NOVIKOV, FREEMASONRY AND THE RUSSIAN ENLIGHTENMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Russian Enlightenment wrought great changes in Russian society. Though normally under the auspices of the Imperial government, the task of Enlightening Russia would not have been possible without the support and the contributions of some of Russia's foremost citizens. Many Russians who had benefitted from the Petrine reforms made efforts to disseminate their ideas, but Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov was by far the most influential. As a journalist, publicist, educator and philanthropist, Novikov demonstrated his desire to raise moral standards for the betterment of Russian society. In spite of his achievements, Novikov is often maligned for his involvement in Freemasonry, a diverse movement which encompassed rationalist and mystical elements. The lure of mysticism was not strong enough, however, and Novikov retained his faith in the ideals of the Enlightenment and his desire to bring progress to Russia.

ABSTRAIT

La Russie a beaucoup changé pendant les années des lumières au dix-huitième siècle. Bien que le gouvernement impérial a initié ce mouvement, ses idées se propagèrent grâce à l'aide d'importants citoyens. Le citoyen le plus influent de cette periode fut Nicholas Ivanovich Novikoff; journaliste, publiciste, educateur et philanthrope. L'ambition première de Novikoff était d'améliorer les moeurs en Russie. Quoiqu'il sût réaliser un bon nombres de ses amibitions, Novikoff étant devenu franc-maçon, fut souvent critiqué par des historiens. Bien que ce mouvement, en Russie, avait des nuances mystiques et malgré les critiques des historiens, Novikoff a su résister à la tentation du mysticisme et il poursuivit sa première ambition: Améliorer la société Russe.

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INTRODUCTION

The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century has defied definition. Its conflicting trends and ideas had made generalisations appear simple and superficial and it seems best to describe the period by exposing its ironies and its contradictions. Though it has been called the "Age of Reason" and the Age of Voltaire" it is clear that neither man's reason nor Voltaire dominated the affairs of the century. Is it not ironic that in an age of "enlightenment" the majority of the European population remained ignorant of the arguments waged by the philosophes until the end of the century when the French Revolutionary wars gave them another dimension?

If the European Enlightenment poses interesting problems, then the Russian Enlightenment is even more challenging. Is it possible to speak of an Enlightenment in Russia when the country remained so backward in comparison to its neighbours during the eighteenth century? But what about the Petrine reforms? It is important to remember that Peter the Great's attempts to create a meritocracy, to expand education and to limit the power and influence of the Church anticipated the reforms of the enlightened despots who reigned nearly half a

century after his death. The Russian gentry was one of the most quickly secularised in all of Europe, but Russia's social structures remained backward and oppressive. In spite of such apparently contradictory trends Russia's progress seems impressive when compared with Poland during the eighteenth century. There was obviously an "enlightenment" but what did it achieve?

Were there in fact two Enlightenments? There was obviously the Enlightenment of the philosophes where materialism and faith in reason dominated the concentric circles of debates, but there was also an Enlightenment of mysticism and superstition. The influences of both trends formed such a kaleidoscopic puzzle that it is often difficult to differentiate between them. Recent scientific discoveries in fields such as celestial mechanics and medicine produced a rejuvenated interest in astronomy and a profound faith in mathematics, but this was often expressed through a fascination with astrology and numerology. Was the prevalence of alchemy due to the influence of rationalist science or to mysticism?

Such apparent contradictions were prevalent among some of the luminaries of the age. Isaac Newton is

frequently portrayed as a man of science and discovery, but he spent many hours delving into the hidden mysteries of alchemy and trying to prove the existence of God. Like Giordano Bruno before him, Newton was a strange mixture of the rational and the mystical. It was not uncommon for the "rationalists" who gathered around Diderot and d'Alembert in the Paris salons to pay exorbitant sums to have their astrological tables made by men of untold powers, or perhaps of unknown cunning.

The dual nature of the Enlightenment was well reflected by the Freemasons, one of the most successful movements to flourish during the eighteenth century. Masonry had evolved from the stone masons' guilds in the Middle Ages into a complex society with its own history, mythology and beliefs. There were rationalist and mystical tenets in Masonic ideology and it seems as though rationalist and mystical lodges throughout Europe were merely a reflection of the respective attitudes of their brethren. If Voltaire, Ben Franklin and Simon Bolivar were exemplary figures of the rationalist trend in Freemasonry, then Casanova and Cagliostro were exemplary of Freemasonry's other character. Freemasonry was undoubtedly as diverse as was the Enlightenment.

Both Freemasonry and the Enlightenment had cosmopolitan appeal. It is difficult to say whether Masonry helped to spread the ideals of the Enlightenment or whether the Enlightenment facilitated the spread of Freemasonry, but it is clear that their histories were closely interwoven. The influence of the lodges was considerable throughout Europe but the greatest impact, in an intellectual sense, was in Russia where many of the period's outstanding figures were Freemasons. Their contributions, individually and collectively, aided Russia in its process of Europeanisation by infusing the country with European ideas and with humanitarian values.

Although there were many fascinating figures in the Russian Enlightenment surely the most interesting and certainly among the most controversial was undoubtedly Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov. He, more than anybody else, personified the dichotomy of the age. As a publicist, a philanthropist and as a Freemason Novikov became one of Russia's leading citizens. He was attracted by the ideas of the <u>philosophes</u> but he retained his sincere faith and piety. Reason could indeed lead to a life for all of mankind, but only if it was tempered with fundamental Christian humanism.

Whereas his contemporary, Aleksandr Radishchev, may be regarded as a Russian philosophe, Novikov's importance lay not in his ideas, but in his work. He was Russia's leading publisher during the latter years of the eighteenth century and his philanthropic activities during the famine of 1787 helped to save a great many lives. Why, then, is he such a controversial figure? Novikov joined the Freemasons comparatively late in life at age thirty, by which time he had already formed many of his attitudes and opinions. Debate rages as to whether his life achievements were due to Masonic beliefs or to his support for the ideals of the Enlightenment. Some of his masonic activities seem to contradict the work which he was trying to achieve in his publishing ventures. Was Novikov a rationalist or a mystic? Was the Russian Enlightenment as profound as the Enlightenment in the West or was it a sham based on a poor understanding of Western ideas? If the Russian Enlightenment had a significant influence in Russia's development, to what extent were Novikov's contributions important? In addressing such questions this essay will try to provide a clear picture of Novikov, revealing the wealth of ideas which circulated during the Enlightenment as well as the inner conflicts which faced Russian intellectuals of the eighteenth century.

NOVIKOV: THE JOURNALIST AND PUBLICIST

Nikolai Novikov is remembered for many things; his humanitarian aid to starving peasants during the famine in 1787, his Masonic activities and his journalistic and publishing enterprises. Although he was successful at all he undertook, his contributions as a journalist and publisher were by far his greatest contributions to eighteenth century Russia. During his long career he made an effort to publish books and articles which would raise Russia's moral standards and which reflected the changing atmosphere of eighteenth century European thought. He was unquestionably a man of the Enlightenment who valued reason and who was sceptical of superstition and fanaticism. Though he was a Mason, he did not embrace the mystical side of Masonry with its belief in alchemy and the occult, but rather the deistic beliefs of English Masons whose beliefs attracted such enlightened men as Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin. Throughout his publishing career he made an effort to print books which reflected his own view of man's progress, a view which was sometimes muddled and confused, but which constantly stressed the belief that man was the master of his own destiny and that progress could only be achieved through moral improvement.

Although there were several stages to his career as a journalist and publicist and though there were many changes in form and style, the content was a constant reflection of his belief in the principles of the Age of Reason. In spite of the fact that Novikov is thought to have drifted away from the rationalism of his satirical journals to a form of mysticism which was reflected in his Masonic journals and the work published by the Typographical Company, it is clear that he consistently retained the same aspirations for improving Russian society. Though Novikov did become involved with the mystical side of Masonry upon his move to Moscow, he continued to publish works of the Enlightenment and continually sought to improve society by encouraging individual perfection. Novikov was forced to work closely with those Masons who embraced alchemy and the occult in order to stave off financial insolvency. Either a notoriously poor bookkeeper or else a man who was more interested in ideas and issues than in the monetary side of publishing, Novikov was never in solid financial condition and would not have been able to publish if he had not had the support, financial and otherwise, from some of Russia's most important citizens. A man of only moderate wealth, Novikov, unable to support the losses he incurred, was forced to close some journals. In spite of the fact that he made a considerable profit during the first years at the Moscow University Press, he fell into the hands of mystical Masons who

continued to supply him with the financial security he needed in order to continue publishing.

Although it is impossible to say that Novikov was entirely rationalist or that he rejected mysticism of any sort, it is clear that he was no more mystical than other luminaries of the age. Newton rejected astrology and did not believe in the existence of evil spirits, but the vast body of alchemical writings he left behind shows how seriously even the greatest natural philosopher of modern times took such pursuits. Similarly, some of Europe's leading "rationalists" were duped by the charlatan Cagliostro when he visited St. Petersburg and seemingly offered knowledge and medical cures hitherto unknown to man. The reasons for Newton's lapses and those of his successors can be explained easily enough. Though the scientific revolution of seventeenth century Europe made great advances in the fields of celestial and terrestrial mechanics and medicine, the field of chemistry, which was plagued by a belief in alchemy and the erroneous phlogiston theory, lagged behind. In addition, mysticism (which is hard to define) resurfaced in the latter half of the eighteenth century when the Enlightenment reached its peak. More pseudoscientific findings and the continued popularity of alchemy and the occult

compromised its intellectual achievements.[1] In Novikov's case, however, in spite of a profound religious experience during a long bout of illness, he never rejected the principles with which he set out. Unlike Lopukhin who rejected materialist ideas after translating Holbach's Système de la nature because it questioned the existence of God and questioned the immortality of the soul,[2] going so far as to write a condemnation, Novikov continued to publish the works of the philosophes. He refused to become a mere pawn in the hands of the Typographical Company which was by then run by a German appointed by the Berlin Rosicrucians after Schwarz's death. Though he was obviously drawn closer into circles of that kind, Novikov retained his intellectual independence while he remained indebted in subtler ways to the more mystical Masons.

As a publisher and journalist Novikov was largely responsible for the creation of a dedicated reading public in Russia, and thereby helped to lay the foundation for that country's literary Golden Age in the nineteenth century. He

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[1] N.V. Riasanovsky; A Parting of the Ways: Government and the Educated Public in Russia 1801 - 1855, Oxford University Press, 1976, pg. 50.

[2] A. Lipski; "A Russian Mystic Faces the Age of Rationalism and Revolution: Thought and Activity of V.I. Lopukhin", Church History, Vol. 36 No. 1, Berne, Ind., American Society for Church History, 1967, pg. 172.

was responsible for the establishment of a book selling system which enabled provincial nobles and gentry to buy books despite their isolation from the printing centres of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Karamzin remarked that Novikov was responsible for the growth of the Moscow reading public which was only able to patronize two bookshops in 1777, but which had 20 to choose from in 1802.[3] There can be no doubt that Novikov's contributions to the enlightenment of Russia made him a more important figure than a man like Radishchev who, though he made a tremendous symbolic impact, did not really contribute to Russia's enlightenment to any great extent. The strength of his practical contributions made an immediate impact which made further achievements possible, whereas Radishchev contributed to the mythology of the Enlightenment, a bequest which continues to capture the imagination of many historians. It could even be claimed that by force of his example Novikov contributed more than Catherine since he continued to bring out Enlightenment literature long after Catherine had lost her early enthusiasm for the ideas of Voltaire and Diderot.

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[3] N.M. Karamzin; "The Book Trade and the Love of Reading in Russia", Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology, M. Raeff ed., New York, Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1966, pgs. 113-116.

An examination of Novikov's publishing ventures from 1779, when he took over the Moscow University Press, to 1792, when he was arrested, show what interests he shared. Although twenty-one per cent of his publications dealt with religious topics, thirty-three per cent were definitely of an enlightened nature, ranging from such diverse topics as secular philosophy, history and geography, to science and mathematics and grammars and lexicons.[4] It must be remembered, however, that books such as Pope's "Essay on Man", while dealing with religious or philosophical themes, cannot be considered devotional works. In addition, thirty per cent of his books can be classified as belles-lettres, dramas and comedies which may or may not have had an impact on expanding the literary horizons of his readers.

Although Novikov was instrumental in creating an interested reading public in Russia, he was by no means the only interested and active individual. He was only one of a host of literati emerging from Moscow University which, after its opening in 1755, was then just beginning to realise the hopes of its founders. The enthusiasm of Novikov and young intellectuals like him resulted in the publication of several

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[4] G. Marker; Publishing, Printing and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia 1700 - 1800, Princeton University Press, 1985, pg. 132.

different journals between 1760 and 1764, all of which were privately funded and were printed on the press of Moscow University. The most significant journals were M.M. Kheraskov's Poleznoe Uveselenie and Svobodnye Chasy, and A.P.Sumarokov's Trudoliubivaia pchela, but their initial success soon vanished since Moscow's reading public was still too small to support several weeklies. Despite the fact that nearly all of them were forced to close, the weeklies demonstrated the new feeling of responsibility the literati of Moscow and St. Petersburg now shared vis-à-vis the moral growth of their readers as well as their entertainment.[5]

The rise of the Academy of Sciences Press in St. Petersburg was equally impressive. Between 1750 and 1770 the Academy established six more presses, bringing the total number to seventeen, thus making it one of the largest publishing houses in Europe. Concurrently, the Translation Society attached to the Academy doubled its number of translators between 1755 and 1766 by hiring twelve more. Such growth is indeed remarkable, but it is not surprising considering that the Academy's major supporters, Nikita Panin, Prince Bestuzhev-Riumin, Ivan Betskoi and others, seemed more

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[5] Ibid., pgs. 86-87.

interested in supporting celebratory literature, like odes, or works in foreign languages than they were in works in Russian or the works of Russian writers. As a result, many were forced to translate the works of foreigners in order to eke out a living. Their own work, with few exceptions, was simply not profitable enough. In spite of the seeming lack of interest, the Translation Society published many of the works of the philosophes, including Candide by Voltaire, Montesquieu's L'Esprit des Lois, as well as works by Corneille, Mably and Rousseau and selections from Diderot's Encyclopédie.[6] All this paved the path for Novikov and his contemporaries when they undertook their various projects in the 1760's.

The Satirical Journals 1769 - 1772

After the demise of the journals of the early 1760's Russian literary life once again became fairly stagnant, only to be rejuvenated in early 1769 by the publication of a satirical journal called Vsiakaya Vsiachina. Although nominally under the editorship of G.V. Kozitskii, literary secretary to Catherine the Great, the Empress was actually the motivating

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[6] Ibid., pgs. 90-100.

force behind the journal. There is no consensus on why Catherine decided to start the journal. It has been suggested that Catherine wanted to continue the process of forging a progressive public opinion which she had started when she established the Legislative Commission.[7] Or did she found the journal in order to show that, in spite of the fact that she had hastily closed the Commission, she still held the same enlightened views and still believed in enlightened rule?[8] Regardless of her motives, Catherine's intention in founding Vsiakaia Vsiachina was clearly to improve Russian society by satirising some of Russia's social problems and showing the type of attitudes which were more desirable. Satire was used so that social criticism could take the form of good-natured chiding, rather than rebuke, in the hope that such an approach would be more successful, but there were limits to satire and to what extent it could be used. In its opening issue Vsiakaia Vsiachina, while encouraging others to found similar journals which could help in the task of ridding Russia of vice and corruption, carefully outlined the tasteful limits of satire. In order to be tasteful, satire had to remain anonymous and

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[7] I. de Madariaga; Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great, London, Yale University Press, 1981, pg. 331.

[8] A. Walicki; A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism, Stanford University Press, 1979, pg. 15.

could not criticize specific instances of vice or corruption, but could only discuss problems in their general context. Within a very short time there was a host of journals which eagerly joined the fray, anxious to help foster a change in Russia's prevailing social attitudes.

Novikov responded with a satirical journal of his own entitled Truten' which appeared in May 1769, though there is some indication that he may have been thinking of starting a journal some time in 1768 because he applied for and received a loan of 100 roubles in that same year from the Nobles' Bank. From the beginning it was clear that he took the task very seriously and that he was intensely interested in changing the values of the day. Novikov and others involved in the journal saw a necessity for more active intervention in social life and they used a more severe form of satire,[9] retaining the anonymity which Catherine insisted upon, but using genuine circumstances as the targets of their attacks. Dissatisfied with what he regarded as Catherine's feeble attacks on Russia's social problems, because she preferred to minimize their importance by regarding them as individual cases of vice and

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[9] Yu. D. Levin; "Angliskaya prosvetitel'skaya zhurnalistka v russkoi literature XVIII veka" Epokha prosveshcheniia, M.P. Alekseev, ed., Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo nauka, 1967, pg. 53.

weakness, Novikov's satire was more virulent than that which Catherine had deemed to be tasteful. In spite of its virulence, Novikov's satire was not negative, because he tried to show what behaviour was desirable by contrasting it with behaviour which obviously was not.[10]

It is as a result of his journalistic debate with Catherine and his refusal to stay within the guidelines which she had set that Novikov is regarded by some as a rebel who challenged the authority of the Empress,[11] or, similarly, a critic who took advantage of Catherine's encouragement to vent frustrations which he was otherwise too cowardly to air.[12] Although it is understandable that such views were formed, they do not really present a clear picture of Novikov nor do they reflect the aspirations of his satire. Though he was undoubtedly the most outspoken of the satirical journalists, Novikov was not as controversial as some have made him out to be. He may have strayed from Catherine's form of satire, but he was mimicking a form of satire which was popular all over

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[10] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov: Enlightener of Russia, London, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pg. 55.

[11] A. Monnier; Un publiciste frondeur sous Catherine II: Nicolas Novikov, Paris, 1981, pgs. 80-85.

[12] I.F. Martynov; Knigoizdatel' Nikolai Novikov, Moscow, 1981, pg. 13.

Europe. The English satirical journal Spectator, edited by Addison and Steele, was renowned throughout Europe and served as the model for Catherine's Vsiakaia Vsiachina as well as Novikov's Truten'. If Novikov used a more direct form of social criticism than Catherine, it was because he was not in the same difficult position as the Empress who was restrained by her pseudo-anonymity. In the lively debates which occurred between the two journals, it is clear that the jibes were jovial and convivial rather than menacing. Teasing Granny about her poor mastery of Russian and chiding her for referring to vice as mere weakness are hardly examples of attempts to question the system. Clearly, it is a case of a journalist taking full advantage of the opportunities presented to him.

Though Novikov adapted many features of Spectator-type journals, as well as some articles which had originally appeared in that publication, he showed a considerable amount of ingenuity and originality in conjuring up an entire cast of supporting characters to support his "Mr. Drone". Whereas the Spectator's editor was the only well developed character, Novikov created a team featuring Chistoserdov, Pravdaliubov and Priamikov who echoed "Mr. Drone's" ideals and helped to reinforce the editor's pleas for improvement. Since many of these fictitious characters appeared either as correspondents or as people writing to the editor, they created an air of general concern which was not limited to merely "Mr. Drone" and

his staff. In addition to the fictitious supporting cast, Novikov made extensive use of concocted news items from the provinces in an effort to point out that Russia's ills were not restricted to the cities and larger towns. To cure such 'ills', Novikov offered "prescriptions" to heal those who were afflicted.

Truten' ran for one year, publishing fifty-three weekly issues and it was the last satirical journal to close in April 1770, a fact which made Novikov very proud. Many reasons have been given for its demise, ranging from Imperial interference to financial hardship. Some have argued that Novikov's lively debate with Catherine and his refusal to operate within her guidelines led the Empress to close his journal, but such a conjecture is nothing more than speculation. Russia's reading public was extremely small at that time and it could not support eight journals. It is significant that all of the other satirical journals, including Vsiakaia Vsiachina, had ceased publication before Novikov closed Truten'. It is more likely that Truten' was closed because Novikov had alienated his readership through numerous delays in publication and had suffered great financial loss as a result. Truten' relied on subscriptions and had done fairly well in its first months of publication, averaging one thousand two hundred and forty copies in 1769. Due to several delayed publications, it averaged only seven hundred and fifty copies in 1770, and

profits declined proportionately.[13] The financial instability of a weekly journal was clear to Novikov who realized that Russia's small reading public had been saturated and it was no surprise that his subsequent publication, Pustomelya (The Tatler), was a monthly publication.

Another fact which makes it unlikely that Truten' was closed on Catherine's order is that both Truten' and Pustomelya were printed on the press at the Academy of Sciences. It is unlikely that Catherine would have permitted Novikov to publish again at the Academy had she been really incensed at the content of his former journal.

Pustomelya only survived two months, but in two issues Novikov displayed his acumen in changing the format of the journal. Though still satirical, the editorial persona was not as well defined as "Mr. Drone" had been. Aware that the public may be wearying of such literary devices, Novikov also included original literary works and light tidbits in case readers found the content too heavy. In the moral tales which appeared in Pustomelya, Novikov demonstrated his belief in enlightenment and the search for knowledge. He described the hero of the

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[13] W.G. Jones; "The Closing of Novikov's Truten'", Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. I, No. 118, London, Cambridge University Press, Jan. 1972, pg. 111.

first moral tale as one who had studied languages, geography and history, logic and physics and even theology and divinity.[14] By describing the benefits of education, Novikov showed that he considered learning a valuable asset which helped to mold a morally superior individual.

Pustomelya closed after only two issues because it was unable to operate profitably. The escalation of the Russo-Turkish War dominated the thoughts of Russia's reading public, leaving little opportunity for a satirical journal. Whereas the St. Petersburg News only averaged six hundred copies in 1768, its circulation more than doubled by 1770 to one thousand three hundred copies.[15] Realising that such competition was too much, Novikov graciously closed operations.

Though Novikov was temporarily employed as a translator for the College of Foreign Affairs, he did not neglect his work as a publisher. In 1771 he published Voltaire's "Sur la guèrre entre les Russes et les Turcs" and while working as a translator he began to collect and scrutinise the numerous documents which would later appear in his Drevniaia Rossiiskaia Viliofika (Ancient Russian Library). In 1772, however,

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[14] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 82-83.

[15] Ibid, Pg. 53.

Novikov began to publish his last satirical journal, Zhivopisets (Painter), which may have been his most successful, since it was printed in book form on several occasions, the last print run occurring in 1793, one year after his arrest.[16] Since Novikov was patronised by Catherine, he felt such official sanction reduced the need for anonymity. As a result, the editorial persona was not so strictly defined and part of Novikov's character was allowed to reveal itself.[17]

The most important item to appear in the pages of Zhivopisets during its rather unpunctual fifty-two weekly issues was "Fragment of a Journey to ...." which was a strong attack on serfdom. It is not quite clear who wrote "Fragments of a Journey to ...." because only the initials I.T. were given, but names such as Ivan Turgenev (who obviously fits the initials), Aleksander Radishchev and even Novikov have been suggested.[18] The actual authorship, however, is of little importance, but the fact that Novikov, under imperial patronage, decided to publish such an indictment of serfdom is extremely interesting. It demonstrates not only the awareness

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[16] Svodnyi katalog russkoi knigi grazhdanskoi pechati XVIII veka 1725-1800, Vol. IV, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Kniga, 1966, pg. 85.

[17] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pg. 68.

[18] Ibid., pgs. 73-74.

of men like Novikov that serfdom held many inherent evils, but also of Catherine's awareness of its brutality. Whereas Novikov had criticised individual cases of serfs being abused by their masters, this was the first instance that the entire institution of serfdom was being roundly criticised. The inclusion of the "Fragment ..." was the first indication of Novikov's patriarchal view of society in general, and the serf question in particular. He envisaged a society in which nobles would not own peasants, but would rather act as benevolent intermediaries between peasants and the authorities, providing aid in times of drought and famine and helping to educate the peasants in more productive agricultural techniques.[19] Such views of benevolent philanthropy were to be expressed later in Novikov's life when he led a campaign of humanitarian aid to drought stricken peasants in 1787 and even in the way he treated the serfs who worked on his estate.

It has been suggested that the harsh criticism of the "Fragments" led to the closure of the Zhivopisets,[20] but considering that the journal was funded by Catherine and was allowed to continue for a fairly long period after the essay appeared, this seems unlikely. As was the case with Truten',

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[19] A. Walicki; pg. 16.

[20] Ibid., pg. 16.

Novikov had great difficulty publishing his journal on time. Although the first issue was presented on 24 March 1772, the fifty-second only appeared in July 1773, demonstrating a cumulative gap of approximately three months.[21] Although it closed rather unceremoniously after completing its run of fifty-two issues, Novikov published Zhivopisets in book form on several different occasions in 1772, 1773, 1781 and finally in 1793,[22] one year after he had been arrested for his activities in the Society of Freemasons.

The "Drevniaia Rossiiskaya Vivliofika" and "Koshelek": Novikov and the Search for Russian Identity 1773 - 1775

Although Novikov was hired as a translator for the College of Foreign Affairs after the demise of Truten' and Pustomelya, he actually devoted most of his time to research on Russian history. Working on a grant from Catherine and given extensive use of her private library as well as of the official archives,[23] Novikov began to compile an impressive collection

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[21] Svodnyi katalog, Vol. IV, pgs. 133-135.

[22] Ibid., pg. 135.

[23] de Madariaga, pg. 333.

of documents dealing with foreign as well as domestic relations. The fruit of his labours was the Drevniaia Rossiiskaia Vivliofika (Ancient Russian Library), a compilation of Russian historical material published in journal form between January 1773 and 1775. Published concurrently with Koshelek, a more popular historical journal, the Drevniaia Rossiiskaia Vivliofika was an expression of his growing displeasure with some of the shallow Westernisers in Russia, but, more precisely, at Court. Novikov had realised that being Westernised was only a veneer to many people; that many Russians displayed their Westernised look in fashion or in speech, but they were not Westernised in a progressive sense because they could not appreciate the values of the Enlightenment and made little effort to improve as individuals.

Novikov also published his Opyt Istoricheskogo Slovarya o Rossiiskikh Pisatelyakh (Essay on a Dictionary of Russian Writers) which was an attempt to improve upon a poor defense of Russian letters in a history of Russian work published in Leipzig in 1768. He hoped to popularise many deserving Russian writers who had been forgotten through the zealous adoption of works by French, English and German authors. Though most of the names included in the Slovar' were his contemporaries, men like Fonvizin, Emin, Maikov and others, Novikov also included many writers whose works were no longer available but who

Novikov deemed important because their works were evidence of Russia's literary history.

The reason for Novikov's interest in history was the popularity of a book by a Frenchman, Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche, which described Russians as barbarians who would never be Europeanised, a view which was alarmingly well received throughout Europe. Even Jean-Jacques Rousseau made a similar comment in his Du contrat social when he belittled the reforms of Peter the Great because they were inappropriate for a people who were not yet ready for the corrupting influences which the reforms had wrought.[24] Such theories obviously painted an unpromising picture of Russia's future development and placed Russia on an unequal basis with the rest of Europe. While recognising Russia's fundamental differences, Novikov, through his study of ancient documents, realised that Russia had inherent virtues which were not described by Chappe d'Auteroche or Rousseau, virtues which were being discarded as Russia adopted Western traits and fashions. By emphasising the civility of Russia's past, Novikov hoped to encourage civility in contemporary Russian society, which is one of the reasons

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[24] Rousseau as quoted by Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 109-110.

the Library was accompanied by the more popular journal, Koshelek.

According to Novikov, the simplicity of Russians, their generosity, simple souls and their apparent disinterest in luxury, was exemplified by the purity of their trade goods. Hemp, tallow, leather and furs were goods of simplicity and utility, whereas Russia imported cuffs, ribbons, stockings and lace which were unnecessary and somewhat impractical.[25] Through his study of pre-Petrine Russia, Novikov became disillusioned because he saw the disappearance of Russia's virtues at the expense of imitations of the West. Although he acknowledged the benefits which Western culture and technology had brought to Russia, Novikov argued for discriminate borrowing from Europe.[26] Russia could learn from the West, but should not lose her identity in the process.

When the Library first appeared in January, 1773, it was very popular. There were one hundred and ninety-eight subscribers for two hundred and forty-six copies. The subscribers were amongst Russia's most important people;

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[25] H. Rogger; National Consciousness in Eighteenth Century Russia, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1960, pgs. 71-73.

[26] Garrard, pg. 19.

Catherine ordered several copies, and Grigorii Potemkin, Grigorii Orlov and even the Archbishop of Moscow, Platon, were subscribers.[27] Although the initial response to the Library was fairly good, the pedantic nature of the material was unsuitable to many subscribers' tastes, and subscriptions fell accordingly. By 1775 there were only fifty-seven subscribers for seventy-seven copies.[28] The Library was reprinted between 1788 and 1791, in a more organized manner, but there were only one hundred and sixty-eight subscribers in 1789.[29]

Perhaps the most overlooked aspect of the Library was the way in which Novikov assembled the various documents. He did not merely search for the material, edit it and then publish, but rather sought to authenticate various copies of individual documents by comparing them in order to clarify any discrepancies which existed. Though there were historical works written before Novikov's, the Library marked the first time an historian had subjected documents and various other materials to critical scrutiny. It is possible, therefore, to group Novikov in the select group as one of Russia's first historians with men like Tatishchev, Shcherbatov and Karamzin

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[27] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 122-123.

[28] Svodnyi katalog, Vol. IV, pg. 128.

[29] Ibid., pg. 129.

since his use of primary sources made the work of subsequent historians that much easier.[30]

While publishing the Ancient Russian Library, Novikov also published Koshelek, a light, more popular journal of an historical nature. Koshelek was really the last of Novikov's satirical journals, but since it was an indication of Novikov's reflection and evaluation of Russia's position in contemporary Europe, it was thus more serious and more complex than his other satirical journals. Although satire was the basic form, (even the title poked fun at those wealthy Russians who spent money to acquire only the accessories of Westernisation), Novikov dealt with poignant issues concerning Russian identity, and since Koshelek was published concurrently with the Library, the content was more historical than that of Truten' and Pustomelya.

Koshelek was the most nationalistic of Novikov's journals. In striving to define essential Russian traits, something which he was never really able to do, Novikov stressed the differences between Russia and the West. Though he acknowledged Russia's backwardness in several fields,

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[30] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 120-122.

Novikov argued that backwardness was not necessarily an indication of inferiority and that time would absolve Russia. According to Novikov, backwardness only meant that Russians had retained fundamental human virtues. Though an astute publisher, he resisted the temptation of using trendy foreign words and phrases and even constructed new Russian words in order to avoid the tendency towards using neologisms.[31] No doubt part of Novikov's displeasure over the affectations of Westernisation and the prevalent opinion that Russia was backward and would never become sufficiently Europeanised, stemmed from the failures he had encountered in his Society for the Printing of Books. Although the Printing Society tried to supply readers with various Western works such as Swift's Gulliver's Travels, Corneille and others, as well as books on interesting aspects of Russian history, the reading public was more interested in less serious works; cheap romances, adventures and works in foreign languages. The sophistication of the Russian reading public was not very high since it was still in its nascent stages, but Novikov wanted Russia's readers to challenge their minds rather than merely entertain them. Due to such disinterest in his work, Novikov was forced to close his Society, and it would not be surprising if such circumstances led him to question his countrymen's outlook.

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[31] Ibid., pgs. 101-102.

It has been suggested that Novikov was involved in a personal crisis during this period of his life, that his veneration of old Russian virtues clashed with his respect for the Enlightenment and produced a 'crise de conscience'. Granted that Novikov's delving into Russian history and his frustration over the seemingly misguided Westernisation of many of his countrymen may have evoked strange reactions, it is also possible that Novikov was merely reminding his fellow Russians of their past so that they would use their reason to choose the aspects of Western culture which they found suitable. Though he has been regarded as a patriot in the Enlightenment sense, a man who considered the past as the source of all virtues,[32] it is better to regard Novikov as a true rationalist who reacted not only against those critics who belittled Russia's progress, but also those charlatans who led the Enlightenment of Russia astray.

An interesting aspect of Koshelek was Novikov's detachment and neutrality. He presented the various arguments through a series of dialogues between a Frenchman, a German and a Russian, and the attitudes of each were highly stereotyped so as to represent distinct opinions. Although the Frenchman, the

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[32] Ibid., pgs. 100-101.

Chevalier de Mensonge, was obviously not Novikov's ideal of an enlightened man, but rather a fop who would have been regarded as one of the canaille in France, in Russia his status was that of a respectable tutor. The character of the German was also rather extreme since he believed the old Tsars were right to resist Westernisation as long as they did. In the end, the Frenchman is criticised for his excessive cynicism, though it is acknowledged that some of his views were very astute, while the German was ridiculed for his blind patriotism and idealisation of the past. Novikov believed that the true path lay between these two opposing views.

Novikov and the Masonic Influence: "Utrennii Svet" and the Typographical Company 1777 - 1786

Many historians regard the last years of Novikov's publishing career as a different stage in his life, a period when he was swayed by obscurantism, piety and mysticism. Although he joined the Freemasons in 1775 and played an active role in the Masonic movement in St. Petersburg and later in Moscow, Novikov remained a man of the Russian Enlightenment. Though involved with mystics and pietists, Novikov retained his belief in rationalism and scepticism and remained separate from

those who had rejected their earlier beliefs. To regard Novikov as an example of the anti-Enlightenment is wholly ridiculous.[33] His earlier journalistic ventures and his role at the Moscow University Press during his Masonic years are clear indications of his support and his belief in the Enlightenment. Though Novikov may have rejected the materialism of the radical Enlightenment which characterised the works of d'Holbach and Helvetius, so did many rationalists who retained a belief in God.

In both of Novikov's ventures during his Masonic years it is difficult to assess his involvement. The journal Utrennii Svet (Morning Light) was a collective venture, as was the Typographical Company, and though Novikov's name was perhaps the most well known, it is uncertain to what extent the journal reflected Novikov's beliefs at that time. It is significant that Novikov's first Masonic writings in Utrennii Svet were anonymous, possibly because the journal was a group effort, but it is perhaps an indication that he was resisting the pull of mysticism and still wanted to be regarded as a rationalist. At any rate, it is more important to see through

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[33] As, for example, in J.H. Billington; The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture, New York, Random House Inc., 1966, pgs. 242-252.

the haze of the collective exercises and to isolate Novikov's individual role rather than grouping Novikov with those who surrounded him.

Utrennii Svet was first published in 1777 under the collective editorship of A.M. Kutuzov, M.N. Muraviev, M.M. Kheraskov, I.P. Turgenev and Novikov.[34] The journal, in spite of its Masonic connection and obvious Masonic-inspired title, was not mystical. Rather, it reflected a realisation that the Masonic ideal of self-improvement was perhaps a better way to improve society than the collective ideal which was encouraged by the philosophers. From the first issue the philanthropic intentions of the journal were clearly pronounced, but there was also an invitation to the reading public to take an active part by sending donations. Although the subscription fee was three roubles and fifty kopeks, many subscribers displayed their philanthropic spirit by sending generous sums, running as high as twenty-five roubles. Some of the subscribers were prominently displayed since they were important courtiers, as was the case with Ya. A. Bryus, in the hope that their names would act as a catalyst for the generosity of others.[35] The

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[34] Svodnyi katalog; Vol. IV, pgs. 205-208.

[35] W.G. Jones; "The Morning Light Charity Schools", Slavonic and East European Review, pgs. 53-54.

people from whom Novikov hoped to solicit support were Russia's reading public, those people who could reflect and whose social conscience led them to benevolent action.[36] By stressing the importance of learning, as he had done in Truten', Novikov and the other editors of Utrennii Svet hoped to create a new sense of values which would benefit future generations.

Although seemingly a Masonic enterprise, Utrennii Svet had the support of many members of the imperial court, and possibly even received money from the Empress.[37] Any profits which the journal earned were set aside for charity schools, the first of which was opened in November, 1777, only two months after the first issue. A second school was opened in the following year. The schools were open to all free classes, but it was clear that the stress was placed on those members of the free classes who could not afford to send their children to more expensive schools. Since there was no form of public education in Russia at that time, the Morning Light charity schools were an important development in the country's educational history, because it demonstrated a belief that education should not be limited to those with financial means, but rather should be readily available to all children with an

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[36] Ibid., pg. 48.

[37] Ibid., pg. 63.

aptitude and an inclination for learning. Although Catherine established a state school system several years later, her anonymous grants were an indication of her support for the independent venture as well as a reflection of her belief in le bien public, the belief that any venture which improved the mass of society was laudable and should be supported.

Despite the fact that Utrennii Svet was established as a vehicle to support the charity schools, the subscriptions paid for the maintenance of the schools were soon subsidising the journal.[38] Utrennii Svet was closed in 1780 when Novikov realised that he did not have sufficient funds to continue publishing and that the schools were prosperous enough to survive on the subscriptions which they were receiving. The schools continued to run independently until 1782, when Catherine the Great incorporated them into her new public education system, an indication of her high regard for the enlightened venture.

Obviously the philanthropic endeavours of the staff are not the only reflection of the ideals behind Utrennii Svet. The content of the journal reflected the Masonic belief that ancient knowledge which had been lost should be regained. Far

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[38] de Madariaga; pgs. 494-495.

from being mystical, such a belief reflected the importance which Freemasons placed on finding real truth and their belief that through a greater understanding of man some of the secrets of the universe would be revealed. Translations of Bacon, Gellert, Grotius, Wolff and Pascal only reflected the Masonic belief that through God man would use his ability to reason, to increase his own knowledge, and would also become a better person in the process. Though it would seem that Novikov and the others were becoming pietistic at this point, particularly when it is remembered that materialism and atheism were prevalent in the writings of their contemporaries in Western Europe, it is important to consider that Freemasons in general, and Novikov in particular, had never denied the existence of God. Rather, they were akin to English deists or men of the early Enlightenment like Voltaire who disliked the superstition associated with organised religion but who still saw a place for God in the contemporary world.

A subsequent Masonic journal, Vechernaia Zaria, was noticeably more mystical in its content. It was published in 1782 by some of Schwarz's students, and though Novikov was occasionally associated with the publication, there is little concrete evidence to suggest that he took an active part. Schwarz's influence, however, was powerful enough to draw Novikov and several other seemingly rationalist Masons into the

Typographical Company, a printing and publishing enterprise operated solely for Masonic works. Most of the Freemasons involved in the Typographical Company were members of another Masonic organisation, the Friendly Learned Society, which aspired to instruct parents on the best way to raise their children. As well as publishing books, the Friendly Learned Society also provided needy students with the necessary funds they required to complete their studies. Since the journals of the Friendly Learned Society, the Moskovskoe Ezhemesyachnoe Izdanie (Moscow Monthly Periodical) and Vechernaia Zaria[39] had not been very successful, the members decided to form a new company expressly for Masonic publications.

Novikov's poor financial standing was reflected in his donation to the new company. Since he was still in debt, owing eight hundred and thirty-nine roubles to the Academy of Sciences for the printing of books published by his Printing Society, which had collapsed ten years earlier in 1774, Novikov could only provide material, not money.[40] Whereas members of the Learned Society provided sums ranging up to five thousand roubles, Novikov and his brother supplied the Typographical

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[39] See G. Marker; pg. 125 and Svodnyi katalog, Vol. IV, pg. 123.

[40] Marker; pg. 94.

Company with eight thousand roubles worth of books.[41] Although the value of Novikov's contribution is indeed impressive, it must be remembered that he had made a considerable profit during his first years at Moscow University Press,[42] one hundred and fifty thousand roubles, yet he was unable to make a much needed financial contribution.

Although the years 1787 and 1788 were Novikov's most productive as a book publisher, the nature of the material is immediately called into question. The Typographical Company, Moscow University Press and his own secret Masonic press kept Novikov very busy. He published one hundred and thirty-four books in 1787 and one hundred and fifty-five in 1788,[43] astounding figures for the period. Despite the fact that a large proportion of the works dealt with alchemy, the occult and spiritualism, Novikov had not necessarily rejected his former idealism, but rather was trapped by his Masonic affiliations. Though he had moved to Moscow at the behest of Schwarz, a mystical Mason, he had done so because of the lure

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[41] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pg. 179.

[42] I.V. Malyshev, ed., Novikov i ego sovremeniki: izbrannie sochineniia, Leningrad, Izdatel'stvo academii nauk CCCP, 1961, pg. 451.

[43] G.H. McArthur; "Catherine II and the Masonic Circle of N.I. Novikov", Canadian Slavic Studies, Vol. 3 No. 4, Montreal, Loyola College, 1970, pg. 537.

of the University Press, and had even expressed reservations about Schwarz's Masonry. In his dealings with fellow-Moscow Masons, Novikov was always in a position of responsibility, but he remained a subordinate. Schwarz and, after his death, Baron Schroeder, exercised control of the Masonic movement in Moscow and had secretly brought the more mystical Rosicrucianism to Moscow. As a subordinate to these men Novikov was subject to their orders and, as in the case of Schroeder, in particular, the influence was decisive. Schroeder made severe demands of Novikov for the printing of mystical books on the press at Moscow University which Novikov was unable to fulfil.[44] This strained their relationship and may ultimately have led to the financial collapse of the Typographical Company in 1791.

Moscow University Press: A True Reflection of Novikov's Ideals

While Novikov was working on Utrennii Svet, he was offered the job of running Moscow University Press, which had never been run to capacity and had fallen into disrepair. The offer came from Novikov's friend and fellow-Mason, M.M. Kheraskov, who extended it to him because of Novikov's good

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[44] W.G. Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 178-192.

reputation as a publisher. Although Novikov's Masonic connection may have helped to some extent, it was his experience in past publishing ventures and his astute knowledge of the commercial aspects of publishing which got him the job at Moscow University Press.

The offer made Novikov aware that his Masonic connection could replace imperial patronage as his main form of financial support, something which had been dwindling since his friend, G.V. Kozitsky, had committed suicide.[45] When he moved to Moscow to take control of the Press, Novikov not only accepted the challenge which the job presented, he also hoped that it would be profitable enough to allow him to retire after he had fulfilled his contract.

The lure of the press of Moscow University was only part of Novikov's attraction to the notion of moving back to Moscow. Less cosmopolitan than St. Petersburg, Moscow appealed to Novikov because he thought of it as the soul of Russia. The city was less influenced by the Vol'teriantsy who had corrupted the ideals of the Enlightenment in the capital city and it was a better centre for sending books to the provinces. During his first years in Moscow Novikov worked so diligently at the

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[45] Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pg. 150.

University Press that he had little free time and, as a result, Novikov played only a minor role in the Masonic movement,[46] despite the fact that he had been accorded one of its highest degrees.

It is impossible to document all of Novikov's work at the University Press, but a brief glimpse of his work from 1779 to 1789, supposedly his most mystical years when he was involved in Freemasonry, reflects Novikov's dedication to the Enlightenment and the expansion of knowledge in Russia. It must be remembered that, although he had nominal responsibilities to Moscow University for publishing its journals, Novikov was responsible for the operation of the Press and the publishing decisions were his entirely. During his so-called mystical period, Novikov published Milton's Paradise Lost, Voltaire's satirical and philosophical works and a book on English law by Blackstone. He completed the publishing of Gulliver's Travels by supplying the final chapters which had been left out in the first edition and he printed the works of many explorers whose information and adventures were as popular as those of Swift's fictional hero. There were countless grammars and lexicons as well as reprints of popular works such as Pope's Rape of the Lock and books by

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[46] Malyshev, ed., pg. 451.

Lessing and Locke.[47] Although such a list is only a brief overview, it reflects Novikov's ambition to bring the best of European culture to Russia and to make it readily available to the small but growing reading public.

It has been suggested that the goal of the Rosicrucians was to gain control of the presses in Moscow in an effort to help spread their influence.[48] If this was indeed the case, Novikov resisted any attempts to influence him in the operation of the Press at Moscow University. Though technically subordinate to men like I.G. Schwarz and Baron Schroeder, Novikov continually asserted his role as the operator of the Press and refused to allow outsiders any operational influence. Despite the fact that some mystical books were printed at the University Press at the behest of the Rosicrucians, Novikov tried to retain sole authority, but was forced to acquiesce.[49] Though Novikov joined the Masons in 1775, it seems that he resisted the mystical side of Freemasonry which tried to influence him and ultimately played a role in his arrest in 1792.

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[47] For an exhaustive list, consult Svodnyi katalog, Vols. I-IV.

[48] In-Ho L. Ryu; "Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order" The Eighteenth Century in Russia, q.v. pg. 228.

[49] Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 179-181.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREEMASONRY IN RUSSIA AND THE ACTIVITIES OF N.I. NOVIKOV

Nikolai Novikov's involvement in the Russian Masonic movement is the key issue in the debate concerning his role in the Russian Enlightenment. Though he is regarded by some historians as a true man of the Enlightenment who maintained his belief in humanism and rationalism, there are many people who consider Novikov's Masonic period as a fundamental change in his attitude to the Enlightenment, a rejection of the godlessness of the Vol'teriantstvo and a condemnation of those who failed to appreciate the essential purity of the Russian national character. There is no doubt that Novikov did question the foppish behaviour and attitudes of many Russians who adopted only the fashionable affectations of the Western Enlightenment such as powdered wigs, the French language or Western dress, but in spite of such criticism, Novikov continued to believe that Russian society could be improved by adopting the essential beliefs of the Enlightenment; rationalism, the demystification of knowledge and of religion and skepticism, the ability to assess Western customs and beliefs critically and to decide whether their merits compensate for their deficiencies. The fact that Novikov sought the support of his Masonic brothers rather than Imperial

patronage, as he had done formerly, does not detract from his Enlightenment endeavours.

Some of the confusion over Novikov's role in the Masonic movement arises from a misunderstanding of Freemasonry and an unwillingness to separate Novikov's thoughts and actions from those of his fellow Freemasons. As in any large movement, Freemasonry represented a multitude of beliefs and attitudes and it is folly to assume that Novikov held the same mystical beliefs as men like Schwarz or Lopukhin merely because he associated with them in the Masonic movement. It is very likely, in fact, that Novikov was attracted by different Masonic principles than were either Lopukhin or Schwarz and that his search for the right form of Freemasonry never ended successfully since Novikov's beliefs and attitudes varied considerably from those of the Moscow Rosicrucians with whom he was associated at the time of his arrest. Part of Novikov's unsuccessful search is no doubt a result of the changing character of Freemasonry as it spread through Europe and the declining influence of English Freemasonry in east central Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The Origins and Ideals of Freemasonry and its Dissemination Throughout Europe

It is difficult to trace the origins of Freemasonry since there were two distinct phases before speculative Freemasonry evolved in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The operative Masonic guilds of early England, where secrecy and fraternity helped to bind operative Masons into a tight society which protected the integrity of the skilled stonemasons, gradually evolved into accepted Masonry when those who were not operative Masons were granted the privilege of joining the festivities at the Masonic lodges which housed travelling operative Masons. The lodges were renowned as congenial meeting places where men could openly discuss a variety of subjects without being ridiculed or condemned for their opinions. It was during this period of accepted Masonry that Elias Ashmole and Sir Robert Moray joined Masonic lodges in Lancashire and Edinburgh respectively. Both men were interested in alchemy, an interest which was not uncommon at that time, but, more significantly, they were also interested in encouraging universal learning and both played a role in the founding of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge in 1660.[1] The tolerance and the interest in

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[1] M.C. Jacobs; The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists,

(Footnote Continued)

knowledge and learning are two of the most important aspects of accepted masonry which later formed the basis of Freemasonry when it emerged at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Although several lodges in late seventeenth century London were recognisably speculative in nature, it was not until they merged in 1717 that speculative Freemasonry was established, and the Anderson principles, the governing laws of speculative Freemasonry, were not drafted until 1723. Speculative Masonry was entirely apolitical and was open to all men regardless of religion or social status, a reflection of their belief in toleration, and members were free to express their views without fear of expulsion. Early Freemasons had a profound interest in the new science, a result of the architectural and mathematical interests of their forebears, and supported a Newtonian rather than an Aristotelean or Cartesian view of nature.[2] Thus, in addition to entertainment and companionship, the Masonic lodges provided the opportunity to discuss relevant current issues in a tolerant and learned atmosphere.[3] Freemasonry also served as a convenient link for those who

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(Footnote Continued)
Freemasons and Republicans, London, George Allen & Unwin, pgs. 116-117.

[2] Ibid.; pgs. 113 and 245.

[3] J.M. Roberts; The Mythology of Secret Societies, London, Secker & Warburg, 1972, pgs. 24 -27.

sought a more open society and who encouraged social mobility and constitutional monarchy.[4] In spite of such admirable principles, however, the egalitarian spirit of early English Masonry soon disappeared. In spite of the fact that the first three Grand Masters were commoners, nobles filled the post for the rest of the eighteenth century.

Freemasonry did not remain confined to the British Isles, but spread quickly to the European continent. Although Freemasonry was easily disseminated amongst learned Europeans who supported the essential beliefs of the Enlightenment, it was initially most successful amongst countries with pronounced English sympathies, particularly those countries involved in the Great Northern Alliance against France.[5] As a result, Freemasonry was easily disseminated by British merchants who sought companionship in various cities along the trade routes.[6] The response to Freemasonry was exceptionally strong and it attracted men from all social classes. Writers like Goethe, Voltaire, Wieland and Lessing joined, as did many monarchs and clergymen. Though it has been suggested that Freemasons like

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[4] Jacobs, pg. 109.

[5] Ibid.; pgs. 110-111.

[6] P. Hazard; European Thought in the Eighteenth Century from Montesquieu to Lessing, London, Hollis & Carter, 1954, pg. 374.

d'Alembert and Helvétius were representative of the radical nature of Masonry, it must be remembered that they were balanced by such conservative forces as the clergy, particularly in France where prelates played an active role in the Masonic movement. In Germany, however, the Illuminati, a derivative group of Masonic origin founded by Adam Weishaupt in 1776, were considered to be quite radical because of their avid republicanism. They rivalled the Freemasons but, because of their radicalism, were disbanded in 1786.[7]

One of the reasons for the popularity of Freemasonry in Europe was that it was regarded as a welcome response and an alternative to the Jesuits. Its cosmopolitan, humanitarian and rationalist principles helped to spread Freemasonry through the "societés de pensées" in France and the reading clubs in Germany and it was also well received by enlightened despots like Joseph II in Austria. In spite of the apparent popularity of Freemasonry and the favourable response to its ideals, Masonry began to change in Europe and was noticeably less rationalist by the end of the century. The Masonic insistence on toleration which had appealed to so many Freemasons actually

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[7] N. Cohn; Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967, pg. 26.

began to undermine the rationalist principles by mid-century.[8] Part of the reaction to English Masonry was expressed by the creation of different Masonic Orders which offered different degrees and a different basis for knowledge. The first form of revisionist Freemasonry, known as Scottish Rites, was essentially French and did not originate in Scotland as the name suggests. Scottish Masonry offered five degrees and justified the two additional degrees by professing to offer forgotten knowledge, ancient secrets which would help men understand the mysteries of antiquity. The cult of Solomon's Temple and other antiquarian mysteries were popularised by Scottish Masons and their popularity signalled a change from the future-seeking Freemasons of the English system to a form of Freemasonry which emphasised man's essential purity in the past. In addition, Scottish Masonry also favoured the aristocracy and was not egalitarian like English Masonry, and thus appealed to those who disliked the spirit of social equality which had originally characterised the movement.

As different strains of Freemasonry developed and each claimed to offer more or different knowledge, the number of degrees increased. As was the case with Scottish Masonry, however, the higher degrees were often used merely as a way of

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[8] Roberts; pg. 95.

keeping the lower classes out of the inner circle which controlled the lodges.[9] One of the most popular forms of Freemasonry to develop was known as Lax Observance, or Swedish Masonry as it was called in Scandinavia, which offered seven degrees, but there were other systems which offered as many as one hundred degrees.[10]

The mystical basis of the new forms of Freemasonry which appeared on the Continent were representative of the reaction against the Enlightenment and the renewed interest in alchemy and the occult. Whereas English Freemasonry had essentially wanted to expand knowledge and make it accessible to all men regardless of their social position, the new forms of Freemasonry wanted to restrict the accessibility to knowledge by restricting membership or by denying certain men the right to pursue higher degrees. As a result, the link between Freemasonry and the Enlightenment must be qualified by a clear understanding of which Masonic Orders were involved and what principles governed the lodges.

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[9] In-Ho L. Ryu; pg. 201.

[10] See Roberts; pgs. 90 - 105.

Freemasonry in Russia

There are many myths concerning the emergence of Freemasonry in Russia. It has been suggested that Sir Christopher Wren introduced Peter the Great to Freemasonry when the young tsar was in London on the Grand Embassy in 1698 and that the Neptune Society, Peter's clandestine group of inquisitive friends, was actually a Masonic society which explored the mysteries of alchemy.[11] Since Peter the Great's visit occurred nineteen years before the establishment of the Grand Lodge in 1717, it is safe to say that any connection of Peter the Great and Freemasonry is nothing more than mere fantasy. The possibility has also been raised that Dmetrius Kantemir, the well-educated hospodar of Moldavia, was a Freemason, but his membership in the Society of Freemasons is equally tenuous.[12] There were, however, several foreign Freemasons in Russia in the early 1730's, but the first lodge was opened by General James Keith, a Scottish soldier in Russian Service. His lodge opened some time in 1733 and Keith was made the first Russian Grand Master in 1740.

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[11] N. Hans; "The Moscow School of Mathematics and Navigation", Slavonic and East European Review, XXIX, London, Athlone Press, 1951, pg. 535.

[12] See E.L. Lozovan; "Dimitrie Cantemir-Franc-Maçon", Revue des Etudes Roumaines, Vol. 16, Paris, 1981.

Although Keith's English Freemasonry was not very successful in attracting Russians to join in the early years when Anna Ioannovna was Empress, many Russians began to join during the reign of Empress Elizabeth. It seems, however, that the young Guards officers who decided to join were not attracted so much by their admiration of Masonic principles as by the festive nature of the lodges and their social functions.[13] It is very likely that the more serious side of Freemasonry was often neglected in Russia at that time since most Masons were English merchants who could not participate in lodge activities during the hectic trading season. As a result, the lodges remained closed for many months and lodge practices were adversely effected.

During Catherine the Great's reign Freemasonry grew remarkably. Continental Masonic orders began to establish lodges in Russia and to actively recruit Russians with more success than Keith's English lodges had experienced. In 1765 the German Lax Observance Order established lodges in Russia and they were followed by Baron Reichel who, in 1771, created the Zinnendorf system, which later merged with the lodges of I.P. Yelagin in 1776, a Russian who controlled a number of

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[13] G.H. McArthur; "Catherine II and the Masonic Circle of N.I. Novikov", pg. 530.

lodges of both the English and German variety. At the end of the decade, in 1779, the Swedish system was introduced in Russia, but was not very successful since Catherine, keenly aware of the danger of a system led by the Duke of Sudermania who would later become Charles XIII, monitored the proceedings and made it clear that she did not approve.[14]

Although English lodges continued to operate, higher order Freemasonry became more popular and eventually dominated Russian lodge activity. Since it was possible to limit membership by denying undesirable members the permission to seek higher degrees, thus effectively barring them from the inner circle of Masons who controlled the lodge activities, the Russian nobility preferred higher order Masonry to the more egalitarian English variety. Baron Zinnendorf's system was notorious because it seemingly had only three degrees, because some members were discouraged from seeking the four higher degrees or were not granted permission. In addition to the restrictive nature of higher order Freemasonry, there were other reasons to become a Mason. Whereas English Freemasonry was synonymous with the Vol'teriantsy, the segment of Russian society which zealously adopted Western attitudes, often

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[14] According to G. Vernadsky in Russkoe Masonstvo, pg. 90, between 17 and 30% of all Civil Servants were Freemasons. The percentage varied according to department.

haphazardly, higher order Masonry seemed to be a worthy compromise between the godlessness of Vol'teriantstvo and the strict confines of the Russian Orthodox Church. Although many Russians were attracted by the ideals of the Enlightenment, the often foppish behaviour did not replace the spirit of community which Orthodoxy had provided. As a result, Freemasons stood precariously in the middle, distrusted by the religious Orthodox and yet condemned by the Vol'teriantsy for their curious mystical beliefs.[15]

The Masonic Activities of N.I. Novikov

In view of Nikolai Novikov's firm commitment to spread the ideals of the Enlightenment in Russia and his obvious Anglophilia, it is not surprising that he decided to join the Society of Freemasons in 1775. His historical research had led him to condemn the atheism and the shallowness of the Vol'teriantsy since they failed to acknowledge the merit of Russia's inherent characteristics, but Novikov remained committed to encouraging the harmonious acceptance of faith, reason and knowledge. Although it has been suggested that many of the men who joined Masonic lodges at this time did so

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[15] Lipski; "A Russian Mystic . . .", pg. 178.

because they sought comfort and fraternity to soothe them in the wake of the Pugachev rebellion which had raged the countryside for two years previous, it is doubtful that any singular event or issue prompted him to become a Freemason. Rather, it was an accumulation of various factors which drew Novikov into the fold of Russia's Masonic movement and finally resulted in his membership.

Although Novikov became one of the leading Freemasons in Russia, it would be a mistake to regard him as exemplary of Russian Freemasonry. Novikov was already one of Russia's leading citizens and his publishing ventures, coupled with his involvement in various Masonic lodges virtually ensured his high standing in the Masonic movement. Due to his dedication to the Enlightenment, he became disgruntled with several lodges which did not reflect his views and, as a result, he changed lodges several times, but it is doubtful whether he found the form of Masonry which reflected his own beliefs and attitudes. Novikov was not a mystic and did not share the same ideals as many of his fellow Masons, but he relied on them for the financial support which sustained his publishing ventures. Thus, Novikov became involved with a number of wealthy Masons whose interests did not necessarily match his own but whose money and influence replaced the imperial patronage which was no longer forthcoming.

Novikov had already developed a strong sense of civic-mindedness and had begun to question the secular French influences in Russian society before becoming a Freemason, thus making it clear that he did not join the society as a reaction against the Enlightenment. In fact, he was attracted by Freemasonry because of its promise to explain the mysteries of man and the universe,[16] the same attraction which also lured I.V. Lopukhin, a mystical Mason who would later work quite closely with Novikov in Moscow. Although such intentions could be interpreted as being somewhat mystical, particularly since Lopukhin had also been lured by the same interest, it must be remembered that the Enlightenment popularised many of the discoveries of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and that such knowledge was one of the reasons Novikov was so interested in the Enlightenment.

Although Novikov had some misgivings about Freemasonry, he was convinced of its merit when he learned that some of St. Petersburg's most prominent citizens were members of Masonic lodges.[17] Novikov was by no means an elitist, but it is quite possible that he recognised the possibilities which his new

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[16] Ibid; pg. 173.

[17] G.H. McArthur; "Freemasonry and the Enlightenment in Russia: The Views of N.I. Novikov", Canadian-American Slavic Studies, Vol. 14, N.3, Arizona State University, 1980, pg. 364.

connections would open up to him. Not only would his Masonic brethren be excellent men to work with and to discuss relevant ideas with, it was also possible that Novikov regarded them as possible collaborators in his publishing ventures.

Novikov was admitted by a Masonic lodge under the leadership of I.P. Yelagin, one of the largest systems in Russia at that time. He was accepted without taking an oath and was granted all three degrees simultaneously, without having taken part in any of the standard rituals and without having studied the rules and regulations which governed lodge procedures.[18] It is clear that Novikov's high standing in society and his excellent reputation made him a most desirable candidate for membership in a Masonic lodge and there can be little doubt that the leading Masons in Yelagin's lodge were anxious to have him as a member. By exempting Novikov from the mundane procedures which usually accompanied the granting of various degrees the Masons made it clear that they admired Novikov and were willing to forgo the standard practices in order to ensure that he would become a member.

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[18] G. Vernadsky; Russkoe masonstvo v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny vtoroi, Europe Printing, Lichtenstein, 1970, pg. 14.

Although Novikov was accorded special treatment in the simultaneous granting of three degrees, the practice of accepting members in Yelagin's system was very haphazard. Members were accepted indiscriminately and nearly every meeting served as the initiation of some new members.[19] Due to such lax admittance practices, the members of Yelagin's lodge were not the most serious and Novikov complained bitterly that they "... played at Masonry with little understanding."[20] He found that lodge activities had become stagnant and that the infatuation with mysticism which pervaded the lodges of the Yelagin system was not suited to his own beliefs and he began to search for a new system which would be more akin to his own idea of what Freemasonry was and what its function should be.[21] Novikov then became a member of the Zinnendorf system, the order of Freemasonry which had been brought to Russia by Baron Reichel several years earlier. It is ironic that Yelagin soon realised that his lodges had gone astray and that he and Reichel merged their respective orders shortly after Novikov had joined the Zinnendorf system. Although several lodges from each system remained outside the agreement, Yelagin was named

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[19] Ibid; pg 14, N.1.

[20] Ibid;, pg. 21.

[21] McArthur; "Freemasonry and the Enlightenment ..." , pgs. 364-366.

Grand Master of the united orders and Novikov again found himself under Yelagin's tutelage.

Since higher order Masonry was recognisably aristocratic, it is curious that Novikov would join. As a firm believer in the ideals of he Enlightenment, he was essentially middle class in his outlook and preferred to see ability rather than birth the measure of man's worth. The sole reason which prompted Novikov to join the Zinnendorf system was its seriousness, a factor of great importance in view of the festive nature of Yelagin's lodges. The fact that Novikov was not content with a lodge in which the members merely played at Freemasonry was indicative of his intention to use his Masonic connections to aid him in his work. His ideal was an apolitical form of Freemasonry which would work to educate the Russian people through philanthropic endeavours like the charity schools and through moral weeklies which would ridicule the corruption and vice which plagued Russian society. Novikov's brand of Masonry can be regarded as an example of the humanity of the upper classes during Catherine's reign[22] and can also be seen as one of the sources of Russia's intelligentsia which played such an important role in Russian affairs in the nineteenth century.

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[22] A. Gleason; Young Russia: The Genesis of Russian Radicalism in the 1860's, New York, Viking Press, 1980, pg. 65.

Although Novikov was happier with the Zinnendorf system, he was dismayed at the eagerness of Russians in general to adopt foreign Masonic Orders without thinking about the implications. Such was the case with Swedish Masonry which was quite popular with a great number of government officials in St. Petersburg. Novikov expressed his fear of having important bureaucrats under foreign tutelage and questioned the political nature of Swedish Freemasonry,[23] the first indication of his nationalist aims and his desire for an independent Masonic movement in Russia. Novikov's desire for independence as well as the nationalist aims of Prince N.N. Trubetskoi were finally honoured when a conference of European Freemasons at Wilhelmsbad in 1782 recognised Russian Masonry as a separate independent province, thus essentially freeing it from the threatened dominance of Swedish Masonry.[24]

Although Novikov still regarded his publishing ventures as being more important than his Masonic activities, it would be foolish to underestimate the role his Masonic connections played in securing the post at Moscow University Press for him. There can be little doubt that the offer from Prince Trubetskoi to Novikov to run the press at Moscow University was as much a

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[23] Vernadsky; pg. 51.

[24] Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pg. 159.

result of Novikov's Masonic membership as it was an acknowledgement of his expertise in the publishing field. The offer was extended by Trubetskoi at the behest of J.G. Schwarz, a German from Transylvania who was a member of the Lax Observance Order of Freemasonry. In spite of the great opportunities which Trubetskoi's offer opened up, Novikov was hesitant to become involved with Schwarz and Lax Observance Freemasonry because of the distinctly aristocratic nature of the Order. The lure of the press, however, as well as the lure of working in the most Russian of cities, proved to be stronger than his reservations and Novikov accepted the post.

When Novikov began the laborious task of reorganising Moscow University Press he had little time to devote to Masonic activities. The Press had been neglected for many years and was in poor repair, and Novikov's time was spent trying to make it successful once again. During his leisure time, however, Novikov socialised with many of Moscow's most prominent Freemasons, one of whom was Schwarz. Although initially wary of his new colleague, Novikov became very close friends with Schwarz, whose interest in literature and philosophy appealed to him. With the formation of a secret lodge in 1780, the most important Moscow Freemasons were grouped together under the leadership of Prince Trubetskoi, with the understanding that Schwarz would not inoculate the seven other members with his

ideas on the higher degrees of his Observance Freemasonry.[25] In spite of such an agreement, Schwarz was able to convince the other Masons, including Novikov, to join with P.A. Tatishchev in the creation of a new lodge called "Garmonia", and to send himself as an emissary to the Duke of Brunswick who was the acknowledged leader of Strict Observance Masonry in Berlin. Although Schwarz was able to negotiate for the recognised independence for Russia as a separate Masonic province, the real significance of his journey was only discovered much later. While in Berlin, Schwarz had sought the "true" form of Masonry and had contact with J.C. Wollner who claimed to be the head of the Rosicrucians, a group which professed to hold the knowledge which was sought by other Masonic groups. As a result of Schwarz's secret dealings the Moscow Freemasons were quietly put under the tutelage of the Rosicrucians without their knowledge, although their final acceptance into the highly secret society was postponed until the Moscow Freemasons had made personal applications for acceptance in order to make it appear that the decision to join was their own.

The Rosicrucians were a very curious group. Although there was a Rosicrucian Manifesto which circulated throughout Europe during the seventeenth century, there is no evidence

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[25] Ibid; pg. 157.

that a Rosicrucian movement actually existed. The Manifesto, said to have been written by Christian Rosencruz in 1484, dealt with the occult and alchemy and claimed to have the key to hidden knowledge. It is not known how the Manifesto circulated so widely without a society to support it, but it seems that pockets of early Rosicrucians in each country believed that they were part of a much larger movement.

The Rosicrucians of the eighteenth century, however, were very well organized. They used Masonic degrees as a prerequisite to their own since they claimed to be the masters of true knowledge which all Masons sought. Rosicrucians were so secretive that even the Freemasons were wary of them.[26] The movement was actually a conservative reaction against the progressiveness of the Enlightenment. It had a respect for hierarchy and tradition which appealed to those with conservative religious and social attitudes and opinions. It is no surprise that Wollner, who had acted as Schwarz's contact in Berlin and who was the head of the Rosicrucian movement, was responsible for the conservative policies of Frederick William II in Prussia, whose reign was notable for its reaction to the enlightened despotism of Frederick the Great.[27]

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[26] Ryu; pg. 199.

[27] Roberts; pgs. 102-103.

It would be difficult to dissociate Novikov from the movement to bring Rosicrucianism to Russia since he was one of the active leaders of the "Garmonia" lodge, but it is more than likely that he had little or no idea of the nature of Rosicrucianism and that he was merely acting on information passed to him by his friend Schwarz. Novikov's search for "true" Masonry is well documented and it is well known that Schwarz had boasted that he had discovered it in Berlin, much to the enjoyment and surprise of Novikov and the other Moscow Freemasons. Although Novikov was excited at the prospect of joining his fellow Masons in a new Order, he never ceased to work actively at the University Press and was reticent at having to swear an oath of loyalty and absolute obedience to Schwarz since he realised that this would affect his publishing duties. Novikov's unwillingness to allow outside influence to interfere with his duties at Moscow University Press were adequately reflected when he quietly but firmly forbade Baron Schroeder, Schwarz's successor, to dictate to him how to run the press at the University and at the Typographical Company.

A lot of controversy has been generated by Novikov's close friendship with J.G. Schwarz, the mystical Transylvanian who gradually became the leader of the Moscow Rosicrucians. Though it is true that Novikov was drawn to Schwarz because of their mutual interest in literature and nature philosophy, he did not accept his friend's mystical ideas or share his interest in

alchemy and the occult. It is strange that Novikov should have been attracted to a man who was, in many ways, so different from himself, but Schwarz seems to have been a very interesting character who was able to gain people's confidence and to influence them a great deal. It is difficult to gauge to what extent Schwarz was able to influence Novikov or change his ideas since Novikov's friendship with mystical Masons like Ivan Lopukhin or Schwarz seem to conflict with the essential rationalism of his publishing duties at Moscow University Press. Schwarz was clearly aware of Novikov's reputation as a publicist since he urged Prince Trubetskoi to offer Novikov the post at Moscow University, but it is hard to say whether Schwarz already had thought about starting the Typographical Company which was only established in 1784, six years after he had offered the job at Moscow University Press to Novikov.

It is also ironic that Novikov, who had urged Russians to become the masters of their own Masonic affairs, should allow Schwarz to become the leader of the Moscow Masons and to eventually associate them with a Masonic Order based in Berlin. Schwarz's manipulation and deception in his dealings with nationalistic Freemasons, and friends, like Novikov and Trubetskoi, do not appear to be worthy qualities which would appeal to Novikov who was seemingly so willing to follow his example. The fact that Schwarz, while in delirium from a raging fever, made a deathbed confession in which he admitted

that Rosicrucianism was nothing more than an attempt to undermine Orthodoxy in Russia[28] clearly does not help to clarify matters. In the final analysis, a separation must be made between Novikov's Masonic connections and his activities as a man of the Enlightenment. Though it is clear that Schwarz must have had some sort of influence on Novikov it is difficult to see how profound an influence he might have had since such great discrepancies existed between Novikov the Freemason and Novikov the publisher. Without extensive evidence to qualify Schwarz's possible role, the only concrete judgements which can be made are those based on the evidence of Novikov's activities as a philanthropist, educator and publisher.

It is significant that Novikov continued to operate the Moscow University Press so effectively and used it to publish the same sort of material as he had previously done. Not only does it demonstrate where Novikov's real interests lay, it is also an indication of his independence and his separation from the mystical activities of his Masonic brothers Schwarz and Lopukhin. Novikov was aware of the kind of books which were being published by the Typographical Company and on the secret Masonic presses, but he continued to spread the works of the Enlightenment. It is clear that Schwarz's interest in the

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[28] Ryu; pgs. 222-223

occult had little influence on Novikov who was not interested in such matters.[29]

Novikov's Masonic activities rarely interfered with his publishing and his goal of bringing the Enlightenment to Russia. Though he was serious about Freemasonry and made efforts to find what was referred to as "true Masonry", there is no reason to suspect that he was content with any of the Orders with which he was associated, particularly the Rosicrucians whose secrecy, elitism and mysticism clashed markedly with Novikov's own beliefs. Although Schwarz and some of the other Masons placed a great emphasis on the importance of education, their fundamental attitudes were much different from that of Novikov who refused to compromise or reject his principles. Through his continued work at Moscow University and his philanthropic work both on his own estate and during the famine of 1787 Novikov demonstrated his belief in the values of the Enlightenment and the basic Christian values which he thought should be the basis for daily life.

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[29] V.V. Zenkovsky; A History of Russian Philosophy, Vol. I, G.L. Kline, trans., London, Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd., 1953, pg. 97.

The Diversity of the Russian Masonic Movement and Novikov's Place in it

Nikolai Novikov is generally regarded as having been the leading Freemason in eighteenth century Russia, but he was only one of many dominant figures in a movement which included men from different social backgrounds and of different ideological beliefs. Though it may be argued that Novikov's contributions to Russian society were more important than those of other Freemasons, it would be wrong to suggest that his views and attitudes were wholly representative of Freemasonry in Russia. It would also be wrong, however, to claim that Freemasonry was distinctly rationalist or mystical because the Masonic brothers remained individuals and they were influenced by numerous trends in Russian society, not only by Masonic lore. It is true that generalisations can be made concerning the nature of the new Masonic orders which opened in Russia in the 1770s, but too much emphasis has been placed on painting a uniform picture and this has led to some distortion. Freemasonry was not a unified or cohesive movement, but rather a hodge-podge of different ideas and inspirations which sometimes sought conflicting goals. Through an assessment of some of the major Masonic figures it is possible to show how diverse the Masonic movement was in eighteenth century Russia. Then, by comparing the different evaluations of Novikov it

might be easier to place him in context with the rest of the movement.

Though the impact of Freemasonry in Russia, in an intellectual sense, during the eighteenth century was probably greater than in any other part of Europe, this was not so much due to uniformity as to diversity. The Masonic movement could be separated into a left and a right wing, a progressive and reactionary faction, according to how various Freemasons reacted to the ideals of the Enlightenment or to specific events such as the storming of the Bastille by the mob in Paris, but this would be specious. If men like Aleksandr Radishchev and Prince M.M. Shcherbatov are to be referred to as progressive Masons, does this imply that more mystical Masons like Johann G. Schwarz and Ivan Lopukhin were totally unsympathetic to the Enlightenment? Though both Radishchev and Prince Shcherbatov had high regard for many ideas of the philosophes and showed a keen interest in the Enlightenment, they drew radically different conclusions. Whereas Shcherbatov claimed that the erosion of the rights of the nobility was pulling Russia into a moral abyss, Radishchev sought Russia's redemption through the emancipation of the peasantry. Both men were dismayed by the rising tide of mysticism in late eighteenth century Freemasonry, so much so that Radishchev refused to take Masonic vows after having made several visits to Masonic lodges and Shcherbatov actually left the movement.

Despite their eventual rejection of Freemasonry, it is clear that Shcherbatov and Radishchev had been attracted by its fundamental humanist values and yet they made markedly different assessments of Russia's ills and how to solve them.

A similar case can be made about the futility of grouping Schwarz and Lopukhin together as mystical Masons since they were very different from one another. They may have shared a common interest in their quest for new knowledge, but whereas Schwarz sought wisdom through alchemy and the occult, Lopukhin sought it through a better understanding of man's relationship to God. Though both men have been labelled "mystics", it is not fair to equate a fascination with magic with a search for oneness with God. It is also important to remember that belief in alchemy, which is regarded as mystical by twentieth century standards, was not judged so in the eighteenth century and it was not until the nineteenth century that it came to be regarded as mystical.

Schwarz and Lopukhin also held different views of the Enlightenment. Lopukhin made a violent denunciation of its radical aspects when he destroyed his translation of d'Holbach's Système de la nature because of its atheism, but he remained an "enlightened" man, as witnessed by his attempts to humanise the Russian judicial system. Schwarz, on the other hand, appeared to be a man of the Enlightenment due to his

interest in rationalism and the ideas of the philosophes, but he sought solutions for man's problems in the supernatural. A Baconian may argue that belief in any powers other than those of man could be called mystical, but Bacon, Newton and many other "luminaries" also harboured many irrational beliefs.

Attempts to classify Freemasonry seem even more ludicrous when considering a man like M.M. Kheraskov. Though he was one of Russia's foremost poets in the eighteenth century and held the post of curator at Moscow University, he was also intensely religious. Like Novikov, Kheraskov was deeply involved with the more mystical Masons, but there is little evidence to suggest that his interests led him to the supernatural or any farther than a strict belief in faith. Kheraskov, of all the Freemasons described, perhaps comes closest to echoing the dilemma present within a great many Masons who respected the convictions of the Enlightenment but whose sensibilities led them to search for true faith. For Kheraskov, the cold-hearted belief in reason alone, as advocated by men like Diderot and d'Holbach, was inappropriate because it left no place for man's conscience and created a man without feeling. Such ambivalence reflected Kheraskov's view that true wisdom could not be attained by clinging to other men's values and beliefs. In his work Piligrimy, ili iskateli shchastiia the hero, Pansoph or All-Knower, ". . . disliked Locke, was scornful of Newton, cursed Tasso, Young and Milton,

and Kant and Weilland seemed unintelligent to him." It is just such a view which may best describe Novikov's view of Freemasonry.[30]

The subject of Novikov's place in the Russian Masonic movement has kindled many debates. It is readily acknowledged that the period of the satirical journals represents a liberal phase in Novikov's life, but there is an entire range of controversy concerning his decision to join the Freemasons in 1775. Soviet scholars tend to view Novikov's Masonic period with disdain, claiming that Novikov was essentially a rationalist, that he was a 'reluctant' Freemason whose true interests lay in the publishing business at Moscow University. Though there may be some truth in this, this view is more an extension of the general Soviet opinion that the mystical Masonic lodges were merely an aberration and that they did not offer a different path to new knowledge. Many scholars, on the other hand, tend to ignore the fact that Novikov's main interests, even while he was heavily involved with Freemasonry, lay in publishing. He remained fully occupied at the university press and continued publishing the works of Swift, Voltaire, Pope and Rousseau, even while he was becoming

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[30] As quoted for Kheraskov's verse in the forthcoming study, Milton and the Rise of Russian Satanism, by V.J. Boss, Chapter 6.

involved with the Rosicrucians. There is little doubt that the contemporary misconception that Masonry was essentially mystical, something which eventually drove N.M. Karamzin from the movement,[31] has coloured many modern interpretations. It is important to evaluate Novikov's relationship with the mystical Masons to discover to what extent they were able to influence him and to what extent he shared their views. Novikov's mere association is sufficient proof that he shared some common ground with the mystics, but is this enough proof to say that he had abandoned his former quest for enlightening Russia?

Novikov was not an impressionable young man when he took his Masonic vows in 1775. He was already one of Russia's leading citizens and it is quite possible that he had initially been attracted to Freemasonry by the possibility of making some valuable contacts which could aid him in his publishing ventures. Though he joined a lodge in St. Petersburg, his Masonic connections soon took him to the press at Moscow University. It seems relatively certain that Novikov's friendship and publishing expertise were readily sought by

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[31] A.G. Cross; N.M. Karamzin: A Study of his Literary Career 1783-1803, London and Amsterdam, Feffer and Simons Inc., 1971, pg.37.

J.G. Schwarz, who prompted Prince Trubetskoi to offer Novikov the post, and it is clear that Schwarz had more to gain through their association. It is this friendship with Schwarz which most historians acknowledge as the critical volte-face in Novikov's life. Schwarz, a Transylvanian German who came to Moscow as a tutor to Aleksandr Rakhmanov and soon became a lecturer at Moscow University, was exceptionally gregarious and he was able to gain the confidence of many leading Freemasons, and eventually became one of the leading Masons in Russia. Though Novikov and Schwarz shared an avid interest in literature, an interest which seems to have formed the basis for their friendship,[32] their other views were quite different. Whereas Novikov was dedicated to improving Russian society, Schwarz showed little interest in such pursuits and preferred to delve into alchemy and the occult. It was this mystical view of Masonry, as held by Schwarz, which soon characterised the Russian movement while Novikov's more rationalist and philanthropic view was overshadowed.[33]

It has already been noted that Novikov continued his duties at the university press and that he strongly resisted

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[32] Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pg. 157.

[33] J.V. Clardy; The Philosophical Ideas of Alexander Radishchev, London, Vision Press Ltd., 1963, pgs. 30-31.

any interference in its operation by either Schwarz or Baron Schroeder, Schwarz's successor. Novikov's unwillingness to ultimately submit to his superiors was in violation of Masonic law, but Novikov refused to allow anyone to meddle in his personal affairs. Publishing remained his biggest interest and he refused to allow interference from anyone. This does not suggest that Novikov regarded Freemasonry lightly. On the contrary, he criticised others who considered it only a game and he actually looked to Freemasonry for inner piety.[34] Novikov was, however, aware of Schwarz's different views and was wary lest they interfered with the running of the press.

The most important episode in Novikov's Masonic career occurred during Schwarz's negotiations to bring the Rosicrusians to Moscow. Though Novikov eagerly sought a new form of Freemasonry which would free the Russians from the dominance of the politically unacceptable Swedes, and hoped for eventual independence for the Russian movement, he was unhappy with Schwarz's union with the Duke of Brunswick, who led a chivalrous order which recognised aristocratic birth, something which Novikov had criticised so often.[35] Despite the excitement of many of the Masons in Novikov's circle, he

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[34] Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pg.162.

[35] Malyshev; pg. 430.

remained devoted to the press and split his duties accordingly. Freemasonry did not usurp his life, but was rather an outlet for his particular philosophy which he had formed even before becoming a Mason.[36]

It is at this point that Schwarz's friendship with Novikov was put to the test. Though the men were very close, Schwarz failed to reveal that the Rosicrusians were in fact led by Johann Christophe von Wöllner,[37] the man who eventually formulated many of the policies which would undermine the work of Frederick the Great. Wöllner, however, was equally deceptive by making it appear as though the Moscow Masons had to mature before being granted a formal invitation to join.[38] It is quite likely that Wöllner merely wanted to wait until the Swedish connection with Russian Freemasonry had deteriorated, thus making the Russians more vulnerable to outside influence.

Though Novikov disliked the ideals of chivalrous orders, he was nonetheless anxious to find out what new knowledge the new system would bring. He had shown a singular interest when he learned of the Egyptian hieroglyphics and the

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[36] Jones; pgs. 163-164.

[37] Vernadsky; pg. 38.

[38] Malyshev, pg. 432.

possible knowledge which could be gained from them. Such curiosity was representative of Novikov's view of Freemasonry. He did not regard it as a vehicle for exploring the supernatural, as did Schwarz, but rather saw Freemasonry as an outlet for the spiritual side of his character. His form of mysticism extended to his profound faith and his search for true religion. It must be remembered that Novikov was only one of the many Freemasons who were drawn by the compatibility of sincere faith and enlightened principles in the Masonic doctrine. Attempts to link him with the mysticism of Schwarz are simply attempts to prove guilt by association. There is no convincing evidence to support this and, in fact, the only firm evidence of Novikov's true interests remains his publishing.

In order to define Novikov's place in the Russian Masonic movement, therefore, it is necessary to regard both his publishing career and his Masonic connections as expressions of his beliefs. Though he sought to improve Russia by stressing some of the ideas of the philosophes, he retained the fundamental belief that moral improvement was impossible without spiritual awareness. In this sense, he exemplifies the compatibility of Enlightenment and religion which brought many Russians into the Masonic movement during its early years.

NOVIKOV AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

The importance of the intelligentsia in Russian life has not been overlooked. Numerous studies have traced its origins, its roots, its political views and so on, but there is little consensus as to when the intelligentsia congealed into a definable group which could exert an influence on Russian society. The evolutionary process from an educated nobility to an intelligentsia obviously occurred gradually over many years, but the first inklings of the intelligent ideal of using knowledge and learning for the betterment of society emerged during the reign of Catherine the Great. Though the intelligentsia only appears as a coherent group of men and women in the 1830's, both Novikov and his fellow Freemason Aleksander Radishchev have been referred to as Russia's first intelligents. Their contributions, though vastly different, helped to create a spirit and an attitude which encouraged others to independently seek improvements to Russian society without the approval of the autocracy. The successes, failures and frustrations of both Novikov and Radishchev were indications of the kind of sacrifice that the role demanded, but their patriotism and humanity also encouraged people to follow their examples.

Although both Novikov and Radishchev are considered as Russia's first intelligents, their contributions to the Russian Enlightenment are not the same. Radishchev's Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow was impassioned, but ambiguous, and did not make any tangible impact on Russian society. Its value lies in the mythology which surrounds the experiences of his fictional traveller and their relevance to Russian society, particularly in the wake of the Decembrist Revolt in 1825. The work was banned by Catherine and was only published following the 1905 Revolution, but its message and the tragic fate of Radishchev inspired many liberal and radical opponents of autocracy. In contrast, Novikov wrote a great deal more than Radishchev, but none of his works were as seminal as Radishchev's Journey. The importance of Novikov's role in the evolution of the intelligentsia is measured by his insistence that all men be of use to their society, that men are, in fact, their brothers' keepers and should make every effort to assure that their lives are free from hunger and pain. His role as an educator and as a philanthropist demonstrated his keen sense of the ills of contemporary Russian society and his will to rectify them through action.

Because Novikov was a noble and because he was one of the first intelligents, he is an excellent example for showing how some of the nobility made the transition into intelligentsia. Novikov's experience was by no means characteristic of his

peers, but it serves as an example of some of the trends in the Russian nobility during the eighteenth century; their acceptance of Western ideas and the ability of a small minority to apply them in the context of Russian society. The changes wrought by the Petrine reforms made a significant impact on the role of the nobility and though some of the duties and obligations of the nobility were relaxed after Peter the Great's death in 1725, the reforms had sown the seeds for the budding of the intelligentsia at the turn of the century.

The Nobility and the Birth of the Intelligentsia

Before the Petrine reforms the Russian nobility was a mixture of appanage princes and a service nobility, much as in Western Europe where there was a noblesse de l'épée and a group of nobles who had earned their titles and their lands through service to the king. Some of the nobles had votchina, hereditary land-holdings which were not linked to service, but most had pomestiia, land-holdings which were granted on condition of service of the holder and his heirs. When Peter the Great came to the throne and began to expand the army, create a navy and increase the size and efficiency of the bureaucracy, he needed a pool of educated people to help run the state. The nobility was forced to get an education in the cipher schools and in the technical colleges so that they could

use their education to serve the state. Peter the Great made state service compulsory for all nobles and refused nobles the right to marry or to receive hereditary land if they did not have a sufficient education. Although such incentives should have been enough to inspire the nobility to pursue an education so that they would be able to serve the state, Peter was dissatisfied with their response and he formed the Table of Ranks in 1722, a system of promotion in government and military service which recognised education and ability, but which ignored social status by virtue of birth. The only way for the nobility to acquire more land and wealth, therefore, was to serve the state after pursuing an education.

Education was a novel concept in eighteenth century Russia. It was not regarded as a privilege, but rather as a burden and an inconvenience. Many families made concerted efforts to keep their sons at home rather than sending them off to school. Though the initial success of Petrine education was quite limited, the nobility gradually began to accept the educational possibilities made available to them. Education exposed them to Western ideas and fashions, which they readily embraced since they had formed few of their own ideas,[1] and

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[1] V.O. Kliuchevskii; A History of Russia, Vol. 5, New York, Russell & Russell, 1960, pg. 93.

many nobles lost contact with native Russian ideals. The nobility even lost touch with Orthodoxy since it was secularised so quickly. As a result of such changes, the Russian nobility became engrossed in its own concerns and became a separate entity in Russian society; Russian by birth, but aloof from the realities of Russian issues and social problems.[2]

The Table of Ranks was designed to make nobles work for the state and not for the tsar, an emphasis which Peter the Great stressed many times during his reign. Although many nobles shirked their obligations in government service and only worked half-heartedly, some served dutifully not only to secure promotion, but also because they wanted to serve Russia. The ideal of worthy service to the mother country was not accepted by all, but it had at least made a sufficient impact upon a small but dedicated core of individuals who encouraged similar attitudes amongst other Russians. Though most nobles took advantage of the opportunity to renege on their state duties after Peter the Great's death and even demanded total emancipation from state service, which they received in 1762, a

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[2] M. Raeff; Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth Century Nobility, New York, Harcourt Brace and World, 1966, pgs. 74-80, 141-158.

small group of nobles realised that active participation was needed to mend Russia's social problems. While most nobles were content to form a leisure class, the growing intelligents were using their acumen and applying their knowledge to expose the problems which plagued Russia. Though the mass of the nobility entertained Western ideas, it was only a minority who really understood them and who could see a link between ideas and application of them to encourage change.[3] This small minority was the core which formed the nascent intelligentsia.

The Masonic Influence on the Intelligentsia

It was not mere coincidence that Freemasonry grew just as the nobility was regaining its freedom. Nobles who were able to neglect their duties and obligations to the state were able to participate in more social activities, one of which was Freemasonry. Although there were a number of Masonic lodges in Russia before the emancipation of the nobility in 1762, under the reign of Tsar Peter III, the number of Masonic Orders, and consequently the number of lodges and brothers, increased dramatically once the nobility had been relieved of the burden

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[3] Kliuchevskii; History of Russia, pgs. 118-119.

of state service. It would be simplistic to suggest that nobles joined Masonic lodges because they had nothing else to do, but it is clear that many did in fact join either because they were attracted by the festive nature and camaraderie of lodge life or because they regarded Masonic principles as being a close reflection of their own ideals. Though it is true that not all Masonic brothers were progressive men of the Enlightenment, there were enough enlightened thinkers in the Russian Masonic movement to influence the character of Russian Freemasonry and to attract others with similar attributes and ideas to join. Brothers like Prince M.M. Shcherbatov who, while embracing some aspects of the Enlightenment, did not like the middle class spirit associated with the new ideas waged a constant struggle with more progressive Freemasons who held opposing views. Since rank in Masonic lodges was determined by virtue of personal involvement and activity rather than by birth, a split occurred in the Masonic movement between those who appreciated the middle class ideals of Freemasonry and those who sought to protect the rights and privileges of the nobility, a split which roughly corresponded to the division between English Freemasonry and Higher Order Freemasonry.

The members who regarded Freemasonry as the social equivalent of the Table of Ranks were closely associated with

the emerging intelligentsia.[4] Though men like Novikov, Radishchev and Mikhail Kheraskov were already influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment before becoming Freemasons, they were attracted by Masonry because it offered the possibility of joining a group of men who held similar interests and ideas. They regarded Freemasonry as an excellent organisational tool for social criticism, debate and benevolent philanthropic endeavours,[5] ideals which formed the core of their views on Freemasonry and which were reflected in their activities as part of Russia's budding intelligentsia. Having been relieved of their obligation to serve the state, many Freemasons turned their allegiance to Russian society and strove to improve the quality of life and to cure Russia's social ills.[6] The preoccupation with society and its problems was endemic to Russia's young intelligents and it was to remain a prominent feature of the intelligentsia until 1917.

The Masonic ideal of self-improvement through learning corresponded with the budding intelligentsia's belief in the merits of education. Many of the young literati who filled the

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[4] Raeff; Origins, pg. 161.

[5] McArthur; Freemasonry and the Enlightenment in Russia ...", pg. 361.

[6] Raeff; Origins, pg. 163.

ranks of the intelligentsia during the 1760's and 1770's were recent graduates of the new gymnasia or from Moscow University and had come to appreciate the advantages which learning had provided and they readily supported the Masonic principle of moral improvement through self-knowledge and reflection. Literature, which played such an important part in the activities of the intelligentsia in the nineteenth century, was also important to Freemasonry and the young intelligents in the late eighteenth century. Freemasons like Kheraskov, Sumarokov, Radishchev and even Karamzin regarded literature as an excellent medium for the expression of their ideas since literature was easily disseminated through Russian society where relevant ideas could be discussed and evaluated. Radishchev used his translation of Mably's Observations sur l'histoire de la Grèce as a vehicle for his criticisms of autocracy and may have been falsely encouraged by the absence of any condemnation, enough so that he naively wrote his Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow without carefully considering the possible repercussions.

The link between Freemasonry and the emerging intelligentsia cannot be underestimated. It is clear that Masonry was as influenced by their ideas as they were by the basic tenets of Freemasonry, but the relationship which existed between the Masonic movement and Russian intellectuals in the eighteenth century ensured that both would thrive. Although

the influence of Freemasonry declined in Russia after the French Revolution and again after the failure of the Decembrists in 1825, the Masonic ideals which were shared by the growing intelligentsia continued to exert a powerful influence on Russian society throughout the nineteenth century. Had such new and controversial ideas not found the support of the Masonic movement in the late eighteenth century it is quite possible that the thoughts and actions which inspired so many men and women might never have gained prominence.

The Role of Novikov as Russia's First "Intelligent"

It has been suggested that the majority of free thinkers in the Catherinian era were unable to make the association between the ideas of the Enlightenment and the need for change in Russian society,[7] but Nikolai Novikov was a most noticeable exception. Though he was not conscious of playing the particular role of a social critic,[8] Novikov's belief in the ideals of the Enlightenment prompted him to analyse the problems endemic to Russian society and to offer possible

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[7] Kliuchevskii; History of Russia, pgs. 117-119.

[8] Gleason; pgs. 27-28.

solutions. He was motivated by his concern for his fellow men, a concern which transcended class interest and encompassed all of mankind. His efforts as a publisher, educator and as a philanthropist reflected his devotion to improving Russian society and have earned him the distinguished title of Russia's first intelligent, an honour which he would not have acknowledged since he considered it the duty of every man to be of use to society and to mankind.

Though he was not an original thinker, Novikov was extremely adept at popularising ideas. His own views were based on his desire to rectify social injustice in his own country, and as a result he encouraged his fellow Russians to be more humanitarian and to recognise the problems which plagued Russian society. Though Novikov thought of himself as quite apolitical, he did have several definable goals to improve life in Russia. By far the most important was intellectual freedom, but this was defined in individual and not political terms. Novikov wanted all Russians to be liberated from the stagnant attitudes which stifled Russia's progress. He firmly believed that traditional Russian prejudices hindered the ability of many men to think clearly and to make sound judgements on the state of contemporary Russian society. He also believed that all men should be equal before the law, regardless of their social status. Though he did not condemn serfdom, he did condemn its abuses and he

suggested that a patriarchal system whereby the nobility would be responsible for the welfare of serfs would be a much more desirable system than the exploitive one that existed.[9] In this sense Novikov was different from many of the intelligents who followed him. He did not want to abolish serfdom or the autocracy, but rather wanted to ensure that fundamental human needs were looked after and that the abuses which plagued such systems were removed. Such views were not uncommon during the Catherinian era. Although Radishchev condemned serfdom and compared it to slavery, Fonvizin, who had ridiculed the cruelty with which peasants were often treated, also thought that the undesirable elements of serfdom could be removed through education. If the nobility could be shown how their cruel actions contradicted the ideas of the Enlightenment, which many had adopted, their attitudes would change and everything would be much better.

Novikov believed that Russian society could be improved by elevating the moral outlook of individuals, a belief which he shared with the Freemasons. His efforts were dedicated to creating a true son of Russia who was good in a moral, social

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[9] P. Miliukov, C. Seignobos and L. Eisenmann, History of Russia: The Successors of Peter the Great - From Catherine I to Nicholas I, trans. C.L. Markmann, New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1968, pg. 163.

and spiritual sense,[10] but he did not squander his efforts by trying to influence all Russians. Rather, Novikov concentrated his efforts on those whose education and social conscience encouraged benevolent action.[11] He had hoped that these individuals would help to create a new sense of justice so that future generations would benefit from changes in attitude. Though his view that only those who were motivated by ideas could help to change society seems quite elitist, it must be remembered that similar attitudes also prevailed in Western Europe where fear of the mob influenced even the most progressive of men. Voltaire, for instance, was very wary lest the lower classes became influenced by the mood for change.

Novikov's commitment to raise standards in Russia was best exemplified by the didactic qualities of his journalistic and publicistic ventures. Though he was aware of the financial possibilities which publishing presented, he was more interested in disseminating ideas and encouraging moral growth. There can be no doubt that he was well enough versed in the literary market because he knew what kind of books to publish when he needed to make money in order to fund the less

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[10] M. Raeff; "The Enlightenment in Russia and Russian Thought in the Enlightenment", The Eighteenth Century in Russia, q.v. pg. 42.

[11] Jones; "The Morning Light Charity Schools", pg. 48.

profitable, but more important works, which he thought Russians should read. He had great disdain for the cheap romances and the adventure novels which sold so well in the Russian literary market, but he resisted the temptation of making large profits and devoted his efforts to publishing works of value which would leave lasting impressions on readers.[12] He regarded publishing as a social duty and a philanthropic endeavour rather than merely a business venture, and, as a result, he was often in financial trouble.

Novikov blossomed as an intelligent when he used his own initiative to publish Utrennii Svet. Whereas his earlier journals had received Imperial financial support or were encouraged by the Empress, that journal was published by Novikov with the financial support of his Masonic colleagues. The fact that he was willing to continue his crusade without official sanction marks the big difference between Novikov and his peers. Though Catherine's interest in supporting progressive ideals had waned since the Pugachev rebellion, Novikov was unabashed at the Empress's change of heart and he continued to proselytise and to encourage others to change. From this point onward, Novikov acted alone as a concerned citizen who wanted to help others. Though he may have received

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[12] Marker; pg. 95.

financial support from others, the impetus for action came from him and he remained in control of his activities and his affairs.

Though Novikov's humanism was a common quality amongst the nobility during Catherine's reign,[13] he was one of the few who acted upon their feelings. His philanthropic endeavours with the Morning Light charity schools helped families to educate their children, but his most important philanthropic contribution was made during the famine of 1787. Despite his weak financial position,[14] Novikov coordinated relief efforts for the peasants in his area by soliciting donations from wealthy Russians and providing food and seed for numerous villages. Although he had only three hundred serfs, Novikov provided for over nine hundred from his personal stock. He could not bear to let serfs from the surrounding countryside starve, so he provided for all those in need.[15]

His aid to starving peasants was only one indication of his concern for the serfs. On his own estate, Novikov had revolutionised agriculture and had taught his serfs the latest

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[13] Gleason; pg. 65.

[14] de Madariaga; pg. 527.

[15] Jones; Nikolai Novikov, pgs. 202-205.

agricultural techniques from Western Europe. He also created small cottage factories for brick-making and manufacturing linen and yarn. The profits which Novikov earned from his peasants' labour were channelled back to the estate where he built izbas made of stone for each family so that the peasants would be well protected from the elements.[16] Thus, Novikov was not merely an idealist. When he suggested that nobles be responsible for the welfare of their serfs, he stood by his convictions and went to great lengths to ensure their well-being.

Novikov entertained many of the same ideas as his fellow nobles, but he was different because the ideas had made such an impact on his outlook that they encouraged him to act. Although men like Fonvizin, Kheraskov or Radishchev also held progressive views on Russian society, they did not act on their convictions. Their literary works reflected the changing attitudes amongst a small core of the nobility, but they did not contribute in a concrete fashion to the development of Russia during the eighteenth century. The link between thought and activity was unique in Novikov, though it became more common amongst the intelligentsia of the nineteenth century.

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[16] Ibid., pg. 205.

It is doubtful that many men or women contributed as much to the enlightening of Russia.

CONCLUSION

Novikov's activities as a publicist, a philanthropist and as a Freemason provide a wealth of information, but since so much of what can be gleaned is confusing and seemingly contradictory it is exceedingly difficult to make any coherent conclusions or evaluations on his life and work. The period which might perhaps hold the key to understanding Novikov, the years between his release in 1801 and his death in 1818, remain a mystery. Although there are records of his benevolent efforts to improve the lot of the serfs on his estate and his attempts to build small factories, little is known about his views and opinions. Did Novikov, in the wake of the violence of the Reign of Terror, recant his support for some of the ideals of the Enlightenment? What did he think of Napoleon, of Speransky, of Freemasonry? If some sort of record had been left it would be easier to understand the motivating influence which had made Novikov the most dynamic figure in Catherinian Russia. Instead, we are left with a host of interesting but confusing details and no clue as to which principles guided Novikov through his work.

It is clear that Novikov was greatly influenced by many of the ideals common to the age. He recognised ability rather than birth, he acknowledged the importance of reason and he echoed many of the ideals which can probably be classified as "enlightened". The satirical journals demonstrated his willingness to implement those ideas and his philanthropy was evidence of his extraordinary commitment to humanistic principles. In spite of his apparent rationalism, however, Novikov also had a more contemplative side. He believed in Original Sin and he viewed knowledge and wisdom as possible paths to man's former innocence. He believed in reason, but not like Diderot and d'Alembert. Rather, reason was a tool for man's self-perfection, a tool which must work in conjunction with faith lest it lead to the corruption of morals. Novikov scorned the Court fops who paraded in Western fashions and who affected French manners and mimicked French ideas. He had a far more profound understanding of ideas and their implications and that is perhaps why he regarded them so critically. If there is any truth in Pypin's view that the Russian Enlightenment was based on a poor understanding of foreign ideas then Novikov must surely be regarded as a most worthy and notable exception.

What, if anything, can be made of Novikov's Masonic connection? It is clear that he was one of Russia's leading Freemasons, but could this be due, in part, to the fact that he was one of Russia's leading citizens? There is little doubt that Novikov was fully committed to Freemasonry. He was not a "reluctant Mason". But what did Freemasonry represent to Novikov - hidden knowledge, inner truth, an outlet for his own thoughts? Nobody knows, for the simple reason that no one has been able to fully understand the mysteries surrounding Freemasonry. Is it possible that Freemasonry allowed all men to seek knowledge and truth through self-perfection and that each truth reflected individual contemplation so that no two truths could be the same? This would certainly help to explain the divergent views present within the Masonic movement and it would also aid the understanding of Novikov's close friendship with Schwarz, a man who remains more of an enigma than does Novikov.

Historians from Longinov to Makogonenko have painted various pictures of Novikov, each reflecting a different "truth", but perhaps the best evaluations of his career have come from those who have resisted the urge to make judgements. Karamzin praised Novikov's efforts in establishing a serious reading public in Russia. Kliuchevskii remembered how difficult it had been to find

a secular book during his boyhood in the provinces. Both these assessments make no attempt to evaluate Novikov or to place him within some sort of context, they merely admire his vitality and the wealth of his contributions. After all, is it possible to pass judgement or to claim to understand a man who may never have reconciled his own inner conflicts?

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