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Introduction

1. Research Questions, Methodological Approach

The Cathedral of Christ the Savior (Chram Christa Spasitelja, CCS) was (and is still today) one of the most important churches in Moscow. It is often called “the main Russian cathedral”.¹ Its two-hundred-year history is closely linked to all the main turning points in Russia’s past two centuries. The construction was announced by the tsar Aleksandr I after the Russian victory over Napoleon’s invading forces in 1812. The church was meant to be a token of thanks to God for the salvation of the fatherland, a memorial to the fallen and, above all, the national monument, meant to commemorate the victory achieved by the joint forces of the whole Russian nation. The construction was started in 1817 according to the plan (Fig. 1, 2) of the architect Aleksandr L. Vitberg (1787–1855). However, after the enthronization of Nicholas I in 1825, the construction was called off and a new project (Fig. 3, 4) was started in 1832 – this time according to the proposal of Konstantin A. Ton (1794–1881). After its completion, the Cathedral became one of the most important churches in Russia – the national cathedral. After the takeover of power by the Soviets, the building was blown up in 1931 and in its place, the monumental Palace of Soviets (Fig. 52, 53) by architect Boris M. Iofan (1891–1976) was planned. However, the Palace was never completed. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Cathedral was reconstructed over the years 1994–1997 and became Russia’s main church again (Fig. 59). This role came into question, however, in 2012 after the punk protest group Pussy Riot held a performance in the Cathedral.

This short overview shows that the Cathedral is an object–place, on which the ruling elites have constantly concentrated their attention. In each of the mentioned periods, the government tried to give the building a specific physiognomy, to correspond with the current official viewpoint on Russia and its place in the world. In this sense, the history of the CCS offers an exceptional possibility to consider – through the lens of a concrete object – the complicated question of Russia’s self-perception, of its creation, re-formulations and changes.

One of the central terms of this text is “identity”. This term is widely employed in many scientific domains, such as psychology, sociology and history, as well as being overused in politics and everyday language. This leads on one hand to its banalization, on the other hand it makes it difficult to set a clear and commonly accepted definition for this term.² The present text uses the

¹ E.g., Lev Kolodnyj, *Poslednij kirpič chrama Christa Spasitelja*, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1996 January 6th.

² The term is often coupled with different adjectives as personal identity, collective identity, sexual identity, national identity, religious identity. Among many others, Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, London 1991; Heiko Motschenbacher, *Language, Gender and Sexual Identity. Poststructuralist Perspectives*, Amsterdam 2010; Francis-Vincent Anthony (Ed.), *Religious Identity and National Heritage. Empirical-theological Perspectives*, Leiden 2012.

definition of Odo Marquard, who describes Identity as “response to the question, who one is. One is who he is, by means of his being himself [Selbigkeit] in one’s relationship to himself and by being with others [Anderssein] in his relationship to the others”.³ Under this very broad definition of identity, this text sees very concrete questions which Russia (Russian elites) in the past two hundred years has attempted to answer. The term “Selbigkeit” is addressed in the very basic questions such as What is Russia and who is Russian? How could the Russian nation be defined? On which bases does Russia stand? The term “Anderssein” involves themes such as: What is Russia’s relationship to the “other” – on the East as well as on the West? What is Russia’s place in the world?

This text has no ambition to give an exhaustive overview of how these questions have been answered throughout Russia’s history. Its aim is to analyze how these questions and their responses were “materialized” in one concrete building, and to discuss what particular problems and issues came associated with this “materialization”. At the same time, the goal is to consider how the Cathedral, already built, contributed to the spread of the official views on Russia and how the Cathedral and the elite’s discourse was received by the public. The reflection is based on four main points: the very appearance of the building, the ruling elite’s discourse, the opposition’s opinion and the reaction of the public.

Questions linked to Russia’s self-perception and to its “materialization” remain throughout the two-hundred-year history of the Cathedral *de facto* all the same; however, the political and social situations change considerably. Every period brings specific issues that necessitate the use of several different methodological approaches which are not limited to the domain of history but which draw also from art-history, sociology and political science.

The first chapter addresses the period 1812–1883. It focuses on the role of the CCS in the “birth” of the Russian nation and on the theme of Russian official nationality in the context of the European nationalisms of the time. The chapter rests methodologically on two main pillars. First, on the style and iconographic analysis of the architectural elements used in both proposals for the Cathedral and on the historiographical reflection of their meaning.⁴ The second pillar is the works of the theoreticians of nationalism – Ernst Gellner⁵, Benedict Anderson⁶ and Eric Hobsbawm⁷, who see the “nation” as a modern phenomenon and as “imagined community”. The members of

³ “Identität [meint] die Antwort auf die Frage, wer einer ist. Er ist, wer er ist, durch seine Selbigkeit mit sich selber und durch sein Anderssein gegenüber anderen.” Odo Marquard, *Nicht-Identität, Identität und Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert*, in: *Kunst und Identität im 20. Jahrhundert*, Mainz/München 1997, 75. Cf. Bohdan Tscherkes, *Identität, Architektur und Rekonstruktion der Stadt*, Zürich/Berlin 2014, 15.

⁴ Richard Krautheimer, *Introduction to an ‘Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture’*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5, London 1942, 1–33; Meyer Schapiro, *Style*, in: A. L. Kroeber (Ed.), *Anthropology Today*. An Encyclopedic Inventory, Chicago 1953, 287–312.

⁵ Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca/New York 1983.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983.

⁷ Erick Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism Since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge/New York 1990.

this community are bound one to each other through, among other things, the faith of the common past. This faith is consolidated by “invented traditions” – which means by a set of practices “of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past”.⁸ The first chapter thus discusses the architectural style of the CCS and the ruling elite’s discourse precisely in light of the “invented tradition” theory.

The second chapter deals with the destruction of the Cathedral and the search for the ideal form of its replacement – the Palace of the Soviets. The reflection is based on stylistic and iconographic analysis of the changing projects of the palace.⁹ This process reveals the change from constructivism and functionalism towards monumentalism with classic elements, but also an important continuity with the prerevolutionary architecture. At the same time, the transformations of the architecture illustrate the change in the character of Soviet leadership during the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. However, because the Palace of the Soviets is not the principal object of this work, the chapter is much shorter than the other three. Its aim is mainly to underline the importance of the place for the creation of Russian identity.

The third chapter concentrates on the reconstruction of the Cathedral as a national symbol in the 1990s, in the context of the search for new identity and new symbols for post-Soviet Russia. It was, in fact, precisely the CCS that should have become, according to the ruling elite, the symbol of the new democratic Russia and the symbol of national reconciliation. Reflection about the character of post-Soviet identity and about the role the CCS played in its construction is based on concepts of desecularization¹⁰, public religion¹¹ and ethnodoxo¹². The first two concepts address the role of religion in the public space and politics. It is argued that, after the strong secularization during the Soviet regime, there has been a strong tendency towards desecularization, meaning that religion enters the public space and becomes also an important player in political decisions. However, the rise of the importance of religion doesn’t mean the rise of personal faith in individuals, but it more likely reveals the formation of a new type of self-perception based on religion-linked arguments.¹³ The third term – ethnodoxo – brings in the question of the ethnic and

⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, Introduction, *Inventing Traditions*, in: Eric Hobsbawm – Terence Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge/London 1983, 1f.

⁹ Krautheimer, Introduction, 1–33; Schapiro, *Style*, 287–312.

¹⁰ Peter L. Berger (Ed.), *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Grand Rapids 1999; Vyacheslav Karpov, *Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework*, in: *Journal of Church and State* 52/2, Oxford 2010, 232–270.

¹¹ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago 1994; Idem, *Public Religion Revisited*, in: Hent de Vries (Ed.), *Religion. Beyond the Concept*, New York 2008, 101–119.

¹² Vyacheslav Karpov – Elena Lisovskaya – David Barry, *Ethnodoxo. How Popular Ideologies Fuse Religious and Ethnic Identities*, in: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51/4, New Jersey 2012, 638–655.

¹³ Karpov, *Desecularization*, 236–240.

religious components of Russia's post-Soviet identity as well as the question of the appropriateness of the cathedral – national monument and religious building in one – as the symbol of post-Soviet democratic Russia.

The fourth chapter describes the illegal performance of the protest-group Pussy Riot, which took place in the Cathedral in 2012. The text focuses on the trial of the protestors and on society's reactions and tries to assess the importance of the performance, as well as of the trial, to the re-formulation of official Russian identity at the beginning of the 2010s. The mechanism of this re-formulation is explained by means of Emil Durkheim's theory of norm and deviance.¹⁴ According to this theory, the norm in society is set and maintained (and also changed) by negative definition, meaning by the condemnation and stigmatization of the abnormal. The second methodological tool of this chapter is, similar to the third chapter, the concept of desecularization.

The two-century-long period and the use of several different methods ultimately offers the possibility to look at the Cathedral and its role in the construction of Russia's identity from the perspective of the *longue durée*¹⁵. It offers the possibility to observe the mechanisms through which national self-perception is constructed. Three of them in particular are worth underlining here. The first point is that the view of the (re)construction(s) of Russian identity through the lens of a concrete building leads to a reflection on the *lieu de mémoire*¹⁶. The formation of collective identity is closely linked to the construction of collective memory.¹⁷ The *lieu of mémoire* could then be a concrete place to which the memory of a concrete event is related. The example of the CCS points out partly the importance of collective historical memory in the discourse of power and in the struggle for power. Partly, this case displays its chronic instability and predisposition to be permanently reinterpreted, which makes it not only the place of memory but, by necessity, also the place of forgetting.

The second point resulting from the *longue durée* approach is the question of architecture as a medium; it means architecture as a tool of power and as a tool for the divulgation of the official discourse. As the text argues, architecture is an important tool to display the elites' view of Russia's identity, however the architectural form is not in itself a bearer of an objective meaning and the visual aspect alone is thus not sufficient to transmit the complex political message. An important component of the message is also the accompanying discourse, which explains, interprets and re-

¹⁴ Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social*. Livre I, Paris 1893; Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social*, Paris 1897. The case of Pussy Riot was reflected in the light of the Durkheim's theory by Rachel L. Schroeder – Vyacheslav Karpov, 'The Crimes and Punishments of the "Enemies of the Church" and the Nature of Russia's Desecularising Regime, Religion, State & Society 41/3, London 2013, 284–311.

¹⁵ Fernand Braudel, *La longue durée*, in: *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 13/4, Paris 1958, 725–753.

¹⁶ Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, München 1999.

¹⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, Paris 1950.

interprets the forms. In this sense, the struggle for the hegemony of interpretation of the Cathedral's materiality was involved, over the past two centuries, in the struggle for power.

2. State of Research

The CCS is a church-monument, which has been closely bound with politic happenings since its origins. This is visible also in the bibliography on the subject, which often conforms to the author's political persuasion. For this reason, it is possible and fitting to consider the works about the CCS itself not only as research literature, but simultaneously as primary sources for the periods in which they were written. The political role of CCS resulted also in the publishing of the large public books, which often have strong patriotic and political overtones. In the following overview, only books and articles concerning the whole history of the Cathedral are considered. The articles related to component issues are mentioned in respective chapters. The number of works dedicated to the Cathedral is relatively small. Before 1917, there is practically only one major *opus*.¹⁸ Between 1917 and 1991, the Cathedral was not studied. Since the fall of the Soviet regime, several Russian as well as foreign publications have appeared which are presented here below.

The first monograph¹⁹ was written by M. Mostovskij and published on the occasion of the completion and consecration of the Cathedral in 1883. The book contains a great amount of information, ranging from the description of the architecture, paintings, iconostas, altars, and inventory to lists of the clergy and their salaries, also including all committees and their decisions. All expenses are mentioned with the precision of kopeks. Moreover, the author transfers all inscriptions and texts placed in the building. However, the book is purely descriptive and doesn't offer any theoretical or political consideration. An abridged version was published in 1918 by the Brotherhood of the CCS, which, in the foreword, imploringly urged the people to contribute to the maintenance of the Cathedral, which had been stripped from the state subventions and was at risk of frost damage.²⁰ A third version, also abridged, appeared in 2000, with a foreword by the patriarch Aleksij II.²¹

An important scholar dealing with CCS was the art historian Evgenija Kiričenko, author of the extensive monograph *Chram Christa Spasitelja* in 1992.²² A second edition was published on occasion of the re-construction of the Cathedral and contains the addition of a short chapter about the re-construction and forewords by the patriarch Aleksij II and the then-mayor of Moscow Jurij

¹⁸ M. Mostovskij, *Istoričeskoe opisanie chrama vo imja Christa Spasitelja v Moskve*, Moskva 1883.

¹⁹ Mostovskij, *Opisanie*.

²⁰ M. Mostovskij, *Chram Christa Spasitelja v Moskve*, Moskva 1918.

²¹ M. Mostovskij, *Chram Christa Spasitelja v Moskve*, Moskva 2000.

²² Evgenija Kiričenko, *Chram Christa Spasitelja v Moskve. Istorija proektirovanija i sozdanija sobora. Stranici žizni i gibelj. 1813–1931*, Moskva 1992.

M. Lužkov.²³ Kiričenko presents detailed information about the subject and draws from many important sources; in addition, the book contains a large number of unique reproductions of the Cathedral. However, the bibliographic references are relatively few and the sources are, in some case, transmitted non-critically.²⁴ The author tries to point out the importance of the lost (and reconstructed) monument as a place where Russian art was resurrected in the nineteenth century. The stress on the exceptionality of the Cathedral is, however, sometimes excessive and prevents a critical look at the role of the CCS in the social and political fields. According to Kiričenko, for example, the character of the composition of the inside paintings - decorative lower level and narrative and votive images on the upper levels, accentuation of the architectural elements by decorative zones - are typically Russian.²⁵ However, similar solutions could be found in many churches in the East as well as in the West (*e.g.*, San Vitale in Ravenna²⁶, the upper basilica of the St. Francis Cathedral in Assisi²⁷). In the same way, the assertion that the use of inscription is typically old-Russian seems unfounded.²⁸ Inscriptions on the narrative scenes or under the cupola are commonly used in many places (*e.g.*, Dome of Creation in the narthex of the San Marco basilica in Venice²⁹, Cappella Palatina³⁰). Moreover, the text contains strongly patriotic passages: the author evaluates the talent, virtue and love for the fatherland of the artist. The latter allegedly manifested itself also in the endeavor for the rebirth of Russian national art. At the same time, the author doesn't mention the complexity of the revival process and its political causes and significance. Kiričenko tries to achieve "historical justice" by naming as many people as possible who participated in the decorating.³¹ The last chapter dedicated to the reconstruction of the Cathedral concentrates mainly on the alleged identical appearance between the old and the new Cathedral and on search of the prototypes for decorations. The author stresses several times the "methodological attitude to restoration".³² The importance of the Cathedral for Russian society and politics and the artistic value of the replica, as well as the way it was reconstructed, are not regarded in a critical way. However, regardless of these problematic points, Kiričenko's monograph

²³ Evgenija Kiričenko, *Chram Christa Spasitelja v Moskve. Istoria proektirovanija i sozdanija sobora. Stranicy žizni, gibeli i vozroždenija 1813–1997*, Moskva 1997. The English translation dates from 2012 Evgenija Kiričenko, *Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Its Creation, Destruction, and Rebirth 1813–1997*, published online. http://www.thomashoisington.com/pdfs/Moscows_Cathedral_Kirichenko.pdf, 2012.

²⁴ For example the non-critical adoption of Vitberg's memories: Kiričenko, *Chram*, 26–33.

²⁵ Kiričenko, *Chram*, 96.

²⁶ Gianfranco Malafarina (Ed.), *La Basilica di San Vitale a Ravenna*, Modena 2006.

²⁷ Serena Romano, *La basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi. Pittori, botteghe, strategie narrative*, Roma 2001.

²⁸ Kiričenko, *Chram*, 106.

²⁹ Herbert L. Kessler, *The Cotton Genesis in situ. An Early Christian manuscript cycle on the walls of a thirteenth-century Venetian church*, in: Ivan Foletti – Zuzana Frantová (Eds.), *The Antique Memory and the Middle Ages*, Rome 2015.

³⁰ Ernst Kitzinger, *The Mosaic of of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. An Essay on the Choice and Arrangement of Subjects*, in: *The Art Bulletin* 31/4, London 1949, 269–292.

³¹ Kiričenko, *Chram*, 110.

³² Kiričenko, *Chram*, 283, 286.

is the first one of the twentieth century and, alongside the Mostovskij book, represents a starting point for any reflection about the CCS. Especially for the information about the destruction of the building is the book practically the only accessible source of information.

An extensive article on the history of the Cathedral was issued in 1998 in the *History Workshop Journal*.³³ The author Andrew Gentes summarized the history of the Cathedral by describing Vitberg's as well as Ton's project for the Cathedral, the Palace of Soviets and the new "Lužkov's" Cathedral as epitomes of "grandiose ambitions and abject failures of Russia's leaders over the past two centuries".³⁴ He pointed out the similarities in the attitudes of respective governments toward monuments and their ability to use them to display their power. Gentes also tried to see if the respective buildings demonstrate "epochal" or "essential" aspects of their rules. In his point of view, czar Aleksandr conceived it as epochal, Stalin's attitude is a "curious intermixture of epochalism and essentialism"³⁵ and for Boris N. El'cin's and Lužkov's government, essentialism seems to be more important. In the whole article, the criticism of autocratic governments, especially Stalin's and El'cin's/Lužkov's, are explicit.

The first English book about the subject, 'The Holy Place. Architecture, Ideology, and History in Russia'³⁶, was published in 2007. In the book, the criticism of Lužkov and El'cin and of the way the Cathedral was reconstructed is evident. The scientific public received the book rather coldly as "narrative and not investigation". It was criticized for its non-critical use of sources, impartiality, and journalistic overstatement.³⁷

Bohdan Čerkes addressed the CCS in the context of Moscow's urbanism in his book 'Identität, Architektur und Rekonstruktion der Stadt'.³⁸ Its weak point, however, is that the author doesn't draw from the original sources, but from Kiričenko's text, which he non-critically adopts; in some occasions he even fails to quote his source. For example, he asserts that "The idea of the cathedral which should also have the function of a memorial goes back to old-Russian tradition. This idea wasn't present in western European art. For this reason the turn to medieval Rus' was absolutely programmatic".³⁹ This assertion is problematic for at least two reasons. First, churches built on the

³³ Andrew Gentes, *The Life, Death and Resurrection of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, Moscow*, in: *History Workshop Journal* 46, Oxford 1998, 63–95.

³⁴ Gentes, *Life*, 63.

³⁵ Gentes, *Life*, 84.

³⁶ Konstantin Akinsha – Grigorij Kozlov – Sylvia Hochfield, *The Holy Place. Architecture, Ideology, and History in Russia*, New Haven 2007.

³⁷ Reviews by: Simon Franklin, *The Slavonic and East European Review* 87/3, London 2009, 552–554; Scott W. Palmer, *The Slavic and East European Journal* 53/2, Los Angeles 2009, 320f.

³⁸ Tscherkes, *Identität*.

³⁹ "Die Idee der Kathedrale, die auch als Denkmal fungieren soll, reicht bis zu altrussischen Traditionen zurück. In der westeuropäischen Kunst war diese Idee hingegen nicht vertreten – weshalb die Hinwendung zu den Traditionen der mittelalterlichen Rus' für die Konzeption des Gebäudes geradezu programmatisch wurde." Tscherkes, *Identität*, 115.

occasion of a victory are also known in the medieval West.⁴⁰ Second, the author's conclusion that it was a return to old-Russian roots is false. In fact, when the idea of the church-cathedral was proposed for the first time, the main point of interest was Europe; on a political level – collaboration with Europe, on an artistic level – neo-classicism. Without quoting the source, Čerkes also borrows mistaken information from Kiričenko, saying that by the first laying of the foundation stone in 1817 Aleksandr I and Nicholas I were compared to biblical kings David and Salomon.⁴¹ In fact, this happened on the occasion of the second laying in 1837. At the first one, there was no reason to suppose that Aleksandr would die prematurely and that his successor would be his third brother Nicholas and not one of Aleksandr's children or his second brother Konstantin. This mistake is only a detail, however, it reveals that the author sees CCS from its beginning in 1812 to its destruction in 1931 as an expression of a unique and unvarying Russian identity based on old-Russian roots and does not take in consideration the changes in Russian self-perception or the multiplicity of the possible interpretations of the building. In some parts of the book, Čerkes summarizes complicated theoretical questions⁴², in other parts, he goes very much into detail. Finally, he presents a general conclusion: “Notwithstanding the different political and ideological realities, it remains the myths that have been embodied by the buildings, the same; only the form of its architectural expression and the way of decipherment changes. However, the basis remains always the same – the great power thinking and messianism.”⁴³

Despite the importance of the Cathedral, the bibliography discussing its history and significance is rather scarce; the subject presents thus an open research field. The present text aims to go beyond generalizing assertions and to discuss the complexity of the Cathedral's role in the shaping of Russia's identity, and to discuss concrete problems in the main periods by asking the questions: What role did the CCS play in the formation of Russian (national) identity? How does the Cathedral (its visual aspect as well as the discourses about the building) mirror the dynamics of identity formation?

3. Note on Transliteration, Dates, Footnotes and Text Structure

For the transliteration of Russian, the text uses the scientific mode. The bibliographic references are transliterated; quotations in footnotes are in original script. If already transliterated texts are

⁴⁰ Cf. Fulvio Cervini, *La natura figurata. Monumenti ai caduti e fermo di sacralizzazione dei campi di battaglia medievali*, in: Arturo C. Quintavalle (Ed.), *Medioevo. Natura e figura. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Parma, 20–25 settembre 2011*, Milano 2015, 755–765.

⁴¹ Tscherkes, *Identität*, 116; Kiričenko, *Chram*, 35.

⁴² For example, the subchapter “Formierung einer russischen Nationalidentität”, resuming the period since 1552 until nowadays. Tscherkes, *Identität*, 97–111.

⁴³ Tscherkes, *Identität*, 156.

quoted, the original transliteration is observed. Unless otherwise stated, translations are made by the author. For the pre-revolutionary period, dual dating is used. In the case of the quotation of internet sources, the date of the last consultation is mentioned only in the final bibliography. The source of cited newspaper articles was mainly the online newspaper-database Integrum.⁴⁴ For this reason the precise pages of the articles could not be stated in this text.

The text is divided into four chapters. Due to different dealings with the issues, each chapter contains its own concluding remarks. The final conclusion is arranged as an autonomous reflection based on the *longue-durée* approach.

⁴⁴ Integrum, <http://www.integrumworld.com/>.

Chapter 1

Cathedral of Christ the Savior and Russian Identity in Tsarist Russia

As emphasized above, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (CCS) was built in order to become a national shrine. Its architectural style was also qualified as “national”. This chapter concentrates on how the idea of a national shrine came into existence and how it was concretely realized in the nineteenth century. The first part of the chapter focuses on the expression and materialization of the idea of a national church in the architecture and in decorative elements of the building. Two plans, the first proposed by Vitberg (plan accepted in 1817, construction cancelled in 1826, Fig. 1, 2) as well as the second one by Ton (plan accepted in 1817, church consecrated in 1883, Fig. 3, 4) are discussed. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the role that the CCS as a national church played in the search for a Russian national identity in the nineteenth century, and to the question of how the visual aspects of the Cathedral reflect Russia’s then view of itself, of its past, and of its place in the world of that time.

Analysis of these questions is grounded on two elements. The first is the source material commenting on the Cathedral and the debate on the architectural styles.⁴⁵ These sources are contextualised into the broader debate on Russian (national) identity.⁴⁶ The reflections on Russian national identity and on its manifestation in the CCS are methodically based on concepts presented in Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism*⁴⁷, Eric Hobsbawm’s *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*⁴⁸, Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*⁴⁹ and, especially, Hobsbawm’s book *Inventing the Tradition*, in which the author presents the concept of “invented tradition”⁵⁰ as largely invented practices which are meant to create a link between a concrete moment in the past, and considers them pertinent for the forging of “nation”.⁵¹ Based on these ideas, the thesis of this chapter is that the national style of CCS should be seen as an invention that should have unified Russia and demonstrated the ruling class’s view on the country’s past and future. The second important pillar of this chapter is the comparison between the Cathedral and architectural styles of

⁴⁵ Architects’ memories and articles as well as articles of art critics and tsar’s directives are used.

⁴⁶ For the short review of the debate about the Russia’s identity in the nineteenth century see James Billington, *Russia in Search of Itself*, Washington 2004, 7–23.

⁴⁷ Gellner, *Nations*.

⁴⁸ Hobsbawm, *Nation*.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁵⁰ ‘Invented’ tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. [...] However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of ‘invented’ tradition is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. Hobsbawm, *Introduction*, 1f.

⁵¹ “They are highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the ‘nation’, with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation – state, national symbols, histories and the rest”. Hobsbawm, *Introduction*, 13.

nineteenth-century Russia and Europe, as well as Byzantium. The visual aspect of the Cathedral is compared with Russian historiography, which was, in the course of the nineteenth century, progressively constructing the Russian “Byzantine past”. In this regard, the CCS case also serves as a good visual example to analyze the turning point in Russian self-perception. Its construction could be seen as a starting point for Russian nation-building and for the search for Russia’s own independent cultural and political roots. Finally, the process of the Cathedral’s construction shows a particular use of architecture in the Russian politics of the nineteenth century.⁵² These politics, as put forward in Richard Wortman’s ‘Scenarios of Power’, reproduce “the visual artefacts [to] restore the imagined unity” of a territory.⁵³ In this sense, the CCS case also opens the question of the power of art and architecture in politics, of transmission of political ideas through visual means, and of politicizing artistic forms and the unceasing reinterpretation of these forms in the course of the nineteenth century.

1.1. Cathedral of Christ the Savior as a National Church

The idea to build a national church came about after the Russian victory over Napoleon in 1812. It is precisely this war against Napoleon, also called the “patriotic war” (*otečestvennaja vojna*)⁵⁴, that is essential to understanding the importance the new Cathedral had for Russia, as well as its role in the “construction” of Russian national identity.

In June 1812, Napoleon’s army crossed the Russian border and headed towards Moscow. The shock to the population was severe because Russia had not experienced war on its territory since the Polish-Lithuanian invasion of 1611–1612 and also because Napoleon’s troops ravaged a significant portion of Russia’s land. In September 1812, General Michail I. Kutuzov (1745–1813) tactically vacated Moscow and left the city to the enemy. Nearly the entire city was then destroyed by looting and fire. The destruction of Moscow, “Russia’s heart”⁵⁵, was another big blow for Russians: a real as well as a symbolic one. However, this hopeless situation changed several weeks later. Napoleon’s army, surrounded in the burnt and empty city of Moscow and exhausted after an unsuccessful battle at Borodino (24 August/7 September 1812), turned back out of Moscow and on 25 December 1812/6 January 1813 they left Russian territory. The defensive war changed into

⁵² As mentioned by James Billington, till the nineteenth century there was no general consciousness of the Russian national identity. It was the very architecture, dominant art since the eighteenth century, that received the role of the first “vector” of these nationalistic ideas. Only with the emergence of the Russian language, in the 1820s and 1830s also the literature started to accomplish the same role. Billington, *Russia*, 7, 21.

⁵³ Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power. Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II*, 2 vol., Princeton 2006, 251.

⁵⁴ Dominic Lieven, *Russia Against Napoleon. The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814*, London 2009.

⁵⁵ The expression Moscow – Russian heart should have been used by the Napoleon while explaining his intention to conquer Russia: “By capturing Saint Petersburg, I would gain Russia’s head, but I want to conquer Moscow – Russia’s heart.” Cf. e. g. Kiričenko, *Chram*, 7.

an attack against Napoleon's rule in Europe, and in March 1814, victorious Russian troops led by Aleksandr I reached Paris. This victory, apart from great significance for Russia's own self-confidence, changed Russia's position on the international political scene: once a "backward" and weak country, Russia had become the rescuer of monarchic regimes in Europe.⁵⁶

These events of 1812–1814, primarily trauma and losses caused by the war as well as the campaign in Europe and the final victory, are crucial to understanding the CCS's role as a national shrine. As already mentioned, the war afflicted a significant portion of the Russian territory and severely hurt the civilian population. Tsar Aleksandr explicitly asked the civilian population to join the combat and encouraged every social stratum to resist the enemy. This is particularly visible in Aleksandr's manifesto from 6 July/18 July 1812, where he gave the people examples of good patriots, historical heroes fighting against the Polish-Lithuanian invasion at the beginning of the seventeenth century:

"Indeed, the enemy will find at every step faithful sons of Russia. [...] May he encounter in each nobleman a Požarskij, in every clergyman a Palicyn, in every subject a Minin. Noble gentry! At all times you have been saviors of the Fatherland. Most Holy Synod and Clergy! With your heartfelt prayers you have caused heavenly grace to descend upon Russia. Russians! The brave heritage of brave Slavs! [...] May you all join together. With a cross over your heart and weapons in your hands, no human force will defeat you."⁵⁷

Just as the war itself was understood as nationwide and patriotic, the victory was also seen as communal and nationwide. At the end of the year 1812, Aleksandr I declared several manifestos in which he emphasized the courage and participation of the whole nation in the defense of the fatherland.⁵⁸ The idea of a nationwide victory also had to be present in the monument whose construction was announced on 25 December 1812/6 January 1813⁵⁹, the day the enemy's army

⁵⁶ Lieven, Russia.

⁵⁷ *Sobranie Vysočajšich manifestov, Gramot, Ukazov, Reskriptov, prikazov vojskam i raznyh izvešenij posledovavših v tečenii 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815 i 1816 godov*, Sankt Petersburg, 1816, 14–16. Translation from: Evgenija Kiričenko, *Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Its Creation, Destruction, and Rebirth 1813-1997*, online publication, 2012, p. 3. http://www.thomashoisington.com/pdfs/Moscows_Cathedral_Kirichenko.pdf, 27 July 2015. Cf. Annex, Text 1.

⁵⁸ "The army, high and low nobility, clergy, merchants, the people – in short, all state officials and all states, not sparing their property nor their life, formed one single soul; the soul both courageous and pious, burning by the love to the Fatherland as well as to God." Manifest o prinesenii Gospodu Bogu blagodarnosti za osvoboždenie Rossii ot našestvija neprijatelja ot 25 dekabnja 1812 g., in: *Sankt-Peterburgskie senatskie vedomosti* 1, Sankt Peterburg 1813 January 4th; Cf also: *Sobranie*, 94–98, 139ff.

⁵⁹ *Sobranie*, 103f. It is worth noting the use of the words "fatherland" and "motherland" by the ruling elites from Aleksandr I to Putin's period. These terms could be employed as complementary, interchangeable or even opposite and could be loaded with the sentimental meaning and moral duty imperative based on the understanding of gender and familial relationships. For examples of different uses and for broader discussion cf. e. g. Alisher Faizullaev, *Individual Experiencing of States*, in: *Review of International Studies* 33/3, Cambridge 2007, 531–554; Victor Shnirelman,

left Russia. To conceive of this monument as a church consecrated to Christ the Savior was first proposed by Petr A. Kikin (1772–1834) in his letter to Vice–Admiral Aleksandr S. Šišikov (1754–1841). Besides the construction of the Cathedral, he proposed the establishment of an annual three-day-long festivity: the first day dedicated to church celebrations, the second to a military parade, and the third to the nation. These festivities were meant to embrace the whole nation that, in Kikin’s words, defeated the enemy by joining forces.⁶⁰ The nationwide aspect of the monument was also supported by the claim that the Cathedral would be built with donations collected from all over Russia.⁶¹

Nationwide trauma and nationwide victory were thus at the origin of the Russian national consciousness⁶² and should have also been translated into the importance of the monument-cathedral, an expression of national pride.⁶³

1.2. First Plan of the Cathedral

The winner of the architectural competition was chosen by the tsar himself. It was Karl Magnus Vitberg (1787–1855), a graduate of Petersburg’s Academy of Arts in painting. Vitberg had never studied architecture before; it was only after the opening of the contest that he dedicated two years to self-study of this discipline and worked on his plan for the Cathedral.⁶⁴

In his memoir, written in the early 1830s, Vitberg identifies his own proposal as typically Russian, orthodox and national, and declares that his aim was to project a cathedral worthy of the nation.⁶⁵ He then describes his success in materializing the idea of the tsar himself and in drafting

Stigmatized by History or by Historians? The Peoples of Russia in School History Textbooks, in: *History and Memory* 21/2, Special Issue: Historical Scholarship in Post-Soviet Russia, Gabriel Gorodetsky (Ed.), Indiana 2009, pp. 110–149; Karen Petrone, *Motherland Calling? National Symbols and the Mobilization for War*, in: *Picturing Russia, Explorations in Visual Culture*. Valerie A. Kivelson – Joan Neuberger (Eds.), Yale 2008, 196–200. Mark Bassin, *The Morning of Our Motherland: Fyodor Shurpin’s Portrait of Stalin*, in: *Picturing Russia*, 214–217.

⁶⁰ Petr Kikin, *Pervaja Mysl’ o postroenii Chrama Spasitelja v Moskve: Pis’mo k gosudarstvennomu sekretarju Aleksandru Semenoviču Šišikovu ot fligelad’jutanta P. A. Kikina*, in: *Ruskij archiv* 18/2, Moskva 1880, 228–232.

⁶¹ Aleksei Butorov, *Chram Christa Spasitelja. Istoriia stroitel’sтва i razrušeniia*, Moskva 1992, 13, 34, quoted by Smith, *An Old Cathedral*, 164.

⁶² According to Eugen Lemberg, shared suffering is one of the strongest links and important components for the creation of the nation. Lemberg sees it as a significant element of a construction of the community in the capacity of self-sacrifice which he explains by the human need to be devoted to some cause. Eugen Lemberg, *Nationalismus I, Psychologie und Geschichte*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1964, 16–34. The elements of suffering and self-sacrifice, inherently present in the war, could thus serve as a cornerstone for the national consciousness building.

⁶³ Importance of the catastrophe as an impulse to remembering was noticed also by Aleida Assmann: Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume*, 77. Mythos of the 1812 war become one of the, if not the, most important pilasters of the construction of national pride under Nicholas. Olga Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870*, Madison 2010; On the role of the war-mythos in the construction of the nation see: Michael Howard, *War and Nation*, in: John Hutchinson – Anthony Smith (Eds.), *Nationalism*, Oxford 1994, 254–257; Anthony Smith, *War and Ethnicity. The Role of Warfare in the Formation, Self-Images and Cohesion of Ethnic Communities*, in: *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4, 4, London 1981, 357–397.

⁶⁴ Alexandr Vitberg, *Zapisky A. L. Vitberga in A. Gercen, Sobranye sočineniia v 30ti tomach*, 1. vol, Moskva 1954, 380–452, here 382f.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 380f.

a real Russian cathedral.⁶⁶ Since Vitberg was Protestant, the tsar asked him to convert to Orthodoxy. He should have done this not because of the tsar, “but because of the nation/people” (dlja naroda).⁶⁷ In fact, it was appropriate that the Russian national church be built by a Russian Orthodox architect. Vitberg was baptised and received the name Aleksandr (before Karl Magnus) after the tsar who personally became his godfather.⁶⁸

Analysing Vitberg’s statements, it is necessary to consider his probable storytelling hyperbole. He writes in a very poignant way and he most likely exaggerates his own merits; it is also likely that he underlines the idea of the “national and typically Russian character” of his Cathedral on purpose. In fact, Vitberg wrote his memoirs in 1830s, a time when his construction had already been suspended and he had been sent into exile far from Moscow by the new tsar Nicholas I. In this period, as will be further demonstrated in the text, the coherence of a special architectural style and the “national idea” was much more pronounced in the official discourse than before. In this sense, Vitberg’s memoirs could be understood as an *ex post* defense of his own model of the Cathedral. Nevertheless, even if we take Vitberg’s account with some reservations, the fact remains that the tsar specifically chose Vitberg’s proposal to create the Russian national church and even though, as mentioned above, Vitberg had no architectural education, he ordered him personally to survey the construction.⁶⁹

Vitberg’s claim that his church plan (Fig. 1) was typically Russian, is however surprising. The building is characteristic for its classicist elements: four porticos and a dome with a colonnade around the drum, recalling the classical Pantheon in Rome (Fig. 5, 118–125) or European neoclassical buildings, such as Sainte Geneviève in Paris (Fig. 6, 1755) and St. Paul in London (Fig. 7, 1675–1711). Vitberg’s very first proposal (Fig. 8) could also be compared with the most important building of Latin Christianity – St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome (Fig. 9, 1506–1626). In fact, Vitberg wanted to surpass the main church of Latin Christianity⁷⁰ and he calls the style of the building “Greek style”⁷¹. Vitberg’s architectural choice is not surprising because it absolutely fits into the vogue of the time: other proposals submitted to the competition resembled Vitberg’s draft⁷² closely, as well as other buildings of those years, such as the Cathedral of the Kazan Mother of God (Fig. 10, 1801–1811) or the Cathedral of St. Isaac of Dalmatia (Fig. 11, 1818–1858), which show the same neoclassical elements.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 401.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, 417.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, 417.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, 403.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, 381.

⁷¹ Ibidem, 389, 406.

⁷² As was for example the project of Giacomo Quarenghi (1744–1817, Fig. 31). Kiričenko, Chram 21–23.

It is worth remembering that western architectural elements were implemented in the Russian Empire by Peter I and that the neo-classicist style was particularly in vogue under Catherine II.⁷³ This implies that Vitberg uses forms that are widely employed in the West and which have nothing distinctively Russian about them. How could Vitberg's claim then be explained, that his Cathedral was typically Russian? And above all, how could Aleksandr's choice be understood?

According to Vitberg's own explanation, the difference between his and other proposals consisted in the fact that the others were only interested in outer beauty, without having any religious idea; on the contrary, his own construction had "deep inner meaning".⁷⁴ For Vitberg, it was precisely the presence of religious ideas behind the bare western architectural forms that gave the church spiritual meaning and thus special Russian character.⁷⁵ Vitberg gave an explanation for every architectural form and devised a sophisticated system in which each form had its own significance.⁷⁶ On the basis of this system, he projected the three-story CCS (Fig. 2). Underground, he conceived of a catacomb to remember the victims of 1812.⁷⁷ It is important that Vitberg wanted to record the names of all the killed soldiers there, from common soldiers to main commandants. According to Kiričenko, this was an unprecedented proposal at the time, because common soldiers were never memorialized by name next to upper ranks.⁷⁸ In this idea of Vitberg's, the attempt to construct a *national* church belonging to all the people without any distinction is again visible.

The whole system that Vitberg uses to explain his architectural decisions is, according to his contemporaries, based on mysticism and free-Masonic principles.⁷⁹ This aspect is not surprising, it being known that Vitberg was introduced into the masonic lodge Dying Sphinx.⁸⁰ It must be said that, under Aleksandr I, freemasonry was relatively widespread and enjoyed the interest and support of the significant part of the aristocracy and even the Tsar himself.⁸¹ And it was probably the very mysticism on which Vitberg's plan was based that aroused enthusiasm not only from the tsar but also from certain aristocrats. It is also according to Vladimir Stasov (1824—1906), critic of art and proponent of the Russian style, that Vitberg's success should be explained by "mysticism".⁸²

⁷³ William C. Brumfield, *A History of Russian Architecture*, Cambridge/New York 2004, 201–227, 261–348.

⁷⁴ Vitberg, *Zapisky*, 385.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, 389.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, 386.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 387.

⁷⁸ Kiričenko, *Chram*, 29.

⁷⁹ For Vitberg's sympathy for mysticism and involvement in free-masonry cf. Aleksandr Herzen, *Byloe i dumy. Čast' vtoraja*, Moskva 1958, 277–278; Kiričenko, *Chram*, 26–27; Olga Medvedkova, *Solomonov Chram – dom premudrosti: k istorii neosuščestvennogo proekta Chrama Christa Spasitelja architekatora A. L. Vitberga*, in: *Revue des études slaves*, 65/3, 1993, 459–468. For more information about free-masonry in Russia in the nineteenth century: Andrej Serkov, *Istoria russkogo masonstva XIX veka*, Sankt-Peterburg 2000.

⁸⁰ Medvedkova, *Solomonov*, 464.

⁸¹ Serkov, *Istoria*.

⁸² Vladimir Stasov, *Naša arhitektura za poslednich 25 let*, in: *Vestnik Evropy* 18/5, Sankt-Peterburg 1883, 433–464, here 438.

Vitberg's masonic symbolism and mysticism could certainly not be considered as something typically Russian, as he alleged. At this point, however, it is important to stress once more that Vitberg wrote his memoirs in 1830, when the emphasis in architecture was put on the Russian-national character. This could have led Vitberg to modify his narrative in this direction. Nevertheless, Vitberg's own apology serves as an impulse for going into a broader reflection: as mentioned, architectural forms used by Vitberg corresponded fully with the fashion of the time; they were neoclassical, western. And it is precisely this similarity and Vitberg's endeavour to surpass western architecture by using its same forms for the Russian national cathedral-monument that indicate Russia's desire to "belong to Europe" and to "be Europe". This approach in architecture corresponds thus with Russian foreign policy of the time and Aleksandr's efforts to cooperate with western powers on a new organization of Europe.⁸³

The foundation stone was solemnly laid down at Vorobe Gory on 12 October 1817, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Napoleon's withdrawal from Moscow. However, Aleksandr I died in 1825 and Nicholas I succeeded to the throne. His ascension to the throne brought about many changes in nearly all the political and social domains⁸⁴ and also affected the construction of the Cathedral. In 1826, Nicholas suspended building operations, allegedly because of technical and financial problems. Shortly afterwards, Vitberg was sent out of Moscow and forced to stay in the city of Vjatka. Apart from technical problems and court intrigues⁸⁵ the fact that the new tsar had a completely different opinion on the design of the national church from his predecessor contributed to the fall of Vitberg's plan in a major way.

1.3. Second Plan for the Cathedral

1.3.1. Description

In 1830, Nicholas opened a new architectural competition, from which he chose the proposal of Konstantin Ton. A young architect, a member of the Academy of Arts, he had already created projects for two churches – St. Catherine's church by Kalikin's Bridge in Tsarskoe Selo (Fig. 12) and the second St. Catherine church in Petersburg (Fig. 13).⁸⁶

⁸³ For Aleksandr's foreign politics see: Vasilij Nadler, *Imperator Aleksandr I i idea Svjaščennogo sojuza*, Moskva 2011; Francis Ley, *Alexandre 1er et sa Sainte-Alliance: 1811–1825: avec des documents inédits*, Paris 1975.

⁸⁴ Nicholas Riasanovsky – Judith Zacek, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia. The Apogee of Autocracy, 1825–1855*, Gulf Breeze 1974; Dominic Lieven, *Nicholas II. Twilight of the Empire*, New York 1994.

⁸⁵ Vitberg presents himself as a victim of court intrigues. Aleksandr Vitberg, *Avtobiografija i perepiska s Aleksandrom Ivanovičem Gercenom*, in: *Russkaja starina*, 26 and 27, 1876, 109–126, 267–296, 759–770, here 109–126.

⁸⁶ Tat'jana Slavina, *Konstantin Ton*, Leningrad 1989, 37–38; Stasov, *Naša arhitektura*, 440.

The new location for Ton's Cathedral of Christ the Savior was chosen in 1832⁸⁷ not far from Kremlin, on Moscow-river's bank at the place of the Alekseevskij Monastery.⁸⁸ The founding stone, however, was laid only on 10 September 1839.⁸⁹ At that time, 27 years had already passed since the Russian victory, and the monument–national Cathedral had not been built yet. This led to popular scepticism and to doubts that the building would be ever finished.⁹⁰ There was thus a need to reawaken the common enthusiasm and to legitimize the change of plan. It was also important to stress the continuity between the two projects. This task was accomplished during the foundation ceremony by Moscow's metropolitan Filaret (Vasilij M. Drozdov, 1782–1876), who used a parallel between the chosen Jewish nation and Russian people for this purpose.⁹¹ This comparison between the Jewish people and the “new chosen people” – Russian people, as well as the idea of Moscow – New Jerusalem are not unusual in Russian history.⁹² However, in this case it has, besides the general meaning of the “choosiness” of the Russian nation, a concrete sense. Aleksandr and Nicholas were likened to Salomon and David, and the Cathedral to the Temple of Jerusalem.⁹³ The parallel between the histories of these two nations was planned to be visible in the external as well as internal decoration. Next to the scenes of David and Salomon (Fig. 14) and David's victory over Goliath (Fig. 15), there were sequences from Russian history – Minin and Požarsky and Dmitri Donskoj (Fig. 16). These decorations also served to strengthen the role of the Cathedral as a national monument.

If Vitberg's (Fig. 1, 2) and Ton's plans (Fig. 3, 4) are compared, the difference is striking. The three-story church with neoclassical forms was replaced by a building with a Greek cross ground plan, four identical white facade walls, each of them divided into three parts with four relief pilasters, finishing with semicircles called *zakomary*. Between facades, there are bell towers crowned, like the central dome, with gilded onion-like cupola. The lower third of the facades is decorated with reliefs of narrative scenes, the higher one with busts of Christ and the Virgin Mary and Saints in medallions (Fig. 17). In the middle part, as well as on the drum of the cupola, there are elongated rounded windows. Along the inner circumference there is a two-story gallery where a museum remembering the war of 1812 is located. In this part of the church, marble tablets with names of fallen soldiers are placed. However, not all names are present, as proposed by Vitberg, but only the

⁸⁷ Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj Imperii, sobranie vtoroe, vol. VII, 1832, 198, N. 5288.

⁸⁸ Kiričenko, Chram, 48–53.

⁸⁹ Fedot Kuztičev, Toržestvo zakladki Chrama vo imja Christa Spasitelja 10-go sentjabrja 1839 goda. Pismo k drugu v Pariž, Moskva 1840.

⁹⁰ Kiričenko, Chram, 50–53.

⁹¹ Mostovskij, Opisanie, 38–41.

⁹² Daniel B. Rowland, Moscow–The Third Rome or the New Israel?, in: The Russian Review 55, New Jersey 1996, 591–614.

⁹³ Mostovskij, Opisanie, 38–40; Kiričenko, Chram, 50–51. On the importance of the “Moscow–Jerusalem” parallel see also James N. Class, New Israel Counters Napoleon, in: Russian History 41/1, Boston 2014, 39–54.

names from higher ranks, along with trophies and transcriptions of important texts linked to the war.⁹⁴

The interior of the Cathedral according to Ton's first proposal should have been decorated with mosaics⁹⁵, in his second plan, by wall paintings in old-Russian style, but finally, "because of lack of skill", it was decorated based on "academic manner".⁹⁶

The above-mentioned worsening of the people's attitude towards the construction and the consequent attempts of the tsarist elite to maintain, despite apparent difficulties, enthusiasm, reveal dynamics of communication – concerning the Cathedral – between ordering part of the art piece, *i.e.* the tsarist power, and viewers. Once the post-war popular enthusiasm for construction had disappeared, it was replaced by a strong discourse which, as will be discussed further, not only promotes the construction itself but also dictates its design. Chosen aesthetical elements should, in this case explicitly, confirm actual politics and help to forge a concrete opinion about the character of Russia's identity in the viewer.

1.3.2. National Style

The style of Ton's Cathedral, as described above, was completely new and unusual. The only buildings close to the Cathedral were the two previously mentioned churches by Ton, dedicated to St. Catherine (Figs. 12, 13). These, at that time, were not yet finished.

It must be stressed that no preferred style was indicated in the competition, and architects had to search on their own for forms that could respond to the tsar's idea of a national cathedral. Most of the proposals contained neoclassical elements and resembled the original Vitberg proposal. However, the tsar chose Ton's unusual project⁹⁷ and – through this choice – he made Ton's style the national style. In this sense, the existence as well as the form of national style, although presented as natural in the official discourse, were "dictated" from above.

The rest of this chapter concentrates on the characteristics of this style and on the role the Cathedral played in searching for and creating Russian national art. The main questions to be discussed are: how the new architectural form of the Cathedral reflected Russia's self-perception, including the view of its position between East and West, and what role the CCS, as a national church built in national style, plays in the creation of the Russian national identity.

As already demonstrated, the differences between Vitberg's first plan and Ton's second plan are significant. The shock for the viewers was important, also because Vitberg's proposal corresponded

⁹⁴ Slavina, Konstantin, 115.

⁹⁵ Nestor V. Kukolnik, *Uspechi architektury v Rossii v poslednee trech-letie*, in: *Biblioteka dlja čtenija* 38, Sankt-Peterburg 1840, 119–140, here 137.

⁹⁶ Slavina, Konstantin, 116.

⁹⁷ There was one more plan going in the similar direction. Its author was A. Kutenov. Kiričenko, *Chram*, 45.

fully with the taste of the Russian elites and it matched other buildings constructed in that period. On the contrary, Ton's project was, as mentioned, totally unusual, chosen only through the tsar's personal decision. The lapse of time between the suspension of the first construction and the approval of the second one was only five years⁹⁸, a time too short for tastes in society to change. This change of taste was "ordered from above" and the first and main means of this change became the very CCS, the Russian national church. In his politics concerning architecture, the tsar didn't limit himself to his decision about the style of the Cathedral. In addition, he issued an order to use the so-called national style for all church buildings. This national style was defined as follows: in 1830, Ton obtained to use drawings of various old (pre-Petrin) Russian churches, collected up from all over the empire.⁹⁹ On the basis of these materials, he had to prepare an album of architectural drafts.¹⁰⁰ In 1841, a tsar's directive was issued to "build church buildings in Byzantine style, with the possibility to take inspiration in Ton's proposals".¹⁰¹ Ton's new architectural forms of the so-called Russian-Byzantine or Byzantine style, were thus no longer inspired by western classical models, but had to refer to genuine Russian history and culture, which were declared to be independent of the West.¹⁰²

As already stressed, the new forms were introduced into the public sphere by the tsar's order, and their arrival was relatively sudden. Old Russian art and architecture had still only been partly studied under Aleksandr I, however had been a private initiative of lone enthusiasts.¹⁰³ Generally, only the academic method of art and architecture, based on classical principles, was esteemed in society, and this attitude was abandoned very slowly. When Ton, in 1832, wanted to present his plan for the CCS as a final work to apply for the title of professor, the response of the Academy was that: "Architectural drawings to obtain academic titles must absolutely be made in an elegant and classical style".¹⁰⁴

In fact, in the academic milieu, classical principals were first called into question in 1834 by Michail D. Bykovsky (1801–1885) in his speech "About the illegitimacy of the belief that Greek and Roman architecture is universal and that the beauty of architecture is based on five

⁹⁸ Mostovskij, *Opisanie*, 23.

⁹⁹ In 1835 there was only 138 sheets collected. The number was small and information insufficient and inaccurate. Slavina, Konstantin, 86.

¹⁰⁰ There were two volumes, first was issued in 1839. The second one was formed in 1844 on the explicit demand of the Holy Synod, which asked to have prototypes of smaller and more simple village churches. Slavina, Konstantin, 86.

¹⁰¹ St. 218 *Ustava Stroitel'nogo T XII Svoda Zakonov izdanija 1857 g.*, Sankt-Peterburg 1841 Mart, 25. 14392. Cf. Annex, Text 2.

¹⁰² E.g., Ivan Snegirev, *Pamjatniki Moskovskoj Drevnosti*, Moskva 1842–1845, p. CV–CVI.

¹⁰³ I.a. Petr I. Keppen (1793–1864), Pavel P. Svinin (1787–1839), Andrej E. Martynov (1768–1826), Andrej A. Ornatskij (1778–1827), Evfimij A. Volchovitinov (1767–1837), Aleksej N. Olenin (1763–1843), Fedor G. Solncev (1801–1892) and Nikolaj E. Efimov (1799–1851). Tat'jana Slavina, *Issledovateli russkogo zodčestva*, Leningrad 1983, 27–45.

¹⁰⁴ CGIA SSSR, f. 789, op. 20, Olenin, 1832, d. 14, l. 1–7 quoted by Slavina, Konstantin, 52.

principles”.¹⁰⁵ It was, however, only the first such public declaration, and his view was a minority view. Another case that demonstrates how deeply rooted classical values were is Princess Volkonskaja’s proposal to build national museum. At the beginning of 1830, Russia still had no National Museum of Art. Curiously, when Zinaida A. Volkonskaja (1792–1862) published her concrete proposal for its construction in the journal ‘Teleskop’ in 1831, she omitted Russian art completely – despite the fact that she sponsored many Russian artists. As pointed out by Rosalind Blakesley: “There was to be nothing self-reflective in Russia’s new museum, nothing that acknowledged or explored the country’s Slavic or Byzantine heritage, let alone the achievements of its modern artists.” What is more significant – Volkonskaja’s attitude surprised none of her contemporaries and raised no criticisms. The first museum of Russian art was opened first in 1892.¹⁰⁶

This case shows quite clearly that it was tsarist politics to stimulate interest for Russian art and to promote its growth in several ways. The tsar’s manifestos concerned the mapping of Russian historical buildings and their protection and conservation.¹⁰⁷ An important task was also to broaden general awareness about Russian architecture – in 1837, by Nicholas’s order, the journal ‘Gubernskie vedomosti’ was founded, which was spread throughout the empire and became the first mass media informing about the histories of towns and provinces and their architectural monuments.¹⁰⁸ In addition, study and explorer tours were organized in different parts of Russia, in order to learn and collect materials about Russian art and architecture, and the first books on these issues were published.¹⁰⁹ The process was, nevertheless, slow and gradual. It is therefore important to underline that Ton’s Cathedral, as well as its national Russian-Byzantine style, came into existence in a period when knowledge of old Russian as well as Byzantine monuments was minimal.¹¹⁰ Konstantin Ton was in some measure familiar with old Russian architecture, having to

¹⁰⁵ Michail D. Bykovskij, *Reč o neosnovatel’nosti mnenija, čto arhitektura grečeskaja, ili greko-rimskaja možet byt’ vseobščej, i čto krasota architektury osnovyvaetsja na pjati izvestnyh činopoloženijach, govorennaja na toržestvennom akte moskovskogo dvorcovogo arhitekturnogo učilišča*, maja 8 dnja 1834 g., Moskva 1834.

¹⁰⁶ Rosalind Blakesley, *Art, Nationhood, and Display. Zinaida Volkonskaia and Russia’s Quest for a National Museum of Art*, in: *Slavic Review* 67/4, Seattle 2008, 912–933, here 912, 921, 930, 931.

¹⁰⁷ There were two directives issued: First ordered to collect from all gubernias information about the existence and condition of old monuments. The second one restricted the reconstruction of these monuments and order their preservation. Cf. Evgenija Kiričenko, ‘Pamjatniki drevnego russkogo zодčestva...’ F. F. Richtera v kontekste ruskoj kul’tury serediny XIX v., in: Irina Komarova (Ed.), *Zabytyj zодčij. K 190 – letiju si dnja roždenija akademika architektury F. F. Richtera*, Moskva 2000, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Kiričenko, *Pamjatniki*, 15.

¹⁰⁹ For the first scholars and publications concerning Russian architecture see: Slavina, *Issledovateli*.

¹¹⁰ In connection of this topic, it is worthy to quote the description of the situation by Fedor F. Richter who laments the bad knowledge of Russian architecture: “The Russian Architecture represents a very little labored field; the construction date is rarely stated by the chronographs or, when it is so, it is always done in very imprecise manner. If the time of construction is stated, rarely any date is given, usually there is simply the reign or the century and it is doubtful if this information is always precise. Even on the buildings and in the respective annals, the years of construction are confused with those of restorations as well as the names of the rulers and patriarchs under which they

use drawings of churches collected from throughout the empire. These materials were however quite poor and their data and annotation were insufficient.¹¹¹ Later in the nineteenth century, when it was possible to compare Ton's architecture with his alleged models, he was criticized for lack of knowledge and imprecision.

To summarize, considering the main characteristics of Ton's new national style – the alleged origins in Byzantine and Russian medieval history as well as the strong accompanying patriotic discourse and efforts of the ruling elite to implement this new style – it can be concluded that the CCS is a typical case of “invention” and “construction” of national art and national history, as described by Hobsbawm.¹¹² Certainly, Russia is in no way an exception in its quest for national style. Similar tendencies had been in progress in European countries since the middle of the eighteenth century, and Russians themselves were aware of this paradox – Russia was leaving Western classical models behind and turning to its own history, in all this effort however again following European example. Lev V. Dal' (1834–1878) writes about this issue in 1872: “If, on one hand, we can rejoice that the Russian style promises to acquire predominant significance, on the other hand, we should even more not forget that this new architectural direction was partially caused by the habit of imitating the West. Abroad they have already been interested in medieval European constructions for a long time.”¹¹³

1.3.3. National Style and National Identity – Byzantine Heritage or Russian Sovereignty?

In his 1841 manifesto, tsar Nicolas used the term “Byzantine”¹¹⁴ for the new architecture. Ton himself defined it as “Byzantine style, which since ancient times has grown together with elements of our national character (narodnost)”.¹¹⁵ The question thus arises: in what sense should be the attribute of “Byzantine” be understood? What kind of connection is there between the Cathedral

were restored. Because of the restorations that took place at different periods, it is not only difficult but even impossible to set down an exact order.” Fedor F. Richter, *Pamjatniki drevnego russkogo zodčestva*, Moscow 1850–1856, II.

¹¹¹ Lev Dal', *Sochranenie drevne-russkich pamjatnikov*. Pis'mo L. V. Dalja, in: *Zodčij* 3, Sankt-Peterburg 1874, 156–157; Slavina, Konstantin, 86.

¹¹² Hobsbawm, Introduction, 1–14.

¹¹³ L. Dal', *Istoričeskoe issledovanie pamjatnikov russkago zodčestva*, in: *Zodčij* 2, Sankt-Peterburg 1872, 9–11, here 10.

¹¹⁴ St. 218 *Ustava Stroitel'nogo*, *Svoda Zakonov izdanija* 1857 g., vol. 12, Sankt-Peterburg 1852, 1841 Mart, 25. 14392; In the first half of the century, the terminology in the field of architecture was blurred and disunited. It led to certain confusion also in later professional publications. The style of the CCS was also called “Russian-Byzantine”(russkij-vizantijskij), “old-Russian” (drevnij russkij), “Byzantine” (vizantijskij), “eclectic style”, “Ton's style” or “national style”. Slavina, Konstantin, 92–93. For the description of different used terms see: Evgenija Kiškinova, “Vizantijskoe vozroždénie” v arhitekture Rossii. Seredina XIX – načalo XX veka, Sankt-Peterburg 2007, 4–6.

¹¹⁵ Konstantin Ton, *Proekty cerkvej, sočinennye arhitektorom ego imp. Veličestva, professorom arhitektury Imperatorskoj Akademii chudožestv i členom raznyh inostrannyh akademij Konstantinom Tonom*, Sankt-Peterburg 1844, 1.

and Byzantine architecture?¹¹⁶ Or, to be more precise, to what point does this connection reside in physical resemblance and when does it become part of rhetoric of power? Finally, what sort of role does “Byzantium” play in the construction of Russian national identity? The study of these questions in regard to the CCS offers a specific possibility to observe the creation of Russian national identity between the East and the West and the changes in Russian attitude to the heritage of the East Roman Empire – Byzantium. According to Kiričenko, the Cathedral built in Ton’s Russian-Byzantine style should have been a visual claim of belonging to Byzantine heritage and was meant to demonstrate *translatio imperii* and the continuity between “the second Rome” – Constantinople, and the “third one” – Moscow.¹¹⁷ This assertion is, however, problematic and a deeper analysis is needed.

To understand the use of the term “Byzantine” and its place in the emerging Russian national identity, it is necessary to consider three elements: first, complications caused by confusing architectural terminology; second, “materiality”, meaning the very form itself of buildings; third, it is important to consider a broader reflection about national identity and Byzantine heritage in the Russia of the time. First, it is important to premise that the architectural terminology for different types of architecture and styles at the beginning of the nineteenth century was far from being unified. The term “Byzantine” was used (in specialized texts as well as in the common use) not only for Ton’s architecture, but above all for old Russian, pre-Petrine architecture. Moscow’s Kremlin, for example, is thus qualified as Byzantine.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, if this pre-Petrine architecture is compared with the various important architectures of the Byzantine period (Hagia Sofia (VI. s., Fig. 18), Hosios Lukas (XI. s., Fig 19.), or St. Maria Peribleptos (XIII. c.), a big problem appears: practically no concrete resemblance can be found. The same holds true if one searches for the resemblance between these Byzantine constructions and the Cathedral. Seeing practically no resemblance in the visual aspects, how should the use of the concept of “Byzantine” be explained? Is it possible that people using the term “Byzantine” for pre-Petrine architecture were convinced that it was identical with the architecture of the Byzantine Empire? Looking at the above-mentioned differences, this question may seem superfluous; it is, however, worthy of detailed reflection. The fact of matter is, that in the nineteenth century there was no possibility of comparing the above-mentioned architectures,

¹¹⁶ Under “Byzantine architecture” main important buildings from different moments of Byzantine period are understood. These are above all: (Hagia Sofia (VI. c., Fig. 18), Hosios Lukas (XI. c., Fig 19), or Sv. Maria Peribleptos (XIII. c.).

¹¹⁷ Kiričenko, Chram, 52–53.

¹¹⁸ Vitberg, Zapisky, 404; Passek, Iz dal’nych let, 32. Vitberg qualifies also the Simonov monastyr as “Byzantine”. Vitberg, Zapisky, 406; At the end of eighteenth century, the adjective “gothic” was also used for the Russian medieval architecture. This expression should have, in the same way as in the West, signify “local original architecture”. Finally this expression did not take root. On the use of terms “gothic” and “byzantine” see Slavina, Konstantin, 91.

unlike in the twentieth century. Church buildings of the one-time Byzantine Empire were at that time in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. They were destroyed or transformed into mosques, and studying them was impossible or at least very complicated – the first drawings and measurements of Constantinople's Hagia Sophia were sent to the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1848.¹¹⁹ Besides, as already mentioned, in the first half of the century, Byzantine as well as old Russian art inspired only limited interest among architects and intellectuals, with classical style still being considered the best one.

It is then possible to suppose that in the first half of the eighteenth century, the style of medieval Russian churches was, because of lack of information, really considered to be the same as that used in the Byzantine Empire. This error could have been based on the assumption that the byzantine architecture arrived in Russia together with the faith and in consequence, after the Christianisation of Russia (988), new churches were built after Byzantine models and their style was called “Byzantine”. In the same logic, Ton's architecture, based on pre-Petrine models that were considered “Byzantine”, was in its turn also considered so. This error was later observed by several intellectuals, such as by Dal', who wrote in 1872: “However, there was an unexpected attack prepared against the predominance of our Byzantine style. With the first pictures of Byzantine churches in Athens and Constantinople, published by Gaillabaud, it became apparent that the similarity of our churches built in Byzantine style with genuine Byzantine cathedrals is more than doubtful”.¹²⁰ In the same way, Stasov declared in 1883: “In the times of Konstantin Ton, we had just the most confused ideas about Byzantine architecture. In fact, we started to know something about it only much later, thanks to numerous drawings by Russian architects who, at the end of the 1840s, set out for Greece and the East. However, all of them until Gornostaev thought about using this architecture in their constructions.”¹²¹

To summarize these arguments, the architecture of Ton's Cathedral, based on elements of old Russian churches that were considered “Byzantine”, was also seen as “Byzantine”.¹²² The logical following of this reflection could then be the hypothesis that the Cathedral should have been an explicit and visual manifest of the presence of Byzantine heritage in the Russia of that time, as asserted, for example, by Kiričenko.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Kiškinova, “Vizantijskoe vozrožděnie”, 23.

¹²⁰ Dal', *Istoričeskoe isledovanie*, 10.

¹²¹ Stasov, *Naša arhitektura*, 454.

¹²² This hypothesis seems probable also because similar mechanism of lack of knowledge and subsequent confusion of “Byzantine” and “Russian” was described also in the case of Russian/Byzantine icons: Xenia Muratova, *La riscoperta delle icone russe e il ‘revival’ bizantino*, in: Enrico Castelnuovo – Giuseppe Sergi (Eds.), *Medioevo al passato e al presente, Arti e storia del Medioevo* 4, Torino 2004, 589–606; Ivan Foletti, *Da Bisanzio alla Santa Russia. Nikodim Kondakov (1844–1925) e la nascita della storia dell'arte in Russia*, Roma 2011.

¹²³ Kiričenko, *Chram*, 52f.

A second possible point of this hypothesis of “Cathedral demonstration of Byzantine heritage” could be that it was not meant to be a real resemblance as such, which was important in the nineteenth century, but the related discourse was important. There could even have been some degree of awareness of the differences between Russian and Byzantine architecture among the few specialists but in fact, the physical appearance of the buildings was not the decisive element. What was decisive was the accompanying discourse, which gave names to architectural forms and explained them. The purpose of this discourse would be to demonstrate the alleged origins of the Russian empire and also to legitimize current politics by binding them to the “invented architectural tradition”.¹²⁴ However, considering the broader reflection on national identity then, as well as the first professional texts on Russian architecture, the role of the Cathedral as a reference to Byzantium seems to be more problematic. In fact, the earliest texts about Russian art and architecture put no stress on the continuity between the Byzantine and Russian empires. Instead of *translatio imperii*, the emphasis is laid on the emergence of independent (samobytnoe) Russian art. Architectural monuments are presented as fundamental sources of information about the history of Russia’s own nation or as an inspiration for actual artists creating in the “national” style. Important researchers and the first specialists on old Russian art, Ivan M. Snegirev (1793–1868) and Aleksej A. Martynov (1820–1895), in one of the first books on the subject, entitled ‘Russkaja starina v pamjatnikach cerkovnogo i graždanskogo zodčestva’, accentuated exactly this importance of the monuments for the study of national history; Byzantium as a starting point for Russian art is mentioned only cursorily.¹²⁵ In the introduction to another publication, ‘Pamjatniki Moskovskoj drevnosti’, Snegirev omits Byzantium completely. He stresses again the “national”, using expressions such as “monuments of the internal as well as public life of the nation” and “objects dear to the Russian heart”. He also claims that “love for the past of the motherland is inseparable from the love for the motherland itself”.¹²⁶ Fedor F. Richter (?–1868), author of one of the first albums of Russian architecture ‘Pamjatniki drevnego russkogo zodčestva, snjatye s natury’ mentions Byzantium only once, as the root of Russian art: “Byzantine civilisation, in the period of its highest perfection, transmitted [its art] to Russia before becoming known by the rest of Europe; it is not without reason, that Russian chronicles compared Kiev to Byzantium.” However, the main

¹²⁴ As an example of such an article E. Hobsbawm mentions the use of the Gothic style for the British parliament in the nineteenth century. Hobsbawm, Introduction, 1f.

¹²⁵ Ivan Snegirev and Aleksej Martynov, *Russkaja starina v pamjatnikach cerkovnogo i graždanskogo zodčestva*, Moskva 1852, 8f.

¹²⁶ Ivan Snegirev, *Pamjatniki Moskovskoj Drevnosti*, Moskva 1842–1845, IV.

emphasis is again put on the national “genuinely Russian” art, on its continuity and progress and on the *génie national*.¹²⁷

To summarize, the professional debate about Russian art and architecture in the 1830s and 1840s was not interested in the question of *translatio imperii* and dealt only marginally with the question of the origins of Russian art. In the first half of the century, practically all texts on Russian architecture praised, as shown above, “the own Russian character of art” and demonstrated “development leading to the Russian independent style”. Byzantium, if mentioned, has only a secondary role. The theme of the sources of Russian architecture and art came to the foreground fully in the 1870s in the reaction to the book ‘De l’architecture Russe’¹²⁸ by French historian Viollet-le-Duc. It is also in the 1870s that the journal *Zodčij*¹²⁹ started to be published and served as a platform for discussion of Russian art and its origins.

This statement may be less surprising if contextualized into the then broader debate about Russian identity. In fact, the theme of Byzantium as Russia’s predecessor emerges among the intelligentsia only gradually. First in 1836, Petr Ja. Čaadaev published his ‘Philosophic letter’.¹³⁰ In this text, he criticized Russia’s cultural, social and political situation. Only in reaction to this, an animated debate started among the intelligentsia, about Russia’s place in the world and about its past and its further path. As a consequence of this debate, two schools of thought came into existence – the so-called Westernizers and Slavophiles.¹³¹ The first one saw Russia’s future in its coming closer to Europe. In the second one, the theme of East and Byzantium was developed for the first time. Russia is presented as a specific place between East and West, not belonging to either of them and combining different elements.¹³²

An explicit description of Russia as the heir of Byzantium and therefore the legitimate protector of Orthodoxy and the Slavs first appeared after the Crimean war (1853–1856), in the frames of the Slavophil current, concretely in the concepts of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Orthodoxy and in Konstantin N. Leontev’s and Nicholas Ja. Danilevskij’s cultural-historical system.¹³³ An interconnection between the study of Byzantine history and art and the political claims using “Byzantine heritage”

¹²⁷ “[L]a civilisation byzantine, à l’époque de sa plus haute perfection, a passé [son art] en Russie avant d’avoir été connu du reste de l’Europe; et [...] ce n’est pas sans raison, que les annales russes ont comparé Kiew à Byzance.” Richter, *Pamjatniki*, I-II.

¹²⁸ Eugen Viollet le Duc, *L’Art russe. Ses origines ses éléments constitutifs, son apogée, son avenir*, Paris 1877.

¹²⁹ *Zodčij* was issued for the first time in 1872.

¹³⁰ Pierre Tchaadaev, *Lettres philosophiques, adressées à une dame. Présentées par François Rouleau*, Paris 1970. Čaadaev wrote *Lettres philosophiques* in the years 1829–1831 and published in 1836, in the revue *Teleskop*.

¹³¹ For the overview on Slavophiles and Westernizers: Michel Heller, *Histoire de la Russie et de son Empire*, Paris 1999, 709–727.

¹³² Robin Aizlewood, *Revisiting Russian Identity in Russian Thought. from Chaadaev to the Early Twentieth Century*, in: *The Slavonic and East European Review* 78/1, London 2000, 20–43, here 29.

¹³³ Denis Vovchenko, *Modernizing Orthodoxy. Russia and the Christian East (1856–1914)*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 78/2, Baltimore 2012, 295–317; Billington, *Russia*, 7–22.

as an argument is visible only after the Polish uprising (1863) and after the Russian victory in the Russian-Turkish war (1878). The culmination of this tendency was the Foundation of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople in 1895.¹³⁴ In this period, as will be discussed further, new “Byzantine elements” appear in architecture as well.

Also in the twentieth century the oft-quoted concept of Moscow–Third Rome (which put Moscow in continuity with Rome and Constantinople) first appeared in the public space legally in 1860. This idea formulated at the beginning of the sixteenth century by monk Philoteus was, in fact, soon used by the schismatic group of Old Believers to criticize church reforms as well as tsarist power. For this reason it was banned by the censorship.¹³⁵

The above-mentioned arguments show that in the 1830s, there was no clear discourse linking the Russian-Byzantine style of the Cathedral with the idea of *translatio imperii* and its political consequences.¹³⁶ It is thus difficult to imagine that the Cathedral was understood as the manifest of Russian imperial continuity.

Architectural forms could, of course, provoke visual associations, but they don’t bear any objective meaning and could be interpreted in different ways. This was visible in the case of Vitberg’s plan, accompanied by the author’s elaborated discourse, which makes the typical Russian church from usual classical elements, surpassing its Latin counterparts. A similar example of the “interpretation of forms” is present also in the works of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, Viktor Butovsky (1815–1881) and Natalis Rondot (1821–1900). These men of science tried to demonstrate, based on their analysis of architectural elements in Russian territory, Asiatic origins of Russia.¹³⁷ Only these two examples are sufficient for the assertion that a strong accompanying discourse was needed to explain the CCS. This discourse seems to be even needed in the situation when, as

¹³⁴ Otkrytie Russkogo Archeologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole 26-go Fevralja 1895 goda, in: Izvestija Russkogo Archeologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole 1, Konstantinopol 1896, 1–21.

¹³⁵ Marshall Poe, Moscow, the Third Rome. The Origins and Transformations of a ‘Pivotal Moment’, in: *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Neue Folge 49/3, Stuttgart 2001, 412–429. Philoteus’ text was published for the first time in 1861.

¹³⁶ The absence of the “Byzantine discourse” was demonstrated also by Pavel Rakitin, who studied Byzantine echoes in the Russian nineteenth century press:

„Echoes of the Byzantine Empire in 19th century Russia had a very limited reach on the readers of the initial mass media. The mass reader was never presented with comparisons between contemporary Russia and the Byzantine Empire, even during the wars against the Ottomans, when such context could be expected. [...] The architects and their critics may have consciously followed the patterns of Byzantine art, but the newspapers would not translate these ideas en masse, since it would exceed the generally low level of education among the readership. We therefore see that the institutional and artistic influences of the Byzantine legacy were stripped of all historical perspectives (unless we talk about community of scholars like Uspenskiy or Kondakov).” Pavel Rakitin, *Byzantine Echoes in the nineteenth century press and in the writings of Russian intellectuals*, in: Ivan Foletti – Zuzana Frantová (Eds.) *Byzantium, Russia and Europe, Opuscula Historiae Artium* 18/Supplementum, Brno 2013, 98–109, here 107.

¹³⁷ Butovsky was director of Museum of Industrial Art in Moscow; Rondot was economist and cofounder of the museum. Lauren M. O’Connell, *Constructing the Russian Other. Viollet-le-Duc and the Politics of an Asiatic Past*, in: James Cracraft and Daniel B. Rowland, *Architectures of Russian Identity. 1500 to the Present*, Ithaca/New York 2003, 90–100.

mentioned, the previous “classicist” style had been pushed aside and the new one had not yet had sufficient support among neither theoreticians nor architects. As demonstrated, the main emphasis was put on the “Russianess” of the Cathedral and of Ton’s style in general. The principal point was the search for genuinely Russian indigenous national roots, as was the case for other countries in Europe. Byzantium played a minor role in this period, as one of many elements of Russian culture and architecture, which permitted Russia to be distinctive from Europe. Only in following years would the emphasis on the Byzantine heritage become more important – in art and architecture, as well as in politics.

Finally, also the “visual argument”, although susceptible to various interpretations, shows that Ton’s Cathedral is much more in dialogue with old Russian churches in Kremlin (Fig. 20, 21) or Saint Sophia in Novgorod (Fig. 22) than with buildings of the Byzantine empire. Thus, even the “visual parallel” refers to pre-Petrine Russia¹³⁸ and not to Byzantium.

In this logic, Ton’s own description of his style could be understood – “Byzantine style, which since ancient times grew together with elements of our national character (narodnost)”¹³⁹ – if the emphasis is put not on the first but on the second part of the sentence. Byzantium stands implicitly as “different” from Europe, but it is only the base on which proper Russian art was constructed.

1.3.4. Reception of Ton’s Cathedral and the Legacy of Russian-Byzantine Style in the Context of Russian “National Self-perception”

In the previous part of this chapter, the Cathedral’s accompanying discourse and the message the Cathedral was meant to transmit to the viewer were discussed. The logical following of that reflection is then the question: how was this discourse received by the public? The second important question concerns consequences that Ton’s national style had for Russian society.

Unlike Vitberg’s project, Ton’s was received in a rather complicated way, mainly because of two reasons: an aesthetic one and a political one. Criticism from the aesthetic point of view came from many of Ton’s contemporaries, proponents of the academic classicist canon.¹⁴⁰ With a growing knowledge of Russian and Byzantine monuments, a new criticism of Ton’s Cathedral also emerged. The building was compared with Byzantine and Old Russian models and considered an inaccurate invention. However, it is important to underline that these aesthetical evaluations, the positive as well as the negative ones, were often influenced by the political opinion of the critic and by his

¹³⁸ Cf. with Saint Sophia in Novgorod (Fig. 22) or with Archangelskij Sobor in Moscow Kremlin (Fig. 20).

¹³⁹ Ton, *Proekty cerkvej*, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Slavina, *Konstantin*, 123; Vitberg defined Ton’s project as “a mere village church” (*prostaja derevenskaja cerkov*). Vitberg, *Avtobiografia*, 287. It is quite probable that Vitberg is critical because of personal as well as esthetical reasons. However, the expression “village church” demonstrates, that old-Russian style was considered as something provincial not suitable for the city.

view of Nicholas's politics. Ton's Cathedral was treated as a political issue: it became not only the expression of Russian national character but, for the opponents of the regime, also a symbol of autocratic power and Nicholas's official nationality.¹⁴¹ As a consequence, Ton's style was enthusiastically praised by supporters of Nicholas' national politics. Ivan I. Sviyazev, for example, commended the Cathedral, comparing it with the literary language of Puškin or with the 'Tale of Igor's Campaign'. These works, in his opinion, use language comprehensible to Russian nation (narod) since time immemorial.¹⁴² On the other hand, for example, Vladimir V. Stasov criticized Ton as a simple servant of the tsarist regime, lacking knowledge about historical buildings, and designates his style as "artificially national" in contrast to the genuinely national elements coming "from below".¹⁴³

The tsar's politics proposing Ton's national style and the study of old architecture changed the view on the underestimated Russian and Byzantine medieval art. New knowledge changed the view of Ton's Cathedral and on the appropriate national style in its turn. Already during the reign of Nicholas' successor, Aleksandr II, Ton's style was employed less. However, it is possible to assert that Russian-Byzantine style became an impulse for the formation of new architectural styles that were more faithful to their alleged medieval models. Better knowledge of the Russian tradition resulted in the ornamental, sometimes colorful architecture known as neo-Russian style (Fig. 32, 33, 34). Its models are mainly churches of the seventeenth century (Fig. 23, 24). A second type of architecture takes churches in the territory of the former Byzantine Empire as a model and is called "neo-Byzantine style" (Fig. 25, 26).¹⁴⁴ (Cf. Grimm's Church of St. Vladimir, Fig. 27 with Hosios Lukas, Fig. 19). The important fact is that since 1860s, after the Polish uprising in 1863 and the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878, these types of architecture were used in Poland and in newly gained territories in the south. In this case, the broader debate, nourished by, *i.a.*, journalist Michail N. Katkov (1818–1887), already presented Russia as the protector of Orthodoxy and Slavdom.¹⁴⁵ The use of the neo-Byzantine style¹⁴⁶, concretely in the new territories previously controlled by the Ottoman Empire, should thus be understood as a demonstration of Russian-Orthodox victory¹⁴⁷ and the manifest of Russian continuity with Byzantium. Russia, the continuator of Orthodox Byzantium ostentatiously shows the legitimacy of its presence in the area originally belonging to

¹⁴¹ Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855*, Berkeley 1959.

¹⁴² Ivan I. Sviyazev, *Praktičeskie čertěži po ustrojstvu cerkvi Vvedenija vo Chram Presvtyja Bogorodicy v Semenovskem polku sostavlennye Konstantinom Tonom*, Moskva 1845, quoted by Slavina, Konstantin, 137.

¹⁴³ Stasov, *Naša arhitektura*, 440–441, 446.

¹⁴⁴ David I. Grimm, *Monuments d'architecture Byzantine en Géorgie et en Arménie*, 12 Vol., Sankt-Peterburg 1856–1859.

¹⁴⁵ Billington, *Russia*, 1–23.

¹⁴⁶ For the neo-byzantine architecture on the territory of the Russian empire: Kiškinova, "Vizantijskoe vozrožděnie".

¹⁴⁷ Richard Wortman, 'The "Russian Style" in Church Architecture as Imperial Symbol after 1881', in: Cracraft – Rowland, *Architectures*, 101–229.

Christianity.¹⁴⁸ This shift from Ton's to neo-Russian and neo-Byzantine styles results not only from growing knowledge but also corresponds to the changing political situation. In this sense, the style change aids a better understanding of the specificities of Russian nineteenth-century nationalism and to an identification of its transformations.

As demonstrated above, the construction as well as the very form of Ton's Cathedral was characterized by the fact that it was directed from above. Since the beginning, the Cathedral-national monument was conceived as a point visually uniting three elements: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and the genuinely Russian character of Russian art.¹⁴⁹ These three thus were meant to be, according to Nicholas, the basis of Russian national self-perception.

The main general definitions of nationalism in Europe, such as those by Hans Kohn¹⁵⁰ or Eric Hobsbawm¹⁵¹, link the origins of national self-consciousness with modernization, promoting people's suzerainty, weakening of feudal bonds, secularization, and finally with the effort to abolish existing regimes and to construct new political entities based on ethnicity and language. If these characteristics are compared with the situation in Russia, two elements become clear. On the one hand, as demonstrated above, Russia follows in Europe's footsteps in the effort of *cultural* self-determination¹⁵² by searching for genuine Russian art – the CCS being the prototype of this effort. This process was, however, started and directed top down. On the other hand, in this first phase, the *political* character of Russian national determination is completely different. It should not weaken but, on the contrary, reinforce feudal and religious loyalty; there is no emphasis on ethnic or language belonging; the lines between nation, state and empire are blurred.¹⁵³ Finally, as demonstrated above, in the first Russian national idea, there is no explicit imperial claim.

Aleksandr II continued in the direction of Nicholas' national politics, not emphasizing ethnic and language elements. From the 1860s, however, a new element appeared in the Russian national idea – it was an imperial claim, expressed by, among other things, the new neo-Byzantine style used mainly in the new conquered territories. The neo-Russian style gained more popularity under Aleksandr III who, unlike his predecessors, introduced means of severe Russification and singles out the Russian ethnicity as a main ethnicity of the empire.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Wortman, Scenarios, 258.

¹⁴⁹ This corresponds with the triad of official nationality formulated by Uvarov: Orthodoxy, Autocracy, *Narodnost'*. "*Narodnost'* is a broad term, difficult to translate. It does not correspond to "nationalism" or "populism" but should express the genuine 'Russiness' preserved through centuries in the lifestyle and worldview of simply Russian peasants." Heller, Histoire, 718–721.

¹⁵⁰ Hans Kohn, Nationalism, in: International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 11, New York 1968, 63–69.

¹⁵¹ Eric Hobsbawm, Some Reflections on Nationalism, in: Thomas J. Nossiter – Albert H. Hanson – Stein Rokkan (Eds.), Imagination and Precision in Social Sciences, London 1972, 385–406.

¹⁵² Kohn, Nationalism, 66.

¹⁵³ Maiorova, Shadow, 10f.

¹⁵⁴ Wortman, Scenarios, 244–256; R. S. Wortman, "Russian Style". For the change of Russia's attitude to Europe under Aleksandr II and Aleksandr III cf. Marija Wakounig, Dissens versus Konsens. Das Österreichbild in Russland während

Changing national politics, as well as the growing knowledge of old architecture, changed not only the view of the Cathedral, but partially also its very appearance. Its construction lasted several decades after Ton's death, under the control of Aleksandr I. Rezanov (1817–1887). The new tendencies of “neo-Russian” style are especially visible in the ornamental decoration and the inventory of the Cathedral (Fig. 28–30). Paradoxically, because of a lack of knowledge, Ton's original intention to decorate the building with mosaics and then with old Russian style wall paintings was never carried out.¹⁵⁵ The construction was completed in 1858 and it became an important visual landmark of the city panorama. Works on the interior decorations continued until the 1880s. The consecration took place in 1883.¹⁵⁶

Concluding Remarks

The CCS came about as a gesture of gratitude for the salvation of Russia from Napoleon's invasion and as a celebration of Russian victory, as well as the main monument for the fallen. The intensity of the tragic experience of the war and subsequent great victory gave the building specific importance – it should become the national church. The form that the idea of the national church was meant to take on reveals much about Russia's self-perception in the nineteenth century, as it was formulated by the ruling elite, and exposes mechanisms of using architecture as a bearer of political message. The difference between the first version by Vitberg, chosen by Aleksandr I, and the second, by Ton, approved by Nicholas I, illustrates the big change in Russian self-perception: deviation from Europe and the research of proper independent national roots.

Regarding the mechanism of the message transfer by visual means, the case of the CCS reveals the complexity of this mechanism and shows the importance of the accompanying discourse, without which all architectural forms could be interpreted in many, sometimes contradictory, ways. Ton's style was designated as “Russian-Byzantine” and Russian medieval architecture as “Byzantine”. Nevertheless, sources from the first half of the nineteenth century addressing the Cathedral, national architectural style, and the quest for Russian identity in general show that the use of the adjective “Byzantine” was not meant to be a demonstration of Russian imperial pretensions, as the word may suggest. In fact, it should have been a manifestation of “Russia's special non-European roots”, on which independent Russian culture was built.

Nicholas' politics stimulated the discovery and study of Russian architecture and its roots. The gradual knowledge of this partially led to criticism of Ton's Russian-Byzantine style. However,

der Franzisko-Josephinischen Ära, in: Adam Wandruszka – Peter Urbanitsch (Eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, Vol. VI/2, *Die Habsburgermonarchie im System der internationalen Beziehungen*, Wien 1993, 436–490.

¹⁵⁵ Slavina, Konstantin, 116.

¹⁵⁶ Kiričenko, Chram, 64, 130, 158.

these criticisms were aimed not only at Ton's imprecisions or aesthetic choices, but were also implicitly directed against Nicholas' politics of "official nationality". Progressively, new architectural styles were formed, which corresponded better with their alleged medieval models, as well as the Byzantine one. In the second part of the nineteenth century, churches in the neo-Byzantine and neo-Russian styles were used as a manifest and legitimization of Russian presence in the territories confiscated from the Ottoman Empire (e.g. the Saint Alexandr Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia, 1882–1912) and in the territories of Catholic Poland and Baltic regions (e.g. The Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1876–1883; Our Lady of the Sign Church in Vilnius, 1899–1903) as well as in the Caucasus (Alexandr Nevsky Cathedral in Tbilisi, 1871–1897).

The style of the CCS as well as the successive styles can also serve as a "visual aid" to understand different phases of the formulation of Russia's national self-consciousness: from the one encompassing all the empire without any language or ethnic distinction and without explicit imperial claim, to the one based on Russification and proposing Russia's imperial mission in Europe as well as the Near East.

In the nineteenth century, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior – church, memorial and work of art – had a highly politicized role, and maintained this role in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries as well, as will be discussed in following chapters.

Chapter 2

Palace of the Soviets: Rupture and Continuity.

This chapter deals with the destruction of the Cathedral by Soviet power in 1931 and with the search for a new architectural embodiment of post-revolutionary ideals in the Palace of the Soviets (Dvorec Sovetov, PS). The history of the never-finished PS goes, in a certain way, beyond the main theme of this work, which is the CCS. However, it is important to mention it at least briefly¹⁵⁷, because the attempt to replace the Cathedral with the Palace reveals its importance for Russia's self-perception yet again. The search for the ideal form for the emblematic Soviet building, which the Palace was meant to become, took more than ten years, and six competitions were organized, in which important world architects participated.¹⁵⁸ The first part of this chapter presents briefly the destruction of the Cathedral as an elimination of the symbol of a past identity. In the second part of the chapter, different proposals for the Palace of the Soviets are mentioned and compared with the final version. The changes in the forms are analyzed, using Krautheimer's and Schapiro's attitudes to iconography and style.¹⁵⁹ The gradual transformation of the architecture is related to the official discourse about the palace.¹⁶⁰ The conclusion of the chapter addresses the question of continuity between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary architectural language and the mechanism of re-appropriation of places of cult and memory by the victorious ideology.

2.1. The Cathedral from its Consecration to the Revolution

After its consecration in 1883, the Cathedral became one of the most important churches in Russia. The national church was visited by the royal family during important festivities and became an important pilgrim-site.¹⁶¹ It was the largest cathedral in Russia – an important part of Moscow's

¹⁵⁷ For a deeper reflection about the Palace and its cf., e.g., Peter Lizon, *The Palace of the Soviets: The Paradigm of Architecture in the USSR*, Colorado, 1995; Helen Adkins et al. *Naum Gabo and the Competition for the Palace of the Soviets*, Moscow, 1931–1933, Berlin 1993; Antonina Manina, *Concorso per l'edificio-simbolo del Paese: Il Palazzo del Soviet*, in: *Mosca: Capitale dell'utopia* (Catalog of Exhibition, 2nd March – 28th April 1991, Palazzo della Civiltà, Roma), Milano 1991; and titles quoted here below.

¹⁵⁸ First "Soviet building" which should have served the new Soviet government was to be the Palace of the Labour (competition in 1922). Since 1931, the competitions for the Palace of the Soviets proper were organized. The last two competitions took place only at the end of the 1950s. For this theme Sona S. Hoisington, "Ever Higher": The Evolution of the Project for the Palace of Soviets, in: *Slavic Review*, 62/1, 2003, 41–68; Peter Lizon, *Quest for an Image to Serve a Revolution: Design Competitions for the Palace of the Soviets*, *Journal of Architectural Education* 35/4, Washington 1982, 10–16.

¹⁵⁹ Richard Krautheimer, *Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5, 1942, 1–33; Meyer Schapiro, *Style*, Chicago 1953.

¹⁶⁰ The main sources are the architect Iofan's *Rapport*, Boris Iofan *Akademik architektury, Stalin i dvorec sovetov*, in: Aleksandr Fadeev (Ed.), *Vstreči s tovaryšem Staliny*, Moskva 1939, 84–93; the script from the Meeting of the builders of the Palace I.G. Suškevič (Ed.), *Architektura dvorca sovetov. Materialy V plenuma pravleniya sojuza sovetских architektov SSSR 1–4 i julja 1939 goda*, Moskva 1939; and the promotional cinema spot *Dvorec Sovetov budet vozveden. Ustaraevšij Chram budet razrušen. Nakaz tov. Stalina budet vpolnen.*, Moskva 1931.

¹⁶¹ Kiričenko, 144ff.

landscape. In 1905, during the Russian-Japanese war, the names of the fallen soldiers were announced to their relatives in the Cathedral.¹⁶² In this way, its role as national church and war monument came to the fore. In the turmoil of 1917, the Cathedral was the place of the gathering Holy Synod. On the 5/18 November, the Synod elected the new patriarch Tichon (Vasilij I. Bellavin, 1865–1925).¹⁶³ This event had enormous significance for the Russian Orthodox Church, Tichon being the first patriarch of Moscow and all of Rus' since 1700/1721.¹⁶⁴ However, the status of the Cathedral deteriorated abruptly as the Church was persecuted.¹⁶⁵ First, by the decree “On the Separation of the Church and State”¹⁶⁶, Churches were stripped of state subsidies and the maintenance of church buildings, especially in winter, was extremely difficult. In 1918, the Brotherhood of the CCS republished Mostovskij's monograph from 1883. In the introduction, they asked for money and help.¹⁶⁷ Then, by the decree “On the Monuments of the Republic” of 12 April 1918¹⁶⁸, the Soviet government started to close church buildings. Church buildings were re-used for secular purposes or destroyed; only churches designated by a special committee as having an artistic value and importance for Russia's history were to be preserved.¹⁶⁹ The Cathedral was not acknowledged as such. On the contrary, arguments of decadence, lack of artistic value and unsightliness were proclaimed by advocates of the Classicist style as well as by proponents of modern art.¹⁷⁰ By its ideological opponents, the Cathedral was designated as a symbol of tyrannical tsarist power, being constructed in order to please the tsar by his lackey, Konstantin Ton.¹⁷¹

2.2. Destruction

The destruction of the Cathedral was presented as a way to clear the place for the Palace of the Soviets. However, some of the architects and technicians preferred not the place of the CCS but the Ochotnyj Rjad, which was originally planned for the Palace, as a building place.¹⁷² The decision

¹⁶² Eto pamatnik na veka, in: *Literaturnaja Rossija* 38, 1989 September 22nd. Zitiert von Gentes, *Life*, 72.

¹⁶³ Michel Heller, Aleksandr Nekrich, *L'utopie au pouvoir. Histoire de l'U.R.S.S. de 1917 à nos jours*, Paris 1982, 113.

¹⁶⁴ The last pre-revolutionary patriarch Adrien died in 1700, the patriarchate was officially abolished by Peter I in 1721. Heller, *Histoire*, 424, 452.

¹⁶⁵ Daniel Peris, *Storming the heavens. The Soviet League of the Militant Godless*, London 1998, 25.

¹⁶⁶ Dekret o svobode sovesti, cerkovnyh i religioznych obščestvach 20 janvarja (2 fevralja) 1918 g., Dekrety Sovetskoj vlasti, Tom I., Moskva 1957, 373f.

¹⁶⁷ Mostovskij, *Chram*, 2000, 7–11.

¹⁶⁸ Dekret o pamjatnikach Respubliki 12 aprilja 1918 g., Dekrety Sovetskoj vlasti. Tom II. 17 marta – 10 ijulja 1918 g., Moskva 1959, 95f.

¹⁶⁹ Dekret o pamjatnikach, 95–96. Cf. also Kiričenko, *Chram*, 217–227.

¹⁷⁰ Hoisington, *Evolution*. Cf. Kiričenko, *Chram*, 244.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Kiričenko, *Chram*, 230. Illustrativ is also the commentary of Boris Iofan, the architect of the Palace: “Big and burly, shining its gilded head, [the Cathedral] resembled simultaneously to a cake and to samovar. By its official, dry and soulless architecture [the Cathedral] oppressed the surrounding houses as well as the people's consciousness and reflected the incompetent machinery of Russian autocracy and of its ‘high-rank’ builders who created this landlord-merchant temple.” Boris Iofan Akademik architektury, Stalin i dvorec sovetov, in: Aleksandr Fadeev (Ed.), *Vstreči s tovaryšem Stalinym*, Moskva 1939. Cf. Annex, Text 3.

¹⁷² Hoisington, *Evolution*, 45f.

to build the Palace on the site of the Cathedral was sudden and the Cathedral was destroyed without any preliminary examination of the technical suitability of the square for such a colossal building, as the palace was meant to be.¹⁷³ After the main valuables were removed from the church, it was blown up on 5 December 1931.¹⁷⁴

In the official discourse, the destruction of the Cathedral and the construction of the palace were described in superlatives, as a symbol of the victory of socialism over capitalism.¹⁷⁵ No open resistance took place, mainly because of three reasons: voicing any opposition to Stalin's order would mean risking not only one's position but often also one's life; second, even when there was an attempt to publicly defend the artistic and historical value of the Cathedral in the newspaper, the article was never published¹⁷⁶; third, as already mentioned, the opinion of art and architecture professionals concerning the artistic value of the Cathedral had been problematic since its beginning. Kiričenko reports four passages from private memories and poems deploring and criticizing the destruction.¹⁷⁷ Other authors don't mention any further negative reactions. It is thus difficult to assess the reaction on a larger scale, a careful study of memoirs and diaries would be necessary. However, this study could not even produce clear results, given the fact that in the 1930s, avoiding certain themes because of fear would be understandable not only in the public but also in the private sphere.¹⁷⁸ One of the main evident elements which reveals that the destruction caused a severe shock to the population are the initiatives to remember the Cathedral as soon as the political repression was eased – in the 1980s (the reconstruction in the 1990s, as will be discussed in the next chapter, should be, on the contrary, discussed more critically, being organized not by grassroots societies but by the new government).

2.3. Search for a New Symbol of Soviet Identity

The search for ideal Soviet architecture – concretized in the building for the Soviet government (first named the Palace of Labour, than Palace of the Soviets) started already in 1922.¹⁷⁹ The difference between the proposals in the successive stages of the drafting is significant and leads to the question: what does the changing character of the projects reveal about the transformation of the ruling elite's discourse about new Soviet identity?

¹⁷³ Ibidem, 46.

¹⁷⁴ Mostovskij, Chram, 2000, 85.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Dvorec Sovetov budet vozveden. Ustaraevšij Chram budet razrušen. Nakaz tov. Stalina budet vpolnen, Film, Moskva 1931.

¹⁷⁶ Kiričenko, Chram, 245.

¹⁷⁷ Ibidem, 238–241.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times. Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, Oxford 1999.

¹⁷⁹ Lizon, *Quest*, 10–16.

The decade after the revolution was, in spite of the economic difficulties, an extraordinary period of experimentation and a boom of new ideas in visual arts¹⁸⁰, literature¹⁸¹ and architecture. In the domain of the latter, two main avant-garde currents are usually pointed out – constructivism (functionalism) and rationalism (formalism), both combining simple geometric shapes and refusing decorative elements (Fig. 35, 36, 37).¹⁸² In 1932, all architectural groups and societies were dissolved and absorbed by the Union of Soviet Architects and all arts were subjected to so-called Socialist Realism. The way was set by the government, and no more experiments were allowed. The search for the ideal form for the Palace of the Soviets illustrates this move from experimentation to one ideology and one permitted art style.¹⁸³

The first competitions for the Palace of Labour took place in the years 1922–1923. First prize was given to Noi A. Trockij's (1895–1940) proposal (Fig. 38) – a massive and monumental building, combining the round and rectangular shapes, laid one over another, on the outside. The main hall recalls simultaneously an amphitheatre combined with a Pantheon. Lizon commented that the project “borrowed from all historical styles”.¹⁸⁴ Even if this proposal received the prize, it was criticized openly, immediately after the announcement of the winners. The jury was told to prevent avant-garde architects from setting a new way for architecture by refusing the first prize to the Vesnin brothers (Leonid, Viktor and Aleksandr, Fig. 39), which was considered the best one. Even the head of the jury himself, Aleksandr V. Ščusev (1873–1949), criticized the choice of the first prize, with the following words: “The first prize was awarded incorrectly because of some members of the jury who were afraid of novelty.”¹⁸⁵ On the contrary, the Vesnin brothers' constructivist project – architecture of simple forms, combined in a way to give the impression of an airy architecture – was considered a new original way to construct architecture of the new times. A similar kind of scandal was provoked by the decision of the jury in the competition for the Lenin Library in Moscow in 1928. Although many avant-garde proposals were submitted, the conservative, “classicizing” project of Vladimir A. Ščuko (1878–1939) and Vladimir G. Gelfreich (1885–1967) won (Fig. 40).

Nearly ten years after the first competition for the Palace of Labour – in May 1931, a new competition took place for an emblematic construction of socialism – the Palace of the Soviets in

¹⁸⁰ Evgenij F. Kovtun, *Russkij avangard 1920-ch – 1930-ch godov*, Sankt-Peterburg 1996.

¹⁸¹ Efim Etkind *et al.* (Eds.), *Histoire de la littérature russe. Le XXe siècle. La Révolution et les années vingt*, Evreux 1988.

¹⁸² Brumfield, *History*, 467–484.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, 487.

¹⁸⁴ Lizon, *Quest*, 11.

¹⁸⁵ Igor A. Kazus', *Sovetskaja arhitektura 1920–ch godov. Organizacija proektovanija*, Moskva 2009, 120 quoting Aleksej Viktorovič Ščusev, *O principach arhitekturnogo stroitel'stva*, in: *Stroitel'naja promyšlennost'* 12, Moskva 1924, 760.

Moscow. None of the obtained projects was judged “mature enough” to become the “embodiment of the idea which was to be immortalized in a building for the Palace of the Soviets”; the main goal of this closed round, however, was to define the assignment for the following international competition, which took place in July 1931.¹⁸⁶ The main instructions for the participants were: to design a building on a proposed area of 36,800 m², having one big auditorium (15,000 seats), one with 5,900 seats and several smaller ones. 160 entries were received, 24 from abroad. Three first prizes and three highest awards were given. The latter were given to projects of Boris M. Iofan (Fig. 41), Ivan V. Žoltovskij (Fig. 42) and Hector Hamilton (Fig. 43). All of them, as well as the projects awarded first prizes (Fig. 44–46), used simple shapes, rather horizontal axes, and were modern; only one awarded project (the Žoltovskij’s one) explicitly reflected the classic style.¹⁸⁷ However, Lizov points out that the most avant-garde projects, such as those of Le Corbusier (Fig. 47), Walter Gropius (Fig. 48), Erich Medelsohn (Fig. 49), Mosej Ginzburg (Fig. 50) or the Vesnin brothers, received no awards, (even though they were praised by the jury for their high technical quality).¹⁸⁸ Lizov recaps the results of the competition in the following way: “To summarize the stylistic qualities or directions of the projects receiving awards, there were still more designs displaying a modern expression than those displaying historicism. There were, however, winning entries that merged with a look of the later, so-called Socialist Realism. The avant-garde designs, which reflected novelty in architecture, ended in defeat.”¹⁸⁹ The international competition brought no absolute winner and a new competition for 12 invited teams was organized. Lizov sees in it “the last fight of Constructivism against the incoming Realism”.¹⁹⁰ The participants were instructed to build “single structure, tall and imposing, [...] to give it a crowning feature”.¹⁹¹ In this project, only three entries were Constructivist and the jury stated that the “majority of the submitted designs in this second competition were considerably better than the results of the International Competition”.¹⁹² In the last competition, for five teams in the years 1932–1933, only one of the teams (the team of the Vesnin brothers) was from the constructivist avant-garde. The winning project was by Iofan (Fig. 51) – a massive circular construction formed by three narrowing drums and crowned by a statue of the Liberated Proletarian. The project was chosen by the jury as the

¹⁸⁶ Lizov, *Quest* quoting *The Palace of the Soviets, All-Union competition 1932, Moscow, 1933*; Hoisington, *Evolution*, 43–46.

¹⁸⁷ This idea is further developed by Hoisington, *Evolution*, 44–51.

¹⁸⁸ “[T]he jury viewed the project as too utilitarian and not expressive of the great idea of the Palace – the monument to Socialism. Through the words of the juror Academician Schusev, the jury admitted that ‘the participation of Le Corbusier in the competition was the most valuable of all the competitors.’” Lizov, *Quest*, 15 quoting *The Palace of the Soviets, All-Union competition 1932, Moscow 1933*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 13.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 16.

¹⁹¹ *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy*, 3, 1932, 13–16 quoted by Hoisington, *Evolution* 51.

¹⁹² Lizov, *Quest*, 16.

best, but not as a final version. It was meant to serve as a starting point for the formulation of the Palace – which was meant also as a monument to Lenin. Therefore it should have reached a more monumental character and the statue of the Liberated Proletarian was to be replaced by the “Liberator of Proletarians”. Two more conservative architects were assigned by the jury to collaborate with Iofan – the architects of the already mentioned Lenin Library (Fig. 40) Ščuko and Golfreich. The final project was approved in 1934 (Fig. 52, 53). According to this, the palace should have been 415 meters high and cover the area of 7 million m³.¹⁹³ With these proportions, it would surpass the CCS several times and become the highest and biggest building in the world. The monumental entrance was meant to have a large staircase ended by a massive portico flanked by two protruding parts with sculptural groups. The main mass of the building rises gradually through narrowing stores – changing from rectangular to round. The resulting colossal tower was crowned by a 100m-high statue of Lenin, indicating the direction. In front of the building, a large place including a long alley and a forum-like square were planned to accommodate popular festivities.¹⁹⁴ To use Iofan’s own words, the main characteristics of the Palace were to be “monumentality, simplicity, integrity and elegance of the architectural design [that has to] reflect the greatness of our socialist construction”.¹⁹⁵

The construction of the Palace began in 1937. In 1939, a meeting of the builders of the Palace of the Soviets took place, where questions concerning the ongoing construction as well as the decoration were discussed again. There, the role of the Palace was defined clearly: “[It is] the monument to the leader of humankind, great Lenin. [It is] the monument to our historical period, when the land of Soviets has already built – not in its dreams but in its very reality – a classless society. This monument has to reflect the greatness of the human spirit, reason and creativity that the nation, liberated from the slavery of capitalism, is capable of. [...] All the country, the whole nation is constructing the Palace of the Soviets.”¹⁹⁶

However, in 1939, the works were interrupted, the already-laid foundations were later dismantled and the steel was used for war purposes. After the war, the works were never reopened, due to several reasons; in addition to the economic ones, the ground revealed itself to be unsuitable for such a great building – the water from the nearby river leaked into the foundations. The last attempt to complete the PS took place in 1957–1959, when three final competitions took place.¹⁹⁷ The intended scale was much more modest and the location was changed to the Sparrow Hills

¹⁹³ Boris M. Iofan, *Strojitel'stvo dvorca sovetov i sotrudničestvo iskusstv*, in: Suškevič, *Architektura*, 7–22, here 7–11.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 7.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 11.

¹⁹⁶ Viktor A. Vesnin, *Dvorec Sovetov i sotrudničestvo iskusstv*, in: Suškevič, *Architektura*, 4–6, here 4. Cf. Annex, Text 16.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Ljudmila I. Kirillova, Georgij B. Minervin, *Dvorec Sovetov. Materialy konkursa 1957–1959*, Moskva 1961.

(where Vitberg's Cathedral was meant to stay originally). The competitions brought no results and, at the beginning of the 1960s, the foundations on the original site of the CCS were transformed into the swimming pool, "Moskva" (Fig. 54) designed by Dmitrij N. Čečulin (1901–1981).¹⁹⁸ Although the Palace was not built, its heritage was of the highest importance. The planning of the Palace went hand in hand with the reorganization of Moscow's urbanism, which was largely accomplished.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the palace became the prototype for socialist (Stalinist) architecture not only in Moscow, where seven skyscrapers in the same style were built after the war (*e.g.*, Fig. 55), but also in others countries of the Soviet Bloc, where the representative buildings followed Moscow's pattern (*e.g.*, Hotel Internacional in Prague, Palace of Science and Culture in Warsaw). It must be noted that, in the shift from the avant-garde to the monumentalist, classicizing and eclectic style, Russia stays in near contact with Western countries. First, Russia collaborates with foreign architects in the domain of new artistic ideas as well as in the domain of technical methods.²⁰⁰ In the 1920s and 1930s, the aim of Soviet Russia is not to underline its differences, but to compete and surpass the capitalist world. Second, Russia's architecture and its described changes were part of the larger trend. As in the nineteenth century, when Russia – in the same way as Western countries – discovered its "genuine national art", the adoption of monumental architecture in the 1930s was common to Russia and European states, especially Germany and Italy.²⁰¹

Concluding Remarks

Looking at this short overview and asking the question, "How does the quest for the ideal form of the PS mirror the dynamics of the formation of identity?" several elements come to light. First, the way of granting awards and of selecting invited participants shows the gradual side-lining of constructivist and rationalist architecture from the competition.²⁰² The final version is monumental and celebrates Lenin; the discourse about the Palace praises Stalin, who is presented as Lenin's continuator, the man who chose the place for the building and brought the best ideas for the construction.²⁰³ The destruction of the Cathedral, the project of the awe-inspiring building celebrating the victory of socialism and its two leaders, as well as the unique discourse praising the

¹⁹⁸ Brumfield, History, 468.

¹⁹⁹ Elisabeth Essaïan, *Le Plan général de la reconstruction de Moscou de 1935. La ville, l'architecte et le politique. Héritages culturels et pragmatisme économique*, in: *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine* 107, Paris 2011, 46–57.

²⁰⁰ In 1934, Russian architects went to America to study the technical possibilities of the skyscrapers. Iofan, Stalin, 37.

²⁰¹ Petr Vorlík, *Dějiny architektury dvacátého století*, Praha 2010.

²⁰² The transition from functionalism and constructivism towards monumentalism is highlighted also by the then American historian of Russian Art and Architecture Arthur Joyce. Arthur Joyce, *Contemporary Soviet Architecture*, in: *The American Magazine of Art* 28/9, New York 1935, 527–535.

²⁰³ Iofan, Stalin, 84f.

project, fittingly illustrate the totalitarian and megalomaniac character of the new Russia's self-presentation as it was formulated by Soviet leaders in 1930s. The second point worth noting is the continuity of the Palace with the modern and, at the same time, with pre-revolutionary architecture. Classicizing monumental architecture is typical of Stalin's dictatorship, but it doesn't limit itself to the period of the 1930s. On the contrary, the continuity of classicizing monumental architecture is traceable from the period of the monarchy to the Palace, which combines it with modern trends and brings it to utopic dimensions.²⁰⁴ A characteristic example is the career and works of Žoltovskij, who built in the style of new classicism already before the revolution²⁰⁵; in 1922, he was on the jury for the Palace of Labour, which awarded the first prize to Trockij.²⁰⁶ Žoltovskij's own proposals for the the Palace of the Soviets strongly reflected the classicist tradition (Fig. 42). In the 1930s, Žoltovskij built the neoclassicist apartment house in Moscow (Fig. 56), and became one of the formulators of Socialist Realism.²⁰⁷ The third point to be mentioned concerns the continuity between the destroyed CCS and the Palace. Though the Palace presented itself as the antipode of the Cathedral, in practice, it was meant to take over its main functions. In the same way as the CCS, the Palace was presented as being constructed by and belonging to the whole nation (*narod*).²⁰⁸ It should have displayed the country's might and become the celebration of the victory – not over Napoleon – but of socialism over capitalism. It should have embodied the ruling elite's idea not of the official nationality, but of the triumphant socialism. The Palace should also have become a kind of shrine dedicated not to God, but to Lenin.²⁰⁹ In this way, the CCS was destroyed not only to vacate the lucrative square for the Palace, but rather the CCS was destroyed and replaced because new answers were formulated to the questions about Russia's self-definition and its role in the world, as well as about its interpretation of the past.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Danilo Udovički-Selb, *Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin's Revolution from Above, 1928–1938*, in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68/4, Urbana 2009, 467–495; Antonia Cunliffe, *The Competition for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow, 1931–1933*, in: *Architectural Association Quarterly* 11/2, London 1979, 36–48.

²⁰⁵ Brumfield, *History*, 443.

²⁰⁶ According to Ščusev, it was Žoltovskij who prevented the Vesnin brothers of getting the first prize. Kazus', *Architektura*, 120 quoting Ščusev, *O principach*, 760.

²⁰⁷ Brumfield, *History*, 487.

²⁰⁸ Vesnin, *Dvorec*, 4.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Hoisington, 42f.

Chapter 3

Reconstructing the Cathedral. The Search for Post-Soviet Russian Identity.

This chapter focuses on the reconstruction of the CCS in Moscow in the years 1994–1997.²¹⁰ The discussed questions – what is the role of the Cathedral in the (re)formulation of Russian (national) identity? What does the reconstruction (and the discourse about it) reveal about Russia’s attitude to its own past, present and future and to its place in world politics? – are seen through the lens of the concepts of desecularization²¹¹, public religion²¹² and ethnodoxy²¹³. All three concepts concentrate on the relationship between civic (national, ethnic) and religious identity. The proponents of desecularization argue that, after the period of violent secularization under the Soviet regime, the opposite tendency has gained force in Russia since 1991. The Church became one of the important players in social and political life, and religious values entered the public space. However, this tendency didn’t necessarily mean the rise of personal piety.²¹⁴ The term “public religion” describes a situation of “deprivatization” of religion in which religious appurtenance becomes a type of collective identity that is not linked with the personal attitude to the divine.²¹⁵ When this type of collective identity based on religious arguments merges with the ethnic type, the result is described by Karpov/Lisovskaya/Barry as “ethnodoxy” – *e.g.*, identity using ethnic as well as religious allegiance as arguments for exclusion.²¹⁶ Using these concepts, the following text addresses the Cathedral’s reconstruction and the associated formation of the post-Soviet identity on three levels. The first level focuses on the very rebuilding of the church, in two parts: on the political discourse presenting the Cathedral as a symbol of the repentance and rebirth of Russia, which illustrates the political elite’s search for new Russian national identity. Then, the debate between the supporters and opponents of the project is presented, and the decisional process and practical organization of the construction are mentioned briefly. A look at the practical side of the reconstruction – the decisional process, financing and progress – reveals on one hand the

²¹⁰ This theme was treated from different points of view by Kathleen E. Smith, *An Old Cathedral for a New Russia*. The symbolic politic of the reconstituted church of Christ the Saviour, in: *Religion, State and Society* 25/2, London 1997, 163–175; Andrew Gentes, *The Life, Death and Resurrection of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour*, Moscow, in: *History Workshop Journal* 46, Oxford 1998, 63–95; Dmitri Sidorov, *National Monumentalisation and the Politics of Scale: The Resurrection of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow*, in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90/3, Washington 2000, 548–572; Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York 2001, 83–120; Ekaterina V. Haskins, *The Cathedral of Christ the Savior and the Reimagining of National Identity*, in: *History and Memory* 21/1, Bloomington 2009, 25–62; Evgenija Kiričenko, *Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Its Creation, Destruction, and Rebirth 1813–1997*, published online http://www.thomashoisington.com/pdfs/Moscows_Cathedral_Kirichenko.pdf, 2012; also Akinsha – Kozlov – Hochfield, *Holy Place*.

²¹¹ Karpov, *Desecularization*.

²¹² Casanova, *Public Religions*; Idem, *Public Religion Revisited*, 101.

²¹³ Karpov–Lisovskaya–Barry, *Ethnodoxy*, 638–655.

²¹⁴ Karpov, *Desecularization*, 236–240.

²¹⁵ Casanova, *Public Religions*; Idem, *Public Religion Revisited*, 101–119.

²¹⁶ Karpov–Lisovskaya–Barry, *Ethnodoxy*, 638–655.

complicatedness of the political and economic situation of the 1990s. On the other hand, it reveals the strength of the political discourse and its problematic relationship with “reality”.

The second level of the chapter opens the broad question of the formation of Russian post-Soviet identity. Different views of the elements on which the new “Russianness” should be based are briefly presented, as well as the question of what role Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church should play in the creation of post-Soviet identity.

Finally, as a synthesis of the two preceding points, rises the question of whether the Cathedral succeeded in fulfilling the role of unifying element for the nation, as the ruling elite asserted.

As sources, Russian press articles from the years 1993–1997 are used.²¹⁷ As assessed by Aleksandr Agadjanian, the Russian press in the 1990s had on one hand an important role in forming Russia’s post-Soviet public space; on the other hand, it serves as a mirror of mass attitudes and the ruling elite’s preferences.²¹⁸

3.1. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior as a Symbol of New Russia

3.1.1. Coming to Terms with Soviet Past and Proposals for New Russian Identity

In the 1990s, after the breakup of the USSR, Russia had to deal with many serious problems: the economic situation had deteriorated dramatically due to abrupt inflation, elementary goods became scarce and criminality rose sharply. The land was going through complicated legislative and political reconstruction; the political crisis culminated in September 1993 with a Constitutional crisis and its bloody outcome.²¹⁹ In consequence of the many changes, Russia, a state with new borders and a reduced territory²²⁰, faced the question of how to perceive itself and which attitude to take towards the country’s tragic past.

In the course of the 1990s, the search for a new identity was addressed on the high-political level, as well as becoming an actual issue among the people. In 1996, El’cin explicitly asked his collaborators to search for Russia, an idea; its official version was meant to be prepared before the year 2000. El’cin proclaimed: “There have been various periods – monarchism, totalitarianism,

²¹⁷ The titles of the central Russian press were mainly used that mention the theme of the reconstruction most frequently – *i.e.* *Moskovskaja Pravda*, *Nezavisimaja Gazeta*, *Večernaja Moskva*, *Moskovskij Komsomolec*, *Segodnia*, *Komersant*, *Ross. Vestnik*, *Izvestia*, *Kuranty*, *Ross. Gazeta* and *Moskovskie Novosti*. The source of all cited newspaper articles was taken from online newspaper-database Integrum: <http://www.integrumworld.com/>. For this reason the pages are not given. For the classification, owners and the question of independence of the Russian press see, *e.g.*: Monroe E. Price, Adrei Richter, Peter K. Yu (Eds.) *Russian Media Law and Policy in the El’cin Decade. Essays and Documents*, The Hague 2002.

²¹⁸ Alexander Agadjanian, *Public Religion and the Quest for the National Ideology: Russia’s Media Discourse*, in: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40/3, New Jersey 2001, 351–365, here 352.

²¹⁹ For the period of 1990s cf. David M. Kotz – Fred Weir (Eds.), *Russia’s path from Gorbachev to Putin: the Demise of the Soviet System and the New Russia*, London/New York 2007.

²²⁰ For the impact of the diminution of the country’s territory on the formation of the post-Soviet identity see John O’Loughlin – Paul F. Talbot, *Where in the World is Russia? Geopolitical Perceptions and Preferences of Ordinary Russians*, in: *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 46/1, London 2005, 23–50.

perestroika and, finally, the democratic path of development. Each epoch had its own ideology. Now we do not have one. And that's bad.”²²¹ In addition, in 1996, a public competition for the best formulation of a new Russian identity was organized. The winning proposal would obtain a 10 million-rouble prize.²²² At the same time, pre-Soviet writers and philosophes working on the question of Russian identity were rediscovered and their ideas further elaborated.²²³ The idea of new Russian identity was undergoing a boom in the public sphere, and, on the political level, it became a weapon.²²⁴

However, the search for the answers to “Who is Russian? How can the Russian nation be defined?” hinted at several fundamental obstacles:

The first problematic point to overcome was how to come to terms with the Soviet past and heritage. As asserted by Kiss other ex-socialist countries could blame foreign power for the crimes of the totalitarian regime.²²⁵ Russia could not. At the same time, the attitude toward the Soviet/Stalinist regime and to its symbols was complicated. In fact, these symbols referred to the dictatorial government as well as to the Soviet victory over Hitler's Germany in WWII and to the Soviet Union as a world power. In consequence, the question of their removal was very controversial.

The second problem was the lack of any precedent in Russia's recent history of national non-imperial identity.²²⁶ Tsarist Russia as well as the Soviet Union were based on an imperial, messianic perception of themselves and on the one tsar/one party rule.²²⁷ As described in the first chapter, the formation of the Russian official national identity was directed “from above” and was based on subordination to the tsar. As a result, there was no spread of a Russian national idea based on civic and non-imperial principles.

In consequence, Russia, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, stood before a difficult task. The country had to explain and legitimize its new borders and formulate, practically *ex novo*, a new national identity in the situation where the majority of the legitimization means used in the pre-Soviet period (in Russia – Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality promoted by the tsarist power; in Europe – ethnic, or language based nationalism) were anachronistic. Russia had to find a way to

²²¹ Michail Lancman, Prezident poručil doverennym licam najti nacional'nuju ideu, *Segonia*, 1992 July 13th, 2 quoted by Michal Urban, Remythologising the Russian state, in *Europe-Asia Studies* 50/6, Glasgow 1998, 969–992, here 969, 987.

²²² Konkurs ‘Ideya dlya Rossii’, *Rossiskaya gazeta*, 1996 July 30th quoted by Urban, Remythologising, 983.

²²³ Billington, Russia.

²²⁴ Urban, Remythologising, 970–986.

²²⁵ Csilla Kiss, Transitional Justice: The (Re)Construction of Post-Communist Memory, in: Ene Kõresaar, Epp Lauk, Kristin Kuutma (Eds.), *The Burden of Remembering*, Helsinki 2009.

²²⁶ Vera Tolz, Forging the Nation. National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia, in: *Europe-Asia Studies* 50/6, Glasgow 1998, 993–1022, here 993.

²²⁷ Billington, Russia, X, 2.

re-define itself in the context of an ethnic and religiously inhomogeneous society, in a world tending toward globalism, democracy, plurality of opinions and relativism.

As put forward by Vera Tolz, several possible definitions of the Russian nation can be found in the post-Soviet period: 1. Union (Imperial) identity, according to which Russians are defined as an imperial people or through their mission to create a supranational state; 2. Russians as a nation of all eastern Slavs united by common origin and culture; 3. Russians as community of Russian speakers, regardless of their ethnic origin (Orthodoxy as a marker of Russian national identity is also of particular importance); 4. Russians “by blood”; 5. Civic Russian (Rossijskaja) nation including all citizens of the Russian Federation; 6. Citizens of Russian Federation together with “Russian speaking populations” in the lands of the former USSR.²²⁸

Proponents of these visions competed for the formulation of a new post-Soviet identity. The important question, however, is: which of these visions was preferred by the political elite of El'cin's government – in the political discourse as well as in the practical decisions? The short analysis of the government's discourse concerning the CCS could shed light on this issue.

3.1.2. El'cin's Speech and its Analysis

In the period of the search for stability and new direction, President Boris N. El'cin (1991–1999) proposed the renewal of the destroyed Cathedral. His speech to the Committee of Construction merits full citation and a close look:

“Dear compatriots! With deep gratitude I greet you and among you all those who assume the noble mission of transforming into reality the idea of rebuilding the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. We were destined to live in the difficult times of destruction and creation, of the tragic confrontation between the old and the new, in the times of change in economic and political foundations. In our country, a long and painful process of finding the ideals of faith, goodness and love is going on. Moral purification has always been and will be the hardest test. It requires a supreme effort of spiritual forces and a ruthless attitude to oneself. The most important thing is then the support, human compassion, wise counsel, and the strengthening of faith in one's forces, which from time immemorial man has received in the church.

Today, Russia needs the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. It is a Russian national shrine, and it should be revived. With it, it will be easier for all of us to find the way to social cohesion, to the creation of goodness and to the creation of the life in which there will be less space for sin. With all my heart, I support your initiative and I am confident that the Russian government and the regional authorities

²²⁸ Vera Tolz, *Forging*, 995–996. The sixth point was added by Peter J. S. Duncan, *Contemporary Russian Identity between East and West*, in: *The Historical Journal* 48/1, Cambridge 2005, 277–294, 285–286.

at all levels will treat it as one of the most important governmental tasks and will assist to its rapid implementation. I sincerely wish you success in this noble task.”²²⁹

In this address, El'cin uses a very emotional tone and employs terms that normally belong more to the spiritual than to the political domain: life without sin, faith, goodness, love, moral purification and so forth. An important point is that he presents the Cathedral as needed for Russia, as Russia's national shrine, which should help the country to get into a better situation. Construction of this argument seems to be logical but it hides an important point. El'cin, in some way, is completely right, when he speaks about the Cathedral as the Russian national shrine. The problem is how he frames his argument. The Cathedral *was* the Russian national shrine of the imperial period, with its specific understanding of nationality as official nationality. The redemptory role of the Cathedral and the necessity of its reconstruction for post-Soviet Russia is however not so evident, as El'cin asserts. The status of the Cathedral as a national shrine is not, in the 1990s, an absolute, objective fact, as El'cin suggests, but is constructed specifically by the elite's discourse and decisions. In fact, it is El'cin himself who gives the church its importance. El'cin presents the reconstruction as a noble fact, which “should be done”. In this formulation, an implicit imperative and a kind of moral duty is thus present, which makes any further discussion about the issue difficult. This “moral duty element” is even more evident in Aleksij's II statement quoted below, who sees it as an “act of repentance on the part of the government and the people, as the sign of the resurrection of historical memory, as a return to the faith of our fathers”.²³⁰ Finally, it is worth noting that El'cin proclaims the reconstruction of the Cathedral as “one of the most important governmental tasks”. The Cathedral's importance for El'cin's government is clearly expressed. It is the means that was meant to lead to “social cohesion”.

Moscow's mayor Jurij Lužkov (1992–2010) used similar rhetoric and the same exalted tone:

“Today, on the threshold of the Millennium, it is particularly important to restore the destroyed or dilapidated shrines of the Russian people, the symbols of its spirituality, moral purity and strength. The reconstruction of the great Cathedral of Christ the Savior is fully in process [...]”.²³¹

²²⁹ Boris El'cin, “Obraščenie prezidenta rossijskoj federacii k členam obščesvennogo nabljudat'nogo soveta po vossozdaniju Chrama Christa Spasitelja”, *Rossijskaja gazeta*, Moskva 1994 September 7th. Cf. also: Ukaz prezidenta Rossijskoj Federacii ‘o vossozdanii Chrama Christa Spasitelja v Moskve’, *Rossijskaja gazeta*, Moskva 1995 May 12th. Cf. Annex, Text 4.

²³⁰ Patriarch: “Ne vsjakomu duchu ver'te”, *Argumenty i fakty*, Moskva 1995 August 17th.

²³¹ Jurij M. Lužkov, “Obraščenie k Moskvičam i vsem Rossijanam po slučajju predstojaščego 850-letija stolici Rossii”, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1996 January 31st. Cf. Annex, Text 5.

Patriarch Aleksij II (1990–2008) also speaks in a similar way:

“The Cathedral of Christ the Savior, which was one of Russia’s symbols, is becoming today a symbol of Russia’s revival. The void at the place of the Cathedral was not only a wound on the body of Moscow – it was a wound in the soul of the nation. The rebuilding of the shrine is seen by many as an act of repentance on the part of the government and the people, as a sign of the resurrection of historical memory, as a return to the faith of our fathers, as well as a tribute to the killed soldiers whose names are preserved in the Cathedral. I am absolutely convinced: if the Cathedral of Christ the Savior is risen by national zeal – also our nation will be reborn. If we have enough spiritual strength to recreate this shrine, if we pray and work fervently, God will not forsake us and will help us to become better.”²³²

These speeches also had a great response in the press, where many variations can be found.²³³ Words from the spiritual sphere like “sin”, “repentance”, “reconciliation”, “rebirth” and “community” became part of discussions and official speeches. Politicians asserted spiritual renewal and return to God (and return to Orthodoxy) as a way out from the crisis.

Looking at the vocabulary used, one observes that the emphasis on spiritual renewal (repentance, pray, moral purity) has completely overshadowed the civic one. No terms from the political domain describing, for example, democratic political values or civic responsibility of the individual are present, and these issues are not developed.²³⁴ The political elite covers thus the “rebirth of the nation” with pious formulation, and transposes it to the supernatural domain, distant from concrete political decisions and societal transformations.

It is also important to remember that the reconstruction of the Cathedral was presented on one hand as an act of repentance and as an aid for a better life, on the other hand, it was seen as a return to historical memory and as a tribute to the soldiers killed during the 1812 war. It remained a church as well as a monument to Russia’s heroism. With time, the argument of repentance and the vision of the Cathedral as a place for prayer were overshadowed by the vision of the Cathedral as a triumphal symbol of new Russia and of the strength of Russian culture – in the past, as well as in the present and future. In this sense, the publicity spot broadcasted on television to collect donations before the very end of construction is symptomatic. In this spot, as described by Svetlana Boym, young women guide visitors around the nearly finished cathedral. At one moment she says

²³² Patriarch: “Ne vsjakomu duchu”. Cf. Annex, Text 6.

²³³ E.g. Radi vyššego smysla, *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1994 January 12th; Dmitrij Popov, Nota Tona: Dva veka zvučanija, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1994, May 31st, 4.

²³⁴ In some occasions the Cathedral was described as a symbol of democratic Russia. However, the civic theme was not developed beyond this statement. L. K., Chram Christa pod zolotymi krestami!, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1996 March 30th.

– “the old cathedral was [...] the new cathedral is [...]”. One of the visitors, an older man, interrupts her kindly but firmly and says: “Don’t say old and new cathedral. There is only one Cathedral of Christ the Savior as there is only one Russia.”²³⁵

An important question results from the strange above-mentioned mixture of the political level with the spiritual level, and from the active engagement of the patriarch – that is, what role do Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church have in the creation of new Russian identity?

3.2. Orthodoxy in the New Russian Identity, Cathedral as a Sign of Desecularization

To better understand why exactly the CCS, with its double role as church and monument, should have become the symbol of new Russia, and to better understand its impact on the formation of new Russian identity, it is necessary to look closer at the situation of “Orthodoxy” in the 1990s.²³⁶ To avoid misunderstandings and confusion of terms, it is important to distinguish, from the start, three different but closely related levels of “Orthodoxy”: personal, political and cultural.

The first, personal level concerns the general revival of personal spirituality after the breakup of the communist regime. This spiritual boom was caused by the spontaneous interest of the people: in the 1990s, many people searched for “spirituality” in the traditional Orthodox Church and were baptised, but some also looked for new attitudes through other religions and confessions.²³⁷ The second important level is Orthodoxy as a political issue – Orthodoxy as an object as well as the subject of the political struggle. Third, Orthodoxy can be understood not as a personal attitude to the sacred or as a political topic, but as a characteristic cultural feature. Orthodoxy is considered historical and the strongest identity feature of Russia.²³⁸ As Geoffrey Hosking points out, Russian identity never had a national or ethnic base, but rather was founded on the idea of Empire²³⁹ and, in contrast to European countries, it has never experienced genuine “national revival”. In Imperial Russia, “Russianness” could have been expressed by the very word “Orthodox” (*pravoslavnyi*) and vice versa – those who were not *pravoslavnyi* were not considered genuine Russian (*russkij*).²⁴⁰ As

²³⁵ Boym, *Future*, 96–109.

²³⁶ The bibliography on the role of the Orthodoxy in modern Russian politics is large, we name at least: Agadjanian, *Public Religion and the Quest for the National Ideology: Russia’s Media Discourse*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40/3, New Jersey 2001, 351–365; Zoe Knox, *The Symphonic Ideal: The Moscow Patriarchate’s Post-Soviet Leadership*, *Europe-Asia Studies* 55/4, Glasgow 2003, 575–596; Leslie L. McGann, *The Russian Orthodox Church under Patriarch Aleksii II and the Russian State: An Unholy Alliance?*, *Demokratizatsiya* 7/1, Washington 1999, pp. 12–27; Irina Papkova, *The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics*, New York 2011.

²³⁷ Papkova, *Church*, 78.

²³⁸ McGann, *Russian Orthodox Church*, 1.

²³⁹ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552–1917*, London 1997, XIX quoted by Duncan, *Contemporary Russian Identity*, 283.

²⁴⁰ Georges Nivat, *Aspects religieux de l’athée russe*, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 29/3–4, 1988, 415–425; William B. Husband, “Godless Communists”. *Atheism and Society in Soviet Russia 1917–1932*, DeKalb 2000, 3–35. The close link between “Russian” and “Orthodox” is visible also at the case of Aleksandr Vitberg’s conversion described in the first chapter.

shown by the statistics, a similar attitude to Orthodoxy can be observed in the 1990s. In the survey of a Finnish-Russian team in 1999, the percentages of respondents declaring themselves “Orthodox” and “believers” were respectively 75 and 40.²⁴¹ These numbers reveal that more respondents designated themselves as Orthodox than those who declared to be practicing or even believing in God. Thus, Orthodoxy is, in this case, not understood as personal faith or belonging to the religious community, but as a characteristic feature for Russia, as a basic element of cultural distinctiveness.²⁴²

In the 1990s, politicians usually referred to “Orthodoxy” and combined all three above-mentioned levels. This led to, among other things, the (direct or indirect) involvement of the Church hierarchy in the politic issues. “Orthodoxy”, as a traditional cultural feature of Russia, was promoted by the majority of the political spectre – by Gennadij A. Zjuganov, leader of the Communist party of the RF²⁴³, as well as by the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia led by Vladimir V. Žirinovskij.²⁴⁴ McGann explains the importance and power that the Orthodox hierarchy had in 1990s politics precisely with the fact that Orthodoxy was seen as privileged bearer of tradition in Russia.²⁴⁵ Another element that pushed the patriarchate forward on the politic scene, was the above-mentioned “spiritual boom”. With the growing number of baptized people, there was reason to hope that believers would become a powerful electoral group. Politicians’ search for their sympathy and for the patriarch’s support was a logical outcome of this supposition.²⁴⁶

Apart from the element of cultural feature and electoral potential-element, the use of Orthodoxy in the political sphere and its use as a constituent of the new national identity seems to have had several further advantages. In fact, the idea of Orthodoxy was flexible enough to embrace the ethnic as well as the supranational (imperial, religious, Slavic or language based) explanation of Russian identity and could serve as a unifying element of different views on the Russian nation. At the same time, this “elasticity” enabled an avoidance of the painful question of the loss of empire and territorial diminution – it gave the possibility to replace the political empire with a spiritual one²⁴⁷, with a messianic mission and embracing even peoples and groups located outside the territory of the Russian Federation under the term “Russia”. In the official declaration of El’cin

²⁴¹ Kimmo Kaariainen – Dmitri Furman, *Religiosity in Russia in the 1990s*. An introduction, Unpublished manuscript, 1999 quoted by Agadjanian, *Public Religion*, 360. Later published as Kimmo Kaariainen – Dmitri Furman, *Religiosity in Russia in the 1990s*, in: *Religious Transition in Russia*, Matti Kotiranta (Ed.), Helsinki 2000, 28–76.

²⁴² “While there was no real sense of secular national identity for Russia prior to the nineteenth century, there had been a strong feeling of cultural distinctiveness. It was based on both fidelity to the Orthodox faith and the closeness to nature or peasant culture. Already in the popular culture of the late seventeenth century, Russian Old Believers used the term ‘rusak’ to describe those who resisted foreign ways of living and worshipping.” Billington, *Russia*, 2.

²⁴³ Urban, *Remythologising*, 977–982.

²⁴⁴ Tolz, *Forging*, 1011.

²⁴⁵ McGann, *Russian Orthodox Church*, 12.

²⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 22.

²⁴⁷ This have also very practical impact Russian Orthodox Church having its parishes outside the Russian territory.

and Lužkov, this “universalistic” claim does not appear explicitly, but in the press, it is possible to find several – more or less explicit – variations on this theme. For example, in the article “Moscow is Getting Russia Together”, the construction of the Cathedral is described not only as a reconstruction of one of Moscow’s churches, but as a reconstruction of the shrine of the Slavic nation, if Orthodoxy in its entirety²⁴⁸; the author implicitly includes other Orthodox and Slavic peoples under the term Russia. Another article emphasizes the donations for construction coming from Belarus, Ukraine, near-abroad (blizkogo zarubeža) or from emigrants.²⁴⁹ In addition to the connections to Orthodox and Slavic peoples, the Orthodoxy gives the possibility to create a link to Russia’s eastern neighbours – to Asia. This could be done by using the term Eurasia as a geographic and historical territory, based on the spiritual traditions of Orthodoxy and Islam often placed in opposition to the secular West.²⁵⁰ Even though this is a minority position in the press, it is possible to find it, for example, in the text of priest Andrej V. Kuraev, who accuses those against the construction of supporting American expansion on Eurasian territory.²⁵¹

Finally, Orthodoxy as a political identity is also useful for demonstrating a clear distance between Russia and the West – the Latin (heretic) West of the past or the liberal one of the contemporary period.²⁵² Official declarations do not develop this idea; however, in the press, several contributions underline the spiritual dimension of the Russian worldview and put spiritual Orthodox Russia in opposition to the corrupted and materialistic West, decomposed by liberalism.²⁵³ As already mentioned, the opponents of the West even build a collaboration with similarly-spiritually-based “Asia” in this argument.

The use of Orthodoxy, as described above, and its implication in public and political life seems to respond fully to the process of desecularization, as defined by Peter L. Berger²⁵⁴ and Vjačeslav Karpov²⁵⁵. They see it “as the resurgence of religion and its societal influences in reaction to secularization”²⁵⁶, and as “process of social change associated with religions’ resurgence and their expanding societal influences”²⁵⁷. Characteristics of desecularization are “(a) rapprochement

²⁴⁸ Tamara Voinova, Egor Stroev: Moskva sobiraet Rossiju, *Vječernjaja Moskva*, Moskva 1997 September 3rd. Cf. Annex, Text 7.

²⁴⁹ Kolodnyj, Poslednij kirpič.

²⁵⁰ Agadjanin, Public Religion, 360.

²⁵¹ Andrej Kuraev, Chram Christa Spasitelja: za i protiv. 6. argument, Russkaja Pravoslavnaja Cerkov’ – Kafedral’nyj sobor patriarcha Moskovskogo i vseja Rusi, <http://www.xxc.ru/stati/kur06.htm>; Cf. also: Musul’mane i Rossijskaja vlast’: Na jubilee islamskogo centra ego glava prizval golosovat’ ua El’cina, *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1996 April 9th; Islam i vozroždenie Rossii, *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1996 July 25th.

²⁵² Presentations of Russia as a moral and religious country facing decadent and heretic West could be seen as kind of topos used through history. Cf., e.g., Gabriele Scheidegger, Perverse Abendland - barbarisches Rußland, Zürich 1993.

²⁵³ Kuraev, 6. argument; Islam i vozroždenie Rossii.

²⁵⁴ Berger, Desecularization, 1–18; Karpov, Desecularization.

²⁵⁵ Karpov, Desecularization.

²⁵⁶ Berger, Desecularization. Karpov, Desecularization, 236.

²⁵⁷ Karpov, Desecularization, 238.

between formerly secularized institutions and religious norms; (b) a resurgence of religious beliefs and practices, and (c) a return of religion to the public sphere, (d) a revival of religious content in a variety of a culture's subsystems, including the arts, philosophy, and literature, and in the decline of the standing of science relative to a resurgent role of religion in world-construction and world-maintenance. Important consideration is that the countersecularizing processes may be weak or not at all integrated", which means that desecularization is not necessarily associated with the revival of popular religiosity.²⁵⁸

Orthodoxy as a distinctive cultural element separated from popular religiosity becomes firstly "public religion"²⁵⁹; in other words, it leads to "belonging without believing"²⁶⁰, when people proclaim themselves as Orthodox, even if they do not attend church services or even if they do not believe in God at all.

By the discourse in which Orthodoxy is associated with the resurrection of national culture, the ruling elite, even when speaking about democratic and secular Russia, is directing the new Russian identity towards ethnodox, which is defined as "a collectively held belief system that rigidly links a group's ethnic identity to its dominant faith".²⁶¹ This type of identity is based on exclusion but can generate strong links inside the group – because, among other reasons, it adds a sacred dimension to ethnic identities. This component of the sacred supports high self-esteem as well as a positive collective self-representation.²⁶² At the same time, the religious component becomes a legitimization of politics, and any criticism is then seen as an offence to the sacred.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned information, it is possible to assert that, in 1990s Russia, the CCS – presented simultaneously as an Orthodox cathedral, a Russian national monument and a necessary element for national rebirth – stood at the beginning of the processes of desecularization and development of the ethnodox and, at the same time, became the "materialized" proof of these tendencies.²⁶³

Precisely because of its close link to the Orthodox Church and to "ethnic Russians" was the Cathedral criticized as an unsuitable symbol for the new multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional Russia. The "Russian–Orthodox" identity carried by the Cathedral was criticized as exclusive and incompatible with inclusive civic identity.²⁶⁴ The main promoter of the new common

²⁵⁸ Karpov, *Desecularization*, 239–240.

²⁵⁹ Casanova, *Public Religions*; Idem, *Public Religion Revisited*.

²⁶⁰ Expression used by Karpov, *Desecularization*, 259, who presents it as a variation on "Believing without belonging" used by Grace Davie, "Believing without belonging: Is this the future of religion in Britain?", in: *Social Compass* 37/4, Louvain 1990, 456–469.

²⁶¹ Karpov/Lisovskaya/Barry, *Ethnodox*, 638.

²⁶² *Ibidem*, 642.

²⁶³ Karpov gives the history of the construction, destruction and reconstruction of the CCS as an emblematic example of secularization and counter-secularization. Karpov, *Desecularization*, 247.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Tolz, *Forging*, 993.

civic identity, Valerij A. Tiškov²⁶⁵, described it as “based on citizenship of the RF (Rossijskij), rather than on any form of ethnic Russian (Russkij) characteristics”.²⁶⁶ He argued that the government should “encourage the widespread use of new state symbols [...] which should be meaningful for all citizens of the RF, regardless of their ethnicity.”²⁶⁷ The Cathedral could hardly be seen as such a symbol and its selection seems to be even more problematic because in 1990, there was no national symbol that could demonstrate civic democratic values. The national anthem in the 1990s was Glinka’s patriotic song without words, the flag (a variation on the imperial one) was officially introduced for the first time in 2000 and the Day of National Reconciliation and Accord was oddly put on the October Revolution Anniversary.²⁶⁸ According to Tiškov, the only civic symbol was the White House, destroyed during the unrest of 1993.²⁶⁹

In the years 1991–1992, President El’cin’s government was trying to promote the civic form of the new Russian identity, but it revealed itself not to be a good argument in the political struggle of the time. El’cin then turned to the more popular vision of “ethnic” nationalism.²⁷⁰ In one of his speeches, El’cin identified the Cathedral as a symbol of the rebirth of democratic Russia.²⁷¹ However, considering the entire discourse connected with the Cathedral, it seems to be more of a simple *cliché* than a real return to the vision of the civic national identity model.²⁷²

Tiškov stressed the need for a new symbol for a new Russia. The Cathedral, on the contrary, was not new, but an update of an old symbol through which Russia creates a link to the old mythos of Russia as an important power. In some ways, 1990s Russia suffered the consequences of the absence of a non-imperial, civic or democratic national mythos.

In light of this reflection, the role of the Cathedral as a war monument testifying a victorious and mighty Russia capable of becoming an important player on the international scene comes again to the surface. As already mentioned, this interpretation gained strength gradually and was confirmed by the search for the negation of the difference between the first and the second Cathedral, as described above. In summary, the renewal of the CCS and the accompanying discourse shows that the ruling elite promotes Orthodoxy as a means for a moral rebirth and

²⁶⁵ Valerij Tiškov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology and, in March– November 1992, head of the State Committee on Nationalities, has been the main advocate of a civic definition of nation, which he has officially publicised in 1989. Cf. Tolz, Forging, 1007.

²⁶⁶ Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union*, London, 1997, IX quoted by Tolz, Forging, 1005.

²⁶⁷ *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1994 January 26 th, 1 quoted by Tolz, Forging, 1005.

²⁶⁸ Urban, *Remythologising*, 983.

²⁶⁹ *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1994 January 26 th, 1., quoted by Tolz, Forging 1005. Urban notes also the unused potential of the Manezh Square, place of mass rallies of the early 1990. Urban, *Remythologising*, 983.

²⁷⁰ Tolz, Forging, 1007–1011; Urban, *Remythologizing*.

²⁷¹ L. K., *Chram Christa*.

²⁷² Tolz asserts that Jelcin abandoned partially the civic nation-model as non-effective, in the course of the struggle for the legitimacy in the 1992–4 and than also during the election campaign in 1996. Tolz, Forging, 1017–1018.

unification of the nation. From a theoretical point of view, it seems to be a choice that is historically justifiable and advantageous from a political point of view, because it seems to have the potential to unify different opinions about the new Russian identity. At the same time, this choice contains a conflict with the civic vision of the Russian nation and seems to be an unsuitable “unifying element” for the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state that post-Soviet Russia was. With the Cathedral, Russia returned to the mythos – cultural and military – that described Russia as a strong and mighty country. They tried to adapt this mythos to the new situation of the 1990s, in spite of the fact that it was not coherent with the civic identity of the democratic secular country that Russia proclaimed to be.

3.3. Project of the Construction. Public Debate between its Opponents and Defenders.

After having outlined the problematic elements of the search for new Russian identity in general, and after describing the politic elite’s discourse, it is worth looking at the proceedings of the construction itself and at concrete arguments of its critics and advocates.

It is important to stress that the idea of rebuilding the Cathedral had not initially come from politicians. As summarised by Kathleen Smith in her article ‘An Old Cathedral for a New Russia’, from 1988, there were several different groups interested in the reconstruction of the Cathedral, or in some kind of memory of it. The first idea came from the sculptor Vladimir Mokrousov, who proposed rebuilding the Cathedral as a monument to World War II. Inspired by this proposition, Father Grigori Dokunin created a community of believers who tried to collect money for the reconstruction. Another confraternity, headed by Father Vladimir Rigin, however, gained the blessing from the patriarch. They aimed to build a chapel on the place of the Cathedral. These groups of believers saw the reconstruction mainly as an act of repentance. A second category of the Cathedral’s supporters were Russian nationalists linked to the newspaper ‘Literaturnaja Rossiya’, who saw the Cathedral primarily as a war monument. In 1989, all organizations created a foundation, which was meant to promote reconstruction. They also got support from liberal intellectuals who saw the Cathedral as a victim of Stalinism, but who did not support the identical reconstruction and preferred some other kind of remembrance of the Cathedral instead.²⁷³

In 1992, when Lužkov became mayor, he endorsed Mokrousov’s project in practice and gave Mokrousov’s confraternity the 6.7 hectares of land where the Cathedral had once stood. It was occupied by a Chechen used car dealer, who paid the confraternity 3.5 million roubles for rent and they could make a plan for a small chapel near where the Cathedral used to be.²⁷⁴ In 1994, the

²⁷³ Smith, *Old Cathedral*, 168–172.

²⁷⁴ David E. Hoffman, *The Oligarchs*, New York 2011, 239–241.

government took charge of the idea for the reconstruction, as described above. However, the government's discourse concerning the renewal of the Cathedral together with the practical execution of the project were harshly criticized on several levels.²⁷⁵

The first problem highlighted by the critics was the completely non-democratic, non-transparent decision about the initiation of the construction. As mentioned above, the idea of the Cathedral's rebirth had supporters already from the 1980s and, in 1992, the group around the the sculptor Vladimir Mokrousov, supported by Lužkov, started to plan a small chapel. However, when the Moscow architecture council approved a new plan of the full reconstruction of the Cathedral in February 1994, the confraternity was abolished by a formal notification from the patriarchate.²⁷⁶ The problem was that the Patriarchate had given Mokrousov's group its benediction but was not part of the association – meaning that the Patriarchate dissolved the fraternity without having any legal authority to do so; the regular procedures of the abolition of a civic association demanding the agreement of its members were not respected.²⁷⁷

No grassroots organisation could participate in the decision-making. Citizens were not consulted about the project of reconstruction, and the final decision was made by El'cin and Lužkov, despite criticism from opponents. In doing so, they appropriated an idea that had already existed for some time. In the article 'We will build the building and destroy the church', Dokunin expresses his disappointment in the government's doing, which had, in his opinion, turned the original idea based on religious intents into a megalomaniac project.²⁷⁸ The fraternity was replaced by the Public Supervisory Council which, despite its name, was neither public – the members were nominated and not elected – nor solely supervisory – the task of the commission was to coordinate works such as the financing of the project, and some of its members were even told to participate in the reconstruction.²⁷⁹ In this way, the construction was completely directed by Lužkov, El'cin and Aleksij and ordinary citizens had no possibility to influence or control the decision-making.²⁸⁰ In addition, any collaboration with those who, in the course of the works, expressed their disagreement with the government's doing was broken off.²⁸¹

The second problem closely connected with the loss of public control was the non-transparent financing of the project. One of the critics' most emphasized arguments was the high cost. They

²⁷⁵ An overview of these groups is given by Haskins, Cathedral, 38–42. For the list and discussion of the contra-arguments cf. Smith, Old Cathedral, 168–172.

²⁷⁶ Hoffman, Oligarchs, 239–241.

²⁷⁷ Dmitrij Šušarin, Vokrug chrama, *Segodnja*, Moskva 1994 October 1st.

²⁷⁸ Edda Zabavskich, Zdanie vosstanovim, a Chram pogubim..., *Moskovskie novosti*, Moskva 1994 November 16th.

²⁷⁹ Newsmaker's diary, *Kommersant-Daily*, 1994 September 8th.

²⁸⁰ Newsmaker's diary; Chram Christa Spasitelja strojat po nočam, *Moskovskij komsomolec*, Moskva 1994 October 8th.

²⁸¹ As it was the case of painter Ilja Glazunov: Ekaterina Gorelova, V soznanii mnogich vosstanovlenie Chrama Christa Spasitelja v Moskve nerazryvno svjazano s figuroj Il'i Glazunova, *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, Sankt-Peterburg 1995 November 22nd.

suggested using the money for the construction of urgently needed flats instead²⁸², or for the restoration of many churches and historical buildings falling into disrepair.²⁸³ From the beginning, it was clear that the costs would be high, however, exactly how high they would be was unknown²⁸⁴ – the government published an estimate of 150 million dollars, but critics designated it misleadingly low.²⁸⁵ Precisely because of these financial reasons, even many supporters of the renewal suggested not starting the works immediately but waiting to reconstruct until the economic situation was stabilized. Critics from the ranks of the Church dissent (and others) declared such an expensive project as immoral because the Church was taking money for its completion instead of giving it to the needy.²⁸⁶

The government's response was two-pronged: the first argument was moralizing and portrayed the critics as shallow materialists. For example, Lužkov's statement that "without cultural monuments, spiritual symbols and morality we will cease to be a nation and become well-fed animals"²⁸⁷, quoting the biblical "Man shall not live by bread alone"²⁸⁸ or the assertion that, in the 1930s, it was the government that destroyed the Cathedral so it is fair that the government repair it now.²⁸⁹ Finally, the renewal was presented as a debt to past and future generations.²⁹⁰ The second argument said that the money for construction would not be taken from the federal budget and taxpayer money, but only from donations and the city budget, therefore the citizens and their needs would not come to harm.²⁹¹ In reality, the financing appeared to be more complicated than the government alleged. Donations from ordinary people covered only a small part of the cost; a

²⁸² Kirill Nesterov, Vjačeslav Makarov znaet, čto proischodit s den'gami moskvičej, *Moskovskaja pravda* 229, Moskva 1995 December 2nd.

²⁸³ Lebedeva Elena, Postroim dvorec Christa Spasitelja? *Moskovskie novosti*, Moskva 1994 November 16th; Otto Laus, Poddel'naja Rossija nepomožet duchovnomu vrozroždeniju obščestva, *Izvestija*, Moskva 1994 November 24th; Viktor Rozov, Renaissance prestupnosti i upadok kul'tury, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1996 January 31st.

²⁸⁴ Aleksandr Puchal'skij, Ne choču, čtoby kto-to kajalsja za moj sčot, *Izvestija*, Moskva 1994 November 2nd.

²⁸⁵ Ivan Krolenko, Vedet li eta doroga k Chramu?, *Moskovskie novosti*, Moskva 1994 October 19th; Ivan Krolenko, Dos'e "MN", *Moskovskie novosti*, Moskva 1994 October 19th; No information about the final cost is given on the official website of the Cathedral. Hoffman gives the number of \$700 million (in contrast to the first official estimations between \$150 million and 300\$ million), Hoffman, Oligarchs, 242.

²⁸⁶ Oskvernenie svjatyn' prodolžaetsja, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1996 March 16th. The economic situation was difficult – even official statistic stated that "one-third of the population lives in poverty, and one-quarter lives below the boundary of what is necessary for physical survival". Yuri Rytov, Sredny klass – ne dlya nas?, *Novoye vremya*, 1996, 39; quoted by Smith, Old Cathedral, 163.

²⁸⁷ Est' ugroza stat' sytymi. Jurij Lužkov tolkuet Novyj Zavet, *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1994 November 18th.

²⁸⁸ Nikolaj Zjat'kov, Kto stroit naš dom?, *Argumenty i fakty*, Moskva 1995 August 24th.

²⁸⁹ Igor Pokrovskij, Chram, kotoryj postrojat vse, *Moskovskij komsomolec*, Moskva 1994 November 1st.

²⁹⁰ Viktor Velikov, Vosstanovlenie Chrama Christa Spasitelja načalos' pri otsuusuvii naroda, *Izvestija*, Moskva 1994 September 27.

²⁹¹ Nina Batalova, Ju. Lužkov: vsem politikam nužno zanjat'sja obustroystvom žizni ljudej", *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1995 December 30th; Kolodnyj, Poslednij kirpič; Interv'ju s Igorem Pokrovskim rukovoditelem masterskoj "Mosproekt-2", *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1994 October 25th; Patriarch: 'Ne vsjakomu duchu'. Nevertheless, critics of the project denounce the use of the federal money for the construction: e.g., Stoličnaja дума razbiraetsja s Chramom, *Segodnja*, Moskva 1995 June 28th.

significant part was given by big companies and banks²⁹², which, in return, received tax allowances.²⁹³ The money for the Cathedral was thus not taken from the state budget, but was “poured out”, so to speak, before even becoming part of it. Moreover, the construction was exempted from value added tax.²⁹⁴ Benefits accorded to some firms weren’t limited to tax advantages: e.g., the Stoličnyj Bank, after offering gold for the gilding of the domes, became an administrator of accounts of the Patriarchate.²⁹⁵ The names of the sponsoring companies and most significant private donors were written in gold on a commemorative plaque in the Cathedral²⁹⁶; an act which was seen by critics as a desecration of the memory of the soldiers fallen in 1812, whose names are remembered in the Cathedral in the same way.²⁹⁷ Collaboration with big companies and the use of “sinful money” for a good thing was justified on the moral level e.g., by priest Kuraev by using a Biblical citation taken out of its context: “And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.” (Luke 16:9).²⁹⁸ This argument, of course, could not convince Lužkov’s critics, who accused the mayor not only of arranging tax evasions but also of creating a parallel client power structure²⁹⁹, of direct connections to mafia organizations³⁰⁰ and of his own enrichment³⁰¹.

A closer look at the financing of the construction also reveals the problematic interconnections between the Patriarchate and the state power structure: without the public’s knowledge, the Patriarchate was given permission to trade tobacco products tax-free³⁰² and to import – under the

²⁹² Among sponsoring companies: e.g., Rosvooruženie: Kto skol’ko požertvoval?, *Segodnja*, Moskva 1996 May 16th; Coca-Cola: O. Nikol’skaja, Dela bogougodnye, *Večernjaja Moskva*, Moskva 1996 October 12th; Moscow’s casinos: Coullodon, Moscow City Management, *Kommersant Weekly*, Moskva 1997 September 23, 5 quoted in Donald N. Jensen, The Boss: How Yuri Luzhkov Runs Moscow, *Demokratizatsiya*, Washington 115; Bank Moskovskij: 1.000.000.000 rublej požertvoval bank Moskvyy na vossozdanie Chrama Christa Spasitelja, *Večernjaja Moskva*, Moskva 1996 August 8th; Prezident of the Oil Company Hermes: 28 Fevralja prezident koncerna “Germes” vnes 50 millionov rublej iz ličnych sredstv na stroitel’sтво Chrama Christa Spasitelja, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1993 March 2nd; for main sponsors cf. the official website of the Cathedral, Chram Christa Spasitelja, <http://xxc.ru/reconst/particip/ffp.htm>.

²⁹³ Kto skol’ko požertvoval?; Chram Christa Spasitelja stroitsja na dengi moskovskich nalogoplatel’sčikov, *Segodnja*, Moskva 1995 August 12th; Jensen, Boss, 101.

²⁹⁴ Batalova, Ju. Lužkov.

²⁹⁵ Jensen, Boss, 101.

²⁹⁶ Batalova, Ju. Lužkov; Kolodnyj, Poslednij kirpič; Pavel Dmitriev, Chronika Chrama Christa spasiteja: ot pervogo kamnja do pervoj molitvy, *Moskovskaja pravda*, Moskva 1996 January 10th.

²⁹⁷ Krolenko, Vedet li?

²⁹⁸ Andrej Kuraev, Chram Christa Spasitelja: za i protiv. 5. argument, Russkaja Pravoslavnaja Cerkov’ – Kafedral’nyj sobor patriarcha Moskovskogo i vseja Rusi, <http://www.xxc.ru/stati/kur05.htm>.

²⁹⁹ Moscow’s levels – and levers – of power, (Canonical ID: 09MOSCOW-2046_a), Wiki-leaks, 2009 August 10th, https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09MOSCOW2046_a.html.

³⁰⁰ The Luzhkov dilemma, (Canonical ID: 10MOSCOW317_a), Wiki-leaks, 12 February 2010, https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/10MOSCOW317_a.html.

³⁰¹ The most visible example is that after Lužkov’s arrival to the mayor-post his wife Yelena Baturina, owner of the company *Inteko* (specialized in plastic products and construction industry) became the richest woman in Russia. Boris Nemcov, Vladimir Milov, Nezavisimyj ekspertnyj doklad “Lužkov. Itogi-2”, Moskva 2010, 25ff. Cf also Jensen, “Boss”, 106.

³⁰² Vladimir Semenko, Dukhovno-gosudarstvennaya struktura, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (online), 1996 October 25th quoted by McGann, Russian Orthodox Church, 17–21.

cover of “humanitarian aid” – chicken drumsticks that were then sold for normal prices.³⁰³ Aleksij reportedly also asked for access to the petrol trade.³⁰⁴

The third criticized element was the way in which the Cathedral would be renewed and the related timetable of the works. The critics highlighted the dubious artistic value of the replica and its alleged identity with the old Cathedral. Already at the beginning, warning voices stressed the impossibility of replicating the old Cathedral and achieving the same artistic level.³⁰⁵ In fact, the new Cathedral is meant to give the impression of being identical to the original one, but the material used is completely different³⁰⁶: concrete instead of bricks, alloy with minimal percentage of gold instead of the gold on the roofs, bronze instead of marble for the exterior sculptures. In fact, Lužkov himself admits differences between the two buildings, proclaiming that the second one is better: the new Cathedral has the addition of an underground garage with 600 places (placed under the altar), a conference hall with 1,000 places, a restaurant, modern lifts, a ventilation system and a special lighting system which it has in order to illuminate the decorations “as in a museum”.³⁰⁷

The building was to be finished for the celebrations of the 850th anniversary of the city of Moscow, planned for September 1997; this schedule was observed and the first small liturgy was held in the church already on Easter of 1996. In 1997, the Cathedral was one of the main centres for festivities, and the inside decorations were finished in December 1999. The church, which had been constructed over nearly five decades in the nineteenth century, was finished in five years in the last decade of the 20th century.³⁰⁸ According to the critics, the church had lost all its artistic value and was no longer a Russian cultural monument but a “remake”, “fake” and “kitsch”³⁰⁹; the speed of the construction recalled stakhanovite competitions and megalomaniac projects of the “constructions of the century” (*strojka veka*)³¹⁰, typical of the Soviet regime. The complex under the building was criticized as being inappropriate for a church and as serving the Patriarch’s commercial interests.³¹¹ The government presented the replica, on the contrary, as a “true piece of architectural art”.³¹²

³⁰³ Oskvernenie svjatyn’.

³⁰⁴ Semenko, *Dukhovno-gosudarstvenaya struktura*.

³⁰⁵ Yuri Gnedovsky, *Ne draznite Konstantina Tona*, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, Moskva 1994 March 11th, 6 quoted by Smith, *Old Cathedral*, 170.

³⁰⁶ Gorelova, *V soznanii*.

³⁰⁷ Description of the complex is available on the site of the Fond of Christ the Savior. *Predloženiia*, Fond Chrama Christa Spasitelja, 2007, <http://www.fxxc.ru/rent/>; A. M. Denisov, *Ot Rozhdestva do Rozhdestva*, in: *Arhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 1, 1996, 26 quoted by Smith, *Old Cathedral*, 175; Cf. also *Oskvernenie svjatyn'*; *Stoličnaja дума*.

³⁰⁸ For the different stages of the construction see the official pages of the Cathedral: *Etapy vossozdanija Chrama Christa Spasitelja*, *Russkaja Pravoslavnaja Cerkov'* – Kafedral'nyj sobor patriarcha Moskovskogo i vseja Rusi, <http://xxc.ru/reconst/stage/index.htm>.

³⁰⁹ *Chram Christa Spasitelja*, *Kommersant-Daily*, Moskva 1994 July 9th; Laus, *Poddel'naja Rossija*; Lebedeva, *Postroim dvorec?*; *Chram, kotoryj my zaslužili*, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, Moskva 1996 February 8th.

³¹⁰ *Chram strojat po nočam*; Lebedeva, *Postroim dvorec?*.

³¹¹ Krolenko, *Vedet li?*.

³¹² Jurij M. Lužkov in Kiričenko, *Chram*, 4.

The critics' last argument attacked the very core of the government's discourse – the idea that it is possible to come to terms with the past and to “redress” it with the reconstruction of a building. They argued that the hasty construction of the monumental Cathedral would not lead to the regeneration process and to a reflection on Russia's past and future but, on the contrary, it would make it possible to avoid this reflection by replacing it.³¹³ Above all, they stressed the necessity of a public debate about Russia's situation. Instead of the grandiose and expensive church, they proposed a much humbler project that would lead to reflection about the harm done by the Soviet regime. One of these proposals was the construction of a chapel on the site of the destroyed Cathedral, representing the silhouette of the original with a simple metal construction or light rays.³¹⁴ The project completed by the government, they say, gives the impression that it is possible to give back what was destroyed in the seventy-four years of the Soviet regime.³¹⁵

Concluding Remarks

As a conclusion to this chapter, the questions arise: How can the role of the CCS in the 1990s be assessed? Was its reconstruction a successful response to Russia's identity crisis? To what extent has the Cathedral become a means and symbol of Russia's rebirth and a unifying element of the nation? Which vision of the past was promoted by the official discourse about the Cathedral?

In spite of the scepticism of the critics, the construction was finished as scheduled. The press presented and celebrated the completion of the construction as a big success – as a restoration of the national shrine, as the main church of the country, as the symbol of Russia's rebirth.³¹⁶ Since its completion, the ruling elite has attended the Cathedral regularly on big holidays.³¹⁷

If we rely on statistics, it seems that the majority of Moscow's inhabitants agree with the official discourse, appreciate the rebuilding of the Cathedral, understand it as a symbol of renewal, and perceive Orthodoxy as a characteristic feature of the new Russian identity. According to the statistics from Moscow State University, 78.56% of respondents see the role of Moscow's government positively in the reconstruction of religious monuments and 54.37% consider the increase of various foreign religious sects and missionary groups as a negative³¹⁸; also, the results of the elections can be seen as the expression of general satisfaction. In fact, Lužkov had solid support among Muscovites and in the 1996 elections, he easily won the seat of Mayor again.³¹⁹ It

³¹³ Boym, *Future*, 101.

³¹⁴ Laus, *Poddel'naja Rossija*.

³¹⁵ Ibidem; Jama i bašnja. Simvolom kakoj vlasti stanet Chram Christa Spasitelja?, *Nezavisimaja gazeta*, Moskva 1996 March 15th; cf. also Boym, *Future*, 83–120.

³¹⁶ Kolodnyj, *Poslednij kirpič*.

³¹⁷ La vie de jour. Na svjatkach ne mudreno sputat' mera s patriarchom, *Kommersant-Daily*, Moskva 1995 January 14th.

³¹⁸ Moskviči o processach religioznogo vozroždenija Rossii, *Kuranty*, Moskva 1996 December 6th.

³¹⁹ Jensen, “Boss”, 83.

is, however, important to underline that, during Lužkov's term, many things got better in Moscow. He was capable, in the complicated period of the 1990s, of coming to terms with the old nomenklatura as well as with the new commercial elite and mafia, not by destroying them, but by mechanisms of exchange, and achieved important amelioration in the capital's situation. Streets were repaired, public lighting started to function again, houses started to be reconstructed, etc. The rebuilding of the Cathedral was thus seen as one of Lužkov's big achievements. He was praised for his ability to bring a big project to an end; and, even more, for his ability to raise a symbol of hope and proof that Russia is once again capable of mobilizing its resources and achieving big goals.³²⁰

It seems, then, that with the construction of the Cathedral, Lužkov's and El'cin's government, assisted by patriarch Aleksij, succeeded in touching a historically sensitive spot and finding an easy response to Russia's identity crisis, which was suitable for the majority. Though welcomed by the majority, its character is rather exclusive. In fact, the choice of the CCS as a new national symbol became a visible manifestation of the process of desecularization and of the course of the emerging post-Soviet national identity towards ethnodoxo. By this logic, the Cathedral, initially presented as a symbol of repentance and reconciliation, became a manifestation of the country's might. The Cathedral is thus a place that makes a link to the heroic past and re-creates an old-new "national myth" of strong Orthodox Russian people. However, this myth did not leave room for concrete and constructive political debate. On the contrary, it is constructed in the sphere of "sentiments" – pride and messianism. These functions are important for the cohesiveness of a specific group, but insufficient for the creation of a democratic civic society.

In addition, the discourse, presenting the Cathedral as a "return to historic memory"³²¹, demonstrates how the political elite approaches the past and how it strives to shape collective memory. In fact, the case of the CCS is illustrative for how memory can be selective and how quickly the interpretation of a "symbol" can change. From an act of atonement, it becomes a place, not for remembering the crimes and tragedies of the Soviet regime, but a place for the celebration of the past and present glory of Russia.

³²⁰ Hoffman, *Oligarchs*, 242.

³²¹ Patriarch, *Ne vsjakomu*.

Chapter 4

The Cathedral as a Stage for Protest. Re-formulation of Russian Identity.

This chapter concentrates on the protest performance of the “punk group” Pussy Riot in the CCS in February 2012 and on the reactions this performance elicited.³²² The main question concerns, once again, the Cathedral’s role in the discourse about Russia’s self-perception and place in the world. On one hand, the Cathedral became a stage for criticism of the current political regime. On the other hand, the topic of the “desacralization” of the main national church by the protestors became, as will be argued, one of the main pillars of the elite’s reformulation of Russian identity. The central theme of the official as well as of the protestors’ discourse is the theme of the union of “religious” (Orthodox) and “state” elements. This union can be seen on several levels: in the character of the Cathedral itself, in concrete Russian politics and in the formulation of the official Russian identity.

The first part of the chapter briefly describes the protest performed in the Cathedral. Afterwards there is the text of Pussy-Riot’s protest-song viewed in the context of the development of the Patriarchate-State relationship since the 1990s and in the context of the political situation of Winter 2011/2012. As a third step, the official rhetoric is analysed, the protestors response is briefly mentioned and the public’s reception of the affair is briefly presented. Finally, the chapter concentrates on how Pussy-Riot’s performance and trial have changed the formulation of Russian self-perception. The reflection is mainly based on the concept of desecularization³²³ and on Durkheim’s theory of norm and deviance.³²⁴ Durkheim explains deviance (crime, transgression) as a fundamental element for constructing societal norm: he defines crime as an act that provokes punishment from society and he asserts that through the act of punishing, society unites itself³²⁵ against the criminal and re-affirms the correct norm of behaviour.³²⁶ By this logic, it is the punishment of a (previously non-problematic) action that can establish a new societal norm, by setting new limits of acceptable behaviour; and on the contrary, the absence of punishment for a deed previously seen as criminal attests the change of a norm.³²⁷

³²² For the overview of the affaire cf. Joachim Willems, *Pussy Riots Punk-Gebet. Religion, Recht und Politik in Russland*, Berlin 2013.

³²³ Karpov, *Desecularization*; Berger, *Desecularization*.

³²⁴ Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social. Livre I*, Paris 1897; Émile Durkheim, *Les règles de la méthode sociologique*, Paris 1894. For the application of Durkheim’s concept on the Pussy Riot case cf. Schroeder – Karpov, *Crimes and Punishments*.

³²⁵ Durkheim, *De la division*, 99.

³²⁶ *Ibidem*, 104.

³²⁷ Durkheim, *Règles*, 46–47.

Sources for the analysis are mainly the statements of the protestors in the press and in court documents³²⁸; speeches of Patriarch Aleksij II and Patriarch Kirill (Vladimir M. Gundjaev)³²⁹ as well as of President Vladimir V. Putin³³⁰ will be analysed. An important document revealing the mechanism of the new (official) discourse is also a TV discussion program ‘Specialnyj Korrespondent – Provokatory’ [‘Special Correspondent – Provocators’] presented by Arkadij V. Mamontov. The program had three parts, each more than one and a half hours long and was released on the state channel Rossiya 1.³³¹ Finally, to evaluate the reception of the affair in society, the statistical data of Levada Centre are used.³³²

4.1. Description of the Incident

On the 21 February 2012, a group of five young women entered the CCS. They penetrated the altar space and, with their backs turned to the altar and dressed in colourful clothes and balaclavas, they started to jump and swish their legs. They shook their heads, crossed themselves and shouted (Fig 57.). One of them tried to switch on her microphone, and a second wanted to play the guitar. However, in a few moments the guard started to push the performers out. Consequently, only a few words of the song were comprehensible.³³³ The young women were thrown out of the church without any consequences at that moment. Several hours later, a recording made by the performers’ collaborators appeared on the internet. The spot was compiled with the recordings made in the Epiphany Cathedral at Elochovo in Moscow already on the 18 December 2012.³³⁴

³²⁸ Polnyj tekst prigovora Chamovničeskogo suda, Delo n. 1–170/12, Moskva, 17 August 2012. Disponible online in Prigovor Pussy Riot, “Snob” publikuet polnyj tekst progovora Chamovničeskogo suda, *Snob* (online), 2012 August 22nd, <http://snob.ru/selected/entry/51999?v=1446818074>; *The Feminist Press* (Ed.), *Pussy Riot! A Punk Prayer for Freedom. Letters From Prison, Songs, Poems, and Courtroom Statements plus Tributes to the Punk Band that Shook the World*, New York 2013.

³²⁹ Patriarch Kirill, Address at the Opening of the Eighteenth International Christmas Readings, Russian Politics and Law 49/1, 2011, 74–82; Patriarch Kirill, Slovo Svjatejšego Patriarcha Kirilla pered načalom molebna v zaščitu very, porugannyh svjatyh, Cerkvi i ee dobrogo imeni, 22 April 2012, Oficial’nyj sajt Moskovskogo Patriarchata, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2177868.html>; Metropolitan Kirill, Education and the Orthodox Religion, Russian Social Science Review 51/1, 2010, 43–55; Patriarch Moskovskij i vseja Rusi Aleksij II, Obrašćenie k pravoslavnym junošam – prizyvnikam 1995 goda, 9 October 1995, Patriarkh i narod, <http://patriarkh-i-narod.ru/slovo-patriarha/tserkov-i-armiya/1199-obrashchenie-k-pravoslavnym-yunosham-prizyvnikam-1995-goda-9-oktyabrya-1995-goda>.

³³⁰ Redakcija portala “Pravoslavie i mir”, 3 voprosa Vladimiru Putinu O Pussi Rajot, *Pravmir.ru* (online), 2012 September 7th, <http://www.pravmir.ru/3-voprosa-vladimiru-putinu-o-pussi-riot/>.

³³¹ Arkadij Mamontov, Special’nyj korrespondent: “Provokatory I”, Rossiya 1, 24 April 2012; Arkadij Mamontov, Special’nyj korrespondent: “Provokatory II”, Rossiya 1, 11 Sempember 2012; Arkadij Mamontov, Special’nyj korrespondent: “Provokatory III”, Rossiya 1, 16 October 2012.

³³² Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), *Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013*, Moskva 2013.

³³³ Some of the original recordings are available on You Tube: Original’naja zapis’ vystuplenija Pussy Riot v XXC, 21 February 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FojqzGG7u_k.

³³⁴ Epiphany Cathedral at Elochovo in Moscow could be seen as a direct predecessor of the CCS in the sense of the importance for the Church as institution and in the sense of the collaboration of the Church and State. Epiphany Cathedral was practically the most important church during the Soviet era. In 1945, it obtained the status Patriarch’s Cathedral (patriaršij sobor) and became the place of intronization of patriarchs and place of keeping important relics.

Sound was also added to make the song they had performed comprehensible. Its words were:

(Chorus)

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, put Putin away,
Put Putin away, put Putin away,
(End chorus)

Black robe, golden epaulettes,
All parishioners crawl to bow,
The phantom of liberty is in heaven,
Gay-pride sent to Siberia in chains,

The head of the KGB, their chief saint,
Leads protesters to prison under escort,
In order not to offend His Holiness
Women must give birth and love,

Shit, shit, the Lord's shit!
Shit, shit, the Lord's shit!

(Chorus)

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, become a feminist,
Become a feminist, become a feminist,
(End chorus)

The Church's praise of rotten dictators
The cross-bearer procession of black limousines,
A teacher-preacher will meet you at school
Go to class – bring him money!

Patriarch Gunday³³⁵ believes in Putin,
Bitch, better believe in God instead,
The belt of the Virgin can't replace mass-meetings,
Mary, Mother of God, is with us in protest!

(Chorus)

Virgin Mary, Mother of God, put Putin away,
Put Putin away, put Putin away.
(End chorus)³³⁶

Two weeks later, on 3 and 4 March respectively, two participants, Maria Alechina and Nadežda Tolokonnikova, were arrested. The third woman, Ekaterina Samucevič, was arrested on 15 March. The trial lasted more than five months and was highly medialized³³⁷; on 17 August 2012, the court pronounced its final verdict. The three women were found guilty of having accomplished an “act of hooliganism, that is a gross violation of the public order by prior conspiracy, expressing clear disrespect for society, motivated by religious hatred and enmity on the grounds of hatred against a social group, of any group of persons”. The women were sentenced to two years in a prison colony.³³⁸

For the history of the Cathedral, cf. its the official site. Kafedral'nyj Bogojavlenskij Sobor Goroda Moskvy, Bogojavlenskij Kafedral'nyj sobor v Elochove, <http://elohov.ru/kafedralnyj-bogoyavlenskij-sobor-goroda-moskvy/>.

³³⁵ “Gunday” is a mocking variation of “Gundayev”, Patriarch's secular name.

³³⁶ Pussy Riot, Pank-moleben “Bogorodica, Putina pragoni” v Chrame Christa Spasitelja, 21 February 2012, <http://pussy-riot.livejournal.com/2012/02/21/>. Cf. Annex, Text 8. Translation taken from ‘Virgin Mary, Put Putin Away’ – a punk prayer earns two years in jail, 2012 August 17th, CET Euronews, <http://www.euronews.com/2012/08/17/virgin-mary-put-putin-away-a-punk-prayer-earns-two-years-in-jail-/>.

³³⁷ Cf., e.g., Sud nad Pussy Riot budut translirovat' v Internetu, *Vesti.ru* (online), 2012 July 23, <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=856290>; Prigovor po delu Pussy Riot. “Vedomosti” publikujut kopiju etogo dokumenta, a takže samye jarkie vyderžki iz nego, *Vedomosti.ru* (online), 2012 August 21st, <http://www.vedomosti.ru/library/articles/2012/08/21/tekst-prigovora-po-delu-pussy-riot>.

³³⁸ Polnyj tekst prigovora. Cf. Annex, Text 9.

4.2. Orthodox Hierarchy and Russian Government

The participants themselves denied the motive of religious hatred and presented their actions as a political protest expressed through an artistic form. As main points of their criticism, they indicated Putin's policy and narrow collaboration of the Patriarchate and the state power structure. For a better understanding of their song as well as arguments explaining their actions and their choice of the Cathedral as a place for the performance, it is worth looking briefly at the course of Church-State relations in the post-Soviet period and on Russia's political situation several months before the performance.

As described in the previous chapter, in the 1990s, the state power structure skilfully used the concept of Orthodoxy as Russia's fundamental and distinctive cultural element, and the patriarchate and state became close. The reconstruction of the CCS as the symbol of new Russia was the most visible manifestation of this process. However, the Church-State collaboration became evident in many other regards as well, even though the Church hierarchy tried to use the rhetoric of non-involvement in politics often.³³⁹ Already after the August 1991 coup, patriarch Aleksij became closer to El'cin.³⁴⁰ During the 1993 demonstrations, the patriarchate did not take a position – not supporting El'cin explicitly but not criticizing the bloodshed and censure at all. In 1995, Aleksij appealed openly for the stop to violence in the Caucasus, which had been exacerbated in 1994 by the conflict between the separatists and the Russian army. However, a few months later, he encouraged young men to enrol in the army, which was seen by the opposition as a clear support of governmental policy.³⁴¹

An important moment for Church-State collaboration was the Proclamation of the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations³⁴², which was highly discussed and criticized by most Western scholars and the Western public because it was seen as a challenge to pluralism.³⁴³ In the preamble of this law, Orthodoxy is described as having a dominant role in shaping Russia's culture and "Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions" are acknowledged as "an insoluble part of the historical patrimony of the peoples of Russia". The law established that, in order to gain legal status in Russia and to have certain rights (*e.g.*, real estate ownership, tax exemption), religious associations had to prove fifteen years of previous legal activity on Russian

³³⁹ McGann, *Russian Orthodox Church*, 17.

³⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 16.

³⁴¹ Aleksij, *Obraščenie k junošam*; Jurij Feofanov, "Obraščenie Patriarcha k prizyvnikam: tol'ko li slovo Božie?", *Izvestia*, 1995 October 12th, quoted by McGann, *Russian Orthodox Church*, 17.

³⁴² Federal law N 125-FZ, 26 September 1997, Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations. Effective since 1 October 1997; modified on 13 June 2015. Available at KonsultantPlus – nadežnaja pravovaja podderžka, https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_16218/.

³⁴³ Cf. Agadjanian, *Public Religion*, 353–357; Irina Papkova, *The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics*, New York 2011, 71–93.

territory.³⁴⁴ This measure was presented as a hindrance for foreign missionaries and new sects to take root, operate in the country and harm people.³⁴⁵ Western politicians and human rights activists saw the law as a restriction of religious freedom and Washington put Boris El'cin under hard pressure. El'cin vetoed the law, however, some time later, after the strong insistence of the patriarch, who mentioned the possibility of social unrest if the law did not pass, he signed an only slightly changed version. However, observers from Russia as well as the West assert that the impact of the law in the end was less restrictive than predicted.³⁴⁶ As Papkova argues, in lobbying for the Law, the Patriarchate was advancing its own interests, but at the same time, the Patriarchate's demands were in accordance with the "hysterical campaign in Russian mass media against 'totalitarian sects' and foreign missionaries in general" as well as with the growth of the nationalistically-oriented parliament. The Patriarchate's "defence of the Orthodoxy" then fused with "anti-western" discourse in the media.³⁴⁷

A further point of close collaboration between the Church and State was the question of religious education in schools.³⁴⁸ After the breakup of the USSR, courses on religion were introduced in many schools on the personal initiative of local authorities; since 1994 a special course was offered outside class hours. This course awakened a lot of discussion and criticism from the liberal point of view – its name, Basis of Orthodox Culture (BOC, *Osnovy pravoslavnoj kul'tury*), was criticized as confusing and as not corresponding to the content, which was closer to religious education than to cultural studies; the textbooks for the subject were judged as containing nationalistic and fundamentalist opinions.³⁴⁹ From the year 2000, regional governments decided if the course would be inserted into local school curricula and if it would become compulsory. In 2008 this "regional module" was suspended.³⁵⁰ At the same time, the Orthodox hierarchy proposed the introduction of a compulsory subject 'Foundations of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics' (*Osnovy religioznych kul'tur i svetskoi etiki*).³⁵¹ It was emphasised by the patriarch Kirill³⁵² and the

³⁴⁴ Federal law N 125-FZ.

³⁴⁵ Papkova, *Orthodox Church*, 77–84.

³⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 75.

³⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, 76.

³⁴⁸ Victor A. Shnirelman, "Russian Orthodox culture or Russian Orthodox teaching? Reflections on the textbooks in religious education in contemporary Russia", in: *British Journal of Religious Education* 34/3, London 2012, 263–279; Elena Lisovskaya and Vyacheslav Karpov, *Orthodoxy, Islam, and the Desecularization of Russia's State Schools, Politics and Religion* 3, Cambridge 2010, 276–302.

³⁴⁹ Textbook was written by Alla Borodina: Alla Borodina, *Osnovy pravoslavnoj kul'tury*, Moskva 2002; Alla Borodina, *Pravoslaviye – kul'turoobrazujuščaja religia Rossii. Učebnoe posobie dlja 4 klassa*, Moskva 2006. For the short overview of the textbook and for further bibliography cf: Shnirelman, *Russian Orthodox culture*, 265–266.

³⁵⁰ Papkova, *Orthodox Church*, 97–99.

³⁵¹ The subject is also called Spiritual-moral culture and offers a choice from six modules: Bases of Orthodox Culture, Basis of Islamic Culture, Basis of Budhistic Culture, Basis of Judaic Culture, Basis of World Religious Cultures, Bases of Secular Ethics.

³⁵² Kirill, *Metropolitan, Education and the Orthodox Religion*, *Russian Social Science Review* 51/1, London 2010, 43–55.

then president Dmitrij Anatol'evič Medvedev³⁵³ that education is important in the formation of public opinion. In the textbooks, the idea of the inseparability of Orthodoxy and “Russianness” was fundamental.³⁵⁴ At the same time, the fraternity of different nations living in Russia was underlined and the country was presented as a big family, composed of different members united by their love for the Fatherland. One proves his love for the Fatherland by his ability and preparedness to serve it. In this reflection, culture and citizenship are closely linked. Moreover, in certain passages, the explanation of the term “culture” is problematic. “Culture” was presented as something already given, inborn, practically impossible to change.³⁵⁵

Similar reasoning is also present in the discourse of the Church leaders. In 2006, Patriarch Aleksij II suggested that religious education had to be compulsory.³⁵⁶ In 2007, Kirill, called the introduction of the BOC an ‘issue of national security’³⁵⁷; in 2011, he was absolutely clear on this subject:

“Our shared task is to explain, in a firm and well-grounded manner, the importance of the chosen course for the child’s later development. For it is during one’s school years that one acquires a system of life values and priorities in general terms, undergoes socialization, and assimilates into a national culture. Because the Russian religious tradition forms an inalienable part both of the national cultural legacy and of Russian history, the ‘Foundations of Orthodox Culture’ course is intended to convey to the young citizen of our country an understanding of how closely interwoven and inseparable are the concepts of ‘Russia’ and ‘Orthodoxy’. [...] The earthly future of the Church and the Fatherland will depend on those who succeed this generation. May God grant that the difficulties we are enduring today – difficulties largely generated by human sin – will, as has happened many times before, yield to repentance and a true spiritual, cultural, and economic revival.”³⁵⁸

Again, in a similar way as in the 1990s, ‘Russia’ and ‘Orthodoxy’ were presented as inseparable and economic revival is linked to spiritual and cultural revival and achieved through repentance and elimination of sin. The religious and political are confused in a complex of patriotic discourse.

³⁵³ Dmitrij Medvedev, Vstupitel'noe slovo na soveščanii po voprosam prepodavanija v školach osnov religioznoj kul'tury i svetskoj etiki i vvedenija v Vooružennyh Silach Rossijskoj Federacii instituta vojskich i flotskich svjaščennoslužitelej, Barvicha 21 July 2009. Available at Kremlin.ru, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2009/07/219988.shtml>.

³⁵⁴ Shnirelman, Russian Orthodox culture, 273.

³⁵⁵ It is a case of Kuraev's textbook, Andrej V. Kuraev, Osnovy religioznych kul'tur i svetskoi etiki. Osnovy pravoslavnoj kul'tury, 4-5 klassy, Moskva, 2010, 6ff as quoted by Shnirelman, Russian Orthodox culture, 273.

³⁵⁶ Shnirelman, Russian Orthodox culture, 271.

³⁵⁷ Patriarch Kirill, Mitropolit sčitает, što vvedenie OPK v školach – vopros nacional'noj bezopasnosti v otдел'nyh rajonach, *Interfax-religija*, 2007 January 18th, quoted by Shnirelman, Russian Orthodox culture, 271.

³⁵⁸ Patriarch Kirill, Address at the Opening of the Eighteenth International Christmas Readings, Russian Politics and Law 49/1, London 2011, 74–82, here 80.

Moreover, according to the documents of the Ministry of Education, the aim of spiritual moral education is to “strengthen belief in Russia and personal responsibility toward the Fatherland [...] to raise the confidence of citizens and societal organizations in state institutions [...] to raise the efficacy of the state force to modernize the country [...] to raise national security”.³⁵⁹ Indeed, the textbook alternates chapters, combining biblical, liturgical and morality-oriented chapters (e.g., Christ and His Cross, Conscience and Repentance) with those forging patriotism (“Russia – Our Motherland” and “Love and Respect for the Fatherland”). In fact, it seems that the idea of the inseparability of Orthodoxy, morality and patriotism is to be learned from school years on.

Patriarch Kirill cooperated with the government not only in the field of education but there is also the history of patriarch’s tight collaboration with the KGB.³⁶⁰ The latter was mentioned in the “Punk-Prayer” in the verses: “The head of the KGB, their chief saint” and “Black cassock, golden epaulettes”.³⁶¹ Moreover, the Patriarch’s luxurious way of life was the object of scandal several times. In 2012, his ownership of a luxurious flat in Moscow was revealed.³⁶² In 2009 and in 2014, attention was concentrated on Kirill’s Breguet watch, estimated at more than \$30,000. After criticism from journalists, the patriarchate’s office tried to retouch the watch with Photoshop, but the reflection of the watch on the glass surface of the table was not removed, which caused further ridicule of the Patriarch (Fig 58).³⁶³ His collaboration with the government and luxurious way of life as well as his efforts to establish compulsory religious teaching is mentioned in the “Punk-Prayer” words: “The Church’s praise of rotten dictators/The cross-bearer procession of black limousines/A teacher-preacher will meet you at school/Go to class – bring him money!”

In Autumn 2011, Kirill strongly supported Vladimir Putin, prime minister at that time. In the parliamentary elections of 4 December 2011, Putin’s party United Russia won, however, mass protests began, claiming the elections were fraudulent and demanding “just elections”; arrests of the opponents followed. Putin needed to calm the situation, not only to stop the protests and

³⁵⁹ Aleksandr Daniljuk, Aleksandr Kondakov, Valerii Tiškov, *Koncepcija duchovnonravstvennogo razvitija i vospitanija ličnosti graždanina Rossii. Standarty vtorogo pokolenijam*, Moskva 2009, 14 quoted in Joachim Willems, ‘Foundations of Orthodox Culture’ in Russia: Confessional or Nonconfessional Religious Education?, *European Education* 44/2, London 2012, 23–43, here 34.

³⁶⁰ Irina Filatova, The politicking patriarch, *The Guardian* (online), 2009 February 2nd, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/feb/02/russia-religion-patriarch-orthodox-kirill>.

³⁶¹ “By singing ‘Black cassock, golden epaulettes’ we mean that under the black cassock the KGB’s epaulettes are hidden. These are especially appreciated in the putinist system and have a status of golden-ones. Patriarch Kirill is a well Soviet secret police member.” Pussy Riot, *Pank-moleben*.

³⁶² About scandal around Patriarch Kirill’s flat, *Tass Russian News Agency* (online), 2012 March 29th, <http://tass.ru/en/russianpress/672617>.

³⁶³ Victor Davidoff, Watching Patriarch Kirill Discredit Himself, *The Moscow Times* (online), 2012 April 9th. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/watching-patriarch-kirill-discredit-himself/456324.html>; Damien Gayle, Watch closely: Russian church apologises for Photoshop fail after £20,000 timepiece ‘disappears’ from the wrist of the Patriarch, *Daily Mail* (online), 2012 April 6th. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2126092/Watch-closely-Russian-church-apologises-Photoshop-fail-20-000-timepiece-disappears-wrist-Patriarch.html>.

opposition themselves, but to regain public support for the presidential elections planned for March 2012.³⁶⁴ In his speeches Kirill backed Putin, praised the period of his government also proclaimed, addressing Putin: “I should say openly as a patriarch who must only tell the truth, not paying attention to political situation or propaganda, that you personally played a massive role in correcting this crooked twist of our history”. The Patriarch qualified opposition protests as “ear-piercing shrieks” and described the protestors as a minority of Russians, often sympathising with Western consumer culture.³⁶⁵ The Patriarch also clearly expressed which position Orthodox people should take towards anti-governmental manifestations: “Orthodox people don’t know how to attend demonstrations [...] They pray in the silence of monasteries, in their monks’ cells, in their homes, but their hearts are full of pain for the turmoil among our people today, so clearly similar to the desperate frenzy of the years immediately before the Revolution and the discord, disruption, and damage of the 1990s.”³⁶⁶

Pussy Riot’s performance in the Cathedral should then be put in direct relation to mass protests³⁶⁷ and the Patriarch’s support for Putin. The latter is criticized in the Punk Prayer couplet: “Patriarch Gundyay believes in Putin/Bitch, better believe in God instead/’The belt of the Virgin can’t replace mass-meetings³⁶⁸/Mary, Mother of God, is with us in protest!” and “The head of the KGB, their chief saint/Leads protesters to prison under escort”.

The last link that Pussy-Riot’s members made between the Patriarch’s and Putin’s politics was regarding the anti-LGBT campaign and anti-feminist attitude – points criticized in the sentences: “Gay-pride sent to Siberia in chains”³⁶⁹ and “In order not to offend His Holiness/Women must give birth and love”.

³⁶⁴ Vladimir Putin was in president office in two election periods 2000–2004 and 2004–2008. Third period was not allowed by Russia’s constitution. Putin did not run for the post but supported fully Dmitry Medvedev. After Medvedev’s election became prime-minister. In 2012, he won the presidential seat again and Medvedev assumed the role of the prime-minister.

³⁶⁵ “What were the 2000s then? Through a miracle of God, with the active participation of the country’s leadership, we managed to exit this horrible, systemic crisis.” Gleb Bryanski, Russian patriarch calls Putin era “miracle of God”, *Reuters* (online), 2012 February 8th. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/02/08/uk-russia-putin-religion-idUKTRE81722Y20120208>.

³⁶⁶ Slovo Svjatejšego Patriarcha Kirilla v tret’ju godovščinu intronizacii v Chrame Christa Spasitelja, 2012 February 1st, Oficial’nyj sajt Moskovskogo Patriarchata, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1992020.html>. Cf. Annex, Text 10. Translation: Haskins, Places of Protests, 234.

³⁶⁷ One of the participants expressed it clearly: “When peaceful demonstrations of hundreds of thousands people don’t give any immediate result, before Easter we will pray Mother of God to put Putin out as soon as possible.” Pussy Riot, Pank-moleben.

³⁶⁸ Belt of the Virgin refers to the fact that in November 2011 the relic of the Belt of the Virgin was brought from Athos to Moscow’s CCS. Three and half millions of believers came to worship the relic. Patriarch Kirill: Pojas Bogorodicy dal velikuju nadeždu, *Vesti.ru* (online), 2012 January 7th. <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=679163>.

³⁶⁹ “Speaking about the fact that ‘gay-pride was sent to Siberia in chains’ we refer to the law about the interdiction of homosexual propaganda.” Pussy Riot, Pank-moleben.

4.3. Official Discourse

President Putin's comments on the affair were scarce, however, in an interview for Russia Today he said:

“Now I don't want to comment on the decision of the Russian court, but I would like to turn your attention simply to the moral aspect of the affair. In what does it consist? [...] First, I don't know if you are aware or not that some years ago in one of the big Moscow supermarkets they hung three dummies (sic!). [...] in a public place with the inscription that it is necessary to liberate Moscow from Jews (sic!), homosexuals and migrant workers. [...] It seems to me that already then the authorities should have turned their attention to it. After that they organized a séance of group sex in a public space. It is, as is usually said, their business, people have the right to do anything they want, if the law is not transgressed. However, in a public space, I think, the authorities should have turned their attention to it. Then they even put [record] on the internet. Some of the fans say that group sex is better than individual sex, because in that case, as in any collective work, it's possible to take a break. The thing they did in the Cathedral [...] You know, in our country there are very grievous memories from the starting period of the Soviet era when a huge number of priests suffered. And not only Orthodox priests, but also Muslims and representatives of other religions. [...] Many churches were destroyed, all our traditional confessions suffered great damage. And in general the government has to protect the feelings of believers. [...] Now, I will not comment if the judgment is [...] just and adequate to what was done. [...] You know, I'm just trying not to touch this case at all. I know what's going on there, but I absolutely don't meddle in it.”³⁷⁰

There are several important elements in Putin's discourse. First he “turns the attention to the moral aspect of the incident” and avoids the political aspect completely. Second, he recalls two previous actions of the protest art-group Vojna, in which some of Pussy Riot's members participated. The first was a protest performance in September 2008 in the Auchan department store in Moscow, where five real people (not three dummies as Putin asserted) were “hanged”, three migrant workers and two homosexuals (there were no representations of Jews, as Putin alleged). The action was meant as an ironic gift for Jurij Lužkov because of his racist and homophobic attitude.³⁷¹ In 2012, however, Putin presented it as a non-ironic act of hatred against other citizens. The President remembers then a second performance, made at the Timiryazev State Biological Museum in Moscow on 28 February 2008. Several couples had sex in front of a stuffed bear, two other people held a banner with the inscription “Fuck for the heir Puppy Bear!”. The aim of the performance

³⁷⁰ Redakcija portala. 3 voprosa. Cf. Annex, Text 11.

³⁷¹ Sobytiya: Pjat' povešennykh v podarok Lužkovu, Grani TV, 2008 September 8th, <http://grani-tv.ru/entries/460/>.

was to criticize Medvedev's³⁷² candidature for president.³⁷³ However, Putin comments on the performance in a ridiculing way, omits the political element and again emphasizes the moral one. No matter how controversial these two performances might be, the problem is that they were not officially included in the accusation; the president remembered (and partially distorted) them only to display the moral lowness of the actors. Putin also used the same false argument with Angela Merkel in November 2012, mentioning the action in the Auchan store and stating "We cannot support you people who have anti-Semite attitudes".³⁷⁴ As mentioned above, in the Auchan store there was no mention of Jews being sent out of Moscow and no trace of anti-Semitism. A third important point is the link Putin makes between Pussy Riot's actions in the Cathedral, Soviet power persecuting clergy and believers, and the alleged role of the current government in defending believers' feelings. First, he indirectly compares Pussy Riot to Soviet persecutors and killers of believers. In this way, he uses the well-known rhetoric means of historical parallel, by which the opponent is given the bad intentions and deeds of some other historical person. Even more important is, however, that he presents it as the state's duty to protect believers' feelings. He doesn't base this statement on the law, but presents it as a logical outcome of the historical experience of when the Church was persecuted. Even if it is not said explicitly, the message seems clear: the state plays the role of the protector of the Church. Finally, Putin distances himself from the affair and refuses to comment on guilt and penalty, leaving it to the court and presenting himself as an independent observer.

The Patriarch himself as well as the members of his cabinet were much more eloquent on the subject. On 22 February, the patriarchate organized a prayer vigil rally "in defence of the faith, desecrated shrines, the Church and its good name"³⁷⁵ in front of the Cathedral. In his opening speech, Patriarch Kirill highlighted several important elements:

"With such gratitude our nation responded to the freedom to believe! [After the fall of the Soviet Regime.] How the churches of God started to rise towards the sky in all the territory of historical Rus'. However, the same people who had cried: "His disciples stole Him in the night"³⁷⁶ - these same

³⁷² "Bear" in Russian is called "medved", the name Medvedev is thus derived from the word "bear".

³⁷³ "The message was, that the whole country was put on four legs – in the position, we displayed that action. When Putin said, this politician [Dmitrij Medvedev] – at that moment unknown to anybody – would simply be your next president, he put us before the fact. At the time, the country was really fucked. We have portrayed it as we could and as we knew, using the tradition of modern art." Mumin Šakirov, Nikita Tatarskij, Putin, čekist s obiljem strachov, *Radio Sloboda* (online), 2013 December 27th. <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/25214238.html>. Cf. Annex, Text 12.

³⁷⁴ Putin–Merkel. Odná iz Pussy Riot "vešala čučelo evreja", *BBC* (online), 2012 November 16th. http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2012/11/121116_putin_merkel_pussy_riot.

³⁷⁵ Molebnoe penie v zaščitu very, porugannyh svjatyn', *Cerkvi i ee dobrogo imeni*, 22 April 2012.

³⁷⁶ Quotation from the Matthew's Gospel. In the chapter 28, the evangelist describes attitude of those who negated Christ's resurrection and who explained the empty tomb by the fact, that apostles had stolen Christ's body and then pretended he had risen.

people were speaking at the time of the hardest economic crisis also about this God's church which we are standing in front of now: 'Why should we reconstruct the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. For this money we could buy and do this and that.' There were also traitors in cassock just as today there are those among us who say: 'Why should we gather for prayer? Let's forget! Let's pretend that in our lives today nothing happens.' But something very important does happen! We reconstructed the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in those days as a symbol of Holy Rus' resurrection, as a symbol of our hope, as a symbol of our fidelity to the words we heard today from the Apostle and evangelist John."³⁷⁷

The Patriarch likens those who, in the Gospel, denied Christ's resurrection to those who, in the 1990s, didn't want to rebuild the CCS. Those who didn't agree with the reconstruction are explicitly called traitors as well as those who proposed not to organise a rally and pass over the "Punk Prayer" accident in silence. The discourse constructed by these equations is strong – in fact, it cannot be disputed in any way, because the actual opponents are condemned by means of the Gospel, which contains truth that can never be challenged. The important point is that, in this moment, the Cathedral was no longer presented as a sign of Russia's unification, or as a symbol for all citizens, as the elite had attempted, at least rhetorically, in the 1990s. The Patriarch presented it as a symbol of the faith, and this is an important shift. The patriotic element was also strongly present: Russian national heroes were named and their pious attitude to church buildings as well as the importance of these buildings to the Fatherland was emphasized.

"[I]n the very hardest moments of history even Aleksandr Nevskij, Dmitrij Donskoj and Suvorov, as well as Kutuzov and Nachimov and Mareshall Žukov bowed down before holy places [...] and the Lord heard the prayers of the great as well as of the unknown, and gave his mercy to our Fatherland."³⁷⁸

Finally, the Patriarch praised multitude and strength of Russian believers and the identified the incident as an attack by persecutors, which had enormous meaning. The allegedly fatal, decisive character of the situation was stressed. Thus, first, the "crime" of Pussy Riot gains intensity. Second, the cohesion among the "just" is strengthened.

"[T]hese are many millions of people who realized that the Orthodox faith is the pillar of their lives and who are not willing to replace their faith. They are not willing to abandon it. They are not willing to think about the future of their country without relying on the Orthodox faith. And when we were

³⁷⁷ Kirill, Slovo. Cf. Annex, Text 13.

³⁷⁸ Kirill, Slovo.

now exposed to the attacks of persecutors – which were incomparable to those of the past, but dangerous because it is being suggested to see the very fact of blasphemy [...] as a legal expression of human freedom [...] [T]his attitude turned even a microscopic phenomenon into a phenomenon of enormous proportions and touched every believer. [...] We came to pray to God for our country, for its nation. We came to pray that never and in no circumstances should the Cathedral of Christ the Savior be destroyed, that our holy places should be desacralized, that our spirit and moral force should be perverted. [...] [N]obody can forbid us from gathering for a prayer procession in the fateful moments of history – and today we are living in such a moment. [...] Amen.”³⁷⁹

In this amalgam of Gospel citations, accusations, remembrance of past tragedies and warning against future ones, there is no mention of the possible political message of the protestors. All speech is conducted in a half-religious, half-patriotic manner, and the opposition is not judged by means of political or legal terms but more in moral ones.

The sharpest formulations of the arguments against the performers were presented in the film ‘Provokatory’ and the discussion program ‘Specialnyj Korespondent’ by Arkadij Mamontov. Mamontov had no official authorisation to speak on behalf of the government, however, high placed church and state employees as well as cultural authorities participated in his program³⁸⁰; the program was released on the state TV Russia 1. These elements lead to the assertion that the program could be analysed as a non-official megaphone of the official discourse. The ‘Specialnyj Korespondent’ discussion is even more important because the Kremlin, as already mentioned, commented on the affair only barely. In fact, Mamontov and his guests’ arguments demonstrated clearly how Pussy Riot’s performance was stripped of its original political meaning, and how a new political meaning was engrafted on it. The observed train of thought is the following: the performance in the CCS was a profanation of the sanctuary, of the national church – the holiest symbol the nation has³⁸¹; through this attack not only the Church, but the whole nation and the very basis of the Russian state, were attacked.³⁸² In addition, this attack was allegedly not merely an initiative of the young godless, but was part of a coordinated liberal offensive (worldly as well as Russian) to destroy Russia and then dominate the whole planet. Thus, such an attack on the

³⁷⁹ Kirill, Slovo. Cf. Annex, Text 14.

³⁸⁰ E.g., Vladimir Legoyda, head of the Information Department for the Holy Synod; Artem Radčënkov, member of the Investigativ Comitee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Irina Jarovaja, Chairman of the State Duma Committee for Security and Anti-Corruption, and others.

³⁸¹ “When the holy places are involved, behind which lies the existence of the very nation, there is no more possibility to make concessions.” Mamontov, Provokatory II, time: 0:32:40.

³⁸² “The blow was driven into the Russia’s heart, into the tradition, into what is holy for all and into what defines the state.” Mamontov, Provokatory III, time 0:30:14; “If you are against the ROC, against [...] any traditional religion, which is in our big country, you are already an extremist. And it is necessary to fight against it because it is beginning of the state’s destruction.” Mamontov, Provokatory II, time 1:14:42.

Orthodox Church meant an attack on the Russian state and for this reason, an exemplary severe punishment was requested. The argumentation was presented partially in religious terms³⁸³, partly as a dramatic warning against the alleged enemies of Russia.³⁸⁴ The action was presented as an act of war (*akt vojny*)³⁸⁵, and was put in parallel with the fascists' wish to destroy the Orthodox Church³⁸⁶ as well as with Bolshevik anti-religious activities and murders of clergy.³⁸⁷

All mentioned statements – Putin's, the Patriarch's and that of Mamontov Programme – have two common elements. The first is the shift from juridical to moral arguments. The second is a blending of the border between religion, nation and state. Indeed, the argument linking the Orthodox Church and *nation* was already present in the 1990s, during the debate about the reconstruction of the Cathedral. In the case of 2012, however, an important shift occurred: the explicit declaration of the “natural link” between the Orthodoxy and not only the nation, but the *state*.

4.4. Reaction of the Public

The action in the CCS were broadly covered by the media and provoked many reactions.³⁸⁸ According to the data of Levada Centre, at the end of 2012, more than 80% of the respondents in Russia were in some way aware of the act.³⁸⁹ However, the reception of the performance and character of the reactions diverged significantly in Russia and in the West.³⁹⁰ In the West, the performers were supported as critics of Putin's authoritative regime and as fighters for free artistic expression.³⁹¹ In Russia, the act provoked at best mixed feelings and the most frequent response was – an attack on the Church or simple hooliganism.³⁹² This explanation of the performance as hooliganism, blasphemy and attack on the Orthodox Church as well as on the Orthodoxy itself

³⁸³ As for example: “Sin has to be called sin and not performance or politic action.” Mamontov, *Provokatory I*, time 0:34:34.

³⁸⁴ For the use of the conspiracy theories during the affair cf. Ilya Yablokov, *Pussy Riot as agent provocateur: conspiracy theories and the media construction of nation in Putin's Russia*, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42/2, London 2014, 622–636.

³⁸⁵ Mamontov, *Provokatory II*, time 0:1:15, 0:27:25 *et passim*.

³⁸⁶ Mamontov, *Provokatory II*, time 0:9:20.

³⁸⁷ Mamontov, *Provokatory I*, time 0:53:47.

³⁸⁸ It is important to stress that the information about the incident was diffused by the TV, press and in the speeches of the religious leaders. The protesters themselves published the record only on YouTube and LiveJournal; without the state's attention they could not attain such a number of renown.

³⁸⁹ Zorkaya, *Opinion*, 121, Table 11.30. Cf. Annex, Table 1.

³⁹⁰ Cf., e.g., Ekaterina V. Haskins, *Places of Protest in Putin's Russia. Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer and Show Trial*, *Advances in History of Rhetoric*, London 18/2, 2015, 227–247; Manaf Bashir – Maria Fedorova, *Framing the Pussy Riot between the USA and Russia*, *The Journal of International Communication*, 21/1, 2015, 132–152.

³⁹¹ Pussy Riot were nominated for the Sacharov prize and were proclaimed “prisoners of the conscience by Amnesty International. They were supported *i.a.* by Madonna and Yoko-Ono. Pussy Riot nominated for Sakharov Prize, *Euronews* (online), 2012 September 25th, <http://www.euronews.com/2012/09/25/pussy-riot-nominated-for-sakharov-prize/>; Pussy Riot!, 7–10, 121–148.

³⁹² Zorkaya, *Opinion*, 122, Table 11.33, 11.34. Cf. Annex, Tables 6, 7.

was, as demonstrated above, strongly promoted by the official discourse, which tried to rid the performance of its original political motive.

Looking at the statistical data, it seems that the official discourse was, at least to some extent, agreed on by a significant portion of the population. According to Levada Center, the target of Pussy Riot's event at CCS was the Orthodox Church and believers according to 23% of respondents, Vladimir Putin according to 19%, 20% saw it as a reaction to the Church's involvement in politics, 19% found all proposed options correct, and for 19% it was difficult to answer³⁹³ According to these numbers, sixty percent did see the performance as a political act – it seems then that the act was understood and thus successful. However, other data speaks against this statement. On the question “Was it Pussy Riot's intention to insult Russian believers?” 53% of the respondents said yes, in comparison to 34% that said no³⁹⁴; and the punishment of 7 years was seen as adequate by 46% in March 2012. However, there was significant drop in July, when only 33% judged it adequate³⁹⁵, and 2 years was seen as adequate by 56% in April 2013.³⁹⁶ According to the survey FOM, on 23 March 2012, 37% respondents judged several years of imprisonment as just, 34% as unjust. Those who saw several years of prison as just explained their position mostly in the following words: “It is blasphemy”; “desacralization of the church”, “offence of the believers”, “One cannot behave like this in church”; “It is immoral, outrageous behaviour”; “It is hooligan conduct, disturbing the peace”. The political element was not mentioned.³⁹⁷

Combining the above-mentioned data, it is thus possible to draw two different hypotheses: first, that those who saw the performance as a political issue didn't think the sentencing was just; second, that the criminal act was, in the view of the respondents, not the content of the message but its very form which was judged abusive. It seems, thus, that even if a large part of the respondents were able to discern the political aim of the act, the argument of blasphemy and of the attack on the Russian national shrine, finally prevailed and led to a sharp condemnation of the performers. This result was achieved by the above-described official propaganda, on one hand. On the other hand, the radical form of the protest probably prevented a large part of the population from accepting its content.

³⁹³ Ibidem, 121, Table 11.31. Cf. Annex, Table 2.

³⁹⁴ Ibidem, 122, Table 11.35. Cf. Annex, Table 3.

³⁹⁵ Ibidem, 123, Table 11.36. Cf. Annex, Table 4.

³⁹⁶ Ibidem, 123, Table 11.37. Cf. Annex, Table 5.

³⁹⁷ “Pussy Riot” v Chrame Christa Spasitelja. Sleduet li nakazyvat ispolnitel'nic pesni “Bogorodica, Putina progoni”? I esli sleduet, to kak?, Fond Obščestvennoe Mnenie (FOM), 2012 March 23rd, <http://fom.ru/Bezopasnost-i-pravo/10365>.

4.5. Participants' Comments

Participants of the performance denied, during the trial as well as after, that the target of their actions were believers and Orthodoxy, and categorically contested the accusation of the motive of religious hatred.³⁹⁸

“I would like to emphasize that, while in the cathedral, we did not utter any insulting words toward the church, toward Christians, or toward God. The words we spoke and our entire punk performance aimed to express our disapproval of a specific political event: the patriarch’s support for Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, who took an authoritarian and anti-feminist course of action. Our performance contained no aggression toward the audience, but only a desperate desire to change the political situation in Russia for the better.”³⁹⁹

They explained their deed as well as the choice of the place as a political gesture of protest against the Church’s collaboration with Putin’s regime.⁴⁰⁰ In a similar way, they also explained their choice of the CCS as a place for the performance:

“That the Cathedral of Christ the Savior has become a significant symbol in the political strategy of authorities was clear to many thinking people when Vladimir Putin’s former [KGB] colleague Kirill Gundryaev took over as leader of the Russian Orthodox Church. After this happened, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior began to be used openly as a flashy backdrop for the politics of the security forces, which are the main source of political power in Russia.”⁴⁰¹

However, at the trial, all witnesses against the activists were based on complaints of the offence of religious offence and hatred and the psychological harm that the spectators had suffered. The

³⁹⁸ The theme was elaborated many times during the process. The absurdity of the religious hatred accusation was mentioned by all three women in Opening Courtroom Statements as well as in their conclusion speeches. Pussy Riot!, 39–41.

³⁹⁹ Nadežda Tolokonnikova, Opening courtroom statement by Nadya, in : Pussy Riot!, 43.

⁴⁰⁰ “We criticize the desire of the Church to achieve a leading role in public and political life of Russia. Among us are also believers, we respect religion in general and Orthodoxy in particular. This is why we get angry that the great and bright Christian philosophy is used in so dirty way. [...] Many people were outraged by the fact that we did a punk concert in the church. We believe that it is not a cathedral (Chram) but a shame (sram). Shame of Christ the Saviour. It is not the house of the Lord but the office of the ROC. We have officially come to the office of the ROC to express our minds. CCS does not resemble to place on the spiritual life, but to business centre offering for large sums of banquet rooms, dry cleaning, laundry, and parking.” Pussy Riot, Vyn’ prežde brevno iz tvoego glaza i togda uvidiš, 23 February 2012, Livejournal, <http://pussy-riot.livejournal.com/12658.html>, cf. Annex, Text 15. For the CCS as buisness centre and description of the services cf. Evgenij Gladin – Elena Baryševa, Biznes-centr Christa Spasitelja, *Moskovskie Novosti* (online), 2012 April 23th, <http://www.mn.ru/society/faith/80472>; Michail Anšakov, Polnaja shema biznes-centra XXC, Obščestvo zaščity prav potrebitelej (online). <http://ozpp.ru/sovet/anshakov/shema-biznes-centra-hhs/>; and offer on the official sites of the Cathedral, Obsluživanje posetitelej, Kafedral’nyj sobor patriarcha Moskovskogo i vseja Rusi, <http://www.xxc.ru/complex/uslugi/tp.htm> and <http://www.xxc.ru/complex/uslugi/zcs.htm>, quoted in Pussy Riot, Vyn’ prežde.

⁴⁰¹ Ekaterina Samucevič, Closing Courtroom Statement by Katya, in: Pussy Riot!, 88.

political point was not discussed because, allegedly, in the Cathedral, no names of politicians were heard, and the name of Putin was added only later in the internet version, to mask the hooliganism and offence. Alechina and Tolokonnikova were sent to penal colonies IK-28 in Perm and IK-14 in Mordovia, respectively. Samucevič, after having hired a new lawyer, Irina V. Chrunova, received probation. The reason for this was that the guard took her out of the Cathedral before the performance started, so basically she did not participate. Alechina and Tolokonnikova were released on 23 December 2013 on amnesty, about two months before the official end of their sentences. Paradoxically, the motive of religious hatred was, without greater attention from the media, retroactively removed from their accusation.⁴⁰²

Concluding Remarks

What, then, does the affair of the CCS and the reaction of the political and church elite reveal about the character of Russian identity in 2012?

As already stated by several authors, it was precisely the case of Pussy Riot that permitted the Russian government to formulate a new definition of Russia.⁴⁰³ The official discourse presented the performance in the national cathedral as blasphemy which put the very basis of the Russian state in danger; Orthodoxy was identified as the spiritual foundation of the state, and the Orthodox Church as an institution and guardian of this spiritual foundation.⁴⁰⁴ Russia was thus defined as based on moral and spiritual basis of the Orthodoxy, defending the faith and facing the amoral, liberal and democratic West. Of course, these tendencies were already present in the 1990s, however, in the 2010s they became explicit and an important shift occurred in the official rhetoric: in the 2010s, Orthodoxy was seen not only as a fundamental element of the Russian nation/people (*narod*), but as a base for the Russian state. The state was thus legitimized as a defender and protector of the Church and of the believers, as well as of moral norms. This shift to Orthodoxy–nation–state is also clearly visible in the understanding of the Cathedral’s symbolic role itself. The Patriarch described it this time in completely religious terms; the Cathedral was no longer presented as a symbol of the new democratic Russia or as a means of coming to terms with Russia’s past, but as a symbol of the resurrection of the Holy Rus’, a symbol of faith to the Gospel. Nevertheless, the attack on this symbol was taken as an attack on the state.

⁴⁰² Sud ubral religioznoj motiv iz progovora Pussy Riot, *BBC ruskaja služba* (online), 2014 April 4th. http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2014/04/140404_pussy_mosgorsud_late_judgement.

⁴⁰³ E.g., Regina Smyth and Irina Soboleva, Looking beyond the economy. Pussy Riot and the Kremlin’s voting coalition, *Post-Soviet Affairs* 30/4, 2014, 257–275; Schroeder/Karpov, *The Crimes and Punishments*, 285; Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, The Pussy Riot affair and Putin’s démarche from sovereign democracy to sovereign morality, *Nationalities Papers* 42/4, 2014, 615–621.

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. Kirill, *Education*, 44.

All of the official rhetoric mixed secular and religious language and combined terms from state, juridical, moral and religious domains. In this way, the concrete problems were, similar to the 1990s, transposed to the supernatural level of morality and faith. On the other hand, in the case of Pussy Riot, in contrast to the 1990s, it is the earthly state-power-structure that presents itself explicitly as a guardian of this supernatural level, and punishes transgression by earthly means – by imprisonment. Sharafutdinova describes this mechanism as a “morality turn” which was “a strategy selected by the Kremlin to restore the regime’s legitimacy that had been shaken by the protests of 2011–2012”. She presents the trial of Pussy Riot as the “beginning of the latest ideological turn of the regime” in which Putin presents himself as a “protector of conservative values worldwide” and Russia as the “Savior of the moral foundations of Western civilization”. This image of Russia went hand in hand with the radicalization of its position toward the West, which was seen as decadent and amoral.⁴⁰⁵

The reformulation of Russia’s identity and Russia’s role in the world came in the period when Putin’s government was threatened by sinking popularity and mass protests. The rhetoric of Russia’s economic progress and of Putin as the leader of an economic revival, which was popular in the 2000s, was no longer relevant in the 2010s. Moreover, the opposition gained in visibility. The Pussy Riot trial offered the ruling elite a good place to, first, present Putin as a strong and positive leader defending traditions and morality; and second, to stigmatize the opposition and human rights activists as immoral and enemies of Russia, and third, to draw a line between the loyalists and the opponents. In fact, the highly covered Pussy Riot affair also helped to identify who was “ours” and who was the “enemy”, and to create unity in society. The rival camps were presented as follows: the first had characteristics such as: criticizing the performance in the Cathedral – Orthodox — moral – Russian patriot – supporter of the government; the second was identified by the attributes: defending the participants of the performance – not Orthodox – amoral – traitor/collaborator of Russia’s enemies – opponent/enemy of the government. One characteristic went hand in hand with the other: those who were defending Pussy Riot were against Orthodoxy, were not patriots and were immoral and enemies of the government. In this way, the state-power structure and Patriarchate also succeeded in the rhetoric legitimization of their mutual collaboration.⁴⁰⁶ The situation in 2012 clearly shows that desecularization “from above” has gained

⁴⁰⁵ Sharafutdinova, Pussy Riot affair.

⁴⁰⁶ For analysis of these elements cf. Smyth/Soboleva, *Looking beyond*; Schroeder/Karpov, *Crimes and Punishments*; Sharafutdinova, *Pussy Riot affair*; Yablokov, *Pussy Riot*. The mechanism was reflected also by Ekaterina Samucevič in her closing statement: “Why did Putin feel the need to exploit the Orthodox religion and its aesthetics? After all, he could have employed his own, far more secular tools of power [...] It may be, that the harsh, failed policies of Putin’s government [...] forced him to ponder whether it was high time to resign; that otherwise, the citizens of Russia would help him to do this. Apparently, it was then that he felt the need for more persuasive, transcendent guarantees of his long tenure at the pinnacle of power. It was then that it became necessary to make use of the aesthetic of the Orthodox

in intensity since the 1990s.⁴⁰⁷ This tendency is visible in the statistical data which show the growth of the percentage of people identifying themselves as Orthodox, even if, sometimes they do not believe in God.⁴⁰⁸ Orthodoxy thus becomes a political identity feature and brings respect for so-called traditional Orthodox values into the political sphere and gives political authority to the religious elite.

An important point of the official discourse that helped to formulate a new Russian identity was also the use of conspiracy theories as a means to unify “the nation”. This discourse presented Russia as threatened by liberal enemies in the best case scenario, and by the devil in the worst.⁴⁰⁹ The fateful character of the moment was highlighted, as well as the mission of Russia, “the last point from which the moral revival of Europe can come”⁴¹⁰, and everyone was encouraged to take the position, either agreeing with “just Orthodox patriotic Russians”, or being labelled a “traitor”. In the pathos of the moment, the call for mighty and imperial Russian culture was openly expressed.⁴¹¹

As already mentioned, scholars generally agree that it was Putin’s establishment that gained the most profit from the affair, by reformulating Russian identity and setting a new understanding of the State-Church relationship. The mechanism of the re-formulation could be explained by Durkheim’s theory of the norm and deviance.⁴¹² The group of Pussy Riot touched – in an unprecedented action – a sensitive point, that is, the question of the relation between the state power structure and the Orthodox Church. The protestors wanted to criticize their close collaboration, however, their deed and successive trial had the opposite effect: by punishing the Pussy Riot group and by gaining people’s support for the punishment, the state power affirmed a new official norm of behaviour. According to this norm, first, one should not blaspheme and offend another’s religious feelings. This rule was evidently present in the most part of Russian society on a non-legal level, even before 2012, however, with punishment it shifts from a moral

religion, which is historically associated with the heyday of Imperial Russia, where power came not from earthly manifestations such as democratic elections and civil society, but from God Himself. How did Putin succeed in this? [...] Here apparently, the authorities took advantage of a certain absence of the Orthodox aesthetic in Soviet times, an era when the Orthodox religion had an aura of lost history, of something that had been crushed and damaged by the Soviet totalitarian regime [...]. The current authorities decided to appropriate this historical effect of loss, and present a new political project to restore Russia’s lost spiritual values, a project that has little to do with a genuine concern for the preservation of Russian Orthodoxy’s history and culture. Samucevič, Closing Statement, 87–88.

⁴⁰⁷ Schroeder/Karpov, Crimes and Punishments, 303–307.

⁴⁰⁸ Religioznaja vera v Rossii 1991–2013, Levada-centr (online), 2011 September 26th.

<http://www.levada.ru/26-09-2011/religioznaya-vera-v-rossii>; Russians Return to Religion, But Not to Church, Pew Research Centre (online), 10 February 2014, <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/02/10/russians-return-to-religion-but-not-to-church/>.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Mamontov, Provokatory I, II, III.

⁴¹⁰ Mamontov, Provokatory III, time 1:14:20.

⁴¹¹ “[It is possible] to fight them [the provocators] only in one way: by spreading in our society the national, Russian, patriotic, imperial, spiritual, Orthodox culture.” Mamontov, Provokatory III, time 1:13:15.

⁴¹² Schroeder/Karpov, Crimes and Punishments.

transgression to a penal one. As a consequence of the trial, harsher anti-blasphemy laws came into force in June 2013.⁴¹³ Second, what is even more important is that it was not only the criminalisation of blasphemy that was established by the trial, but, hand in hand with it, a new norm for the correct Orthodox and Russian-patriot behaviour was formulated. Church-State cooperation and a new official definition of Russian identity was legitimized. Any attempt to call these into question or any criticism towards the Church elite could be, according to the Durkheim's theory, considered a deviance and could be punished.

⁴¹³ Federal Law N 136-F3, 29 June 2013, Effective since 1 July 2013. Available at KonsultantPlus – nadežnaja pravovaja podderžka, http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_148270/, 4 October 2015.

As a Conclusion:

Cathedral of Christ the Savior in the *longue durée* Approach

The view on the Cathedral's history, as described in the previous chapters, confirms that the building has played an important role in each period of the (re)formulation of Russia's self-perception, as seen by the country's elites: the change of the classical style of building in favour of the Russo-Byzantine style, described in the first chapter, mirrored and, at the same time, enhanced the perception of Russia as strong state, independent from the West and having its own culture. At the same time, this search for Russia's own past fit paradoxically into the general search for a "national past" already underway in Europe. The official vision of Russia switched radically with the changing of the ruling elite after the 1917 revolutions and brought a turn in the attitude toward the CCS. It was seen in a negative way, as a symbol of tyrannical tsarist power that had to be replaced by the soviet building *par excellence* –the Palace of the Soviets. The process of the search for a suitable architectonic expression of Soviet ideals was briefly described in the second chapter. After the fall of the Soviet regime, the CCS came again to the forefront of interest for Russia's political elites. Its reconstruction was proclaimed the way to and the symbol of the new "reborn" country. The rebuilt Cathedral became thus the sign and instigator of a process of desecularization which led to the perception of Russia as based on Orthodox values. The official rhetoric about Russia and its values was contested in 2012 by the protest-group Pussy Riot, with their performance in the Cathedral. As described in the fourth chapter, the trial of the performers was used by the power structures to set new rules and to strengthen and legitimate the triad Orthodoxy-nation-state as Russia's basis.

However, as demonstrated in constituent chapters, the mechanisms used by the ruling elites in their dealing with the CCS, as well as the reactions of the public, were different in each period. They have had their specific issues and thus had to be analysed under different viewpoints and by means of specific concepts. Therefore it is difficult to make general summary-conclusion, as it would lead to simplifications, superficial statements or to repetitions. On the other hand, the two-century-long heterogeneous history of the Cathedral offers a remarkable possibility to look at the Cathedral's role in the construction of Russia's identity from the perspective of the *longue durée*⁴¹⁴ and to try to explain the reasons of its importance for Russia's self-perception. As follows from all the chapters, the CCS was meant to be a place around which the collective vision of the past, the collective memory, was to be constructed in crucial moments, which is one of the bases for the collective self-definition of a group. This leads to the reflection about the CCS as well as about the

⁴¹⁴ Braudel, *La longue durée*.

lieu de mémoire, as was defined by Aleida Assman.⁴¹⁵ To what extent is it possible to consider the CCS as the place of memory and to explain its importance in this way?

Assman characterizes the *lieu de mémoire*, among other things, by the fact that it is the place itself, the “here”, which is important, and not only the objects and buildings that are constructed on the ground. Considering this, the definition of the CCS as *lieu de mémoire* is problematic. The Cathedral had to be built in Moscow, as it was the city that suffered from Napoleon’s invasion. However, the very concrete place of its construction was chosen in function of practical and representative reasons. Moreover, the whole history of the CCS shows that the very building and its visual appearance *did* matter a lot, probably more than the place, which was changed from the Sparrow Hills to the Kremlin’s proximity .

However, looking at the classification and different types of places of memory Assmann describes, there are important common features that can also be found in the Cathedral. Assman assigns different types to the places of memory, speaking about: Places of Generations – where forefathers lived and their memory is present⁴¹⁶, Holy Places – which are privileged places for the encounter with the divine⁴¹⁷, Memory Places – where myths and genealogies are remembered and where the present is seen as a continuity of them⁴¹⁸, Graves – where the dead are remembered⁴¹⁹, and Traumatic Places – where a tragedy happened to the community and is commemorated⁴²⁰. In fact, the CCS contains aspects of all of these types – it is a place, at least for the inhabitants of Moscow, where different generations came; it is a Holy Place of contact with God; it is a place serving as a graveyard for dead soldiers⁴²¹; it is a place where the collective trauma of war and threat to the Motherland is remembered; finally, in the decorations of, and in the discourse about, the Cathedral, national heroes are presented and continuity with their mythical and historical deeds is suggested. In these characteristics, many important psychological elements are combined. The Cathedral offers a personal, materialized – visual and spatial – experience, which can be shared not only with contemporaries, but also with the past (and future) generations.⁴²² Moreover, it is a place of personal and collective worship of the divine; a place that commemorates the dead and speaks about the threat (and is thus able to provoke fear) and victory (which provokes the feeling of might). Finally, the CCS (and the Palace of the Soviets), as was presented in all moments of its

⁴¹⁵ Assmann, *Erinnerungsorte*.

⁴¹⁶ *Generationenorte*, Ibidem, 301–303.

⁴¹⁷ *Heilige Orte*, Ibidem, 303–305.

⁴¹⁸ *Gedächtnisorte*, Ibidem, 305–308.

⁴¹⁹ *Gräber und Grabsteine*, Ibidem, 321–328.

⁴²⁰ *Traumatische Orte*, Ibidem, 328–334.

⁴²¹ Even if the soldiers were not buried in the Cathedral, their memory is celebrated there. Since the beginning, Vitberg speaks about his intention to build a “catacombe” for the dead soldiers. Vitberg, *Zapisky*, 387.

⁴²² Assmann describes this sensation of the sharing of the same experience with the already dead people. Assmann, *Erinnerungsorte*, 312ff.

history, was a collective piece of work, done by the best artists and architects, but supported (financially or through prayer) by the entire nation.

In her treaty on places of memory, Assman underlines that the *lieu de mémoire* refers to the past and remembers it. The CCS surely has this aspect. At the same time, however, it is an active and activated place in every time period. It is a place of cult, a place of the demonstration of force, a representative place for Church ceremonies in which the ruler participated ostentatiously, and also a means to compete with foreign countries. This “active” element was even clear in the 1930s, when the CCS should have been replaced, as well as in the 1990s, when the Cathedral became the symbol of “reborn” Russia, and also in the 2010s, when the status of the Cathedral was contested and re-affirmed.

It is thus possible to assess that it is the very combination of the above-mentioned elements, which combine the personal and the collective, the secular and the religious, as well as the present with the past and the future, which turned the CCS into a place that the ruling elites have tried to use for the unification and definition of Russia over the past 200 years.

Another point resulting from the *longue durée* approach is a question of architecture (but also of any visual element in general) as a medium; it intends architecture as a tool of power and a tool for the divulgation of the official discourse. As described in the constituent chapters, the architectural form should hardly be seen as a bearer of any objective meaning, and the visual aspect alone is thus insufficient to transmit a complex political message. In fact, the visual element works through mental associations: the visual stimulus (even more if the contact is not mediated by image or another kind of representation, but experienced in direct contact with the object) provokes mental associations. These associations are the result of previous experiences. However, these experiences could have been accidentally acquired by the viewer or could have been intentionally brought to the viewer – the result will be the same.⁴²³ In this sense, the visual medium (the architecture of the CCS) is only one element of the “message” that the political elite wants to transmit. The second crucial part is a discourse that explains the forms and teaches all the viewers the “right” association, which, in this way, becomes common.

In the case of the CCS, the importance of the discourse is also revealed by the different sense that Ton’s “Russo-Byzantine” Cathedral acquires in different periods: in the nineteenth century, it was mainly the return to Russia’s pre-Petrine roots, (which is also supported by the visual resemblance of the Cathedral to pre-Petrine architecture). In the Soviet period, the CCS was

⁴²³ Cf. Assoziation (Psychologie), Brockhaus Enzyklopädie Online, <https://crypto.unil.ch/brockhaus/,DanaInfo=uni-laus.brockhaus.de,SSL+asoziation-psychologie>.

presented as an emblem of reactionism and tsarist tyranny. At the end of the twentieth century, the style of the Cathedral – identical to the destroyed one – has a completely different meaning: restoration, repentance, and a new rise of Russia's might.

The history of the CCS demonstrates how competing ideologies struggle not only for actual political power, but also for the appropriation of the past and its symbols to obtain legitimacy and to deliver the adversary to *damnatio memoriae*. At the same time, the case of the Cathedral reveals to what extent the collective historical memory, as shaped by the politic elite, is selective and changing. However, the official discourse is never accepted by the entire society and the places of memory (as well as symbols) maintain “commemorative vigilance”, as described by Pierre Nora.⁴²⁴ In moments of stability, the official discourse is not openly challenged; on the contrary, in moments of crisis, symbols and places of memory become fundamental. Through the struggle for interpretation of symbols, places and history, the political players fight for power.

⁴²⁴ Benjamin Forest – Juliet Johnson, Unraveling the Threads of History: Soviet-Era Monuments and Post-Soviet National Identity in Moscow, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92/3, Washington 2002, 524–547, here 524 quoting Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory. Rethinking the French Past. Conflicts and Divisions*, New York 1996, 7.

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Abstract

The Master Thesis addresses both the formation of and the change in Russia's self-perception in the years 1812–2012 through the lens of the history of the Russian National Cathedral. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow (Храм Христа Спасителя) was meant to be a token of thanks to God for the salvation of the fatherland, a memorial to the fallen and a national monument, intended to commemorate the victory over Napoleon's invasion in 1812. Construction started in 1817 under Alexander I and was fundamentally changed under Nicolas II, before being finished in 1883. After the takeover of power by the Soviets, the building was blown up in 1931. In its place, the monumental Palace of Soviets was planned but never became reality. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Cathedral was reconstructed between 1994 and 1997 and became Russia's main shrine again. In 2012, however, its role was put into question by the punk protest group Pussy Riot, who held an illegal performance there.

In the framework of the *longue durée* approach, the thesis asks a two-fold question: What role has the national Cathedral of Christ the Savior played in the formation of Russian (national) identity? And how does the Cathedral (its visual aspect as well as the discourses about the building) mirror the dynamics of identity formation?

The main questions discussed deal with the following issues: the origin of the Cathedral, the newly re-established tradition, the official concept of Russian nationality and the use of architecture as a vehicle of political message. The destruction of the Cathedral under the Soviet regime and the attempt to replace it with a new "symbol" is mentioned. The presentation of the reconstructed Cathedral as the symbol of Russia's moral rebirth is analyzed, and the difficulties of new post-Soviet identity formation are pointed out by using the concepts of desecularization, public religion, ethnodoxy and the political discourse of the 1990s. Finally, by employing Emil Durkheim's norm and transgression theory, the text deals with reactions to the protest event of the group Pussy Riot in the Cathedral in 2012. The use of this incident for the re-formulation of Russia's self-definitions by its ruling elite is also addressed. As a conclusion, a short reflection upon the reasons for the Cathedral's privileged role in Russia's two hundred-year long search for self-definition is offered.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Masterarbeit versucht die Problematik der Formierung und der Veränderungen des russischen Selbstbewusstseins zwischen den Jahren 1812–2012 auf dem konkreten Beispiel der Geschichte der Russischen nationalen Kathedrale zu beobachten.

Die Christ-Erlöser Kathedrale (Xram Xrista Spasitelja) wurde als Danksagung, Monument und Denkmal für den Sieg Russlands über die Napoleonische Invasion von 1812 gemeint. Die Bauarbeiten, unter Alexander I in den neo-klassizistischen Stil begonnen und unter Nikolas I zum sogenannten Russo-byzantinischen Stil geändert, wurden erst in 1883 beendet. Nach der Oktoberrevolution wurde die Kathedrale vernichtet und sollte vom Palast der Sowjets ersetzt werden, dieser wurde aber nie errichtet. Nach dem Zerfall der Sowjetunion wurde die nationale Kathedrale als Symbol der Wiedergeburt des demokratischen Russlands rekonstruiert und wurde zu einer der wichtigsten Kathedralen des Landes. Ihre Rolle wurde aber mit dem Auftritt der Protestgruppe Pussy-Riot in 2012 in Frage gestellt.

Die Arbeit sieht die Geschichte der Kathedrale mit der *longue durée* Perspektive an und stellt eine Doppelfrage: Welche Rolle spielte die Kathedrale in der Formierung und den Veränderungen der Russischen Selbstperzeption? Wie spiegelt die Kathedrale (durch ihr Aussehen so wie den begleitenden Machtdiskurs) die Dynamiken der Russischen Identitätsformierung?

Die Hauptfragen konzentrieren sich an die Themen der *invented tradition*, der Russischen offiziellen Nationalität und an die Frage der Verwendung von Architektur als Kommunikationsmittel für politische Zwecke. Der politische Diskurs der 1990er Jahre, der die Kathedrale als Symbol der moralischen Wiedergeburt Russlands präsentierte, wird mithilfe der Konzepte von Desäkularisierung, öffentliche Religion und *ethnodoxy* analysiert. Das Problem der Formierung einer neuen post-sowjetischen Identität wird unterstrichen. Für Betrachtung der Debatte über die Reformulierung der Russischen Selbstdefinition, die die Protestaktion der Gruppe Pussy-Riot in der Kathedrale in 2012 auslöste, wird Emil Durkheim's Theorie der Norm und des Überschreitens verwendet. Als Konklusion wird eine kurze Reflexion über den Gründen der Wichtigkeit der Kathedrale in Russlands zwei hundert Jahre langen Suchen nach Selbstdefinition angeboten.

Annex

Tables

Table 1

Have you heard about Pussy Riot’s punk prayer “Mother of God, get rid of Putin” at Moscow’s Christ the Savior Cathedral and criminal prosecution of the band members?

	2012				2013
	III	IV	VI	IX	IV
Follow the events closely	4	10	8	13	6
I am aware of that	30	41	48	55	54
I have heard something about it, but do not know what it is about	20	22	24	16	23
I have never heard of it till now	46	27	21	16	18

2012, N=1600

Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 121, Table 11.30.

Table 2

Who was the target of Pussy Riot’s event at Christ the Savior Cathedral?

(Offered to respondents aware of who Pussy Riot are)

Orthodox Church and believers	23
Vladimir Putin	19
Church’s involvement in politics	20
The first, second and third options are all correct	19
Difficult to answer	19

2012, September; N=1600

Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 121, Table 11.31.

Table 3

Was it Pussy Riot’s intention to insult Russian believers?

(offered to respondents aware of Pussy Riot case)

Definitely yes	17
Rather yes	36
Rather no	24
Definitely not	10
Difficult to answer	13

2012, September; N=1600

Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 122, Table 11.35.

Table 4

Is 7 year prison sentence Pussy Riot stand to receive adequate or excessive punishment for their action, or you believe such actions should not be criminally punishable?

(offered to respondents aware of Pussy Riot)

		III	IV	VII
Adequate punishment		46	47	33
Excessive punishment	35	32	43	
Such actions should not be criminally punishable	9	10	15	
Difficult to answer		10	11	9

2012, N=1600

Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 123, Table 11.36.

Table 5

Is 2 year sentence at general regime penal colony Pussy Riot received for their action at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral an adequate punishment?

(offered to respondents aware of Pussy Riot)

		2012 IX	2013 IV
Adequate punishment		35	56
Light punishment		43	*
Excessive punishment		14	26
Such actions should not be criminally punishable		2	9
Difficult to answer	7	9	

- *option was not offered*

- N=1600

Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 123, Table 11.37

Table 6

What was essentially Pussy Riot's gig at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral?

(offered to respondents aware of Pussy Riot case, responses are ranked)

Simple hooliganism	41
Political move directed at V. Putin the Church's involvement in politics	29
A focused outburst against the Orthodoxy and the Church	19
An art performance and a work of contemporary art	5
Difficult to answer	6
2012, September; N=1600	
Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 122, Table 11.33	

Table 7

What is the main reason for criminal prosecution of Pussy Riot for the gig at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral?

(Offered to respondents aware of Pussy Riot)

They insulted the religion and believers	42
They called for V. Putin resign from power	17
It was a public disorder and disturbing the public peace	29
The first, second and third options are all correct	8
Difficult to answer	6
2012, July; N=1600	
Source: Natalia Zorkaya (Ed.), Russian Public Opinion 2012–2013, Moskva 2013, 122, Table 11.34	

Texts

Text 1

“Да найдет он [враг] на каждом шагу верных сыновей России [...] Да встретит он в каждом дворянине Пожарского, в каждом духовном Палицына, в каждом гражданине Минина. Благородное дворянское сословие! ты во все времена было спасителем Отечества; Святейший Синод и духовенство! вы всегда теплыми молитвами призывали благодать на главу России; народ русский! храброе потомство храбрых славян! [...] соединитесь все: со крестом в сердце и с оружием в руках никакие силы человеческие вас не одолеют.”

Sobranie Vysočajšich manifestov, Gramot, Ukazov, Reskriptov, prikazov vojskam i raznych izvešenij posledovavšich v tečenii 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815 i 1816 godov, Sankt Petersburg, , 1816, 14-16.

Text 2

“[П]ри составлении проектов на построение Православныхъ церквей, преимущественно и по возможности долженъ быть сохраняемъ вкусъ древнего Византийскаго зодчества. Примычание. Для этого могут съ пользою быть принимаемы в соображение чертежи, составленные на построение Православныхъ церквей Профессоромъ Архитектуры Константиномъ Тономъ.”

St. 218 Ustava Stroitel'nogo T XII Svoda Zakonov izdaniya 1857 g., 1841 Mart, 25. 14392.

Text 3

“Большой и грузный, сверкающий своей позолоченной головой, похожий одновременно на кулич и на самовар, он давил на окружающие его дома и на сознание людей своей казенной, сухой, бездушной архитектурой, отражая собою бездарный строй российского самодержавия и его ‘высокопоставленных’ строителей, создавших это помещичье-купеческое капище.”

Boris Iofan Akademik architektury, Stalin i dvorec sovetov, in: Aleksandr Fadeev (Ed.), Vstreči s tovaryšem Stalinym, Moskva 1939.

Text 4

“Дорогие соотечественники! С чувством глубокой признательности приветствую вас и в вашем лице всех, кто принимает на себя благородную миссию претворения идеи воссоздания Храма Христа Спасителя в жизнь. Нам выпало жить в трудное время разрушения и созидания, трагического противостояния старого и нового, смены экономических и политических устоев. В стране идет болезненный и долгий процесс

обретения людьми идеалов веры, добра и любви. Нравственное очищение всегда было и будет тяжелейшим испытанием. Оно требует величайшего напряжения душевных сил, беспощадного отношения к себе. Тем важнее поддержка, человеческое участие, мудрое наставление, укрепление веры в свои силы, которые испокон веков человек получал в Храме. Россия нуждается сегодня в Храме Христа Спасителя. Это русская национальная святыня, и она должна быть возрождена. С ней всем нам будет легче находить пути к общественному согласию, к созиданию добра, жизни, в которой будет меньше места для греха. Всей душой поддерживаю вашу инициативу и выражаю уверенность, что Российское Правительство, региональные власти всех уровней отнесутся к ней как к одной из важных государственных задач и будут способствовать ее скорейшему воплощению в жизнь. От всей души желаю вам успеха в этом благородном деле.”

Boris El'cin, “Obraščenie prezidenta rossijskoj federacii k členam obščesvennogo nabljudatl'nogo soveta po vossozdaniju Chrama Christa Spasitelja”, *Rossijskaja gazeta*, 1994 September 7th.

Text 5

“Сегодня, на рубеже тысячелетий особенно важно восстановить разрушенные или пришедшие в ветхое состояние святыни русского народа, символы его духовности, нравственной чистоты и силы. Полным ходом идут работы по воссозданию грандиозного храма Христа Спасителя [...]”

Ju. Lužkov, “Obraščenie k Moskvičam i vsem Rossijanam po slučaju predstojaščego 850-letija stolici Rossii”, *Moskovskaja pravda*, 1996 January 31st.

Text 6

“Храм Христа Спасителя, бывший одним из символов России, сегодня становится символом ее возрождения. Пустота на месте этого Храма была не только раной на теле Москвы - она была раной в душе народной. Воссоздание святыни воспринято многими как акт покаяния власти и покаяния народа. Как знак воскрешения исторической памяти и возвращения к вере отцов. Как дань благодарности павшим воинам, имена которых хранил Храм. И я совершенно убежден: восстанет Храм Христа Спасителя радением народным - возродится и наш народ. Если хватит у нас духовных сил воссоздать эту святыню, если мы будем усердно молиться и работать. Господь не оставит нас и поможет стать лучше.”

Patriarx: “Ne vsjakomu duchu ver'te”, *Argumenty i fakty*, 1995 August 17th.

Text 7

“Восстанавливая Храм Христа Спасителя, восстанавливают не просто храм Москвы, а духовную святыню славянского народа. Православия в целом. В нем как бы создается образ златоглавой столицы, к которой веками тянулись многие народы.”

Tamara Voinova, Egor Stroev: Moskva sobiraet Rossiju, *Večernjaja Moskva*, 1997 September 3rd.

Text 8

Богородица, Дево, Путина прогони/ Путина прогони, Путина прогони

Черная ряса, золотые погоны/ Все прихожане ползут на поклоны/ Призрак свободы на небесах/ Гей-прайд отправлен в Сибирь в кандала// Глава КГБ, их главный святой/ Ведет протестующих в СИЗО под конвой/ Чтобы Святейшего не оскорбить/ Женщинам нужно рожать и любить

Срань, срань, срань Господня/ Срань, срань, срань Господня

Богородица, Дево, стань феминисткой/ Стань феминисткой, феминисткой стань

Церковная хвала прогневших воджей/ Крестный ход из черных лимузинов/ В школу к тебе собирается проповедник/ Иди на урок - принеси ему денег!// Патриарх Гундяй верит в Путина/ Лучше бы в Бога, сука, верил/ Пояс девы не заменит митингов -/ На протестах с нами Приснодева Мария!

Богородица, Дево, Путина прогони/ Путина прогони, Путина прогони

Pussy Riot, Pank-moleben “Bogorodica, Putina progoni” v Chrame Christa Spasitelja, 21 February 2012, <http://pussy-riot.livejournal.com/2012/02/21/>.

Text 9

“[С]овершили хулиганство, то есть грубое нарушение общественного порядка, выражающее явное неуважение к обществу, совершенное по мотивам религиозной ненависти и вражды и по мотивам ненависти в отношении какой-либо социальной группы, группой лиц по предварительному сговору.”

Polnyj tekst prigovora Xamovničeskogo suda, Delo n. 1–170/12, Moskva, 17 August 2012. Disponible online in Prigovor Pussy Riot, “Snob” publikuet polnyj tekst progovora Chamovničeskogo suda, 22 August 2012, <http://snob.ru/selected/entry/51999?v=1446818074>.

Text 10

“Православные люди не умеют выходить на демонстрации [...] они молятся в тиши монастырей, в кельях, в домах, но они переживают всем сердцем то, что происходит сегодня с народом нашим, проводя в своем сознании ясные исторические параллели с беспутством и беспамятством предреволюционных лет, с разбродом, шатанием, разрушением страны в 90-х годах”,

Slovo Svjatejšego Patriarcha Kirilla v tret’ju godovščinu intronizacii v Chrame Christa Spasitelja, 2012 February 1st, Oficial’nyj sajt Moskovskogo Patriarxata, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1992020.html>.

Text 11

“Я сейчас не готов и не хочу комментировать решение российского суда, но хотел бы обратить Ваше внимание просто на моральную сторону дела. Она в чём заключается? [...] Во-первых, не знаю, известно Вам или нет, но пару лет назад в одном из больших супермаркетов Москвы они повесили три чучела (sic!), [...] в публичном месте с надписью, что нужно освободить Москву от евреев (sic!), от гомосексуалистов и от гастарбайтеров [...] Мне кажется, что уже тогда власти должны были бы обратить на это внимание. После этого они устроили сеанс группового секса в публичном месте. Это, как говорится, их дело, люди вправе заниматься всем, чем хотят, если это не нарушает закон, но в публичном месте, мне кажется, что уже тогда следовало бы обратить на это внимание властей. Потом ещё выложили [запись] в интернет. Некоторые из любителей говорят, что групповой секс лучше, чем индивидуальный, потому что здесь, так же как в любой коллективной работе, сачкануть можно. [...] То, что они сделали в храме [...] Вы знаете, у нас в стране есть очень тяжёлые воспоминания начального периода советского времени, когда пострадало огромное количество священников, причём не только православных священников, но и мусульман, и представителей других религий. [...] Было уничтожено много церквей, все наши традиционные конфессии понесли огромный ущерб. И в целом государство обязано защищать чувства верующих. [...] Является ли оправданным приговор, является ли он обоснованным и является ли он адекватным содеянному, я сейчас не буду комментировать. [...] Понимаете, я просто стараюсь не касаться этого дела вообще. Я знаю о том, что там происходит, но я туда совершенно не влезаю.”

Redakcija portala “Pravoslavie i mir”, 3 voprosa Vladimiru Putinu O Pussi Rajot, *Pravmir.ru* (online), 2012 September 7th, <http://www.pravmir.ru/3-voprosa-vladimiru-putinu-o-pussi-riot/>, 8 January 2016.

Text 12

“Высказывание заключалось в том, что всю страну поставили раком, в ту позицию, в которой мы изображали это действие. Когда Путин сказал, что этот политик [Дмитрий Медведев], никому неизвестный на тот момент политик, просто будет вашим следующим

президентом, он поставил перед фактом. В тот момент страну действительно поймали. Мы изобразили это как могли и как умели, используя традиции современного искусства.”

Mumin Šakirov, Nikita Tatarskij, Putin, čekist s obilím strachov, *Radio Svoboda* (online), 2013 December 27th. <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/25214238.html>.

Text 13

“С какой же благодарностью народ наш откликнулся на свободу верить! Как стали возноситься к небу Божии храмы на всем пространстве исторической Руси! Но и про этот Божий храм, перед которым мы стоим, те же самые, что кричали: ‘Ученики украли Его ночью!’, — те же самые в момент тяжелейшего экономического кризиса говорили: ‘Зачем восстанавливать Храм Христа Спасителя? На эти деньги можно купить и сделать то-то, то-то или то-то’. Находились и предатели в рясах — как и сегодня есть среди нас такие, которые говорят: ‘А зачем собираться для молитвы? Давайте забудем! Давайте сделаем вид, что сегодня в нашей жизни ничего не происходит’. Происходит в нашей жизни, и очень значительное! Мы тогда восстановили Храм Христа Спасителя как символ возрождения Святой Руси, как символ нашей надежды, как символ нашей верности словам, что слышали мы сегодня от апостола и евангелиста Иоанна Богослова.”

Patriarch Kirill, Slovo Svjatejšego Patriarcha Kirilla pered načalom molebna v zaščitu very, porugannych svjatyn’, Cerkvi i ee dobrego imeni, 22 April 2012, Oficial’nyj sajt Moskovskogo Patriarchata, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/2177868.html>.

Text 14

“[Э]то миллионы и миллионы людей, которые осознали, что православная вера является опорой их жизни, которые не готовы разменять эту веру, не готовы от нее отказаться и не готовы думать о будущем своей страны без опоры на православную веру. И когда сегодня мы подверглись атаке гонителей — несопоставимой с тем, что было в прошлом, но опасной тем, что сам факт кощунства [...] предлагается рассматривать как законное проявление человеческой свободы [...] то этот подход даже и микроскопические явления превратил в явления огромного масштаба и задел каждого верующего человека. [...] Мы пришли для того, чтобы помолиться Богу о стране нашей, о народе ее, чтобы больше никогда и ни при каких условиях не был взорван Храм Христа Спасителя, не были осквернены наши святыни, не была изолгана наша история, не был извращен наш дух и наша нравственная сила. [...] [Н]икто не может запретить нам в судьбоносные моменты истории — а сегодня мы переживаем такой момент — собраться вместе на молитвенное стояние. [...] Аминь”

Patriarch Kirill, Slovo.

Text 15

“Мы же критикуем стремление церкви достичь главенствующую роль в общественной и политической жизни России. Среди нас есть верующие, мы уважительно относимся к религии и к православию в частности, именно поэтому нас возмущает, что великую и светлую христианскую философию, так грязно используют. [...] Многие возмутились тем, что мы провели панк-концерт в храме. Мы же считаем, что не храм, а срам. Срам Христа Спасителя. И это не дом Господень, а офис РПЦ. Мы официально пришли в офис РПЦ высказать свои мысли. ХХС похож не на место духовной жизни, а на бизнес-центр: сдаваемые за крупные суммы банкетные залы, химчистка, прачечная, охраняемая стоянка автотранспорта.”

Pussy Riot, Vyn' prežde brevno iz tvoego glaza i togda uvidiš, 23 February 2012, Livejournal, <http://pussy-riot.livejournal.com/12658.html>

Text 16

“[Это] памятник вождю человечества, великому Ленину, памятник нашей исторической эпохи, когда страна Советов не в мечтах, а на деле построила бесклассовое социалистическое общество. Этот памятник должен отразить ту высоту человеческого духа, мысли, творчества, на которую способен народ, освобожденный от рабства капитализма. [...] Дворец Советов строит вся страна, весь народ.”

Viktor A. Vesnin, Dvorec Sovetov i sotrudničestvo iskusstv, in: Suškevič, Architektura, 4–6, here 4.

Illustrations

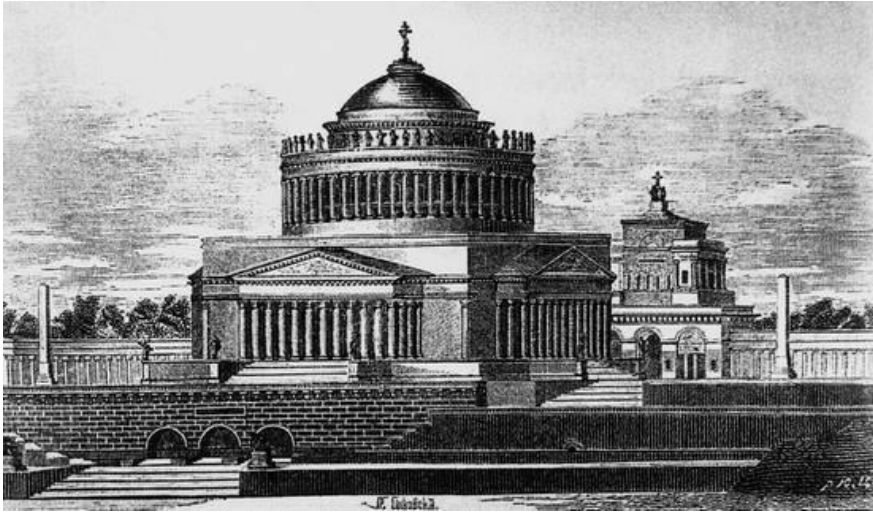


Fig. 1

Aleksandr Vitberg,
Design of the
Cathedral of Christ the
Savior, 1817.

Source: Brumfield,
History, 398.

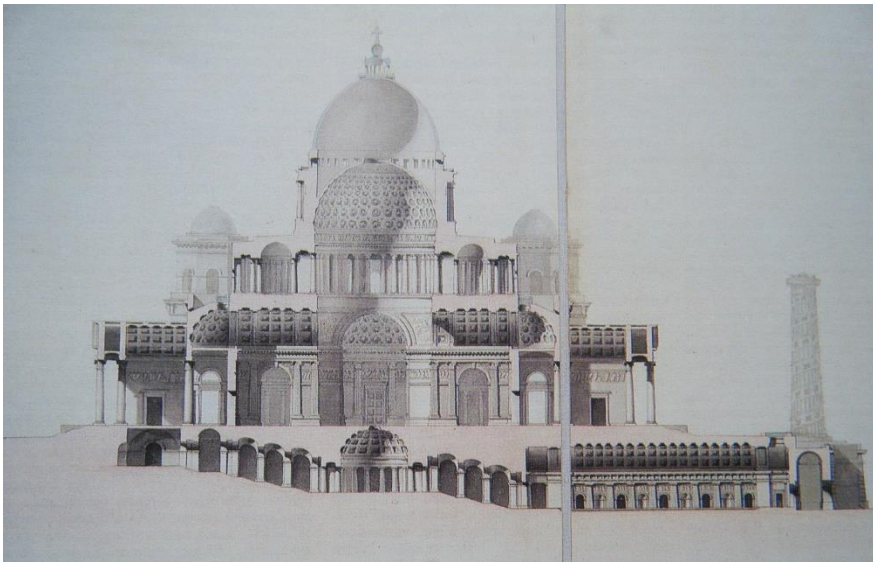


Fig. 2

Aleksandr Vitberg,
Three-story plan of the
Cathedral, 1817.

Source: Kiričenko,
Chram, 7.



Fig. 3

Konstantin Ton, Design of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, 1832.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 78.



Fig. 4

Konstantin Ton, Design of the mosaic floor of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, 1832.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 121.



Fig. 5

Panthéon, Rome, 123.

Source: Léon Pressouyre, *Restauration ou dérestauration: un débat d'actualité sur la conservation des monuments historiques*, in: *Monuments historiques* 112, Paris 1980, 13.



Fig. 6

Jacques-Germain Soufflot, Church of St-Geneviève (Le Panthéon), Paris 1755–1790.

Source: Eugenia P. Janis, *The Photography of Gustave Le Gray*, Chicago 1987, 116.



Fig. 7

Christopher Wren, Cathedral of St Paul, 1675–1710, London.

Source: Ernst H. Gombrich, *Histoire de l'Art*, Paris 2001, 458.

Fig. 8



One of the first Vitberg's drafts of the Cathedral, 1817.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 7.

Fig. 9



St. Peter in Rome, Vatican, 1506–1626.

Source: Photo K.F.

Fig. 10



Andrej N. Voronichin, Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan, Sankt Peterburg, 1801–1811.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.

Fig. 11



Auguste Montferrand, Saint Isaac's Cathedral, Sankt Peterburg, 1818–1858.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.

Fig. 12



Konstantin Ton, Cathedral of St. Catherine, Carskoe Selo, 1835–1840.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.

Fig. 13



Konstantin Ton, Cathedral of St. Catherine, Saint Petersburg, 1831–1837.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.



Fig. 14

Solomon and David with the plan of the Temple, Relief, Facade.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 72–73.



Fig. 15

David after the Victory over
Goliath, Relief, Facade.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 76



Fig. 16

Dmitrij Donskoj Receiving
Benediction, Relief, Facade.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 81–82.

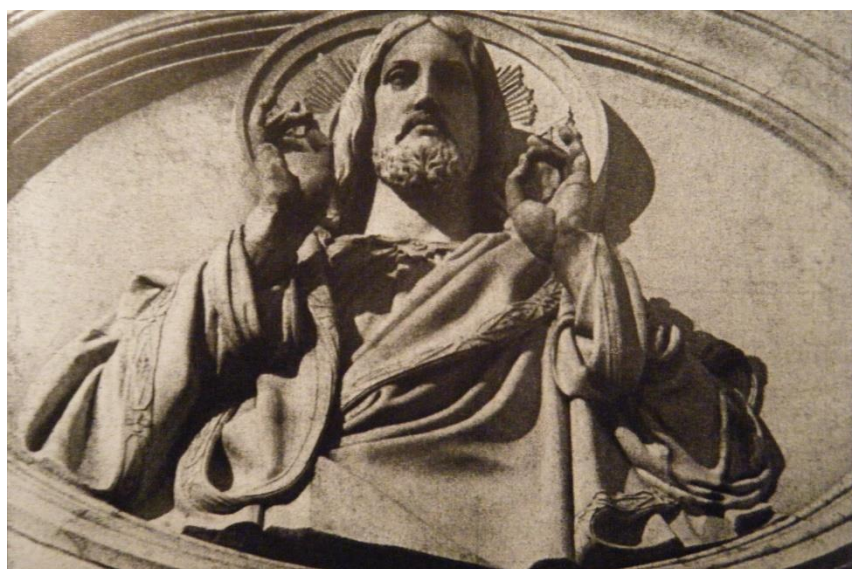
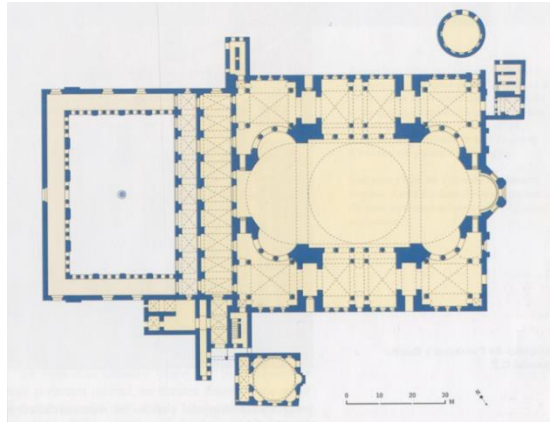
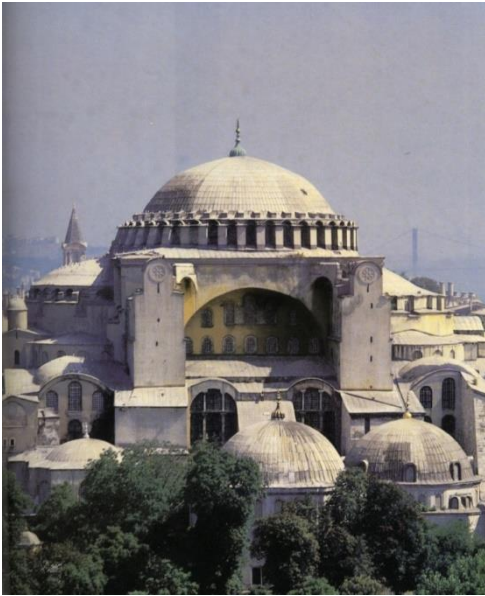


Fig. 17

Bust of Christ in medallion,
Facade of Cathedral of Christ
the Saviour, relief.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 265.

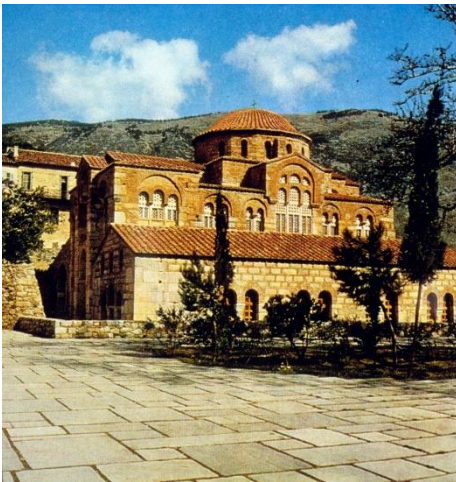
Fig. 18a, b



Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532–537.

Source: Stéphane Yerasimos, Constantinople. De Byzance à Istanbul, Paris 2000, 45.

Fig. 19a, b



Hosios Lukas, Distomo (Greece), XI century.

Source: Diapositive, Section Histoire de l'Art, University of Lausanne.

Fig. 20



Aleviz Novyj, Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, Moscow Kremlin, 1505–1508.

Source: Brumfield, History, 103.

Fig. 21



Aristotele Fioravanti, Cathedral of the Dormition, Moscow, 1475–1479.

Source: Brumfield, History, 98.



Fig. 22

Cathedral of St. Sophia, Novgorod, 1045-1050.

Source: Photo K.F.



Fig. 23, 24

Church of the Trinity at Ostankino,
Moscow, 1678–1683.

Source: Brumfield, History, 155.

Church of the Trinity in Nikitniki,
Moscow, 1628–1651.

Source: Brumfield, History, 148.



Fig. 25

David I. Grimm, Alexandr Nevsky Cathedral, Tbilisi, 1871 – 1897.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.



Fig. 27

David I. Grimm, St. Vladimir's Cathedral,
Chersonesus, 1861–1891.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date
stated.



Fig. 26

Vasilij A. Kosjakov, Cathedral of Saint
Vladimir – Apostol, Astrachan, 1885–
1902.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or
date stated.



Fig. 28

Fjodor Klages, Interior of the Cathedral, painting, 1883.

Source: Chram Christa Spasitelja – pamjatnik Pobedy i Otečestvennoj vojne 1812 goda, Obrazovanie i Pravoslavie, 2011 May 26th, <http://www.orthedu.ru/eparh/3181-xram-xrista-spasitelya-pamyatnik-pobedy-v-otechestvennoj-vojne-1812-goda.html>.

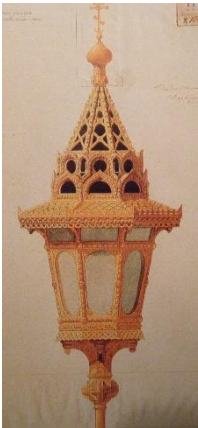


Fig. 29

Lev Dal', Lamp, Inventory of the Cathedral, watercolor.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 124.

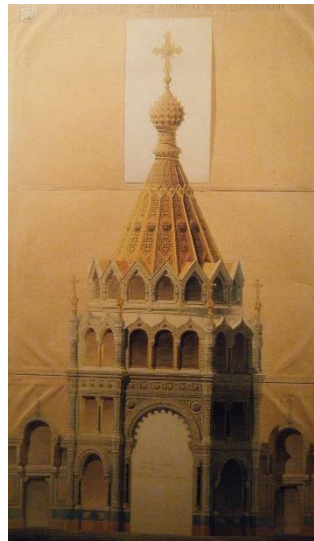


Fig. 30

S. Dmitriev, Project of the main iconostas, watercolor.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 96.

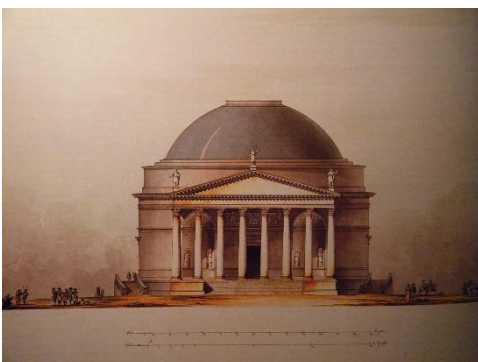


Fig. 31

Giacomo Quarenghi, Project for the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, 1815.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 20.

Fig. 32



David A. Grimm, Church of Mary Magdalene, Jerusalem, 1885–1888.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.

Fig. 33



V. A. Kosjakov, Cathedral of St. Nicholas, Liepāja (Latvia), 1900–1903.

Source: Postcard, no author, editor or date stated.

Fig. 34



Alfred A. Parland, Church of the Resurrection of the Saviour on the Blood, Sank Peterburg, 1883–1907.

Source: Brumfield, History, plate 74.



Fig. 35

Grigoriy Barchin, Izvestija Building, Moscow, 1927.

Source: Brumfield, History, 471.



Fig. 36

Ilja Golosov, Zuev Club, Moscow, 1927–9.

Source: Brumfield, History, 472.

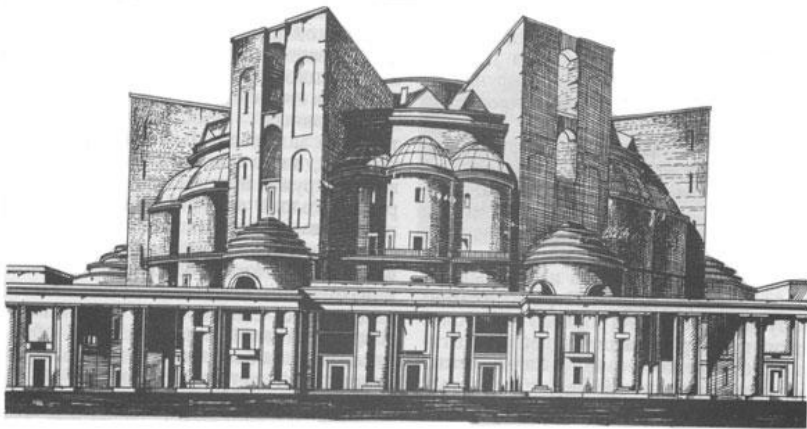
Fig. 37



Mosej Ginzburg, Apartment house for the People's Commissariat of Finance (Narkomfin), 1928–30.

Source: Brumfield, History, 475.

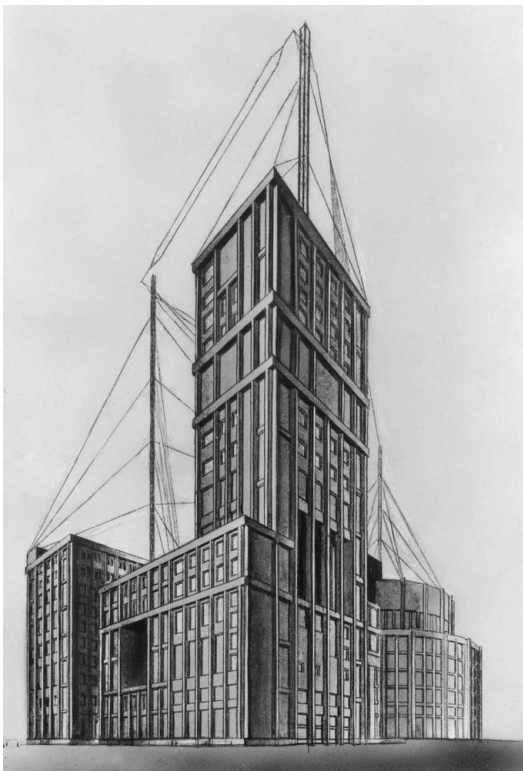
Fig. 38



Noi A. Trockij, Palace of Labour, Project, 1923.

Source: Peter Lizon, Quest for an Image to Serve a Revolution: Design Competitions for the Palace of the Soviets, *Journal of Architectural Education* 35/4, Washington 1982, 10–16.

Fig. 39a, b



Aleksander, Leonid, and Viktor Vesnin, Project for the Palace of Labour in Moscow, 1923.

Source: Michail A. Il'in, *Vesniny, Moscow 1960* reprinted in Brumfield, *History*, 477.

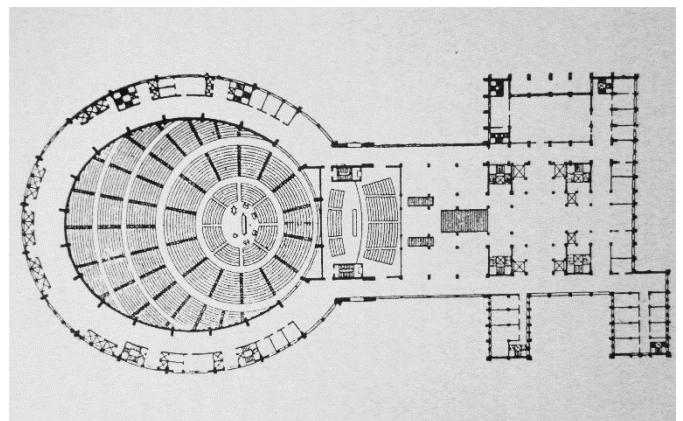




Fig. 40

Vladimir Ščuko, Vladimir Gelfreich, Lenin State Library, Moskva, 1928–1940.

Source: Brumfield, History, 483.

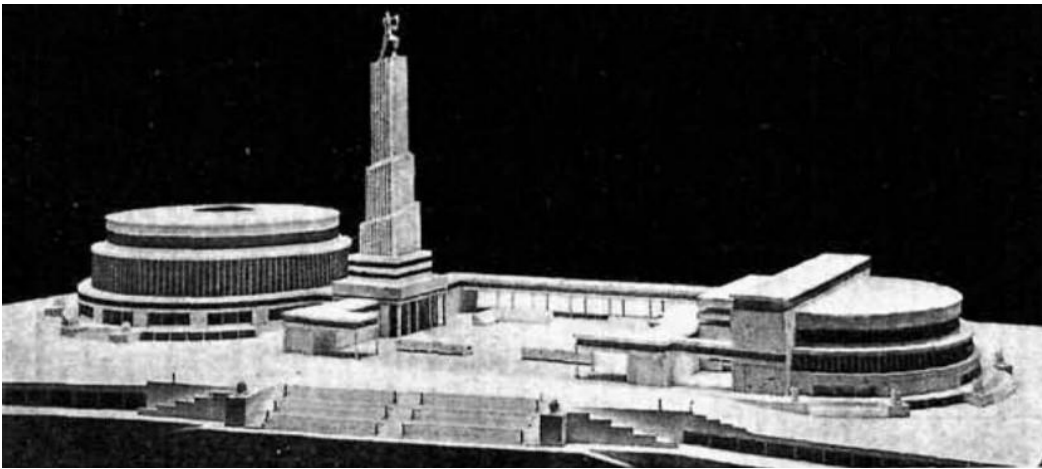


Fig. 41

Boris Iofan, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Project, 1931.

Source: Lizon, Quest, 10.

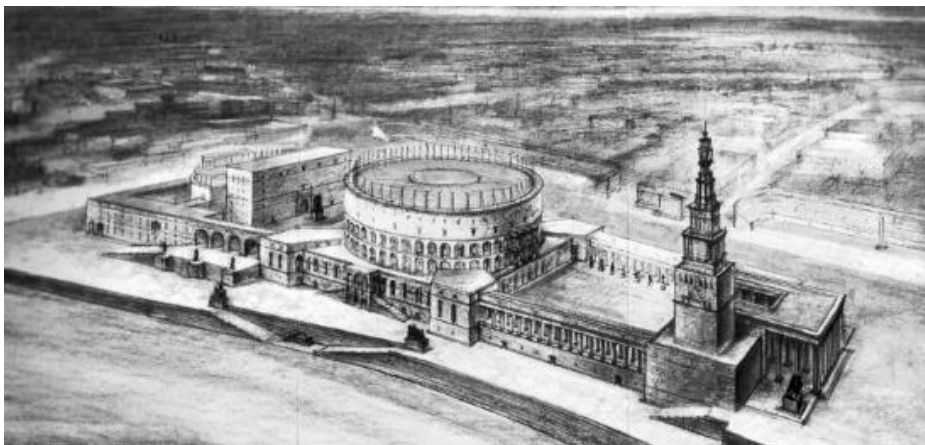


Fig. 42

Ivan Žoltovskij, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Project, 1931.

Source: Lizon, Quest, 11.

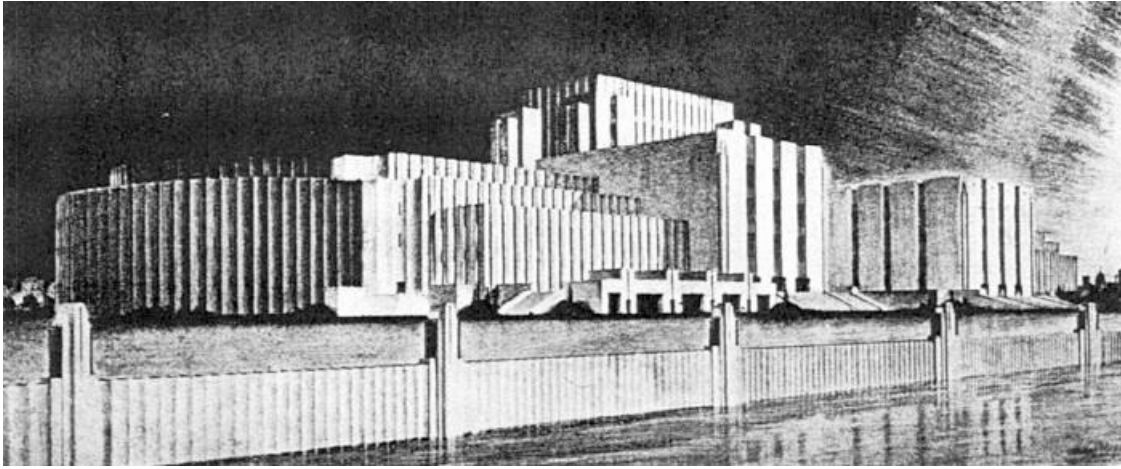


Fig. 43

Hamilton, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, 1931.

Source: Udovičky-Selb, *Between*, 481.

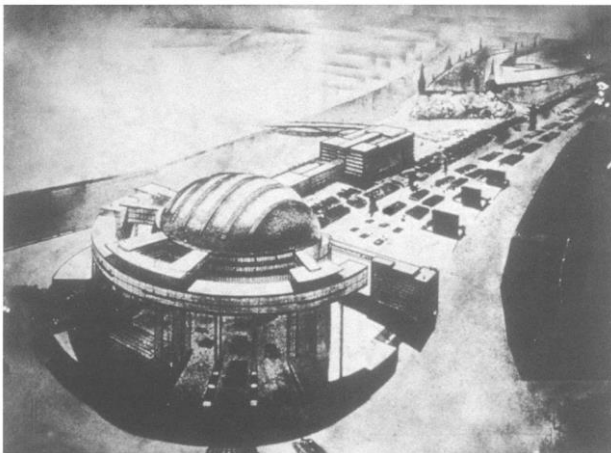


Fig. 44

Karo Semenovič. Alabjan, Vasilij Nikolaevič Simbircev, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Project, 1931.

Source: Hoisington, *Evolution*, 49.
(Courtesy of the Ščusev Museum of Architecture, Moscow.)

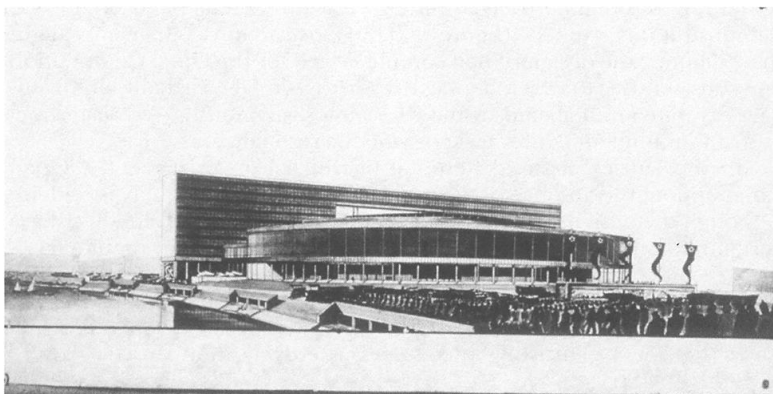


Fig. 45

A. N. Dodica, Ja. N. Duškin, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Project, 1931.

Source: Hoisington, *Evolution*, 48. (Courtesy of the Ščusev Museum of Architecture, Moscow.)

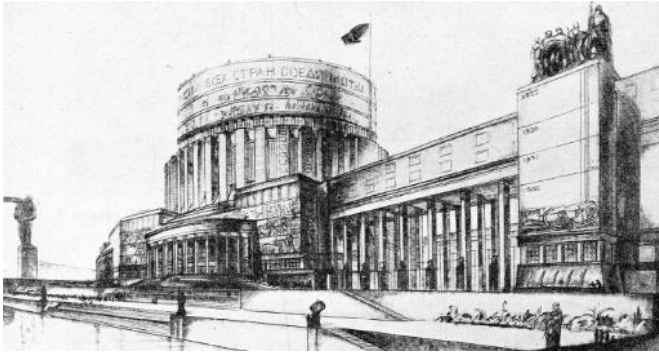


Fig. 46

Žukov, Čečlin, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Project, 1931.

Source: Lizon, Quest, 12.

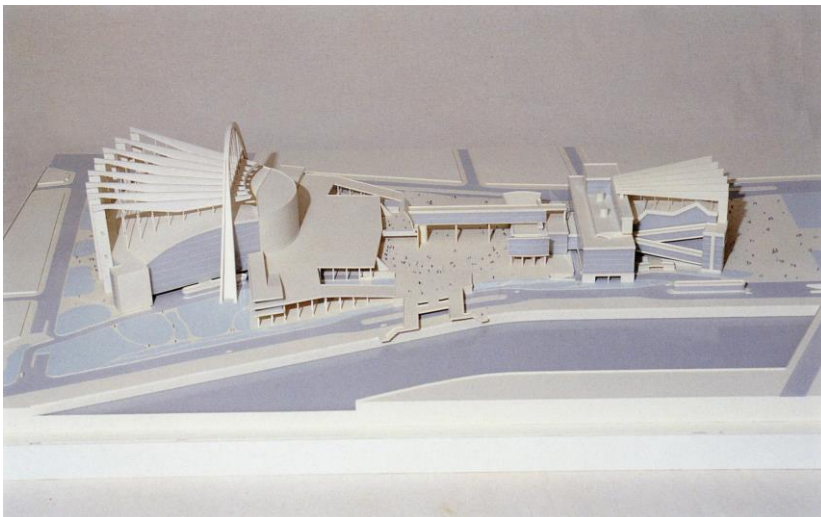


Fig. 47

Le Corbusier, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Model, 1931.

Source: Căsar Menz, Le Corbusier ou la Synthèse des arts, Genève 2006, 248.



Fig. 48

Walter Gropius, Place of the Soviets in Moscow, Model, 1931.

Source: Image Database University of Lausanne.

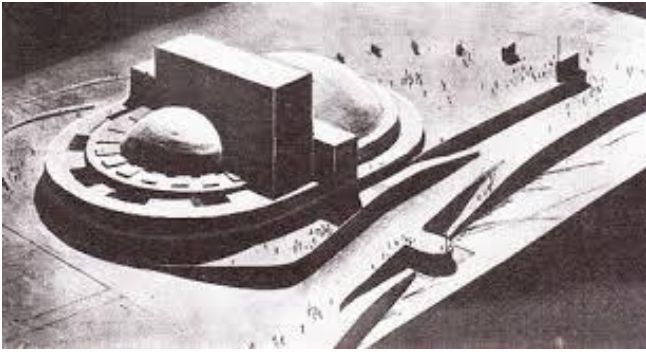


Fig. 49

Erich Mendelsohn, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Model, 1931.

Source: Lizon, Quest, 12.

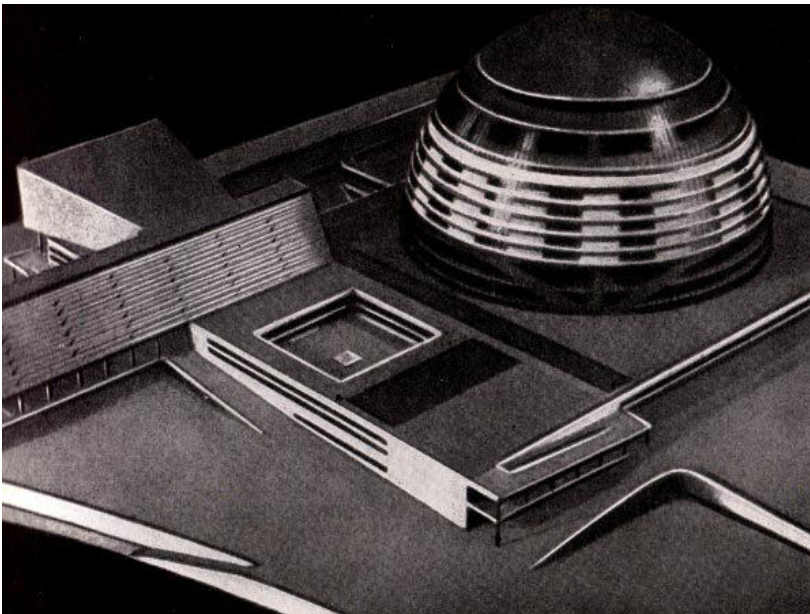


Fig. 50

Ginsburg, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Project, 1932.

Source: Lizon, Quest, 14.

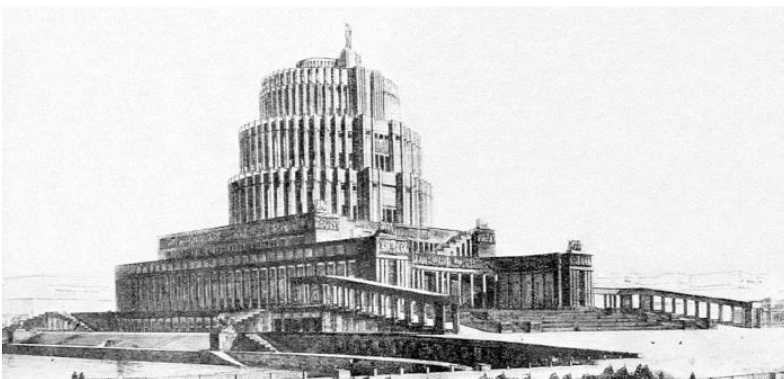


Fig. 51

Boris Iofan, Palace of the Soviets in Moscow, Winning Project, 1933.

Source: Lizon, Quest, 15.

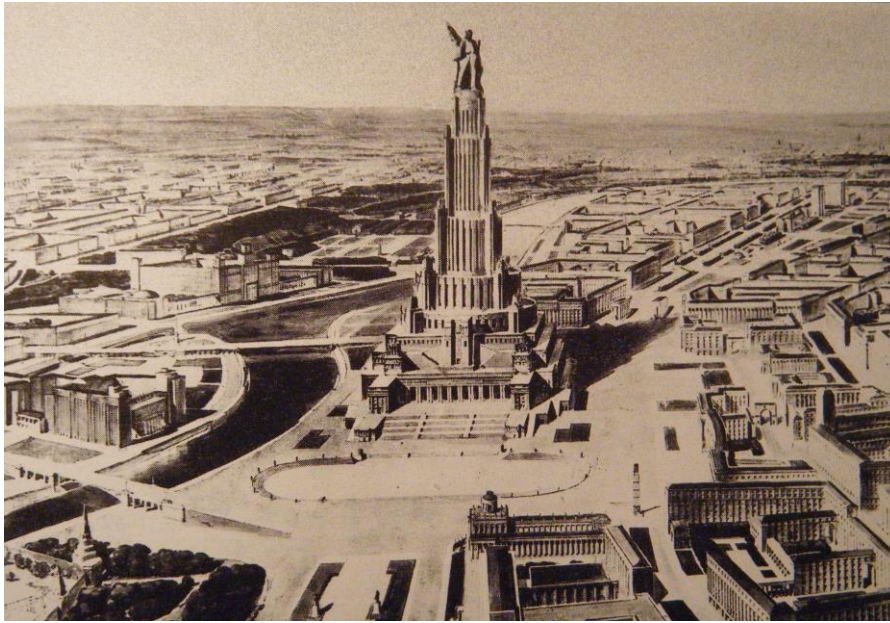


Fig. 52

Ščuko, Gelfreich, Iofan,
Palace of the Soviets,
Revised Project, 1933.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram,
234.



Fig. 53

Ščuko, Gelfreich, Iofan, Palace
of the Soviets, Final Version of
the Project, Approved 1934.

Source: Kiričenko, Chram, 234.



Fig. 54

Swimming pool Moskva, Moskva,
1960–1964.

Source: Ilja Varlamov, Bassejn
Moskva, Radio Echo Moskv,
[http://echo.msk.ru/blog/varlamov
i/926618-echo/](http://echo.msk.ru/blog/varlamov_i/926618-echo/)
2012 September 4th.



Fig. 55

Lev V. Rudnev, Moscow State University, 1949–1953.

Source: Moscow State University ranked in top 100 universities, *RusBase* (online), 2013 March 12th, <http://archive.rusbase.com/news/author/editor/moscow-state-university-ranked-top-100-universities/>.



Fig. 56

Ivan Žoltovskij, Apartment House, Marx Prospekt 16, Moscow, 1934.

Source: Brumfield, *History*, 488.



Fig. 57

Pussy Riot's Performance in the CCS, 21 February 2012, Moskva.

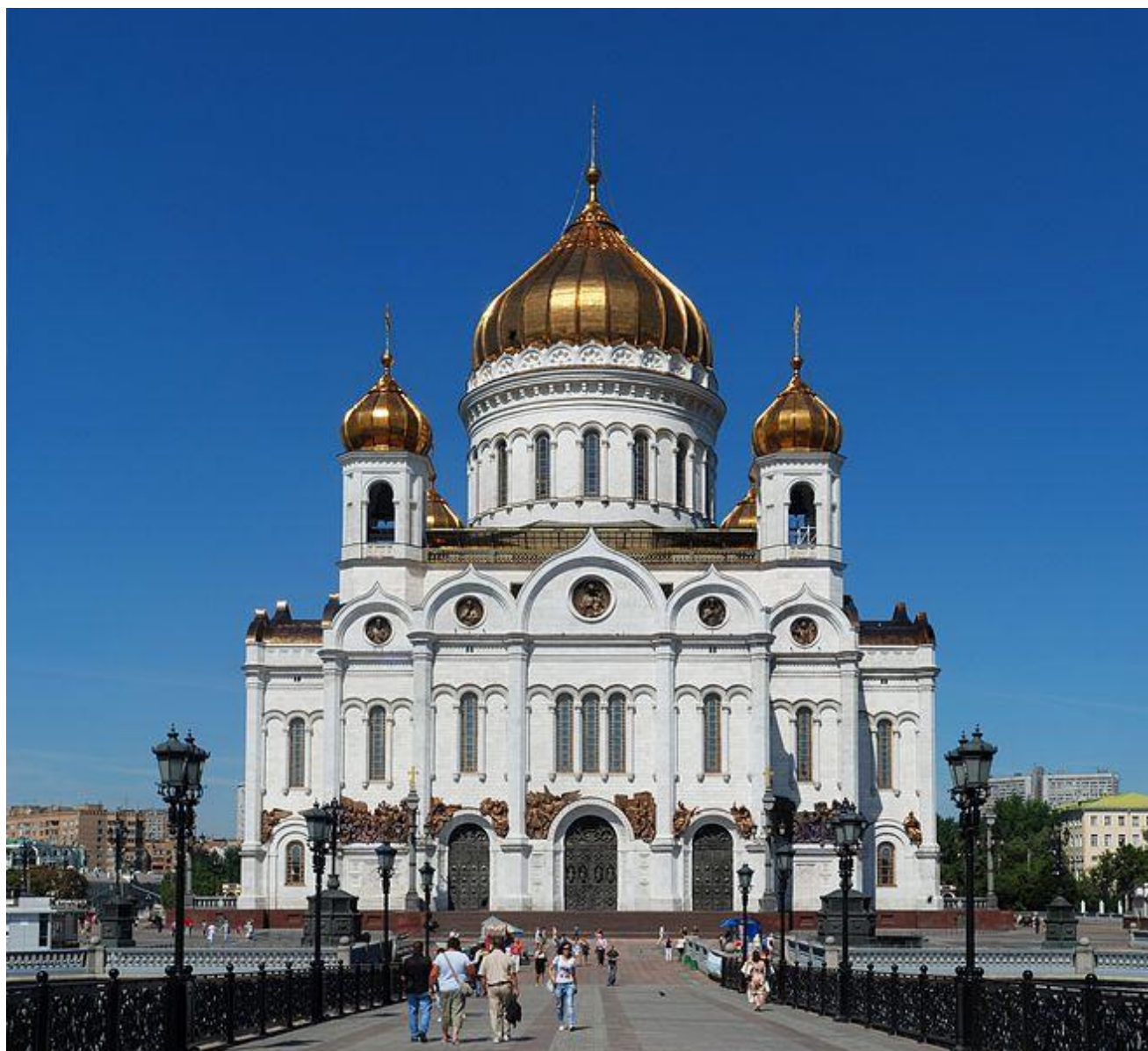
Source: Pussy Riot, Pank-moleben "Bogorodica, Putina progoni" v Chrame Christa Spasitelja, 21 February 2012, <http://pussy-riot.livejournal.com/2012/02/21/>, 8 January 2016.



Fig. 58

Patriarch Kirill with and without watch, Photo,

Source: Damien Gayle, Watch closely. Russian church apologises for Photoshop fail after £20,000 timepiece 'disappears' from the wrist of the Patriarch, *Daily Mail* (online), 2012 April 6th. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2126092/Watch-closely-Russian-church-apologises-Photoshop-fail-20-000-timepiece-disappears-wrist-Patriarch.html>.



Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, reconstructed 1994–1997, Moscow.

Fig. 59

Source: V pamjat' o vojne 1812 goda, Livenet.ru, 2015 September 8th,
<http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/4373400/post371311710/>.

