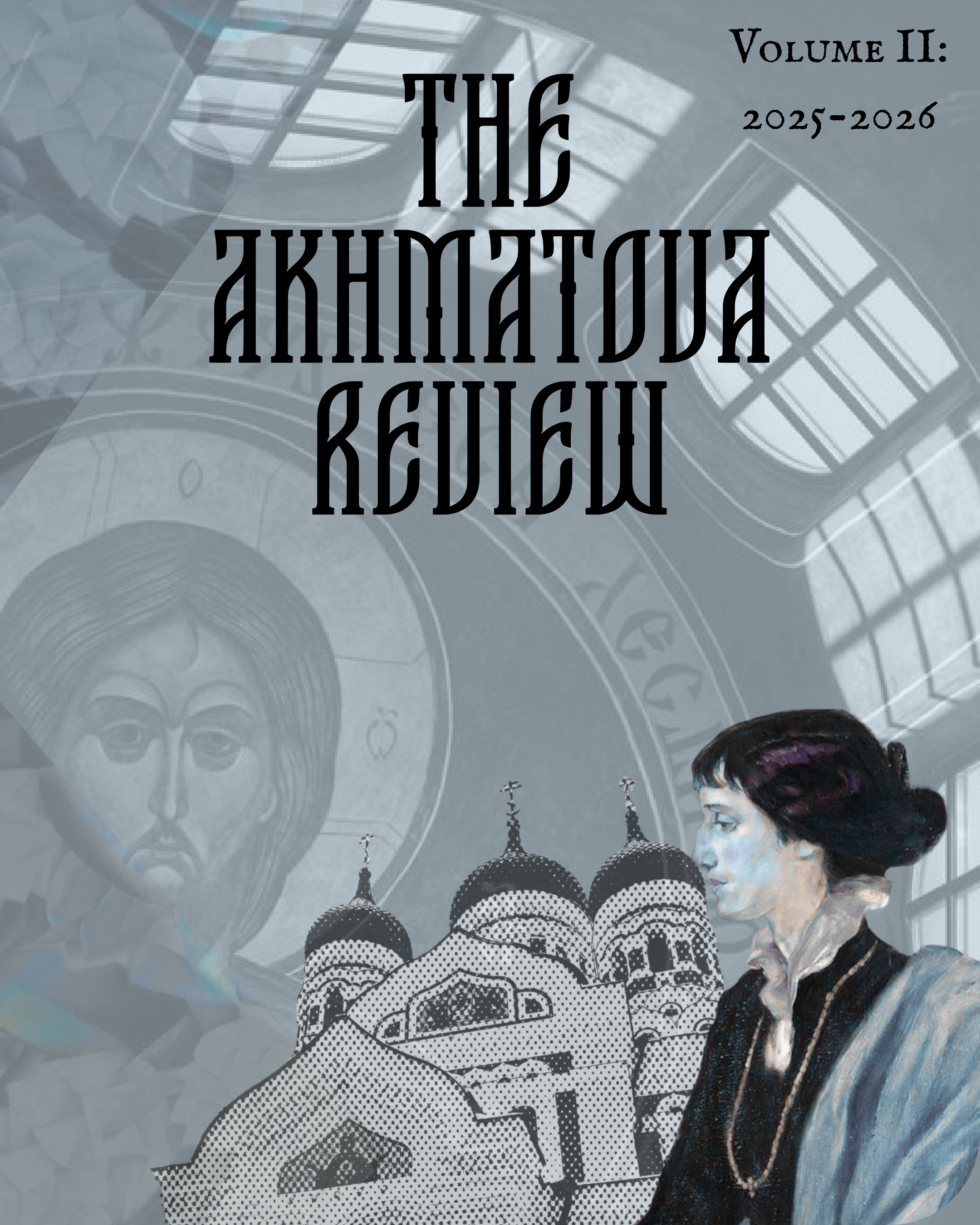


VOLUME II:

2025-2026

THE AKHMATOVA REVIEW



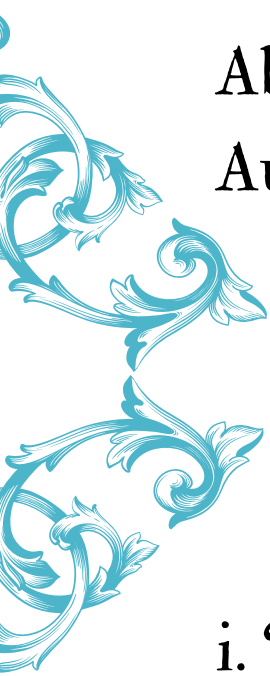


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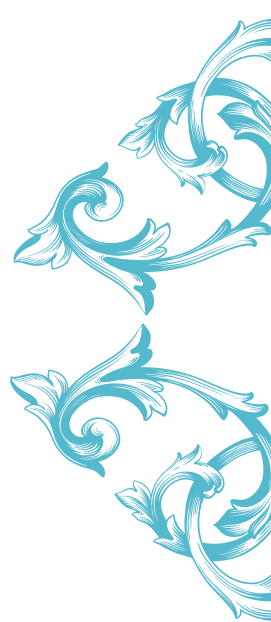


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Opening Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Recently, while updating the Akhmatova Review's webpage, a quote by the namesake poet on our homepage caught my attention:

“Rising from the past, my shadow is running in
silence to meet me.”

Major historical events such as the Bolshevik Revolution, two world wars, and Stalin's totalitarian regime overshadowed the Slavonic world during Anna Akhmatova's lifetime. Yet, many of the shadows that dwelled in her reality resurge to meet us in every generation.

In this year's issue, these shadows take many forms: confrontations with the past, current realities and historical forces; youth abruptly shattered by the realities of war, and generational fragmentation; themes that are poignantly relevant to Slavic identities today. While varying in scope and subject, a thread that runs through this volume is what can happen when these shadows come running to meet us.

This volume was made possible by the contributions of skilled undergraduate authors, to whom I am deeply grateful. I also want to thank my editorial team, Marianna and Stan, and extend gratitude to my friend Samantha de Verteuil for entrusting me with the task of keeping this small journal alive. My hope is that when our shadows inevitably return from the past to confront us, we will have the courage to face them.

Sincerely,
Alexa Frcek
Editor-in-Chief



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Author and Editor Map



Section One: Art, Belief, & Custom



Brotherly Nations

by E.M.

Be glorified, country!
The Russian God ascends to His kingdom
on a radiant troika, drawn by a firebird
ablaze, the visage like a star to pray for mercy to—
Eyes shut as if
being blind to the explosion will mean being deaf to it,
too.

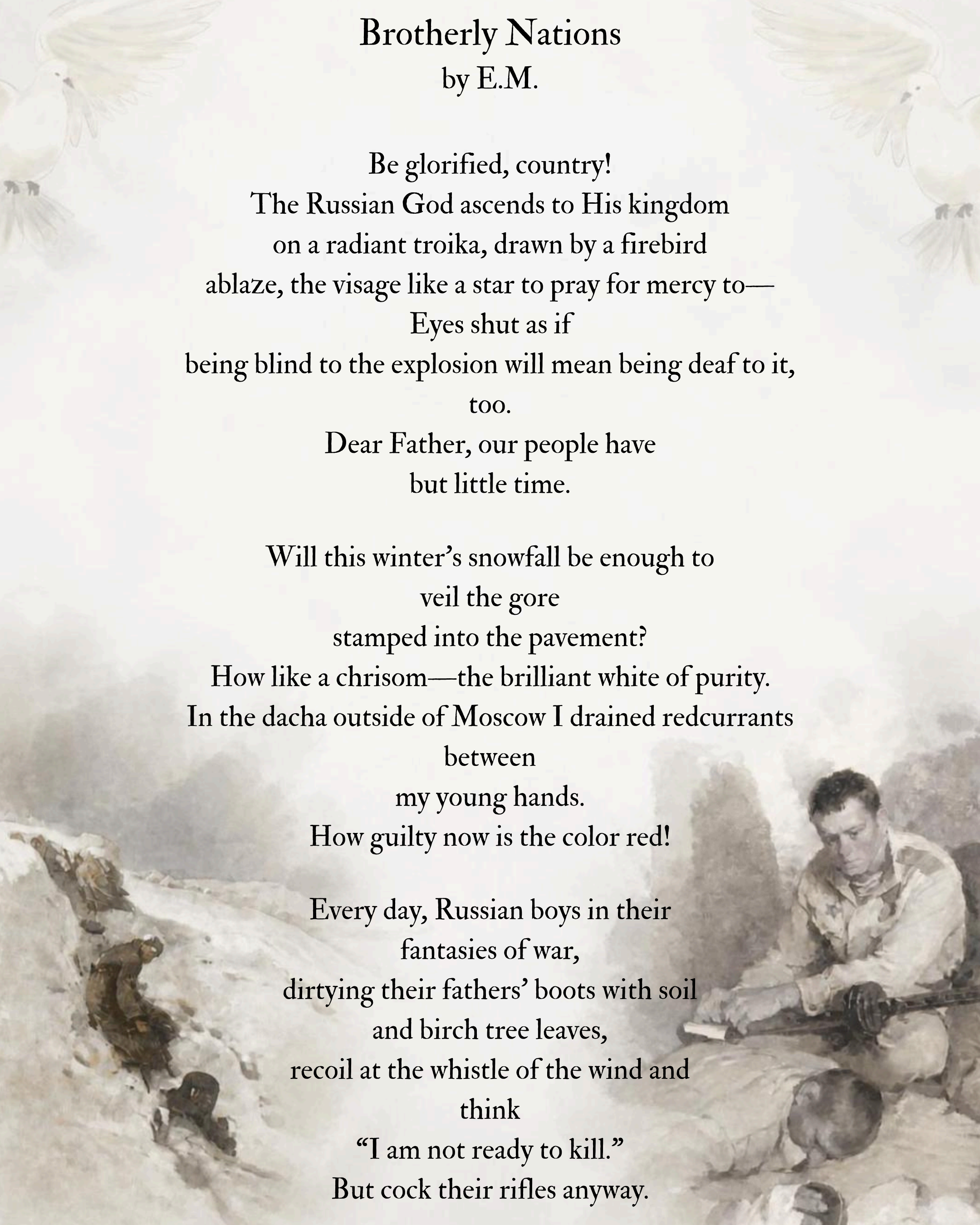
Dear Father, our people have
but little time.

Will this winter's snowfall be enough to
veil the gore
stamped into the pavement?
How like a chrisom—the brilliant white of purity.
In the dacha outside of Moscow I drained redcurrants
between
my young hands.

How guilty now is the color red!

Every day, Russian boys in their
fantasies of war,
dirtying their fathers' boots with soil
and birch tree leaves,
recoil at the whistle of the wind and
think

“I am not ready to kill.”
But cock their rifles anyway.



A DREAM

by Elise Svetlana Viapiano

The brakes of the bus screeched in agony as the hunk of tired metal slowed to a stop in front of the station. A familiar station to the girl who'd just stepped out onto the sidewalk, bundled up in two old coats to protect her from the harsh winter weather, the whirling snow and biting winds that cut at her cheeks and nose.

She quickly hurried down the street, *crunch, crunch, crunch*, her head low, shielding her from the others passing by her. They too walked with the same urgency. Though used to the unforgiving weather that began in October and continued all the way to spring, no one wanted to be stuck in the cold for longer than necessary. Including herself—her coats were thin, and small, and hardly enough to keep her frail body warm.

Crunch, crunch, crunch, she continued down the lane. Towering Soviet apartments, all with the same bland exteriors, all packed with the same tiny rooms. One after the other. Grey on grey. Prisons substituting as homes. One of them was hers, miles away from there.

In her sleep, she'd seen herself somewhere different. A villa in Italy, the sandy stone of its walls warm under her palm from the heat of the sun that so often shone there. A cottage in France, with a lovely breeze that drifted through the porte-fenêtre, tickling her face instead of biting it. A mansion in America, so large and spacious that it took up blocks, with a neat grassy lawn that stretched beyond the horizon. All unattainable places, one out-of-reach dream.

Someone came barrelling down the way, in much more a hurry than anyone else, and shoved past her, ripping her from her thoughts and causing her to stumble. There she was again, on an icy sidewalk, in a city shrouded in darkness, in a country so distant from her dream.

She steadied herself, and kept on going. She couldn't afford to waste time—he was waiting for her. Waiting in another apartment, on another block so similar to her own, to the ones that lined this avenue and many, many others. One she eventually found herself in front of, and entered.

Winding, creaking stairs led her up to his room. As she climbed each step, she could hear the activities of the various tenants who also occupied the space. A mother shouting indiscernably at her children. The din of a television with the volume up much too high. An argument between a couple; the shattering of glass accompanying it. All of these lives bleeding together into a muffled cacophony of chatter as she ascended higher, and higher.

Finally, she arrived at his door. A wooden one, unpolished and worn. She knocked. *Thump, thump, thump*, came his heavy footsteps that dragged across the carpet. *Click, creak, swing*, went the door. And there he was, standing before her—big and broad, hairy and fat, and even further from her dream than anything else.

“Hello, Sasha,” he grunted, his breaths almost labored. She could smell the meats he’d been eating before her arrival there, and the cigarettes he’d been chain-smoking throughout the day. It used to disgust her, but she had grown accustomed to it.

“Hi, Boris,” she replied with ease, lacing her soft voice with sticky sweetness.

“May I come in?”

Boris stepped to the side to allow her through. By now, she could navigate his apartment with her eyes closed. Hideous crimson floral wallpaper, a rickety larch table housing an overflowing ashtray and bottles of beer. A rocking chair in the corner that once belonged to a woman. The overhead light that always reminded Sasha of her breasts.

“Cold today,” Boris huffed out, his beady black eyes trained on her as she shed herself of her coats and her scuffed winter boots.

“Yes.” Sasha continued peeling off garments, her shirts and leggings and socks, until she was in the yellowed nightgown she’d worn underneath her layers.

Boris’s favorite.

Boris hummed lowly, pleased. “Come here.”

He took her into his arms, and kissed her. Rough, chapped lips and unwanted spit. The invasive taste of cigarettes and cold cuts. Sasha braved it as she always did, and molded her thin figure against his imposing frame, though they were hardly matching puzzle pieces.

He pulled away from her mouth panting. His round face, scarred from childhood chickenpox and adult acne, flushed an unsightly, splotchy scarlet. “Let’s go to my room.”

Obediently, Sasha followed. Like he did every week, Boris laid her down and settled on top of her, pressing her into his sheets. He undressed her the rest of the way, and kissed her, and let his calloused, chubby hands wander the surface of her pale skin. She was littered with bruises and bite marks—some from him, some from other men just like him. Boris believed they were all his own.

She stared up at the ceiling as he made love to her. The bed rocked with his movements, squeaked in pain from the near-unbearable weight of their two bodies. The room quickly filled with sharp breaths and moans. Sasha took it like she always did, quietly, unmoving, the way Boris liked her to be. She allowed her mind to drift away, and her dream from earlier to return. Green grass and sunny skies. A pretty blue dress. A new read she’d picked up at the bookstore. Laughter from beyond the lawn she sat on—a group of students just like her with expensive backpacks filled with iPads and textbooks. The bell of a nearby clock tower ringing three times, *clang, clang, clang*.

Sasha barely registered Boris lifting himself from her and settling at her side.

“Did you?” he breathed. The bedframe groaned as he shifted around on the mattress.

“Yes,” Sasha lied in return.

“I can’t pay you today,” Boris continued. “You’ll have to wait. Next week.”

Sasha closed her eyes. “You didn’t pay me last week, either,” she exhaled.

“I know,” Boris sighed, rolling over to grab his half-finished pack of cigarettes and a box of matches from the nightstand. “You don’t mind, right?”

She did mind. She was late with her monthly rent. “No,” she whispered distantly.

“I’ll pay you next week.”

The room fell silent, and Sasha slipped away again. Flowers perfumed the air. She had a few in her hand. A handsome boy, with ginger hair and a crooked smile, had given them to her. They were laying on a blanket and staring at the stars.

“I love you,” he murmured to her. His voice was young and bright. It carried none of the weight and rasp of age. He was so close to her, and smelled of fresh laundry. Vaguely, Sasha felt Boris move on top of her again. She tried to pretend it was the boy, touching her gently and sweetly, in a land far away.

“I seem to myself, as in a dream,
An accidental guest in this dreadful body.”
-Anna Akhmatova

Section Two: Foreign Policy, Politics, and Law



Excerpts from ‘Toska po Rodine: Comparing Preservation and Fragmentation in the Russian Diaspora’s ‘Cultural Mission’ in the Interwar Period and the Modern Day [1]

by Luke Bannerman, supervised by Dr Bryan Karetnyk

Editor’s note: Adapted from a longer work, which was originally published on the Laidlaw Scholars Network on 1st October, 2025 and is reproduced here with permission from the author.

The excerpted text contrasts the changing cultural attitudes from what is known as the First Wave of Russian emigration, following the Bolshevik movement in 1917 to the modern diaspora. This is illustrated through discussion of the work of Silver Age Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva and a contemporary counterpart, Galina Rymbu.



The First Wave

Although the notion of ‘Russia Abroad’ represented a shift towards transnational cultural identity, at its core lay hopes of return to Russia itself, due at least in part to the importance of land in the Russian collective consciousness. This collective nostalgia represents a core tension of the ‘cultural mission’, perfectly expressed by Maria Tsvetaeva’s 1934 poem ‘Toska po Rodine’, in which the poet seeks to convince herself of the foolishness of nostalgia and homesickness, which she labels a ‘A languor long exposed as hooley’.[2]

Throughout the poem, however, Tsvetaeva describes her disillusionment with life in exile and subtly alludes to her yearning for home, *until the mask slips completely in the final lines, where she admits her homesickness through her wonder at the sight of a rowan – a national symbol of Russia with deep importance to tradition and folklore.*[3]

This fundamental tension of ‘Russia Abroad’ is perhaps best demonstrated by the nuanced range of opinions present within the First Wave itself: the scholar Maria Rubins describes how the interwar diaspora was defined by a generational divide, with the older generation more retrospective and committed to Russian identity, and the younger generation less connected to the motherland and more actively interested in European and Western culture.[4] This divide demonstrates the paradoxical nature of ‘Russia Abroad’: a transnational identity which was founded on a deep sense of nostalgia and a longing to return to the nation of Russia itself.



The Contemporary Russian Diaspora

Digital consumption of both Western and Russian political media narratives, furthermore, has created a gulf of information and belief between emigres and their former social networks which can lead to adversarial and even confrontational relationships, described by some as a ‘social death’.[5]

The poet Galina Rymbu explores the painful dichotomy of this connection in her epistolary work ‘Mama Writes. I Write’, in which Rymbu contrasts her warm memories of her family with their increasingly hateful rhetoric, in a series of shocking exchanges which lay bare the emotional rawness of modern exile. Over the course of the poem, her mother’s tone shifts from loving and maternal messages such as “Today is Mother’s Day. A mother’s love is absolute” to “I’m sick because of you ... It’s not right to hate Russia”.[6]

Endnotes

- [1] Marina Tsvetaeva. *Toska po Rodine*. 1934. Accessed through RuVerses, translation by A. Z. Foreman. <https://ruverses.com/marina-tsvetaeva/homesickening/269/>
- [2] Marina Tsvetaeva. *Toska po Rodine*. 1934. Accessed through RuVerses, translation by A. Z. Foreman. <https://ruverses.com/marina-tsvetaeva/homesickening/269/9>
- [3] Maria Rubins. *Russian Montparnasse: Transnational Writing in Interwar Paris*. 1st ed., Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015.
- [4] Dominique Hoffman, “Without Nostalgia: Nina Berberova’s Short Fiction of the 1930s”, PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011.
- [5] Marc Raeff. *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration, 1919–1939*. Oxford University Press, 1990. Pp. 1–5.
- [6] Zinaida Gippius. “Nashe Pryamoe Delo.” [Wikisource], [https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Наше_главное_дело_\(Гиппиус\)](https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Наше_главное_дело_(Гиппиус)).

The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in the Third Reich between 1935 and 1941

Nikolai Marković
University of Vienna



Artothek Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf. "Hab I-81: Efraim Habermann: Christi-Auferstehungs-Kathedrale, Russ. Orthodoxe Kirche am Hohenzollerndamm, 1982" last modified 2025-02-05.

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Introduction

The October Revolution of 1917 made thousands of Russian refugees flee to non-Orthodox countries. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), also called Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), was founded for these people in 1927. For seventy-nine years it existed as an independent Russian Orthodox jurisdiction, until it was reconciled with the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007. Its main purpose was the spiritual ministration to Orthodox Christians living outside of Russia. However, the Church was also used as a weapon against communist influence in the Russian-speaking diaspora.[1] Eastern Orthodoxy played only a marginal role in public life during the Weimar Republic as well as after the takeover of the National Socialists (NS) in 1933. It was only with the establishment of the Reich Ministry for Church Affairs in 1935 and the process of the *Gleichschaltung* of religious life that the ROCA gained a new socio-political role in the Reich.[2]

This article analyzes how the ROCOR was integrated into National Socialist church policy and shows how the regime treated it as a useful partner in anti-communist strategies, while never granting it full autonomy. Especially the interplay between the NS authorities and Orthodox dignitaries, showing the Reich Church Ministry's preference for the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad over other representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. A particular focus of this analysis is the "Law on the Real Estate of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany" [3] enacted on February 25, 1938, and the construction of the Cathedral of

[1] Michail Shakarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches gegenüber den orthodoxen Kirchen in Osteuropa (1939–1945)* (Münster: 2004), 11.

[2] John Conway, *Die nationalsozialistische Kirchenpolitik, 1933–1945* (München: 1969).

[3] Gesetz über den Grundbesitz der russisch-orthodoxen Kirche in Deutschland, Reichsgesetzblatt (RGBl.), Part I (1938): 223.

the Resurrection of Christ in Berlin.

Methodologically, this study relies mainly on secondary literature and surviving documents produced by National Socialist authorities, especially materials from the Reich Ministry for Church Affairs. This source base makes it possible to trace how the regime perceived and used the ROCA, but it also creates a clear limitation because it is forged not by a neutral authority. Invaluable material has been produced by the work of Mikhail Shkarovsky, which has come across a number of entanglements in his research on church policy of the Russian Orthodox Church. [4]

In the following pages we can only hope to scratch the surface of the question of the ROCA's influence in the Third Reich and how that influence was used at various levels of the National Socialist power structure up to the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.[5]

Orthodox life in Germany[6]

Orthodox communities, particularly Greek ones, have been present in German-speaking regions since the 18th century and their Churches represented the authority for all Orthodox people. But through diverse settler agreements between Prussia and the Russian Empire, native Russian-speakers, started to outnumber the Greeks during the 19th century. [7] Before the First World War, the Russian Orthodox

[4] For further bibliographic references, see: Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 8.

[5] Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 8-20.

[6] Germany is understood in this work as a synonym for Prussia, German Empire, Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.

[7] Cf. Nikephoros Datzopoulos, "Die Griechisch-Orthodoxe Gemeinde in Leipzig," in *Griechen in Leipzig: Damals – heute* (Leipzig, 1999).

Church owned 36 properties in Germany, a considerable amount considering the relatively small number of Orthodox believers in the country.

It was only as a result of the October Revolution that up to 200,000 Russian refugees settled in the Weimar Republic in the following years. But most of them did not stay in Germany long-term. The Gestapo reported approximately 80,000 Russian emigrants in 1935, while the Reich Ministry for Church Affairs estimated the number of Orthodox people (including other nationalities) in the Third Reich at 100,000 in 1936. These communities lacked an organizational structure. They were divided into the Moscow Patriarchate, the ROCA, and the Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was based in Paris. The original seat of the Metropolitan of the ROCA was in Constantinople (now Istanbul) and, from 1921 to 1944, in Serbia.

On July 1, 1926, they gained even more independence by establishing an eparchy (diocese) and were allowed to appoint their own bishop for Berlin and all of Germany. This diocese comprised four parishes, the Paris Exarchate nine, the Moscow Patriarchate one before 1933.[8] After the Nazis seized power, the three branches of the Orthodox Church attempted to gain complete control over all church property. In a letter dated September 6, 1934, Archpriest Gregory Porozorov, representing the Moscow Patriarchate, wrote to the new government:

It should be expressly noted in this regard that the sole legitimate owner of Russian ecclesiastical property is exclusively the Supreme Russian Church Authority, currently represented by the Holy

[8] Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 11-20.

Patriarchal Synod and Metropolitan Sergius of Moscow, who presides over it.[9]

Because of the lack of archival material it can be assumed that he never received a reply. Until 1935, the National Socialists refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church in the German Reich. This changed with the decree of July 16, 1935, when Hanns Kerrl was appointed to establish and head the Ministry for Church Affairs. For him Orthodoxy occupied a special position, as it could be instrumentalized as a counterweight to Bolshevism. The limited public presence of the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Germany also made it a more easily controlled religious group compared to the larger churches.

This confirms the ambivalence of National Socialist ideology regarding religion: On the one hand, religion was seen as a potential competitor to the totalitarian state ideology and on the other hand, the regime recognized the usefulness of certain religious institutions for their own goals.[10]

The Reich Ministry for Church Affairs

As a follower of the *Deutsche Christen*, a movement for the union of Christianity and National Socialism, Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller held the highest position within the Protestant Church from 1933 onward. He and other members of the faith attempted to achieve the

[9] Translation from German by the author, Bundesarchiv (BArch), record group R 43 II/179, fols. 250–251.

[10] Cf. Leonore Wenschkewitz, “Zur Geschichte des Reichskirchenministeriums und seines Ministers,” in Tutzinger Texte, special issue I: Kirche und Nationalsozialismus: Zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes, ed. Paul Rieger and Johann Strauß (Munich, 1969).

Gleichschaltung of all church institutions under Protestant leadership. When this failed, the National Socialists sought alternatives.

One proposal came in January 1935 from Dr. Wilhelm Stuckart of the Reich Ministry of Education.[11] In a memorandum presented to Adolf Hitler, he spoke of: “The creation of an agency solely responsible for state church affairs within the Reich and the states, as well as by party authority (...)”.[12] Although Stuckart’s plans resonated with Hitler, Reich Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick opposed interference in church affairs, primarily because the new department would be subordinate to his ministry. Minister Bernhard Rust also opposed its placement within the Ministry of Science, Education, and Public Instruction. Both ministries were reluctant to expand their competencies, as this would entail enormous additional work. Alfred Rosenberg’s and Heinrich Himmler’s attempts to diminish the influence of church organizations also failed. The government again invoked Stuckart’s ideas and, on July 16, 1935, issued an order to establish an independent ministry, to be headed by Hanns Kerrl.[13] Kerrl was a devoutly religious man and had no intention of disempowering church institutions, as was expected of him. His methods were geared toward understanding and compromise. He supported Article 24 of the Nazi Party program, which aimed for religious freedom, and this formed the basis of his ministry. He viewed Orthodoxy as particularly useful in the context of German foreign policy, especially in the fight against Bolshevism. The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad offered a platform for gaining influence

[11] Conway, *Die nationalsozialistische Kirchenpolitik*, 136–37.

[12] Translation from German by the author, Bundesarchiv (BArch), record group R 43 II/163.

[13] Conway, *Die nationalsozialistische Kirchenpolitik*, 139–48.

both in the occupied territories and abroad by serving as a counterweight to Soviet propaganda. [14]

Legal status of Religious Communities

The Catholic Church was granted the status of a public corporation, that is, a legal entity under public law, by the Reich Concordat on July 20, 1933. For the Protestant Church, this status was officially confirmed on March 23, 1934, by the Reich Church Tax Ordinance. In a letter dated February 17, 1936, to Hermann Göring, Hanns Kerrl explained the necessity of granting this status to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad as well. His main arguments were that this act would foster a more favorable attitude toward the German Reich among both Soviet and other emigrants belonging to the Eastern Orthodox Church, and that the church members could play a significant role in the future foreign policy affairs of the Third Reich. [15]

This measure illustrates Germany's ambition to bring the Orthodox communities in Southeast Europe into its sphere of influence. Given the persecution of religious people in the Soviet Union and France's growing dominance in the care of Byzantine rite parishes, the Third Reich recognized an opportunity to extend its influence in the Balkans. [16]

The decision to grant corporate rights was confirmed on October 23,

[14] Schwerin von Krosigk, *Es geschah in Deutschland: Menschenbilder unseres Jahrhunderts*, 255.

[15] Käthe Gaede, *Die Russische Orthodoxe Kirche in Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 289–90.

[16] *Reichsministerialblatt*, Part IV (1936): 637.

1935, and the church was then subject to state control. The official granting of legal status to the ROCA took place on March 14, 1936.[17] A letter of thanks from Metropolitan Antonij Khrapovichkij confirms that the idea of building a representative cathedral in Berlin arose in the course of this cooperation.[18]



The Construction of the Cathedral

On January 18, 1936, an inter-agency conference was held to decide on the future course of action regarding the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. The following note is recorded in the minutes of Government Councilor Hüskes:

In cooperation with the Reich and the Labor Front, a small wooden church is to be erected at another location, but near Fehrbelliner Platz, at the expense of these two bodies of the Russian Orthodox Church (...) The construction of the new church, financed by the Reich and the Labor Front, is to be exploited for propaganda purposes.[19]

Not long after, an agreement was reached to build a stone cathedral, with the costs estimated at 50,000 to 66,000 Reichsmarks. The Foreign Office invested 3,000 Reichsmarks, the German Labor Front 20,000

[17] Reichsministerialblatt, Part IV (1936): 637.

[18] Bundesarchiv (BArch), R 5101/23173, fols. 6–7.

[19] Translation from German by the author, Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv (BLHA), Pr. Br. Rep. 60, no. 479, fol. 26.

Reichsmarks, and the Reich Ministry for Church Affairs 15,000 Reichsmarks. Minister Kerrl directly asked Hitler for support in providing the rest of the money, but Hitler refused.[20] The reasons for this decision are unclear and subject to speculation.

Kerrl sought ways to secure further funding but had to contribute a significant portion from his own ministry. Nevertheless, donations were accepted from the Protestant Church as well as from the Yugoslav and Bulgarian royal houses. In the end, the total sum amounted to approximately 90,000 Reichsmarks, with the German authorities covering 88% of the costs. The cathedral's ceremonial opening took place on June 12, 1938, with representatives of mostly Southeast European clergy in attendance.[21]

The construction of the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ must be viewed within the context of German propaganda. Besides its religious function, the plan for the building was the demonstration of the regime's supposed tolerance toward religious minorities. Its placement in the Berlin cityscape made it a symbol of the influence the Third Reich wanted to exert, even over Orthodoxy. This makes sense if we look at the strategy of the National Socialists to demonstrate their power and influence through symbolic buildings. In comparison to other religious building projects of the Nazi government, it is striking that the construction of the Orthodox cathedral pursued a clear political purpose. While other building projects were not so openly political, the support for the construction of this cathedral explicitly served to consolidate the influence of the German Reich in Eastern Europe and

[20] Bundesarchiv (BArch), R 43 II/181, fols. 36–40.

[21] Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 18.

to use Orthodoxy as a political tool.[22]

Political Influence

With the German occupation of Poland beginning in 1939, the Orthodox Diocese of Warsaw-Cholm, with approximately 300,000 parishioners, was transferred to the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. This was not the first time that the ROCA gained more authority. The NS regime, especially because of the efforts of Hans Kerrl, decided in their favor in the question of church property inside German territory and put the Moscow Patriarchate and the Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and saw only the ROCA as a legal representative of the orthodox faith. [23]

In 1941, ROCA succeeded in persuading the German authorities to invest 20,000 Reichsmarks in the reconstruction of Orthodox churches in Poland. This support was possible because the Polish Metropolitan Dionisij maintained good relations with both the ROCA and the Governor-General Hans Frank. Additionally, the influence of the ROCA on the Reich Ministry for Church Affairs played a crucial role in implementing this measure. Metropolitan Seraphim possessed a certain degree of political influence among National Socialist officials. This enabled him to obtain resettlement permits for several priests from the conquered Polish, Czechoslovakian, and Ukrainian territories to Serbia, as well as to secure the payment of some pensions. [24]

[22] Ibid.

[23] Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 22-4.

[24] Werner Haugg, "Materialien zur Geschichte der östlich-orthodoxen Kirche in Deutschland," *Kyrios* 5 (1940-41): 332-33.

To create a counterweight to the Parisian Theological Institute of St. Sergius and to extend influence into the Balkan region as part of the resistance against Bolshevism, some representatives of the Church Ministry developed the idea of establishing an Orthodox institute in Germany. The Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda described this idea as "very noteworthy." In 1938, the director of the Institute for Eastern Europe in Breslau, Professor Hans Koch argued that such an institute in the German Reich "could be psychologically beneficial in influencing the aspirations of other nations in the competition for the favor of the Eastern Church. [25] Although the Ministry of Science, Art, Education, and National Relations also supported this idea, Reich Minister Rudolf Hess rejected it:

I am firmly convinced that it will be possible to further deepen and expand German cultural and political influence in the Balkans by other means.[26]

The history of the political influence of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and its interaction with the German authorities remains a complex matter. There was no clear line in the decisions, and the power dynamics were often shaped by personal interests and individual relationships. While the actors involved were able to realize their interests within the scope of the given constraints, the long-term effects remained less clear. The political role of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad must also be considered in an international context. Through its connections to Orthodox communities in

[25] Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, 26-27.

[26] Translation from German by the author, Bundesarchiv (BArch), R 5101/23173, fols. 492-93.

other countries, particularly in the Balkans and the occupied territories, it is easy to see them as an instrument of German foreign policy. But the actual situation is a more nuanced one.

Conclusion

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia played an interesting role between 1935 and 1941. Founded in 1927, they attracted the attention of the Reich Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs at the latest in 1935 and went on to have a fruitful relationship. At the behest of State Secretary Hanns Kerrl, the Gestapo intervened in church affairs, resolved internal conflicts and eventually granted the exiled church a special status. With the appointment of Metropolitan Seraphim in 1938 the ROCA gained greater influence in political affairs of the National Socialist regime. The construction of the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Berlin, which both sides sought to exploit to their own advantage, in the end revealed the greater strength of the new regime over the claims of Orthodoxy. The Nazis' support for the ROCA was not religious in nature, but rather a product of the most pragmatic and ideological considerations.

Future academic works should try to get a hold of these documents. In the meantime one possible analysis from the German point of view would be the role of the Church in the years 1941-1945. Another possible topic would be the entanglements of the church and their repercussions in the post-WWII period. Yet another possible topic could be a comparison of how different religions were treated by the totalitarian state and how the various religions interacted with the state in such a setting.

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Closing Letter from the Managing Editor

“Half harlot, half nun,” was the jab at Anna Akhmatova by a high-ranking Soviet official. Veritous or apocryphal, the remark alluded to the poet’s seemingly conflicted passions that shaped her life: her fervent Orthodox faith and close relationship with the poet Osip Mandelstam. Dualities aside, Akhmatova’s story was further complicated by her ardor for her homeland, notwithstanding the arrests of her former husband and son by the Soviet secret police.

Contested identity is a key theme readers can find woven throughout the compelling works and stories in this volume. Indeed, the quandaries and dilemmas that arise between religious faith, personal intimacies, and national belonging continue to mold lives across the geopolitical landscape. Addressing the ongoing displacement of millions of Ukrainians, institutions such as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Diaspora serve as vital rallying points for war-torn families whom are situated at the interstices of faith, family, and cultural solidarity. As the reader may have noticed, such realities bring forth a new context for scholars and writers alike to reconsider the prevailing discourses on identity politics and community activism, as well as suggest new strands and directions for these blooming areas of study.

I invite emerging scholars, writers, artists, and those interested in the Eurasian region to take up the torch and continue the journal's commitment to fostering discussion in the ever-so-relevant field of Slavonic Studies. We may remember that Akhmatova endeavoured to make sense of a world that seemed, too, quite uncertain. Let that be her epitaph as future contributors continue to shape the exciting kaleidoscope that is this journal.

Sincerely,
Stan Vassilenko
Managing Editor

