

reforms, while another segment of the population has grown even poorer. From my point of view, a Constitution cannot work under such conditions. We have allowed for an anti-constitutional process. We're heading towards demagoguery. Democracy won't hold in such an environment. We need to take the experience of other countries into account. For example, Spain did not choose a purely liberal model.

"Reform will be successful when people become owners, or at least don't renege private property. If they feel alien to the process, they won't support it. Can one defend the rights of the individual when the confrontation with the criminal mafia is spreading? I think not. When I criticized Gaidar's reforms, I didn't have reforms as a whole in mind. I'm for reforms. There's no other path for Russia. We can go forward in such a way so as not to fall into the precipice. . . . If it's not a precipice, then why did October 1993 occur and how to define the present state of affairs? The government constantly promises stabilization to no avail. The rule of law and a Constitution cannot exist under such circumstances. Each time it will be amended according to the desire of the President and his officials, which is what we have today. . . .

"I admire Roosevelt and De Gaulle, not Hitler or President Pinochet. When I met with President Yeltsin, I frankly told him: 'You have an excellent chance to be a Russian Roosevelt or a De Gaulle.' He agreed. It seemed to me he understood what I was saying and what I wanted to guard him against. But unfortunately this did not happen in practice."

The Constitutional Court was placed in an extremely difficult situation being called upon to become a third branch of government in a country that was experiencing an extremely difficult transition from totalitarianism to democracy without the backdrop of a rule of law. Furthermore, Zorkin was regarded by some observers as having politicized the Constitutional Court. Golembiovsky, *Izvestiya's* editor-in-chief made the following comment to me when I asked him his opinion of the Constitutional Court's record in its first two years of existence: "As head of the Constitutional Court Zorkin shifted from his role as a legal official to a political one which shows the politicization of society. One of the problems in Russia today is that as long as everyone does not respect the law, from the garbage collector right up to the Prime Minister, it will be hard to speak of democracy. . . . Russia never respected laws. The best Constitution was Stalin's Constitution of 1936. All rights were granted on paper but never realized in practice. People understood the law did not protect an individual. People thought laws were nothing but rules of the game which the bosses thought up to deceive people."

By April 1994 the two-headed eagle, the traditional coat of arms of the Romanov dynasty, would soon replace the star over the Kremlin Tower. It

provoked Moscow political commentator, Denis Dragunsky, to write in the weekly, *Stolitsa*: "The revival of symbols and emblems, standards and coats of arms, medals and titles . . . is easy and pleasant. . . . However, the revival of defiled symbols should begin with the restoration of destroyed reality."

A visit to the Kremlin was to see different realities of history unravel before my eyes through the shapes and articulations of the architecture.

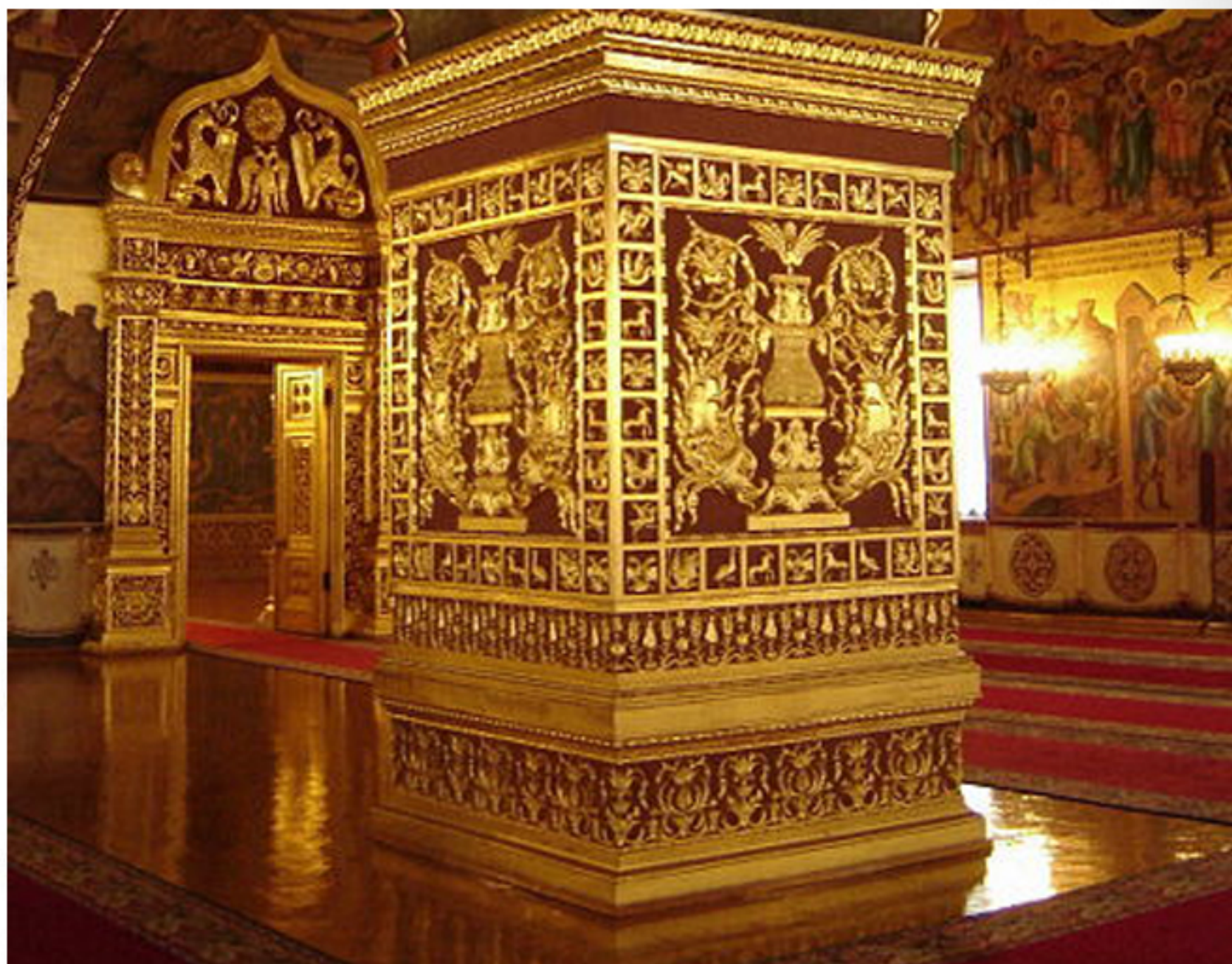
During one of my frequent visits to the capital my friends from the Society for the Preservation of Monuments in Moscow promised to arrange a tour of the Great Kremlin Palace, comprising a number of palaces and private royal churches. Few visitors, either Russian or foreign, have seen them as the palaces have been used for affairs of state, such as the signing of official treaties. In the spring of 1994 during a visit to Moscow I rang up Marina and she told me: "I have good news for you: Natalya will lead an excursion next Saturday. They're a group of young elite KGB officers so you mustn't speak during the tour as foreigners aren't allowed in without an official government invitation." Actually the KGB had been disbanded at the end of 1991. Its successor had been renamed, but everyone still referred to the secret service as the "KGB." "It's not what you know, but who you know," and I thought myself fortuitous in having such a network of ties. The entrance to the Great Kremlin Palace complex is located near the three cathedrals on Cathedral Square, a sacred venue for traditional ceremonies like the weddings, coronations and burials of the Russian Tsars. As our group gathered at the entrance, I couldn't help but notice that the "KGB" officers looked more like a group of students dressed up for a special occasion.

The Great Kremlin Palace is comprised of an extensive complex of chambers and apartments which have evolved over many centuries. The modern title, Great Kremlin Palace, has been used since the middle of the last century to denote the palace built in 1848-1849 by Konstantin Thon for Emperor Nicholas I. The architect integrated the new building with existing structures from previous centuries: the Faceted Palace, the Tsarina's Chamber and the Terem Palace, together with the churches, which had formed part of the Great Sovereign's Palace dating from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

The complex was started by Ivan III in the fifteenth century. When Ivan III ascended the throne in 1462 his reign marked the beginning of the Muscovite period of Russian history. During the appanage period Russia evolved into an autocracy, centered on the Moscow Grand Princes, in order to build an effective resistance to expel the Mongols. The influence of the Tatar Mongols, a nomadic



C.1 The Great Kremlin Palace. The Faceted Palace. (Credit: Edward Steinert)



C.2 Inner portal. Two snow lions guard the entrance. (Credit: Edward Steinert)



C.3 The Great Kremlin Palace. The Faceted Palace. *Grand Prince Vladimir and His Sons*. Painting on the east wall of the Faceted Palace. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

people living in clans, could not rival the impact of the Arabs on the West because, to cite Pushkin, they were "Arabs without Aristotle or algebra."

The earliest building, the Faceted Palace, erected between 1487 and 1491, marks the rise of a unified Russian state and its magnificence reflects Russia's expansion in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Various influences, including European ones, were evident as I looked up at the inner portal of the Faceted Palace. Whereas the shape, articulation and motifs used in the carved decor are characteristic of the stone portals introduced to the Moscow Kremlin by Italian architects at the very beginning of the sixteenth century, the top of the portal is crowned in totally Russian fashion by an ogee arch, which was a very common device in fifteenth-century Russian architecture. Beneath a curving ornamental band, two snow leopards hold shields in their paws; between them are a lion mask and a double-headed eagle. The snow leopard, a creature common to the Altai, would suggest a Mongolian origin. The double-headed eagle, which became a part of the Muscovite coat of arms, originated from Poland. Since the Faceted Palace was built to serve a ceremonial purpose, it is easy to imagine how significant the heraldic decorations were on the portals. Two streams of world history converged here — East and West — jostling and influencing one another.

The legacy of the Mongol yoke was the emergence of a hypertrophic state. At the same time national development was cut short. Kievan Rus possessed democratic traditions and its princely order, modelled on that of Scandinavia, was destroyed after Khan Batu's attack on Rus. I was reminded of this as I looked up at the left mural in the Faceted Palace, depicting Prince Vladimir, the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus (980-1015). The scene shows Vladimir, the first Russian sovereign to convert to Christianity in 988, when he baptized his sons and all the citizens of Kiev. Following the conversion the Church led Russia away from barbarism and the Kievan state experienced a brilliant cultural and economic growth.

The duality running through so much of Russian history manifested itself from the very birth of Rus. According to legend, when Prince Vladimir was selecting which religion Rus would adopt in the tenth century, he received ambassadors from the four great religions — Judaism, Islam, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. Prince Vladimir eventually chose Greek Orthodoxy, representing Eastern Christianity, which is neither an Eastern nor Western religion, but signifies a middle point.

In 1552 Ivan the Terrible celebrated his victory over the Khanate of Kazan in the Faceted Palace. On such occasions the hall was especially lavishly decorated. Valuable Persian carpets and swathes of coloured fabric were spread on the floor, squares of silver and gold material covered the benches, and a large quantity of precious plates were laid out on the tables. The Muscovite princes believed themselves to be successors of Byzantine emperors and based their power on the idea that after the Second Rome, Constantinople, had fallen to the Moslems, Moscow became the "Third Rome". This notion contributed to the power and might of the Moscow state and autocracy of the Tsar. When Russia was under the Mongol yoke, she was regarded as a distant province in a vast empire. Even the Golden Horde did not consider her a wealthy dependency. Western Europe forgot about Russia and her only ties were with Lithuania. Suddenly in the sixteenth century Russia's isolation ended and she began heading eastwards conquering lands which were earlier under the Mongols.

The Russian state, highly centralized, as it emerged in the fifteenth century, contrasted with the spirit of individual, economic and political freedom of Kievan Rus. This shows the polarization peculiar to her own history. Serfdom as a legal institution did not exist yet. By the Muscovite period a total despotism emerged of an Asiatic type, although after the eclipse of the Tatar-Mongol period, Muscovy experienced a cultural awakening. St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square, with all its contradictory elements, was a statement of a purely Russian Renaissance. All the varied influences that ever impinged on Russian

life are present here — Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Tatar and Gothic architecture is piled upon and around it.

The polarization was also evident in the national psychology. Ivan the Terrible's reign, the longest of any Russian monarch, was marked by great achievements and by the cruel acts of a murderous tyrant. During the first part of his reign he established the *zemski sobors* — assemblies of representatives from various estates, — which gave the boyars a voice in the running of the state, while the second half was marked by the naked terror of his secret police, the *oprichnina*, whose members resembled Turkish Janissaries. Ivan the Terrible had a deeply religious personality, yet he killed his son — brought to life in Repin's blood-soaked canvas, *Ivan the Terrible Murders His Son*, — and also murdered the Patriarch who dared reprimand him. During his reign new artistic national styles emerged, including great schools of iconography, which continued up to the Petrine period. Eastern elements, including Tatar ones, in dress, cooking and language, were also assimilated. Ivan the Terrible imported the first printing press (later he burnt it). Western influences were felt in book publishing, artillery and the state army. The first Ministries along Western lines were formed. Although Ivan the Terrible was the most xenophobic Tsar, the idea of opening Russia to the West was already in the air culminating in Peter the Great's reforms.

The merging of so many elements evident in the Great Kremlin complex seemed to be a statement of the duality that was present throughout Russia's thousand-year history down to the present, the result of assimilating Western and Eastern features to form a third civilization. One has to remember that pre-Christian Scythians and Polovtsians invaded Slavic lands starting from the eighth century B.C. and even in Herodotus' time. For the ancient Greeks the dividing line between Europe and Asia was the Black Sea. They called this region Scythian, but divided the Scythians into Europeans and Asiatics. The Tatar-Mongol yoke lasted almost three centuries. Tatar-Mongol attacks continued right up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, embracing Peter the Great's time, and ended only when Catherine the Great crushed the Crimean Khanate. This constant penetration of Asian elements promoted this duality. The particularities of Russian culture are defined by the country's geographical position between East and West, as well as by the multinational population of the empire, comprising Slavic, German, Finnish, Turkic and Mongolian tribes.

The vast fortress walls of the Kremlin, built by Italian architects at the end of the fifteenth century, had to represent the might of the Asiatic state. Geography, climate, an enormous territory and distance from the sea dictated despotism because Russia's expanses had to be subdued and defended. The Russian historian, Kliuchevsky wrote: "As the state grew, the people became

weak." Europe is pluralistic by dint of geography and by its close proximity to the sea. Russia is a victim of her immense territory. In the West everything is delimited and arranged into categories, both the land and the spirit of its people: everything is favourable to the organization and development of a civilization.

Despite the isolation of the Muscovite state compared to Kievan Rus it was in visual forms and above all in architecture that Muscovy's new greatness found its first expression. This was manifested to me as I stood on the Golden Porch, the main entrance to the Terem (Tower-chamber) Palace. It was built in 1635-1636 during the reign of the first Romanov by a group of Russian architects. The palace is one of the most picturesque ones in the whole complex. On the fifth floor there is an attic, or *teremok*, which gave its name to the entire structure.

Although the Terem Palace is modelled in many respects on the wooden architecture of Old Russia and closely resembles the wooden palace in the former royal estate of Kolomenskoye (pulled down by Catherine the Great in



C.4 The Great Kremlin Palace. The Terem Palace. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

her hatred of ancient Russia), it contains many elements, including Persian, German, Italian, Mongolian and Chinese ones. In the architecture of the Terem Palace wide use is made of the double arch with pendant. The pendants of the arches are shaped like lion masks holding the apple of silence in their jaws, a symbol that the secrets of the Tsar's house must never be divulged. Up to 1703 all domestic and foreign news in Muscovy were deemed a state secret. News was carried in reports called *kuranty*, which the Office of Ambassadors prepared on the basis of foreign sources for the exclusive use of the Tsar and top officials.

The two lions guarding the entrance reminded me of similar lions guarding the entrance to temples in China and Mongolia. The fact that the architecture of the Terem Palace is so eastern shows that the Russian mind was more Asian than European. The Kievan princes in the tenth century also preferred to live



C.5 The Golden Porch of the Terem Palace. The two snow lions are reminiscent of snow lions guarding temples in China. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

in a *terem*. The custom of separate women quarters in the *terem* was an Oriental tradition. Peter the Great forcefully ended this custom when women were admitted into the company of men in the eighteenth century. The palace interiors are intimate, totally different from those of the stately Faceted Palace. The rooms, with their low vaulted ceilings and small windows, reflect a tenor of life still rather shut-in and far removed from the outside world. Like the Muscovite state itself the atmosphere was reclusive, although details in the decor suggest the beginning of Western influence.

There is much to remind one of the Orient. The Attic, or main room, with its windows and Kirghiz-style designs, is everywhere decorated with rivulets and the naturalism of flying birds. The plant-designs on the wall are of Persian influence matching the wood-carvings on the royal bed. The new striving for a picturesque interior and the bright patterns signified the awakening of the artistic imagination amidst the expanse of the steppes. Perhaps it was not so much a sign of influence, but the measure of a common mentality and a desire to depart from the dark environment of Russia — the monotony of the landscape, the enormous spaces, forests, rivers and fields. The assimilation of Oriental elements was the result of the Tatar-Mongol yoke. One has also to take into consideration the fact that many Tatars entered the service of the Muscovite state and families were often of Tatar origin. Even Tsar Boris Godunov, the Westernizer, was from a Tatar gentry family.



C.6 The Terem Palace. The Upper Teremok (Attic). (Credit: Edward Steinert)

The Anteroom of the Terem Palace was used by a few boyars who were close to the Tsar and had access to his private quarters. In the mornings they gathered and waited for the Tsar to appear. Bedecked in their golden fabrics, pearls and multi-coloured precious stones, the boyars blended in with their surroundings. In the second room, the Cross Chamber, the carved decor, the ribs of the vaults and the lacy fretwork of the oak window-sills harmonize with the coloured tiled stoves, the bright murals, the mica window-panes, the variegated fabrics, and the painted and gilded furniture. This room was used by the Tsar for discussions with the boyars and the reception of foreign ambassadors. Under Peter the Great the Boyar's Duma, an elected institution, with the right not to agree with the Tsar, stopped functioning. In documents of the Boyars' Dumas, side by side with the usual formula: "The Almighty Tsar said, and the boyars concurred," one could come across such statements: "The Almighty Tsar spoke, and the boyars did not concur." The Patriarch often disagreed with the Tsar. Many examples of this abound in the reign of Alexis Mikhailovich when the Tsar confronted Patriarch Nikon. Often conflicts between the Tsars and Patriarchs were dramatic. Peter the Great abolished the Patriarchate replacing it with a Synod. It was easier to subordinate a group of bureaucrats than a single strong personality.



C.7. The Terem Palace. The Anteroom. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

Beyond the Cross Chamber was the Throne Room, or Study. Its walls are decorated with gold blades of grass, beasts and coat of arms against a red background. A carving on a window shows a figure on horseback killing the dragon, a favourite motif in Russian art. (In fifteenth-century chronicles the dragon, traditionally a symbol of the devil, becomes synonymous with the Tatars.)

The Terem Palace became a symbol of a third culture — neither Eastern nor Western, but assimilating elements of both. It also had many distinct Russian features: the heraldic eagles, birds, animals, and other symbolic elements long ago formed part of the repertory of stone carvers and wood carvers. (All these carved plants are subordinated to architectural forms coming from the West.) This equilibrium was disturbed by Peter the Great when he established his new capital in St. Petersburg in 1703 as a "window" on Europe and Europeanization became state policy. He forced his countrymen to adopt European values in literature, music, diplomacy, military science and in demeanour.

As we moved to the State Apartments and Private Apartments we entered a new world where Western classical forms and tastes took over. Peter the Great's window in Europe had succeeded in secularizing the higher estates. This point was brought home to me after visiting the Tsarina's Golden Chamber, built in the early sixteenth century, a perfect example of traditional Russian



C.8 The Terem Palace. Cross, or Assembly Room. (Credit: Edward Steinert)



C.9 The Terem Palace. East Portal in the Upper Teremok (Attic). (Credit: Edward Steinert)

architecture with frescoes on the themes from the history of the Christian Church showing Muscovy as a monolithic Christian state.

This sudden break in architecture was a manifestation of a schism. Peter secularized Russian Tsardom and brought it in touch with Western absolutism. Western influences, which led to the remarkable Russian culture of the nineteenth century, found no welcome among the bulk of the population. A break took place as the people adhered to their traditional religious beliefs. Peter was so hated he was called the 'Antichrist'. During Catherine II's reign while the privileges and power of the nobility increased, a reverse process took place at the grass roots as the peasantry fell under a more oppressive serfdom. The entire Petrine period was a struggle between East and West. However, owing to Peter the Great traditional Russian architecture forcibly came to an abrupt end. Western images appeared in Russia in the form of the



C.10 The Great Kremlin Palace. The Tsarina's Golden Chamber. (Credit: Edward Steinert)



C.11 The Great Kremlin Palace. The State Apartments. The State Drawing Room. Painted plafond. (Credit: Edward Steinert)



C.12 The Great Kremlin Palace. The Private Apartments. The Boudoir. The Malachite Fireplace. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

Classical Renaissance. It was followed by examples of Classicism — the Senate built by Kazakov at the end of the eighteenth century. Kazakov was a representative of strict Classicism and worked in the same spirit as architects in Europe. Yet in the act of assimilation and reworking Russian Classicism acquired an original form and spirit different from English, French or German styles. The Russian technique using brick and plaster, not stone, combined with the yellowish-white colour and the hand-made stucco moulding.

In all of Dostoevsky's works the significance of Peter the Great for Russia is always accompanied by the idea of bifurcation. In his diary of 1864-1865 he writes: "Since Peter's reforms, when we adopted a bourgeois European lifestyle, we separated ourselves from the people as in the West. A person severed his nose and all his limbs and he was glad that he could do without them when, on the contrary, he should strive to make each and every limb develop physically. . . . Thus every generation was insolvent. Such is the work of Peter." ⁵

In the State Apartments rooms with fancifully shaped windows, niches and unusual cross arches, typical of the Tsarina's Golden Chamber, have been substituted for apartments laid out according to the late Neo-Classical style. The magnificent frescoes on the walls have been replaced by stucco moulding of rather cold tones made to imitate marble. French and Rococo clocks adorn almost every State apartment.

In the Chevalier Guard's Room a magnificent clock called *Raphael in the Temple of Glory* takes pride of place. Traditional vases of the same period with sculptured putti riding hippocampi stand on either side.

The St. Catherine Hall has a candelabra mounted in ormolu, each branch resembling a fabulous tree. There are also candelabra with dark patinated sculptures, gilded mirrors, porcelain vases from the Imperial Porcelain Factory in St. Petersburg. There are fireplaces crafted in rare decorative stone and marble, and fireplaces of malachite, known as the Russian stone, discovered in the Urals in 1814.

In the State Dining Room classical and Renaissance motifs reign, marble vases and sculptures predominate. Themes for the sculptures were taken from Graeco-Roman mythology. The entire material way of life became European.

China vases and clocks in the Private Drawing Room are deliberate imitations of *objets d'art* made by French craftsmen for Madame de Pompadour. Pale blue and many-branched candelabra resemble the Second Rococo and Pompadour styles. The brilliant turquoise colouring and picturesque pastoral scenes and floral designs are based on traditions of Sèvres ware during the reign of Louis XVI. The walls and soft furniture are covered with patterned silk and blend with the painted and moulded ceilings.



C.13 The St. George Hall. Clock with the sculptural group of Kozma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

Ironically amidst the imperial grandeur the Dining Room had a porcelain vase with a classical clarity of form, manufactured in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, depicting an event of the early seventeenth century: Kozma Minin and Patriarch Hermogene exhorting Prince Dmitry Pozharsky to lead the Russian people in their struggle against foreign invaders. (The theme was repeated in a clock adorning the St. George Hall.) Actually they were also fighting against Westernization in the name of the preservation of traditional values. It was not the first time Russia had opted against the West. Alexander Nevsky chose to make peace with the Mongols to leave his hand free to fight the West. The Bolsheviks also rejected the West as demonstrated in the doctrine of "socialism in one country" yet they wanted to build a Western-like technological society.

The furniture and doors of the Empress's study are inlaid with tortoise shell and ornamental brass. The sides of small cupboards feature exquisite ebony and walnut panels inset with mother of pearl. The opulence is emphasized by cast bronze overlays on furniture and doors. Crystal chandeliers adorning the Empress's Study resemble a cascade of pendants and variegated porcelain lamps.

The St. George Hall is one of the most majestic in the Great Kremlin Palace. It is decorated with six beautiful chandeliers. The St. Vladimir Hall is smaller in area, its wall covered with light-coloured imitation marble. All the lavish decor is concentrated on the dome, covered with gilded stuccowork.

Much of what was false and distorted in the Tsars' imaginations lay in these halls in the resplendent excesses of pomp and extravagance. It was not until 1874 that the twenty-five years of forced peasant conscription into the army, in effect a life sentence, was abolished. Beneath all the gold and silver, Russia in the mid-nineteenth century remained a vast country with no industry and an illiterate population, with half its peasants living in virtual slavery. The entire nineteenth century was marked by an awakening of conscience and a movement towards revolution. Very few groups in society supported Tsar Nicholas II.

Under Catherine II and Alexander I Russia moved into Europe physically and spiritually, but she was not equipped to share in the political and institutional development of the West. Peter's reforms were taken up by the upper segment of the population. The liberal thinker, Alexander Herzen, said that Peter challenged Russia and her response was Pushkin. Yet Pushkin's voice is the only bright voice of this Russian Renaissance. An extreme tension is present in literary works of the nineteenth century. The problem of culture and doubt as to its justification haunted writers who did not believe in the solidity of civilization. Feelings of anguish and catastrophe took over because the culture was without roots and without attachments, something that was never the concern of European writers with their more structured societies. Western culture had been forcefully implanted driving the Orthodox culture underground. As Berdiaev noted, in Russia there was nothing to link the nineteenth century with the civilization of the Moscow kingdom which had produced a brilliant culture in the plastic arts.

We also visited the Tsarist churches and chapels, once part of the Tsars' residence and outstanding examples of fourteenth- to seventeenth-century architecture. The carved, gilded and silvered iconostasis in the Church of the Resurrection Glorified and the icons mounted in gold and silver in the Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer-on-Top, executed by royal icon painters, all supported the idea of a central autocratic power. To me the original message of these



C.15 The Great Kremlin Palace. The Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer-on-Top. Iconostasis. Seventeenth century. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

icons had been lost compared with the simplicity of the medieval icons of Andrei Rublev (1370-1430), a painter whose works are remarkable for their spirituality. A few centuries later the spiritual image recedes amid the gold, silver and jewelled frames showing the Church as a debased tool of the Tsars, especially after Peter the Great physically undermined the basis of Orthodox culture transforming it into a fossil.

As we were taken to the Anteroom adjoining the Conference Hall of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, I was struck by the painting, entitled *Lenin Addressing the Third Komsomol*, because it was so evidently out of place among the marble and malachite, the jasper fireplace and the coloured mosaic of the parquet. Lenin used his indomitable will to forcefully create a new culture, using the same methods as Peter the Great — violence, cruelty, a centralized state and bureaucracy. The Revolution was the vengeance of history. The people,



C.16 The Anteroom. The focal point of the Anteroom is the painting on the wall opposite the entrance: *Lenin Addressing the Third Congress of the Komsomol*, executed in 1950. (Credit: Edward Steinert)



C.17 The Conference Hall of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. (Credit: Edward Steinert)

deprived of everything for so long, had turned the tables on the Tsars. The arched decor of the Congress Hall of the Supreme Soviet, built in 1934, is marked by austerity and economy of line reminding me of the asceticism of the early Bolsheviki. From here the Church of Christ Our Saviour was visible on the horizon. This emblem of Tsarist Russia was to be annihilated from the face of the earth and replaced by a monument to the Third International. Just as the doctrine of the "Third Rome" shaped the Muscovite kingdom under the symbol of a messianic idea — in the same way the profession of the true Communist faith would be the test of belonging to Soviet Russia.

The false religion of Communism, which sought to take the place of the Church, brought Russia to a historical dead-end. Although the ideals of Communism answered more truly to Christianity than capitalism, the false religion of Communism took shape because Orthodoxy, with its slave-like subservience to the Tsars, was a misrepresentation of the Church's original doctrine. Today democracy is distorted because the former Communists, who are in power, have no respect for the concept of the rule of law. During this interregnum the disintegration of Soviet society is still going on. At the point when the collapse will be complete a new national idea will be born. It is hard to exaggerate the difficulties of moving from a totalitarian state to a democratic society without the "rule of law." Russia today is a halfway house between

tyranny and freedom. Yet the vast elemental strength of Russians at this very difficult crossroads and the Russian genius for assimilating different cultures and reworking elements into a national form gives hope for the regeneration of Russia in the twenty-first century. Russian ideology has always been totalitarian, theocratic or socialist and the instincts to use force rather than compromise are still there, the Chechen conflict being a good example. Yet half the nation had rallied around Andrei Sakharov's liberal voice who exhorted Russians to reinvent themselves as a nation.