Considering the Masonic activity during Catherine II’s reign, in contrast to the opinions of Vernadskii and Bogolyubov, who argue that the spreading of Masonic ideas was a positive factor in the life of Russian society, the author stresses that “the wide spreading of masonry and the capture the highest positions by masons in the state reflected negatively on the position of the Orthodox Church.”¹⁷³ In his opinion, “although Catherine II did not take part in masonry, but tolerantly regarded it because the empress supported Voltaire’s view on religion that claimed that religion is ‘the curb to keep people in obedience’. Because of the tactical considerations the empress fulfilled the religious requirements, which were perceived as the means for the state’s governance. So in this time it was the full freedom for the Masonic anti-Orthodox work.”¹⁷⁴ He believed that “the Russian society was already prepared to accept the Masonic teaching from the time of Peter I’s reign. For this period professors had struggled for ‘freedom of scientific research’ with ecclesiastical and secular despotism, i.e. with church and state, and preached a new religion and morals based on the West-European mysticism.”¹⁷⁵ According to Ivanov, “the spreading and strengthening of masonry had gone along two paths: through the publishing activity of Novikov, who is not interested in masonry, but at the same time helped to propagate Masonic ideas, and the public propaganda of these ideas by Schwarz, who gave lectures not only to the members of

¹⁷¹ V.F. Ivanov, 483.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 502.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

the Rosicrucian circle, but also in Moscow university, and, therefore, threw the harmful Masonic seeds in society.”¹⁷⁶

Regarding Pugachyev’s uprising and implying the position of the liberal representatives, Ivanov emphasizes that “liberals and socialists argue that Pugachyev’s movement was directed against the existing order and for improving the bad economic conditions. However, it was actually a spontaneous anti-Masonic movement, because the dominant positions of foreigners, the dregs of Russian society, during Peter I’s reign, and Masonic oligarchy during his successors’ reigns, created the atmosphere for the resentment of people who treated Pugachyev as the Orthodox legitimate tsar. That is why Pugachyev’s movement was so strong.”¹⁷⁷

In contrast to Vernadskii and Bogolyubov, the author stresses that Masons had clear political intentions, which were perceived by the empress. That is why Masonic activity provoked her discontent. He explains that “in 1786 in Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm, who was an ardent mason and regarded Russia with hostility, came to the throne. The new king’s loyal advisor and the leader of Berlin masonry, Wollner, was closely related with Moscow masons. From that time, Moscow masons found themselves under the command of the person who was antagonistic to the Russian monarch.”¹⁷⁸ In his opinion, that is why authority took into serious consideration the activity of the Rose Cross order. In addition, “at the end of this year Schroder, the leader of Moscow Rosicrucians, got the order ‘to cease all Masonic meetings and correspondence from 1787 and not resume the work with given permission’. This order proved the Russian masons’ close relations with the European, and, “it is also clear that to the moment of the French revolution, masonry in Russia became the enormous organizing power.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 189.

Ivanov argues that “according to Masonic teaching, the monarchical form of government is evil and only tolerable until the establishment of the more perfect, republican.”¹⁸⁰ So, in his opinion, “like the Illuminati plot in Europe against the church and state, there was also conspiracy against Catherine II that had the aim to dethrone her and proclaim Paul as tsar, whom masons captivated and considered as their Masonic emperor.”¹⁸¹ Ivanov emphasizes that “during the interrogation it was proved that Novikov and his circle’s members belonged to the Illuminati order. Novikov, perhaps, gave evidence of something, which was useless to hide.”¹⁸² So, like Vernadskii and Bogolyubov, the author stresses the Masonic relations with the crown prince as the main reason for Novikov’s arrest. However, in contrast to the liberal authors, who are convinced of Novikov’s innocence, Ivanov perceives that “from Novikov’s testimonies, it was clear that the relations with the crown prince consisted not only in sending books to him, but also had an obviously political hidden motive. Novikov confessed very little, but Catherine II’s government had the satisfactory proof if it decided to punish Novikov so severely.”¹⁸³

Ivanov concludes that “the French revolution, which was finished with the execution of the king, inspired masons to make revolution in Russia too. In Masonic circles there was the decision to remove Catherine II and enthrone Paul. Masons wanted to do with Paul the same that they did consequently with his son, Alexander; in other words, they wanted to link Paul to the murder of his mother and, thereafter, ruled him how they wanted. However, honest Paul rejected this vile offer.”¹⁸⁴ Thus, in the author’s opinion, from the time of Catherine II’s reign, masons, under the influence of European masonry, gradually destroyed the autocracy in the country and also attempted to involve tsars in their activities.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

2.3 The continuity of the Masonic theme in the work of B. Bashilov, the representative of the nationalist-monarchist tendency in the second-wave emigration

Only after the Second World War was the interest in the Masonic issue recommenced and continued by some emigrants of the so-called “second wave”, who were also representatives of the nationalist-monarchist tendency. The emigration of the second wave made out ex-Soviet citizens, who during the war found themselves abroad by different ways. In most cases, some of them were brought as free working force in the cattle wagons to Germany and the neighboring occupied European countries. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of the soldiers of the Red Army were taken as prisoners and were in concentration camps at the end of the war. Others, who believed in the forthcoming collapse of the Communist rule, chose the way of the armed struggle against the Bolshevik regime and collaborated with the German administration in the occupied lands. After the defeat of Germany, most participants of these military units understood that if they returned they would be arrested and executed or moved to Siberian labor camps. Until the last days of the war, concealing their Soviet Union citizenship, they retreated together with the German army and attempted to hide themselves in quiet places of Central and Western Europe.¹⁸⁵

On February 11, 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin signed the Yalta agreements, according to which the persons, found outside the borders of their countries as a result of the military operations, should be compulsorily repatriated. De Gaulle concluded his own agreement with Stalin on June 29 of the same year. So in the spring of 1945 the Kremlin began to realize these accords. These people were put in camps for “displaced persons” behind demarcation lines, which divided the Soviet army and the Western allies’ forces, and, subsequently, they were repatriated to the Soviet Union. However, despite the Kremlin’s efforts not all of them came back. With the beginning of the Cold war the

¹⁸⁵ A.V. Popov, ed., *V Poiskakh Istiny: Puti i Sudby Vtoroi Emigratsii: Sbornik Statei i Dokumentov*, (Moskva: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet. Istoriko-arkhivnyi institut, 1997), 5-6.

“displaced persons” were left to their own fortune. According to some information, approximately one and a half million people stayed abroad. In the post-war years depending on the fluctuation of the Kremlin’s political conjecture, these people were called either “traitors” and “Vlasovians”, or simply “non-returnees”, and their names were erased off the list.¹⁸⁶

Bashilov, a pseudonym of Boris Yurkevich, was among these emigrants. During the war he was taken prisoner and after some time placed at the disposal of the propaganda department “V” of the German army that acted in the middle sector of the front. In the first half of 1943 Bashilov was directed to the school of propagandists, Dabendorff, near Berlin, where the study of materials, linked to the activity of Judaic, Zionist, and Masonic organizations, played a significant role in the training of propagandists. In this school Bashilov probably became interested in the history of Freemasonry, because in the Soviet Union this theme was completely closed for research. He was also in the camp for “displaced persons”, and after the changing name fled to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he got married to the daughter of a colonel of the tsarist army, who emigrated after the Russian revolution.¹⁸⁷

This marriage introduced Bashilov to the milieu of the first-wave emigration, which distinctly differed from the second-wave emigrants. Naturally, there existed not only a difference in age, but also a social-class gap between the first and second waves. On the one hand, after nearly three decades of being cut off from Russia, the older émigrés wanted to reach out to newly arrived fellow Russians, but, on the other hand, they identified their new comrades with those who had exiled them from home and country.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, in the flush of postwar pro-Soviet patriotism, there were first wavers who regarded the newcomers as

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁸⁷ O. Platonov. *Bashilov Boris*. <http://www.onb.kursk.ru/2005/Bashilov%20Boris.htm> (accessed March, 2008).

¹⁸⁸ J. Glad, 352.

“Vlasovite traitors to the Homeland”. Even without such political confrontations, it was obvious that the two groups came from two quite different environments. The first-wave philosopher, Fedor Stepun, wrote in his memoirs that the Soviet Union was an unknown “blackness” and that the new arrivals needed to overcome their “trench-like” psychology so that they might help to comprehend “Russia’s frightening face that had given birth to them and raised them”.¹⁸⁹

In Argentina Bashilov’s articles were printed in the emigrant Russian monarchist newspaper *Nasha strana* (*Our country*), the motto of which, written on the first page, claimed: “After the collapse of Bolshevism only the tsar will save Russia from new party slavery”, and belonged to Bashilov. Moreover, his books were published in the publishing house of Ivan Solonevich, a Russian writer, who greatly influenced Bashilov’s outlooks, and whose aim argument is that the uppermost historical aim of every people is the creation of an empire, and the unique empire in history was created by Russians, an “imperial nation”, who united and established equality among different tribes and nationalities.¹⁹⁰

The question, who is guilty in the Russian revolutions, remained preeminent for the Russian emigration, even despite the fact that almost forty years had passed from that time. The attempts to resolve this question can also be found in Bashilov’s main work *The History of Russian Freemasonry*. In his opinion, the roots of this problem should be sought in Russia’s historical past, which “we, the Russians, know badly. That is why now we cannot understand what happened and why the unbearable yoke of the ‘red rabble’ hangs over the Russian people and oppresses them until now”¹⁹¹. For him, the Slavophiles¹⁹², who also

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.

¹⁹⁰ Entsiklopedia “Krugosvet”. Ivan Solonevich. <http://www.krugosvet.ru/articles/77/1007785/1007785a1.htm> (accessed December, 2007).

¹⁹¹ M.M. Spasovskii, “Russkaya Evropa”, *Nasha strana*, #389, 1957.

http://lib.irismedia.org/sait/lib_ru/lib.ru/politolog/ov/opponent.htm (accessed December, 2007).

¹⁹² The Slavophiles’ theory flourished in the 1840-50s and represented an ideology centered on the belief in the superior nature and supreme historical mission of Orthodoxy and Russia. Historically, as the Slavophiles asserted, a similar harmonious integration of individuals could be found in the social life of the Slavs, notably

attempted to explain the origin of the Russian people and claimed that Russians are “not the younger children of European culture, but the holders of the great distinctive one”¹⁹³, served as the best example. He supported the Slavophiles’ opinion that the revolution, “persecuting the aim of establishment of the perfect society on the earth, is the rebellion, in the first place, against God”¹⁹⁴ and negatively influences the social development of the society. The author quotes Alexey Khomyakov, one of the Slavophiles, who argued that “the process of the society’s development, which is gradually passing, is more useful for the country; all fast events [revolutions] lead to its destruction.”¹⁹⁵

Bashilov emphasizes that the way to the national revival of Russia should begin from the restoration of the Orthodoxy, and, in his opinion, this way is extremely difficult, because “it is possible only if the representatives of the clerical elite and the ruler of the country can accept such an idea, as the idea of a “Third Rome”, as a main principle of the country’s national revival”.¹⁹⁶ For him, the national revival is impossible without the restoration of the Orthodoxy because “the church cannot be imagined separately from the state, which cannot be imagined separately from the Tsar, and all people are united by their belief in the divine power of the tsar and church. It is the historical legacy of Russia.”¹⁹⁷ He perceives that the tsar, who has the mission “to have the stable *social*, not the socialist, idea to conduct rational policy”¹⁹⁸, should be at the head of the state. The author states:

The sovereign’s astuteness and long sight will foresee what forces could assist in the economic productivity and cultural development of his people. So the sovereign should be above all estates, classes and any kind of parties; he should be independent from the conspirators and legions who assisted to come him to power, from financiers

in the peasant commune and in such other ancient Russian institutions as Zemskii sobor. The main argument of the Slavophiles is that “Peter I’s revolution” perverted the natural development of the people’s life.

¹⁹³ B. Bashilov, “Masonstvo i Russkaya Intelligentsia” in *Istoria Russkogo Masonstva*, Part III. http://www.patriotica.ru/authors/bashilov_html. (accessed March, 2008).

¹⁹⁴ B. Bashilov, “Zlatoy Vek” Ekaterini II” in *Istoria Russkogo Masonstva*, Part XVI. http://www.patriotica.ru/authors/bashilov_html. (accessed March, 2008).

¹⁹⁵ B. Bashilov, “Masonstvo i Russkaya Intelligentsia”, Part III.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Part I.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

who provide him by money, and from the world secret power [masons] who tries to weaken his power.¹⁹⁹

Bashilov argues that “the political, social and economic reasons are not always main and decisive causes of the most significant revolutions and wars in human history. The people’s history is determined by the ideology, which exerts great influence on the fate of not only one people, among whom these ideas originated, but very often of the whole humanity, like the ideologies of Bolshevism, Fascism, and Zionism, etc.”²⁰⁰ Therefore, he perceives philosophers and social utopists as “the true destroyers of the state and national institutions”²⁰¹, who believe in the opportunity of fundamental change of life according to their social and political ideas, “the driving forces of all the most important historical events that changed the existing order in the world”.²⁰² So, according to him, the Russian revolution is “the ideological result of centuries-old work of masonry in the direction of destruction of the church and European monarchies.”²⁰³

Like the liberal representatives in Russian historiography, who argue that the intelligentsia was a progressive force for Russian society, Bashilov accepts that the eighteenth century was “predominantly the age of intelligentsia”. However, like Ivanov and other representatives of the nationalist-monarchist tendency, he disputes that it is only “the myth that the intelligentsia symbolizes the best, the most cultural part of the Russian educated society, who created Russian culture... In fact, the Russian intelligentsia is the abnormal and unnatural mixture of two opposite cultures: European and Russian. It is the embodiment of disharmony.”²⁰⁴ According to the author, the Russian intelligentsia was a

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Part I.

²⁰⁰ B. Bashilov, “Zlatoy Vek” Ekaterini II”, Part XIV.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ B. Bashilov, “Masonstvo i Russkaya Intelligentsia”, Part IV.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Part V.

product of Voltairian and Masonic ideologies, “the obsession by which had a clear character of a mental illness”.²⁰⁵

Bashilov argues that Voltairianism, supported by Catherine II, was “one of the Masonic trends, the aim of which was to corrupt the souls of those who accepted ‘the bait’, such as ‘universal religion’... [and] rejected the “olden days” with merciless critique and often even with disdain, ridiculed at everything that close to tradition, and stood for the boldest innovations and reforms”.²⁰⁶ For him, “the ideological closeness of Masonic mysticism and French enlightenment philosophy is undoubted”²⁰⁷, although, at first glance, Masonic mysticism condemned Voltairian rationalism and attempted to “lead away from Voltairianism, but, at the same time, also from the church. That is why masonry assisted the process of secularization, which was conducted in the eighteenth century in Russia.”²⁰⁸ He states that “the main principles of Masonic ideology, such as the ideas of “progress”, “equality”, “democracy”, “freedom”, “revolutionary transformation of the world”, “republican form of government”, served as the ideological basis of the Russian intelligentsia.”²⁰⁹ Therefore, Bashilov argues that the Russian intelligentsia, who was educated on Masonic ideas, “spread the doctrines of Masonic origins and fulfilled the role of ideological servant of the world masonry”²¹⁰. That is why, in his opinion,

The intelligentsia always concealed the real role of masonry in the organization of revolutions and opposed the argument that masonry is the ideological servant of Judaism. All attempts to disclose the masonry’s real role in conducting the planned work to destroy Christian states in the interests of Jewry, who is the creator and leader of masonry, were considered by the intelligentsia as a fantasy of crazy reactionaries, and this belief was firmly established in the wide circles of bureaucracy and educated society.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Part IV.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ B. Bashilov, “Zlatoy Vek” Ekaterini II”, Part VI.

²⁰⁸ B. Bashilov, “Masonstvo i Russkaya Intelligentsia”, Part IV.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Part V.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

He cites the fragment from the book *The View on the History of Jewish People* by the Jew, D. Darmester, who states that “the national secret association of Jews is the source of all Christian religious discords for ages.”²¹² So the author concludes that this and similar confessions clarify the question who and with what goal masonry was created and who actually rules it.

Considering Catherine II’s epoch, Bashilov emphasizes that “we have never had such civilized barbarity, which prevailed in the second half of the eighteenth century. Indifference to the social surroundings and the loss of feeling of reality were the main features of the noble society in that time”.²¹³ According to him, it happened because “the words and ideas of others released the Russian educated society from the need to think, as the free serf labor released it from the need to work”²¹⁴. He perceives that, mainly, Catherine II was responsible for this situation in Russian society, because the empress herself gave a stimulus to the development of Voltairianism in the country. “Her *Nakaz* was regarded by European monarchs as obvious revolutionary work, and prohibited in Europe. So with her support all Russian ‘thinkers’ and writers, masons and non-masons, allegorically opposed the Orthodox church during ‘The golden age of Catherine II’”.²¹⁵

The author argues that “after Peter I’s death any new palace coup was advantageous for masons, because these coups increasingly shook the monarchical power in Russia and obliterated the monarchical conscience of the representatives of the high strata of the society, who adopted European ideas”.²¹⁶ That is why, in his opinion, masons supported Catherine II. “Also after the consolidation of her power, Catherine II ceased to take into consideration the opinion of the clergy and treated the church how it was advantageous for her... [So] it made easy the Russian masons’ work, which had the purpose to overthrow the

²¹² *Ibid.*, Part IV.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ B. Bashilov, “Zlatoy Vek” Ekaterini II”, Part XII.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Part III.

church's authority".²¹⁷ However, Bashilov states that the main contribution of Catherine II, "the oppressor of the Orthodoxy", is the extension of the borders of Russian state to the coasts of the Black Sea, "like in the time of Kiev Rus'. In addition, the military power of Russia's old enemies, Turkey and Poland, was undermined forever. However, Poland's annexation by Russia should be recognized as a mistake, because it generated Poles' hatred of the Russian people and made a large amount of Jews, together with Poles, the Russian subjects. It was the large misfortune for Russia in the future."²¹⁸

The author admits that, despite all her mistakes, "Catherine II did not understand the true political goals of masonry... [and] considered the obsession by Masonic teachings as a harmless passion. The Russian nobles took a great interest in the showy mystical side of masonry and its secret rituals, which seemed a funny and absurd play for the empress."²¹⁹ In his opinion, "only when the French revolution broke up, Catherine II began to realize that she sowed the poisonous seed on the Russian land supporting the spreading of the ideas of the French 'Enlightenment philosophy'. The empress also did not like the attitude of Russian aristocrats-'Voltaireians' and masons toward the news of Bastille's seizure".²²⁰ He quotes the fragment from the French ambassador's memoirs who wrote that "...[a]lthough the detention in Bastille did not threaten anybody in Petersburg, it is difficult to express the enthusiasm among merchants, bourgeois, and other young people of the high social status when they found out about the fall of this state prison."²²¹ Thus, according to Bashilov, Catherine II gradually realized that "masons were not innocent, as it seemed. In fact, Russian masonry was, in general, the blind tool in the hands of European Masonic orders".²²² Therefore, he states that "like the modern, liberalism in the eighteenth century,

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Part V.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Part XXII.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Part XII.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, Part XIX.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*, Part XXI.

which fervently struggled for the freedom of opinion, was extremely fanatical. Only being afraid by the large scale of the revolutionary events in France, Catherine II, Princess Dashkova and other Voltairians began to beat a retreat.”²²³

In view of Novikov’s case, Bashilov is sure that “although Novikov was depicted by Russian masons and later by the intelligentsia as “the guiltless martyr” and “the great Russian enlightener”, he was not so innocent”.²²⁴ According to him, “for many years Catherine II considered Novikov’s activity with benevolence and considered him as the primitive “philosopher-enlightener”, because he was the participant of the palace revolution, as a result of which she came to the throne. Novikov also published the “Voltarian” books.”²²⁵ He stresses that besides the publications of the “Voltairain” and Masonic books Novikov organized the Masonic association “The typographic society” where he was its “soul”.²²⁶ The author emphasizes that “soon after Schwarz’s death, the special association was created by the instruction of the Berlin Rosicrucian order’s leaders. Novikov, Prince Trubetskoy, and the brothers Tatishchevs were the active member of this association, the task of which was to unite all masons and individuals who were not satisfied with the existing regime, and to use them how it would be necessary for masons.”²²⁷

Bashilov supports Ivanov’s view that the main reason for Novikov’s arrest was the disclosure of the correspondence of Moscow Rosicrucians with Wollner. “Only after the disclosure of Moscow masons’ secret relations with Wollner, Fredrick Wilhelm and other German princes, Catherine II gave the order about Novikov’s arrest and other Moscow masons.”²²⁸ He cites A.M. Turgenev’s testimony about the rumor “not only in high society, but also among ordinary people that Novikov was accused in the correspondence with

²²³ *Ibid*, Part XXI.

²²⁴ *Ibid*.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, Part XII.

²²⁶ *Ibid*.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, Part XV.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, Part XXI.

Jacobians, who together with Freemasons planned to poison the empress”.²²⁹ Therefore, for Bashilov, “Novikov’s case was not as simple as sometimes researchers represent. For example, they hardly mention that, by his admission, Novikov passed the limits of ‘educational activity’. He published ‘disgusting’ books, took an active part to establish relations with the crown prince Paul, and had the documents, which embarrassed him. However, he rewrote and preserved them. The authorities had also some documents, which established Novikov’s guilt”.²³⁰ Thus, the author claims that Novikov and his circle’s members, consciously or not, actively spread European masonry, which negatively influenced and manipulated Russian society in its interests. In his opinion, the traces of this influence are evident even in the twentieth century.

To make a conclusion, in contrast to the liberal authors, who described masons as predecessors of Russian liberal intelligentsia, the representatives of the nationalist-monarchist tendency, which emerged under the influence of the complicated political conditions in the country in the beginning of the twentieth century, accentuated, primarily, the political goals of Russian Freemasons who, in their opinion, shook orthodox principles and the bases of autocracy of the Russian state. In these authors’ perception, the Russian intelligentsia is, most of all, responsible for the Russian revolutions, because they believed that Masonic ideas had corrupted the outlook of the Russian intelligentsia, who accepted the ideas of European masonry, which were absolutely hostile to Russian spirit and interests, and followed these ideas during almost two centuries. Thus, the representatives of this trend claimed that the whole revolution and liberal movement were alien to the Russian people. According to the nationalist-monarchist authors, Jews are the real leaders of Freemasonry. So they identified supporters of revolution and liberals as the obedient tools of Jewish masters, who acted without realizing the “true” goals of the clandestine Jewish activity. In

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, Part XXI.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

their opinion, if the Judaic nature of masons is “revealed”, the “Judaic” character of liberalism and revolution in Russia will be proved. That is why to research the Masonic issue and to show the interconnection between Judaism and Freemasonry were so important for these representatives.

Conclusion

In most cases, history is written from the standpoint of present reality. The reconstructed past is actually derived from those texts, artifacts, buildings, belief systems, memories and traditions which have somehow survived and to some extent can be investigated and interpreted. However, sometimes even the surviving material is selected and ordered in accordance with contemporary concerns and needs. More often history is used as the instrument of legitimation, sanctioning political power, justifying social hierarchies, fighting political opponents, determining rights and responsibilities. There is a great deal of historical issues which are rediscovered, retrieved and represented in historiographies according to hypotheses, which governed the diverse readings of the past, and to the ways in which historical theory and practice are influenced by certain political circumstances and respond to the certain needs of the society of that period.

The Russian historiography of Freemasonry is the best proof of this argument. As has been demonstrated in the thesis, the authors who represented the different tendencies in Russian historiography of Freemasonry, depending on the political situation in the country, researched this issue and expressed their opinion motivated more by the political needs of the moment than the aspiration for objective historical judgment.

The interest in the Masonic theme in Russian historiography was linked to periods of liberal reforms in the 1860-70s and “counter-reforms” in the 1880-90s in the country. The liberal ideas, like Enlightenment and Masonic ideas, were also borrowed from the West and became popular in the above-mentioned period of time. However, the Russian liberal movement had its own characteristic features. During almost all the nineteenth century the class bourgeoisie, the possessor of the liberal ideology in the West, was absent in the country. Grown stronger in the last quarter of the nineteenth – the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian bourgeoisie cooperated with the monarchy and did not have

independence and political initiative. Hence, in Russia the liberal ideology was, mainly, upheld and developed by the representatives of non-bourgeois groups: the nobles, government officialdom, university professors, journalists, literary men, and other representatives of the intelligentsia. So the liberal ideas, circulated mostly among the scientific milieu and were transmitted with their help to other strata of Russian society, were used as a basis by the liberal intelligentsia, who attempted to establish their tradition and emphasize that the process of liberalization in the country was rooted in Catherine II's times or, maybe, more deeply. That is why the liberal representatives, who were at the same time the representatives of the intelligentsia, tried to represent such people as Radishchev, Novikov and others as a part of their tradition and to accentuate their large contribution to the process of liberalization in Russian society in the nineteenth-twentieth centuries.

The Masonic issue was extremely popular not only among liberal representatives, but also among conservatives especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the situation in the country radically changed because of the war with Japan, the Russian revolution of 1905, the First World War, among others. The period is characterized by the radical division of Russian society into many political groups, which was an unprecedented factor in the life of the country. The representatives of the nationalist-monarchist tendency, established in this time in Russian historiography on Freemasonry, adopted the Masonic motive from the liberal intelligentsia and completely changed the image of masons. In their perception, masons were the source of all the misfortunes that had happened in the world for the last two centuries. The nationalist-monarchist representatives believed that from the eighteenth century Masonic ideas had corrupted the outlook of the Russian intelligentsia, which was responsible for the Russian revolutions. They argued that liberals and, therefore, the Russian intelligentsia, were "a blind tool" in the hands of the world secret organization, guided by Jewish masters, who manipulated the public opinion in Russia and conducted

their “destructive work” in the direction necessary for them. Because of this perception, their ideas became accepted dogmas for conservatives at the beginning of the twentieth century and continued to develop in the works of the nationalist-monarchist representatives of the first and second-wave emigration. The main idea was the destructive work, which had to undermine the state and church basis, was conducted by masons not only in Russia, but in the whole world, particularly in monarchical states. The conservatives believed that because the Masonic movement was accepted from Europe, there were undoubted foreign roots and the close interconnection of Russian masons with the masons in other countries, especially in Germany. This foreign, mainly Jewish, influence was described by conservatives as alien to Russian spirit. The existence of secret Masonic organizations, which conspired against legitimate governments, was presented as the established fact. Therefore, the research of the Masonic issue was essential for this camp, because the nationalist-monarchist authors perceived that Freemasonic ideas and, hence, liberal ideology, had a Judaic nature, and these ideas brought the country to catastrophe, when the Russian state organization was totally destroyed.

In response to the nationalist-monarchists, who blamed masons for the complicated situation in the country at the beginning of the twentieth century, the liberal representatives attempted to prove that all accusations of the nationalist-monarchists were false. In their opinion, although Freemasonry was adopted from the West, it did not mean that Russian masons were weak-willed puppets in the hands of foreign “brothers”. On the contrary, the Masonic ideas, apprehended by the educated Russian society, went through, and Russian masons put their heart and soul in these ideas and acted unselfishly for the welfare of the people. At the same time the liberal authors rejected the “old rationalistic approach” of the Masonic issue, which was established by the liberal tradition in the 1860s and prevailed until the beginning of the twentieth century, and put the moral searching of Russian

Freemasons, the quest for the moral ideal, truth and the meaning of life, in the forefront of their researches. For liberal authors, it was essential to take into consideration this side of Masonic ideology because conservatives treated Masonic mysticism suspiciously and saw danger in this Masonic mystical tendency. The liberal representatives attempted to prove that regardless of what lodges, i.e. English masonry, the Swedish system or the Order of the Rose and Cross, Russian masons belonged, their goal was self-perfection, the spreading of “useful knowledge”, and, thereby, the improvement of society. This was the main topic of disputes between conservative and liberal representatives in Russian historiography at the beginning of the twentieth century. The liberal authors argued that the propagation of European Freemasonic ideas in Russia in the eighteenth century promoted the intellectual development of Russian society and that the mystical tendency of Russian masonry was an integral part of the spiritual life of Russian society at that time.

The moral quests were also inherent for nationalist-monarchists, although they saw the source of the consolidating strength of Russian people in completely different ideas than Freemasonry or liberalism. For them, the ideology of the Eurasian movement or the Slavophiles or the conception of the Third Rome, i.e. Russia was perceived as the successor of the legacy of the Roman Empire, with Byzantium being the “second Rome”. In other words, the representatives of the nationalist-monarchist tendency emphasized the ideas of Orthodox religion and autocracy, in contrast to the ideas of masonry and liberalism.

In recent years, the debates on Freemasonry and its role in the Russian cultural and intellectual history have risen again, especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when there were fundamental changes in the political life of the country. It would be interesting to explore what social or political factors influence the opinions of contemporary authors on the Masonic issue, how the opinions and ideas of liberals and nationalist-monarchists on the Russian Freemasonry’s issue in this thesis are evaluated and what impact

they have not only in Russian contemporary historiography²³¹, but also in Western historiography on this issue²³².

²³¹ See: V.I. Novikov, *Masonstvo i Russkaya Kultura*. (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1998); V.M. Ostretsov, *Masonstvo, Kultura I Russkaya Istoria*. (Moskva: Izd-vo "Kraft+", 2004).

²³² D. Smith. *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia*. (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999).

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