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## Archival Research

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### New Materials on Leo Tolstoy: From the Archive of Nikolai N. Gusev

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*One of my greatest joys during my time of exile was my correspondence with Lev Nikolaevich [Tolstoy]. I was very happy not only to receive his letters to me, but my letters to him were extremely meaningful to me. In writing on the subjects most dear to me, I couldn't help but be completely sincere and honest with him. It was impossible to allow even the slightest touch of insincerity in the letters. Thus my correspondence with Lev Nikolaevich turned out to be the best and strictest self-examination I could ask for. I'm sure I am not the only one, but many, many people must have felt this way in either their written or face-to-face contacts with him.*

N. N. GUSEV,  
KOREPINO, 28 MARCH 1911

Nikolai Gusev (1882-1967), who served two years as Tolstoy's personal secretary (1907-1909), was a keen chronicler of Tolstoy's life and works. His three-volume collection of Tolstoy's *Posthumous Fiction Works* was published in Moscow and Berlin in 1911-13, together with Tolstoy's *Diaries*. Other tributes to his mentor included *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi: Materialy k biografii* [L. N. Tolstoy: Biographical materials],<sup>1</sup> *Letopis' zhizni i*

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<sup>1</sup>See N. N. Gusev, *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi. Materialy k biografii s 1828 po 1855 god* (Moscow, 1954); *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi. Materialy k biografii s 1855 po 1959 god* (Moscow, 1958); *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi.*

*tvorchestva L. N. Tolstogo* [Chronicle of the life and career of L. N. Tolstoy],<sup>2</sup> and *Dva goda s L. N. Tolstym* [Two years with L. N. Tolstoy],<sup>3</sup> and a host of other books, articles, anthologies, letters, reminiscences, not to mention Tolstoy's own literary legacy. It was a lifetime of service by this "legendary Tolstoyan," whom Tolstoy himself referred to (in a letter to Vladimir Chertkov) as a "priceless assistant and worker."<sup>4</sup>

In 1907 Gusev was briefly detained by the authorities on the charge of circulating banned books and discussing them with peasants. His second arrest two years later was followed by a two-year exile to the remote Cherdyn' district of Perm' Guberniia, from which Tolstoy's efforts to free him proved fruitless.<sup>5</sup> Gusev was not able to return to Moscow until the year after Tolstoy's death.

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*Materialy k biografii s 1870 po 1881 god* (Moscow, 1963); *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi. Materialy k biografii s 1881 po 1885 god* (Moscow, 1970). Lidiia D. Gromova-Opul'skaia has carried on this series with the following publications: *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi. Materialy k biografii s 1886 po 1892 god* (Moscow, 1979) and *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi. Materialy k biografii s 1892 po 1899 god* (Moscow, 1998).

<sup>2</sup>N. N. Gusev, *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva L. N. Tolstogo*, 2 vols., ed. L. D. Gromova-Opul'skaia (Moscow, 1958). Volume I covers the period 1828-90, Volume II: 1891-1910.

<sup>3</sup>N. N. Gusev, *Dva goda s L. N. Tolstym*, ed. V. V. Grigorenko, et al. (Moscow, 1973).

<sup>4</sup>L. N. Tolstoi, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (PSS), Iubileinoe izdanie* (Moscow): vol. 89 (1957), 99.

<sup>5</sup>See for example Tolstoy's plea "Notice of Gusev's arrest" published in *Russkie vedomosti*, No. 183 (11 August 1909).

The few pieces appearing here for the first time in English translation<sup>6</sup> are drawn from the 2002 collection *Novye materialy o L. N. Tolstom – iz arkhiva N. N. Guseva*.<sup>7</sup> The first half of the book comprises 45 letters from Gusev to Tolstoy, covering the period 1903-1910 (to which Tolstoy responded with 19 letters to Gusev, all published in Tolstoy's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Complete collected works], while the second half contains eight memoirs on Tolstoy by seven of his contem-

poraries of different social backgrounds.<sup>8</sup> The originals are all part of Gusev's considerable archive, which he willed, along with his personal library, to the L. N. Tolstoy Museum in Moscow in 1966. His manuscript *Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi: Materialy k biografii s 1881 po 1885 god* [L. N. Tolstoy: Biographical materials 1881-85] was inherited by the Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which published it in 1970 under the editorship of Dr Lidiia Gromova-Opul'skaia.

<sup>6</sup>In Gusev's archive there are two manuscripts of Éverling's reminiscences, whose authorship was established only at the time they were being prepared for publication. The first manuscript, written in pencil with an illegible signature (which was verified by comparison with Éverling's signature in his letters to Tolstoy of 21 and 22 March 1901), was published in the anthology *Novye materialy L. N. Tolstogo i o Tolstom. Iz arkhiva N. N. Guseva* (München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1997), 138-41. The second manuscript, written in ink, is dated 8 September 1920 and is published below. Its authorship was determined with the aid of a hand-written note by Éverling in Tolstoy's diary (of February 1901), which he mentions in his reminiscences. These reminiscences were published in English in 1923 under the title "Three Evenings with Count Leo Tolstoy" in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (New York, 1923), 93: 786-92, 841-49. In the absence of the original manuscripts (unknown at the time), a re-translation into Russian was published in 1976 in *Literaturnaia Rossiia* (16 April). The English translation, however, is dated and inaccurate so that the new one by John Woodsworth in this publication is both timely and welcome.

<sup>7</sup>English title: *New materials on Leo Tolstoy from the archives of N. N. Gusev*. Compiled by Zinaida Ivanova and Lidiia Gromova of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Edited and with an introduction by Andrew Donskov. Ottawa: Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa and Moscow: L. N. Tolstoy Museum, 2002 (xii + 282 pp.).

The three letters and two reminiscences were translated into English for this publication by John Woodsworth, Administrative Assistant of the Slavic Research Group. The annotations in the book were prepared by Zinaida Ivanova; a number of these I have eliminated or modified for the presentation here.

### Gusev's Letters to Tolstoy

Gusev's letters may be arbitrarily classified into three time periods: (a) before Gusev became Tolstoy's secretary, (b) his first arrest and detainment in 1907, and (c) his second arrest and exile beginning in August 1909. The latter period especially offers a wealth of insights into the correspondents' relationships.

The following three categories will serve to describe the various types of information in these letters:

(a) External descriptions: Gusev gives a detailed account of his two incarcerations by the authorities (including his interrogations and the conditions of his prison cell), his privately escorted trek to Siberia, his day-to-day life in the remote village of Korepino, his relationships with both fellow-exiles and the local authorities, and the delicate balance between restrictions the exiles faced and the limited freedoms they enjoyed (see Gusev's letter to Tolstoy of 3 November 1909).

(b) Perceptions of Tolstoy's thought and works: Tolstoy's writings, as well as memories of his own past conversations with his mentor, were Gusev's constant companions during his exile. He also makes frequent mention of news he has seen about Tolstoy in the Russian press. Occasionally

<sup>8</sup>*Novye materialy L. N. Tolstogo i o Tolstom* (Munich, 1997) contains 7 letters by Tolstoy published for the first time, 43 memoirs on Tolstoy by various contemporaries, and 4 reminiscences drawn from letters to Gusev by Tolstoy's visitors and correspondents.

he would receive new writings from Tolstoy (or news of them). His musings on all these permeate his letters and offer significant insight into Tolstoy's thought and works (see, for example, his references to Dostoevsky in the letter of 3 November 1909).

(c) Internal self-examination: Tolstoy's letters, advice, and writings, along with Gusev's own experiences as an exile, led him constantly to re-examine his own thoughts, morality, and worldview. His first-hand exposure to the lifestyles and attitudes of government authorities, fellow exiles, and the local peasant population caused him to question his former perceptions of mankind and to consider them afresh in the light of Tolstoy's ideas (see Gusev's later recollection in the epigraph above). This is superbly illustrated in all three selected letters below.

In the meantime Gusev continued to fulfil his duties as secretary as best he could, scanning the press, copying out and sending to Tolstoy whatever he found interesting in letters he received: quotations from Russian and foreign authors (e.g., Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Montaigne), newspaper clippings etc.

It is especially noteworthy that Gusev did not ask Tolstoy to advise him or make decisions in carrying out his secretarial duties. He was one of the few who instinctively recognised his mentor's need for receiving as well as giving information, advice, and moral support. It was this willingness to prove his capability to perform his function regardless of his imposed circumstances that especially endeared him to Tolstoy. Gusev recognised that Tolstoy's need for learning was just as or even more important than his capacity for teaching.

### Tolstoy's Letters to Gusev

Four of the letters Tolstoy wrote to Gusev were written in the (a) period described above, in response to Gusev's letters, and three in the (b) period, two of them at Tolstoy's own initiative. The remaining 12 to Gusev in Korepino (except for the first, which was never received), were written in reply to Gusev's letters. A reading of all 19 letters reveals Tolstoy's changing attitude toward his cor-

respondent, from regarding him as just another avid follower to confidence in him as a most trusted associate, a kindred spirit.<sup>9</sup> Some of his later letters to Korepino were written in his own hand (rare at that point in his life). We do not know whether his treatment of Gusev was the result of guilt, or admiration of his status as an intellectual to be treated with respect, or the sign of an emotional bond with someone whose thoughts and feelings largely mirrored his own.

We do know Tolstoy felt at least partially responsible for Gusev's exile,<sup>10</sup> and it is clear that he was not writing out of a "sense of duty," but from the dictates of his heart. And while the young

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<sup>9</sup>This is significant, since there is little information in the correspondence about Gusev's work at Iasnaia Poliana (even in the few references in the letters Gusev wrote on Tolstoy's behalf).

<sup>10</sup>In his "Notice of Gusev's arrest" Tolstoy wrote with some concern: "We have all heard or read about thousands and thousands of such measures and actions [on the part of the authorities], but when it happens to those close to us and right before our eyes, it is especially disturbing. And because it has happened to Gusev, I am especially disturbed: I am disturbed by the absurdity of such crude and cruel measures taken against Gusev's person, I am disturbed, too, by the glaring injustice of the stated grounds for such actions, and above all by the pointlessness of these measures in respect to Gusev, if he is to be considered a dangerous man, all the more so in respect to me – I am the real target here." And further: "I would once again ask those people who feel offended by my activities and the circulation of my views, if they cannot keep their peace and feel they must employ violent measures against someone, to employ them in no way against my friends, but against me, the only one truly guilty in respect to the appearance and circulation of these views which they find offensive" (*PSS* 38: 127, 130).

Tolstoy's letters frequently express his hope that the young, impressionable Gusev succeed in maintaining his spiritual equanimity and not fall into the all-too-common trap of resentments against his jailers. Indeed, Gusev's letters indicate that Tolstoy's hopes prove justified: on more than one occasion he urges Tolstoy not to take any further steps to procure his release from exile.

Gusev did not exactly qualify as a highly original thinker contributing significantly to Tolstoy's own spiritual searches, he did have an understanding of their essence, and so must have provided a sympathetic sounding-board for Tolstoy's ideas expressed in his letters—not so much in terms of straightforward dialogue but more in terms of an underlying common set of parameters against which meaningful dialogue could take place. In other words, Gusev was simply willing to “be there” for Tolstoy in his time of need.

### Memoirs Regarding L. N. Tolstoy

Tolstoy himself made use of memoirs on at least one occasion (*Vospominaniia* [Reminiscences], 1903-06), and considered them a valid literary genre.

While the majority of memoirs of Tolstoy's life were contributed by family members and notables among his wide circle of friends and acquaintances (i.e., scholars, writers, composers, artists etc.), a number of valuable reminiscences come from ordinary Russians from all over the country and from many different walks of life—including the peasants, who embraced him as no other writer in Russian history.

Two of the eight memoirs from the above-mentioned volume have been selected for translation and reproduction here: “Fire at Iasnaia Poliana,” by peasant Vasili Morozov, and “Three Encounters with Lev Tolstoy,” by Sergei Èverling.

Vasili Stepanovich Morozov, a former pupil at Tolstoy's school for peasant children and the author of a number of reminiscences, describes a fire at Iasnaia Poliana in August 1890 and the

relief efforts undertaken by Tolstoy, Morozov, and others to bring aid to the agonized victims, especially the tremendous moral and financial support by Tolstoy himself, which ran completely counter to the whole psychology of the Russian peasant.

The second memoirist below is Sergei Nikolaevich Èverling, who at the time was a post-graduate philosophy student at Moscow University, having recently completed a first degree in historical philology.

At his first meeting with Tolstoy during a cultural evening at Khamovniki in February 1901, Èverling engaged in such an impressive dialogue on mankind's need for spiritual renewal and Tolstoy's views on contemporary philosophers (e.g., Vladimir Solov'ev and N. Ia. Grot) that his host proposed another meeting. During two subsequent encounters they discussed, among other things, Tolstoy's fear of science—medical science in particular. Other topics included the writings of philosopher Afrikan Shpir and the possibility of a revolution in Russia.

Such memoirs help further delineate a multifaceted image of the great writer, including his many changes of mood and other features of his complex character that may give the appearance of contradictions. Though written by people of many diverse backgrounds, the reminiscences share a common link: their authors were all Tolstoy's eyewitness contemporaries and all have infused their accounts with living, breathing evidence. And while they in themselves may not resolve any specific controversial issues among the world's Tolstoy scholars, the reader is left with a vivid first-hand glimpse into the inner workings of one of Russia's finest writers and thinkers.

3 November 1909. Korepino.\*

My dear, dear Lev Nikolaevich,

Yesterday I received a letter from you.<sup>11</sup> Thank you for not forgetting me. I've been wanting to talk with you for a long time now, even though I don't have anything to say in particular.

I wouldn't have expected it, but here in the town it turns out there's a small but fairly decent public library, from which residents of the district can borrow books for a fee of 40 kopeks a month. I took out Dostoevsky's *Notes from the House of the Dead*, which I had read a long time ago, when I wasn't able to understand or appreciate it. What an amazing book it is! – in terms of its depth of insight into the human soul, its power of description and, most importantly, the deep, deep, sincere and touching love for the simple, hard-working Russian people which seems to permeate the author's whole inner being. I know of no other writer besides you who expresses this love so vividly and powerfully. Indeed, I don't know of any other writer who comes as close to your views as Dostoevsky. Of all the Russian critics he alone understood and appreciated the deep religious idea underlying *Anna Karenina* when it appeared, as was expressed in its epigraph: "Vengeance is Mine, [saith the Lord,] and I will repay" [Rom. 12: 19]. And there are individual thoughts scattered everywhere in *Notes from the House of the Dead* that are so close to your own views, so close as to be virtually identical. I shall write out two especially noteworthy examples in this regard:

"...The highest and most sharply defined characteristic of our people is the sense of justice and the thirst for it. We do not have anyone among ordinary people displaying the animal-like tendency of trying to be first at all costs, whether they deserve to be or not. One has only to take away the exterior, superimposed shell and take a close and

\*On the envelope is Tolstoy's notation: "[For] reply." Tolstoy replied 13 November 1909 (PSS 80: 190).

<sup>11</sup>Gusev received Tolstoy's letter of 20 October 1909 (PSS 80: 152).

careful look at the core beneath, without prejudice, and the external observer will see in our people things he would never even have guessed at. *There isn't much our elders can teach the people. I would even say emphatically, quite the contrary, they themselves have something to learn from the people.*"<sup>12</sup>

Another quotation:

"...He was a marvellous person; but his convictions were sometimes extremely strange, exceptional. It often happens among a certain class of people who are very intelligent that ideas prevail that are quite paradoxical. But they caused these people so much suffering in life, and such a high price was paid for them, that it is too painful, yea, almost impossible to tear them away from such ideas. . . ." <sup>13</sup>

I don't know whether all Dostoevsky's things are as good as [his] *Notes from the House of the Dead*. I've been wondering why you hardly ever mention Dostoevsky, or refer to him, or recommend him? Certainly, in *What is Art?* you rank Dostoevsky among the true artists and do make favourable mention of *Notes from the House of the Dead*, but that is the only reference to Dostoevsky I know of in your writings. In one of your letters after Dostoevsky's death you wrote that "A kind of support has been knocked out from under me"<sup>14</sup> etc.; on another occasion (in 1882) you wrote Engel'gardt: "The thing that Dostoevsky writes which has always put me off is that war is conso-

<sup>12</sup>F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* [Complete collected works in 30 vols.], Vol. 4 (Leningrad, 1972): *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma* [Notes from the house of the dead], Ch. 11: "Predstavlenie" [Presentation], 121-22.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, Ch. 8, "Tovarishchi" [Comrades], 216.

<sup>14</sup>Tolstoy wrote Nikolai Strakhov 5-10? February 1881: "A kind of support has been knocked out from under me; I felt lost, and then it became clear how dear he had been to me, and I wept and am still weeping. A few days ago, before his death, I read *Unizhennye i oskorblennye* [The humiliated and the insulted] and was touched" (PSS 63: 43).

nant with Christ's teachings..."<sup>15</sup> I happened to overhear you once say in conversation that the bad thing about Dostoevsky's novels is that the author comes out with the whole crux of what he has to say right off the bat and the rest is just padding. "Maybe it's because he needed the money," you added.

That's all you had to say about Dostoevsky, as far as I know. Why so little?..

I also read 3 volumes of Maupassant's writings, which I wasn't very well acquainted with before. He is a writer of amazing power and depth, but – forgive me if I'm wrong – of amazing depravity too. Just look at the relish with which he describes sexual passion in its various manifestations.

As for Dostoevsky, though, his loving insight into the human soul is so deep that many of the psychological traits he ascribes to the labour camp detainees of his time I have noticed, after reading his *Notes*, in many of my fellow exiles, despite the difference in historical periods, as well as the difference in situation between those sent to labour camp and the "administrative exiles" here. I'll write you in greater detail about this exile and those affected by it in my next letter.

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I've been having some correspondence with Vladimir Grigor'evich<sup>16</sup> on a matter of some

<sup>15</sup>In a letter to M. A. Engel'gardt 20? December 1882 – 20? January 1883 Tolstoy wrote: "What Dostoevsky writes and what is very repulsive to me, [is the same that] has been told me by monks and metropolitans, namely, that it is possible to make war, that it is [self-]defence to lay down one's life for one's brethren" (*PSS* 63: 114).

<sup>16</sup>Vladimir Grigor'evich Chertkov (1854-1936)—a captain in the Russian Guards, son of an influential family at court, Tolstoy's disciple who helped found *Posrednik* [The Intermediary]. Exiled to England for circulating Tolstoy's ideas, he there established his own publishing house, known as *Svobodnoe slovo*, or the Free Age Press. He was an ardent supporter of the Doukhobor cause.

importance to me, on which I would also ask your advice, if you think it merits your attention. As you know, he has long had the notion of producing a popular version of several of your most important works. He began but hasn't yet finished an adaptation of *On Life*, in which it seems you took part as well. Now both of us had the thought simultaneously: why don't I work on this, since I have a lot of free time as well as unused strength and enthusiasm. What do you think about this in general, and especially about my participation in the work?

I shan't hide the fact that I would take it on not without some hesitation, but also with all the zeal and attention to detail that I can muster...

It's very important to me to know what you think about this. But even if you don't write, I shan't take offence.

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Peasants from the surrounding villages sometimes drop in to see me and ask me to write out some kind of petition for them. I am always quite willing to oblige. But I haven't had much opportunity to hold very many serious, heartfelt conversations with them, only two or three times. Recently one peasant came in who had walked twenty versts to trade at the district headquarters. We gave him some tea, and after tea he asked me to teach him the right way of living for the salvation of his soul. I say to him, what kind of teacher am I? I myself don't live the way I should; read the Gospel, you'll find out everything there.

But he started asking direct questions about his personal attitudes toward the church and the priests: "See, I drink vodka; if I was to die without confessing to a priest, wouldn't that be a sin?" – "It wouldn't be a sin at all." "No sin at all?" – "Not one at all." "Well, thank ye for tellin' me so! Thank ye. After all, we live here, we don't know nothing. They tell us, and that's what we believe. An' will ye let me ask ye, your highness, if I now should not be going to church, but if I should just pray at home, wouldn't that be a sin?" – "It wouldn't be a sin at all." (I didn't have a Gospel handy to read him the text.) "No sin at all?" – "None at all."

– “Well, thank ye! Well, thank ye for tellin’ me so.”

He further asked me, since now they were building a new church and each householder was supposed to bring 12 cubes of gravel and 15 trees, if he didn’t bring them himself but hired someone else to do it for him, wouldn’t that be a sin?.. After learning my views on this issue which was so vital for him, he went away very happy.

The opportunities for such conversations, however, are few and far between.

The local police constable, in an inebriated state, blurted out to one of the exiles that he had been sent a special memo to keep tabs on me as to whether or not I was in communication with the peasants. This memo probably arose out of the description of my crime in the official sentencing document, namely: “caught distributing prohibited books and revolutionary propaganda.” The constable had also received a similar “special” memo ordering stricter-than-usual surveillance in respect to two poor (in spirit) society girls who had recently been sent here on suspicion of belonging to the “Anarchist-Communist Party.” They were fine girls, but without any [political] persuasions whatsoever; they are no more anarchists than I am a Catholic. But the mere mention of that fearful name of the party to which they supposedly belonged, according to police depositions (if it had been determined that they really belonged to it, they would have been put away for several years in a labour camp or settlement or prison), was enough for these poor, weak and helpless girls to strike such terror into our superintendent and especially our local constable that he was at his wits’ end as to how to get rid of them. The constable went off to the police chief to ask that this lady not remain in Korepino (her friend had been sent to one of the villages nearby). “She goes and sees the exiles living at the elder’s house; there’s five people there, and she’s going to turn them all into anarchists. And our postman travels with only one guard; if he gets robbed, then I’ll be responsible.” He still hasn’t come back from the police chief’s.

Forgive me for telling you this trifling, insignificant incident from our life in exile here; it’s typical of the local administration and its attitude toward us, the prisoners of the Cherdyn’ superintendent.

There may well be some sort of repressive measures taken against me – such as being transferred to a more remote location. That seems hardly frightening to me now, since the most precious things in my life here – living among the working people, and my day-to-day activities – still remain. Since I left Iasnaia Poliana, it doesn’t make much difference whether I live in the capital, in the centre of a district, or in its remotest corner. As for going to fetch the mail, I still have legs, and they’ve become stronger through frequent and prolonged periods of walking.

Well, I mustn’t overstay my welcome. Farewell, dear teacher. My warmest embraces. My respects to Sof’ia Andreevna.

Yours,  
N. Gusev

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2 January 1910. Korepino.\*

Dear Lev Nikolaevich,

After some hesitation (I was concerned about boring you), I am taking the liberty all the same of sending you some excerpts from a friend of mine’s letter which I received in the last postal delivery, thinking it might be of some interest to you. This letter was written to me by the same small, thin, dark-skinned person who came to see you on the 20th of October along with Ivan Ivanovich<sup>17</sup> – Ser-ezha Durylin.<sup>18</sup> I got to know him during the summer of 1902, when he was still at the *gymnasium* and came out to Riazan’ with a fellow-student

\*Tolstoy replied to this letter 14 January 1910 (*PSS* 81: 43).

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<sup>17</sup>Ivan Ivanovich Gorbunov-Posadov (1864-1940) —close friend of Tolstoy’s, editor and publisher of *Posrednik* [The Intermediary] from 1897 to 1925.

<sup>18</sup>Sergei Nikolaevich Durylin (1887-1954)—doctor of philology, historian of Russian literature and the Russian theatre, from 1907 to 1913 he served as editorial secretary for the journal *Svobodnoe vospitanie* [Freedom of education].

from Moscow. At the time he was an avid revolutionary, writing verse on the theme: "to battle, to battle, into the struggle with darkness." When I lived in Moscow in 1905-06, he was already beginning to have doubts as to the moral justification and practical effectiveness of violent means. The lightnings and thunderings of the revolutionary events initiated and controlled by the politically involved intelligentsia made him finally decide for himself as to whether he really could, as he dreamt in his very early days, enter the ranks of the revolutionaries to "be victorious or fall with honour," with weapon in hand. The friend he had come to Riazan' with seven years ago had perished at Ekaterinoslav. This was an ardent and zealous youth, ready to give his all to the cause of struggle, who, like all the rest, didn't hesitate or take time to think about what he was getting into, but plunged headlong into the flood that was rushing and swirling before his eyes. Along with others he was preparing some kind of assassination, he had bombs, and when the police came to search his hotel room, he fired his revolver, not wanting to give himself up alive. Soldiers appeared and opened fire, breaking down the door. The boy's mother, who had aged ten years in less than a year, told me that her Misha had received thirty-two wounds from bullets and bayonets. She was then living in Riazan' (this was in 1906), and she didn't even have a chance to see her son's body.

Many of Serezha's other chums had been hanged, killed, imprisoned, or exiled. Such violent snatchings from life of people close to you have a hardening and anger-provoking effect on people who are governed more by feeling [than reason] and incite a latent desire for revenge, and people submit to bloody means not because of any abstract, foggy notions about the good of the people and so forth, but merely under the influence of a direct and very strong feeling of anger and the desire for revenge.

But Serezha is not one of those people who are ignorant of a higher and truer source of guidance in life than one's baser personal feelings. The losses he experienced only made him deal once and for all with the issue of becoming a violent revolutionary or trying a different route.

And this is what he wrote to me in his last letter:

"I think back on the years following that disastrous year of 1905 - '06, '07 and part of '08 - with sadness, yearning, regret... I was in a great deal of torment at the time, tormented others a good deal, and in the final analysis, in spite of my leanings this way or that, I was deeply unhappy. But that time of torment taught me at least one thing that is firm and beyond doubt - something I very much needed to know: I don't believe, and I never will believe, that what we (i.e., the so-called Russian intelligentsia and everyone attracted to their thoughts and deeds) were doing then, what we were thinking and saying - I don't believe that it was something necessary to do, think, or say; I know that none of it needed to be done. All the horror that we went through and are going through now is unnecessary, it's not justified by anything. We're the ones to blame, and it's no use shifting the blame to anybody else.

"The only one who was sober, who didn't give into the illusion at that time, it seems to me, is Tolstoy.

"For a long time, too long a time, I didn't understand all this, but when I realised it, I cut myself off from everything and now I am living and acting at my own risk.

"I no longer have the same attitude toward people that I used to: all my former actions and thoughts only amounted to blaming others and justifying myself. Life is bad because so-and-so is bad. Now I tell myself: life is wonderful, and if I find it bad, it's because I'm seeing it badly, I'm interpreting it badly...

"Life has become better for me. I know that when you refuse to play the role of everybody's prosecutor - either for God or for human beings, life becomes easier, simpler, calmer. I don't understand now how we, who decried the prosecutors, ourselves took on the role of prosecutors for everybody else.

"All this, of course, is very simple and elementary, and I myself heard about it before dozens of times, but you know, the simplest thing is always the hardest and the most difficult to understand.



It's a lot easier to polemicise about Stirner,<sup>19</sup> about something self-sustaining, than to understand such a simple saying as 'Stop blaming people.'

"And something else that struck me: I know one can observe this from the standpoint of religious feeling, but I don't approach it that way: I experienced for myself the fact that it is impossible to live – to simply live as a human being free from despair and anger – without obeying this rule. It's a special kind of law of self-preservation. Unless you want to destroy yourself – either directly by suicide or indirectly by desolation, despair, boredom, revulsion toward people and God – *judge not*.

"I know there's a lot more that should follow from this 'judge not,' but that's what's clearest to me, and it's something I now know without a doubt.

"After all, all politics, all parties, all so-called public activity – all that is really nothing more than constant prosecution elevated to the status of a principle, a law, an obligation... And how unnecessary, boring, and life-interfering it has all become to me!..

"On the 20th of October I went to see Tolstoy at Iasnaia... What struck me most of all about him was his sense of boundless freedom... It felt as though for him there were no limitations of time, space or nationality – he's himself everywhere, he talks about the ancient Chinese – Mi-ti and Ment-sy – the same way he talks about his contemporaries, yet at the same time he suffers so much from present-day trouble and torture.

"In a word, after talking with Tolstoy and seeing a day in his life, it is impossible, I would say, to leave his presence without becoming a Tolstoyan, in the sense that you'll always have his image before you and you'll always love him."

Don't condemn me, dear Lev Nikolaevich, for these long excerpts. I just wanted to share with you my joy that "our army is now one more soldier greater."

And here, following on from Serezha's letter, is an excerpt from a letter from a former exile who

has now been released and is living in Moscow. After the seriousness and sincerity of Serezha's writing, the vulgar, scathing tone of this letter may sound disconcerting, but its content is nevertheless very important and interesting:

"I want to say a few words about Moscow. It wasn't that long ago that it was different from the way it appears now. The population of this 'white-stone' capital is shifting in a new way. There's a religious ferment taking place here, a healthy one. Wherever I happened to be, I saw people discussing the Gospel, just like the Stundists.

And beyond the Preobrazhensk and Rogozhka gates they're actually holding meetings. I had the opportunity of attending some of them. Most of those who attend are workers, practically revolutionaries. They're good speakers, as if they've spent all their time studying the Gospel. They're pushing the missionary priests into the dirt. And there are all sorts of rogues such as the 'Tula Ivanushka brethren' and the Johannite 'Archangel Michaels,' but these are getting out of Moscow as fast as they can as soon as they don't find any support from their allies."

\* \* \*

Nothing more to write at the moment. My regards to all.

Yours,

N. Gusev

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30 March 1910. Korepino.\*

I sit down to write to you, dear Lev Nikolaevich, with the heavy feeling that I have hardly anything worthwhile to say to you this time. I am very annoyed and upset at the bloody confrontation that just happened between three of the exiled workers over alcohol, *chercher la femme* and, chiefly, utter idleness (most of the exiles have free time with nothing to do twenty-four hours a day). It ended

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<sup>19</sup>Max Stirner [real name: Kaspar Schmidt] (1806-1856)—German philosopher of the Hegelian school of anarchistic individualism.

\*On the envelope: Tolstoy's notation: "splendid letter from Guse[v]."

with one of the participants getting a leg fracture, another stole one of the ladies' money, and a third told the authorities on the lady and another exile.

This was the first time in my life I had witnessed such beastly behaviour. I still even now have not been able to be completely at peace or come to terms with it.

My own position at the moment remains quite uncertain. I have no idea what measures if any are being taken against me in particular. Regarding my transfer, I think if they were going to transfer me they would have done so by now (it's the third week already since the chief of police reported to the superintendent on my "case"). Last week the constable, on instructions from the chief of police, questioned me about the reasons for my "unauthorised leave" to go to Tulpan. Perhaps I shall have to spend several weeks in detention; but these are trifling matters.

Your letter is so wise and so touching and tender...<sup>20</sup> You know I treasure not only your advice but every word you say to me, even the most insignificant. Only don't write about your "quiet" life. I know the price of your apparent quietness. People who live quietly don't seek out Golgotha. I have thought to myself quite a few times recently that the whole burden of dissatisfaction you are experiencing with the outward circumstances of your life is by no means a burden of dissatisfaction with your situation, but the burden of the cross you have voluntarily taken upon yourself – a torture for all collective sins of the whole human race. There's nowhere to hide from such torture. Death is the only thing that can save one who yearns for people's renewal from the inevitable, unstoppable sufferings resulting from the imperfection, weakness, and sin of one's brethren. Is not this the essence of the cross our great Teacher commanded us to take up *every day*?

How touching is the attitude which one of the excommunicated "brethren" in Moscow showed to his persecutors! On the very day of his excommunication, as reported by *Utro Rossii* [Russia's morn-

ing], this brother Ivanushka held a routine meeting which ended with his invitation to sing *mnogaia leta* ["long life"] to the Synod, the Metropolitan and the missionaries. The somewhat amazed listeners meekly sang when he enjoined them several times to sing *mnogaia leta* to "the Synod, the metropolitans, the missionaries and all the clergy."

This is the true grandeur and the true strength still preserved among ordinary Russian religious folk – grandeur and strength, indicated and reflected in works of art by all the Russian artists capable of understanding them: by Tiutchev in his *Èti bednye selen'ia* [These poor settlements], Turgenev in his *Zhivye moshchi* [Living relics], and by you in Platon Karataev, and by Dostoevsky, and even by Nekrasov in *Vlas* (there's nothing like that in Pushkin, Lermontov or Gogol'). I am so fortunate to be learning more and more to appreciate all manifestations of true and sincere faith. Here there is a prevalent custom of "fasting" in the church and the monasteries for 50 or 100 versts all around. And always, when I have the occasion to talk about this with the peasants, I cannot help expressing sympathy for this distraction (albeit a temporary one) from life's daily grind.

Lately I have begun the study, first of all, of methods of elementary education and, secondly, Russian law. In the first of these, despite my eight years' training in the *gymnasium* and my knowledge of the exceptions to Latin declensions and conjugations, I am a complete ignoramus; the need for the practical application of this kind of knowledge is evident at every step.

As for law study, I want to take it up because I have opened a legal practice here, which has been quite successful: I have won two cases: in one of them two peasants were sentenced quite unjustly to paying a rich contractor 50 roubles each, while in the other, a rich timber industrialist underpaid the twelve peasants who worked for him a total of 145 roubles.

Here, in the town and the neighbouring villages, are a lot of fairly wealthy merchants, who mercilessly exploit the trusting, ignorant, and virtually illiterate northern peasants. In their nets the *muzhiki* are struggling like flies in a spider's web. After seeing peasant life up close, I cannot

<sup>20</sup>Gusev received Tolstoy's letter of 18 March 1910 (PSS 81: 152).

help but feel the whole bitterness of the injustice that has built up in the hearts of these people who serve to feed everyone yet are being robbed by everyone.

Well, farewell for now, dear Lev Nikolaevich. I have not written everything I would have liked to. Next mail out I shall write more. My warmest embraces to you.

N. G.

The clipping is for Dushan.<sup>21</sup>

Terribly sad about Molochnikov<sup>22</sup> and his family! Belin'kii<sup>23</sup> is right when he tells me I'm lucky – I have no little kids waiting at home.

N. G.

### *Sergej Nikolaevich Éverling* Three encounters with Lev Tolstoy

8 September 1920

For a long time I have wanted to share my reminiscences of Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy with a wider audience, but for a number of reasons it has not worked out. In view of the fact that these reminiscences might be particularly significant in defining the philosophical views of the late writer, I, on the advice of several acquaintances who also knew Lev Nikolaevich and treasure his memory, have gathered into one place all the fragmentary notes I have kept in my papers which I had made under the direct, still fresh impression of my personal conversations with Tolstoy.

Since I have accumulated a fair number of these notes and they are all rather fragmentary, it is not an easy matter to put them into a single continuous narrative, although I have made a good start in this direction. In any event, that particular question does not concern me at the moment; I shall postpone it to a more favourable occasion. At present I should like to avail myself of the occasion of the [forthcoming] tenth anniversary of the great writer's passing to share just a few of my recollections of one of the more significant episodes of my personal communication with Lev Nikolaevich, especially since it is more or less independent and complete in itself. I am thinking of our several discussions on philosophical and social themes, which took place in the first few months of 1901.

#### I

Lev Nikolaevich spent the winter of 1900-1901 in Moscow at his Khamovniki residence. This is when I made my first acquaintance with the great writer. I got to know him through a couple named Annenkov, my distant relatives. K[onstantin] N[ikanorovich] Annenkov was a fairly well-known law scholar, a landowner from the district of L'gov [in the Kursk area], a man of the 1860s through and through who could hardly be considered a subscriber to Tolstoy's ideas. His wife Leonila Fominichna, however, was an ardent follower of Lev Nikolaevich's teachings, and was close to the

<sup>21</sup>Dushan Petrovich Makovitskii—Tolstoy's personal physician.

<sup>22</sup>Vladimir Aifalovich Molochnikov (1871-1936)—a Novgorod locksmith, who shared Tolstoy's ideas. On 11 March 1910 he was arrested and incarcerated in a Novgorod prison. In a letter to Tolstoy the same day he wrote of his arrest and mentioned the fact that he had persuaded two soldiers named Smirnov and Solov'ev to refuse military service.

<sup>23</sup>Samuil Moiseevich Belin'kii (1877-1966)—a friend of Vladimir Molochnikov's. In 1910 he was working for Tolstoy and Vladimir Chertkov as a copyist.

man himself. Though a landowner of some means, she lived quite a simple life, zealously followed Tolstoy's literary career, had all his latest works, copied out in her own hand. Every winter, just as soon as the sleigh trails were ready, the Annenkovs would leave their rural retreat (the hamlet of Ivitsa in the L'gov district, about 20 versts from L'gov) and come to Moscow for a couple of months to see their friends and relatives and refresh themselves with new ideas. If the Tolstoys happened to be in Moscow during these trips, there would begin that frequent round of mutual visits that was actually Leonila Fominichna's main reason for coming to Moscow. In the two rooms which she usually rented in Chizhov's Furnished Rooms on Mokhovaia (across from the University), a whole "Tolstoyan circle," as it was called, could be found meeting in the evenings. Boulanger, Dunaev, Sergeenko, Biriukov, Khilkov, and Baratynskaia were frequent visitors, not to mention the less prominent followers of Tolstoy. The cheerful and hospitable hostess, Leonila Fominichna, treating the guests to tea with all sorts of country sweets and biscuits, was the centre of these modest gatherings; the conversation invariably revolved around the usual issues of a Tolstoy literary sermon or individual public engagements on the part of one of his followers or like-minded thinkers. But even here, true to her own rules, she never remained idle: there was always some kind of work to be seen in her hands. Mostly it was some sort of wool-knitting project: a scarf, gloves, armlets, socks or a cap. And, of course, it was being knitted for Lev Nikolaevich. She would pronounce his name with an open "e"—not *Lyov Nikolaevich*, the way everyone said it, but invariably *Lyev Nikolaevich*, with a special reverence. Sometimes, in moments of good-natured fun, her husband, Konstantin Nikanorovich, would allow himself the liberty of making a little fun of his wife's handicrafts, speculating that these things couldn't be all that well made, seeing as Lev Nikolaevich wore them out rather quickly. The Annenkovs would usually arrive with their own oil-stove (since they were vegetarians) and their own maid, a young cheerful Ukrainian girl, who was herself, at least according to Leonila Fominichna, attracted to Tolstoy's ideas; this country Tolstoyan girl was

known for her constantly flushed cheeks and her feet shod in enormous felt boots.

During the winter in question, the Annenkovs stayed a rather long time. For a long time I had wanted to make Lev Nikolaevich's acquaintance in person. We had known each other indirectly for some time through N. Ia. Grot: Lev Nikolaevich read several of my literary experiments, once with a flattering pat on the back, but it didn't go any farther than that; quite honestly I'm now rather ashamed of the youthful fervour which took me by storm at the time – I didn't want to go to Tolstoy "on bended knee," so I waited for an opportunity to somehow be introduced to him "by chance" – at Grot's or at another of our common acquaintances. What memories I have now of such an unfortunate incident [as the following]! – After reading, at the request of N[ikolai] Ia[kovlevich] Grot, who at the time was editor of the journal *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* [Questions of philosophy and psychology], the proofs of Tolstoy's article "What is art?" for publication in one of the forthcoming issues (as is well known, Tolstoy put great store by this article), I found myself dropping in one evening at Nikolai Iakovlevich's to return to him the proofs I had read, and to my great misfortune and annoyance was met by his words: "Well, if you had only come a half hour earlier you would have found Lev Nikolaevich here at the house."

Thanks to the Annenkovs, a convenient occasion to be introduced to Tolstoy finally presented itself – under circumstances which seemed to me completely appropriate. The Annenkovs proposed picking me up to go together to the Tolstoys' at Khamovniki, to spend the evening with them. This was on the 1st of February 1901. Leonila Fominichna rode ahead in one carriage, while Konstantin Nikanorovich and I followed in another. The weather was very nasty, a strong blizzard was blowing, and I marvelled at my companion's endurance, dressed as he was in a simple collarless cloth coat and a muffler; besides, he smoked incessantly the whole way there. His endurance was explained by the extreme rigorous training he had long subjected himself to, going bathing [outdoors] right until late autumn, usually right up 'til mid-October.

I distinctly remember now the emotional embarrassment I felt driving into the Tolstoys' estate, which was hemmed in on all sides by factory complexes on the narrow Khamovniki Lane. We turned into the courtyard, past the concierge's house and the outbuilding and right up to the canopied entrance. I remember ringing the doorbell, pulling on the copper handle of the bell. From the brightly-lit hallway within at once came a smartly dressed servant and politely said: "If you please, sir! The Count and Countess are at home, sir!", allowing us to pass on ahead and brushing off the thick snow that had stuck to us. While we were taking off our coats in the hallway we could hear voices from upstairs. We were then invited to go up to the parlour. After climbing the carpeted wooden staircase with its railing covered in a fringed raspberry-coloured cloth, we entered a spacious salon illuminated by wall-lamps. I remember there was a piano to the right, while on the left stood a long dining-table and the usual sort of old-fashioned furniture which one might find in any manor house in the second half of the nineteenth century. There was nobody in the salon; on the servant's report, there appeared in the doorway of the parlour a full-figured middle-aged woman with a lorgnette, whom I instantly recognised from her portraits as Sof'ia Andreevna. But my eyes were involuntarily seeking Lev Nikolaevich. After our initial greetings and my introduction, Sof'ia Andreevna said that Lev Nikolaevich was at home and that he would presently join us. Apart from us, in the parlour there were two other women – one (named Pogozeva), the older, was the wife of a popular Moscow doctor of the period, while the other, a young girl, was M. A. Maklakova, sister to a barrister of some note, V. A. Maklakov, assistant to the famous Plevako. The Countess and Leonila Fominichna sat down on the chesterfield behind a lamp with a large shade and set about their work, while we made ourselves comfortable in arm-chairs. Before ten minutes had gone by, Lev Nikolaevich appeared in the doorway leading from the salon. I remember he seemed not as tall as I had expected. I don't really know why, as I had seen him several times before this from a distance – on the street and once at a public meeting of the

Psychology Society, at a lecture by L. E. Obolenskii.

Lev Nikolaevich was wearing an ordinary grey shirt with a belt, a dressing-gown was draped over his shoulders. He greeted everyone with a friendly welcome. "Very pleased to meet you," he said as he turned to me. "In fact we are already acquainted through Grot." Everybody sat down. I cannot for the life of me remember what we talked about, as I was all caught up in what was going on inside me. Gradually the guests began to arrive; the ones I remember were V. A. Maklakov, N. N. Raevskii, A. B. Gol'denveizer, A. S. Buturlin, and Gorbunov-Posadov. There were quite a few people, in addition to members of the Tolstoys' household. Presently everyone was invited into the salon for tea and cakes. I remember how Lev Nikolaevich settled himself down – not at the big table, but off to one side, to the left of the parlour doors, where there was a small round table, along with a small sofa and chairs made of beechwood. A circle formed around Lev Nikolaevich, comprised of Annenkov, Maklakov, Gorbunov-Posadov, and me. Lev Nikolaevich drank tea and honey and some light biscuits (he didn't use sugar). The conversation revolved around various social issues and topical interests, [such as] courses for workers. While Maklakov talked animatedly about all these, Lev Nikolaevich mainly listened, contributing a remark only occasionally. Initial signs of Zubatov's "police socialism" were already evident in Moscow, everywhere where you could feel the so-called "pulse of society," people were engaged in ardent discussion of the questions arising from this movement, otherwise known as "state socialism." This interest was echoed in the conversation at hand. I remember a remark Lev Nikolaevich made regarding a lecture series on social issues which had been announced for the Historical Museum's lecture hall. "Nothing good will come out of all this," said Lev Nikolaevich. "Nothing can come of it, since the only thing that is needful will still not be said. The questions of truly Christian morality, questions of love among people, will not be touched upon in these readings. Instead, they will talk on and on about things that are completely unnecessary." Naturally there were some objections to this. Little

by little the talk shifted to the distancing (or detachment) of all modern science from life, from its daily needs. Lev Nikolaevich, I remember, became very excited and, turning to me, said: "Well, now, you study philosophy: tell me, please, what is Prince S[ergei] N[ikolaevich] Trubetskoi<sup>24</sup> really saying in his new book about Logos?" Even though I was quite familiar with Trubetskoi's doctoral dissertation which had just been published in Number 27 of *Moscow University Scholarly Annals*, and was at its public defence (which had taken place with great solemnity in the University's ceremonial hall), still this question caused me some momentary embarrassment. I recovered my composure, however, and, it seems, managed fairly successfully to offer a concise outline of the basic theses of this work, appending a few general comments of my own. Lev Nikolaevich attentively heard me out and then said: "That only confirms my thoughts about the superfluity of such writings. Who, in fact, could possibly need them? A simple, ill-educated reader will understand absolutely nothing in them, while for the educated and well-read person they have nothing new to offer. More importantly, they are far from providing an answer to the main question about how to live or think so as to draw nearer to the living truth of life – i.e., how to learn to do God's will and to live in God."

I must admit I was quite taken aback by such a severe condemnation of this brilliant (as it was

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<sup>24</sup>Prince Sergei Nikolaevich Trubetskoi (1862-1905), philosopher-idealist, a follower and friend of Vladimir Solov'ev; from 1900 a professor of Moscow University in the Philosophy department, from 1905 its first elected Rector; one of the editors of the journal *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* [Questions of Philosophy and Psychology] (1900-1905). Tolstoy was acquainted with Trubetskoi and met with him in the spring of 1898 in connection with the publication in the journal of his treatise *What is Art?* Tolstoy mentions Trubetskoi's book *Uchenie o logose i ego istorii* [Doctrine of the Logos and its history], which came out in 1900. Mentioned here is Trubetskoi's doctoral dissertation "Doctrine of the Logos," published as a separate book, which he defended in 1900 at Moscow University.

touted at the time) dissertation by a talented professor, not to mention my teacher, and I tried to offer an objection to Lev Nikolaevich, bringing to Trubetskoi's defence everything I could put into a nutshell, in the interests of basic philosophical theoretical constructs. But I had the feeling right on the spot that everything I said was totally devoid of inner conviction for Lev Nikolaevich. After hearing me out, Lev Nikolaevich asked: "Tell me something: is it true that Trubetskoi was a close friend of Vladimir Solov'ev and borrowed a lot from him?" I replied that in his philosophical views Trubetskoi was indeed very close to Vladimir Sergeevich's *Weltanschauung*, that they were united by a close friendship, but that all the same Trubetskoi was still not without some independence in his scholarly works. Not letting me finish, Tolstoy said: "Well, yes, Solov'ev, Lopatin, Trubetskoi – they're essentially all the same and all three are devoid of originality; they simply repeat the clichés of German philosophy, only each one in his own way, that's all. And I am at a complete loss to understand why Solov'ev is regarded as an independent thinker. He's as boring as all get out, and the thing is, it is impossible to understand what he's really after. His public lectures are an utter mish-mash. I shall never forget how [my] late [friend] Strakhov once dragged me to one of Solov'ev's lectures.<sup>25</sup> Just imagine a hall packed to overflowing, hot and stuffy beyond measure, people crowded in on top of each other, nowhere to sit down – not only all the chairs, but all the window-seats taken. The ladies were practically in ball-gowns. And all at once, very late (as befitting a "maestro"), Solov'ev mounts the stage – tall and skinny as a rail, with a huge mop of hair on his head, with eyes straight out of some Byzantine icon, wearing a frock-coat which hung on him just like on a hanger, and an enormous white tie – actually a silk kerchief in place of a tie – and tied in a bow, like some artist from Montmartre. He

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<sup>25</sup>L. N. Tolstoy was at Vladimir Solov'ev's lecture on religion, together with Nikolai Nikolaevich Strakhov, on 10 March 1878, during his visit to St. Petersburg.

surveyed the lecture hall, fixed his eyes on some distant hill and set about his reading – every second or third word injecting two- and three-layered German terms which for some reason people feel are essential for real philosophy but which are simply impossible to understand... he kept on reading and reading, and then all at once delved into some kind of angelic offices and began naming them off one by one – just like a priest – cherubims, serafims, all sorts of thrones and various other offices... I honestly don't know where he collected them all from or whether he actually saw them himself. Kind of stupid, really. I couldn't bear to stay and listen to the whole lecture; I left Strakhov by himself."

A period of silence ensued. And then, as if recollecting something, Lev Nikolaevich added: "No, he's no philosopher, just a cleric in the spirit of the fathers of the eastern church, born too late. And who in fact needs this universal theocracy of his? Certainly not the one whose case he keeps pleading – i.e., God. And then there's this crazy book, *Opravdanie dobra* [Justification of good]. I certainly couldn't get through it, even though I tried several times. There was once a real Russian thinker with a clear head – one who, it seems, is still alive. That's Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov.<sup>26</sup> I

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<sup>26</sup>Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov (1824-1903)—librarian of the Rumiantsev Museum, a philosopher, author of a major work *Filosofia obshchego dela* [Philosophy of the common cause]. He was known for his boundless disinterestedness, scorn for money and all material goods, and lived an extremely ascetic way of life.

L. N. Tolstoy became acquainted with him in October 1881, witness the notation in his diary for 5 October 1881: "Nikolai Fedorovich is a saint. Closet. Do it! – That goes without saying. – Doesn't want a salary. No linens, no bed" (*PSS*, 49: 58). Tolstoy made friends with him and made frequent visits to him.

Fedorov did not agree with Tolstoy on every point. There were constant disagreements between them. And in 1892 came a final quarrel, after which they no longer saw each other. The last straw was the publication of an article by Tolstoy in the London *Daily Telegraph* in January 1892 entitled "Why the Russian peasants are starving." Fedorov held that

used to meet him somehow (a long time ago) in the Rumiantsev Museum and very much enjoyed chatting with him; however he's got bogged down in bookish intellectualism and has strayed from the true path. At the time that I met him, he had a unique quality of his own in his thinking and living. Strakhov too was writing rather sensibly at that time, only he wasn't into anything whole-heartedly."

I was interested in Lev Nikolaevich's opinion about my university instructor N[ikolai] Ia[kovlevich] Grot,<sup>27</sup> to whom I was assigned for preparation for my professorship and with whom I enjoyed a close and heartfelt relationship (all the more so since our fathers were friends and corresponded with each other). The personality of Nikolai Iakovlevich was very important to me in the development of my philosophical world-view; I think that my worship of his personality was largely responsible for my focusing my scholarly interests on philosophy. Thus to know Lev Nikolaevich's opinion of him was very dear to me. It was not without a sense of apprehension that I decided to pose this question to him directly.

Lev Nikolaevich looked at me intently and said something like the following: "Grot was a very good and sincere individual, but he had many distractions and little in the way of fixed views. His philosophy was shallow, but I appreciated the fact that his erudition and scholarship did not deaden his freshness of thought and did not deprive him of a simple and clear view of life. If he had not had the occasion to devote himself so much to external life, perhaps he would have thought his way to something better. But after all, he wasn't really *living*, but only (as he himself expressed it) con-

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action on the part of government and church was necessary to overcome social disorder; Tolstoy still rejected such measures.

<sup>27</sup>Nikolai Iakovlevich Grot (1852-1899)—philosopher, professor at Moscow University from 1899; chairman of the Moscow Psychological Society, whose sessions Tolstoy attended; one of the editors of the journal *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, which published Tolstoy's treatise *What is Art?* Tolstoy became acquainted with Grot in 1885 and carried on correspondence with him.

stantly boiling in a pot, and he came to a boil prematurely. Besides, I did read some of his writings with pleasure; I found his booklet on Plato<sup>28</sup> especially good – of course you're familiar with it."

In the meantime the guests were slowly wandering about the rooms; some went off with one of Lev Nikolaevich's sons (Sergei L'vovich, it seems), Gol'denveizer sat down at the piano, the ladies went off into the parlour, and it turned out that only Annenkov and I remained with Lev Nikolaevich. I very much wanted to draw Lev Nikolaevich into a more serious conversation on a topic of one of his ongoing interests, but somehow the prevailing mood wasn't right for that. Lev Nikolaevich himself accurately read my secret desire and said to me: "You know, we should have a talk somehow; come and see me some time when there are not so many people around. By the way, have you read Shpir?" I admitted that I had heard of Shpir only in passing, but had not read him myself. "Read him, definitely read him," said Lev Nikolaevich, as though pondering something. "He will most certainly interest you. You will not regret the time spent. You don't have a copy of his work?" I responded that I hoped to find one in the university library. "No need," Lev Nikolaevich replied, "I can give you a copy you can keep." And with these words Lev Nikolaevich got up and headed off to his study – through the "catacombs." That is what in the Tolstoy house they called the route leading down the narrow corridor to Lev Nikolaevich's study. I was amazed at how light and brisk Tolstoy's step was, which I would not have expected in a person of his age. Several minutes later Tolstoy returned, carrying four small volumes of Shpir in a light-green binding.<sup>29</sup> "Here is a Shpir for you

– you'll find places I've marked that I especially liked."<sup>30</sup> I thanked him warmly. "Once you've read it, you and I'll have a talk about him; I'll be interested to know what impression he makes on you," said Lev Nikolaevich with a friendly smile. Meanwhile (or, in the meantime), Konstantin Nikolaevich called Leonila Fominichna out of the drawing-room and we started saying our good-byes, so as not to tire Lev Nikolaevich any further with a long drawn-out visit. Lev Nikolaevich warmly bade us adieu and accompanied us to the stairway landing. Gorbunov-Posadov and Pogozheva left with us. The blizzard had stopped, but in the courtyard we had to make our way through deep snow; it was particularly deep at Devich'e Field, where the workers had not yet managed to clear it away at such a late hour, and where there was never a good deal of traffic. We said good-night to Pogozheva and Gorbunov-Posadov at the end of the lane, and on Prechistenka we again hired two cabs and headed straight home – the Annenkovs to their place on Mokhovaia, and I to distant Lefortovo, where I was living at the time. I rode the whole way in an uplifted mood – my soul for some reason felt joyful and bright. My long-standing desire had at last been fulfilled – I had made Tolstoy's acquaintance, and was looking forward to fascinating conversations with the great writer on philosophical and religious topics which promised to be highly important and instructive for me.

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Èverling. Razguliai. Aptekarskii pereulok, dom Mikhailova, kv. 1" (PSS 54: 237).

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<sup>28</sup>Tolstoy read a lithographed edition of a series of lectures on Plato which Grot gave at Moscow University in the autumn of 1891. In 1896 a condensed version of the lectures was published by *Posrednik* as a separate book under the title *Ocherk filosofii Platona* [Outline of Plato's philosophy].

<sup>29</sup>There is a notation in Tolstoy's record book for February 1901, in Èverling's own hand: "Took Shpir's *Philosophic Essays*, 4 volumes, Sergei Nikolaevich

<sup>30</sup>Afrikan Aleksandrovich Shpir (1837-1890)—Russian philosopher who lived many years in Germany and wrote his own works in German and French. In May 1896 Tolstoy read Shpir's *Collected Works*, published in four volumes in Leipzig in 1883-85. In Tolstoy's diary for 2 May 1896 we find the notation: "Another important event, an essay by Afrikan Shpir. I have now read what was written at the beginning of this notebook. ... This essay strikingly illuminated, from several angles – and strengthened my thoughts about – the meaning of life" (PSS 53: 84). And a notation on 3 May 1896: "I'm still reading Shpir and this reading is calling up the depths of my thought" (*loc. cit.*).



## II

My next appointment with Lev Nikolaevich took place in March of the same year (1901). The Annenkovs were no longer in Moscow at this time, and so I went to Khamovniki alone, again in the evening. Arriving around eight, I found Buturlin there, chatting with Lev Nikolaevich in the downstairs corner room, to the right of the dining room. Tolstoy was sitting on the large chesterfield, wrapped in a dressing-gown: he had just recovered from his usual stomach ailment and still wasn't feeling quite himself. I remember the talk was about medicine, which Lev Nikolaevich was addressing with a bit of good-natured irony. As a matter of fact, Aleksandr Sergeevich Buturlin – already rather well on in years, probably around 60 – had become interested in this discipline and enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine, attending lectures with his teen-age son. Lev Nikolaevich, as is well known, had little faith in medicine and never missed an opportunity to poke fun at doctors and their science. Buturlin, I remember, ardently defended the high degree of scholarship of the medical faculty in general, referring to Sharko, Pasteur, Mechnikov, trying as best he could to persuade Tolstoy that empirical medicine, or the art of curing, rested on completely accurate scientific data, and that therefore there was no reason to be sceptical about it. But Lev Nikolaevich stood his ground and, turning to me, said jokingly: "Defend me against Aleksandr Sergeevich. He would like nothing better than to fill me up with pills to make me 20 years younger." From medicine the conversation turned to other topics, and Lev Nikolaevich asked me, along with Buturlin, to edit his response in English to a telegram request sent him by some newspaper in Philadelphia.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Tolstoy was responding to a telegram request by the Philadelphia paper *North American Newspaper* about his reaction to his excommunication from the Church. However, neither the telegram itself nor Tolstoy's reply are to be found in the manuscript division of the L. N. Tolstoy Museum, nor are they included in the *PSS*. But their existence is confirmed in two documents: 1) in the list of things sent by

While we were in the midst of discussing the formulation of this response, we were invited upstairs for tea. There were guests in the salon. As I remember now, I was surprised to see some people sitting in the right half of the salon, near the piano, who appeared to be musicians, with violins. It turned out they were gypsies, invited by one of Lev Nikolaevich's sons to play a few of Lev Nikolaevich's favourite gypsy melodies. Tolstoy evidently was delighted by the idea, and it was decided at once to listen to the gypsies, even before tea. Lev Nikolaevich sat down in an easy chair, surrounded by those who were already in the room. The piano, accompanied by an improvised orchestra of about five or six gypsies, sounded the opening chords, and Lev Nikolaevich started listening, tapping his foot in time. The music, apparently, gave him great pleasure. After the first piece, Lev Nikolaevich clapped his hands in approval and, turning to those around him, said: "Amazing music – what a sense of moderation it conveys!" The musicians played several more pieces. Lev Nikolaevich thanked them warmly and enthusiastically. Everyone, including Lev Nikolaevich, gathered around the large dining table for tea, which was adorned with two candelabras with lighted candles; the conversation was on general topics, directed mainly by Countess Sof'ia Andreevna. I remember one of those present began talking about Turgenev; Lev Nikolaevich, as if recalling something, said: "Turgenev was spoilt by living abroad; toward the end of his life he had lost his grasp of Russian life. A lot has been said and even written, I don't know why, about our disagreements. But none of that's the way it really was. I was indeed always annoyed by his insincerity; I myself was very zealous then, I kept trying to lead him into pure water, as it

Tat'iana L'vovna Sukhotina to the Tolstoy Exhibit in Moscow in 1911, No 11 is designated as "Telegram to the newspaper *North American Newspaper*, which had questioned Lev Nikolaevich on his ex-communication from the Church" (T. L. Sukhotina Fonds); 2) in the Catalogue of the Tolstoy Exhibit in Moscow (October-November 1911, p. 77, No 1976) concerning the showing of this telegram at the exhibit, from the collection of T. L. Sukhotina.

seemed to me at the time, and this irritated him. This is where our conflicts arose. Still, he was deep down a very good person, and in many respects I wasn't fair to him. My memories of him are always pleasant ones. As I remember now, during my visit abroad I happened to spend several days with him in Dijon, and it is a pleasure for me to think back on this time. We were close then. We used to visit the Polish émigré historian Lelevel. A most interesting individual. He was literally mad about Polish independence. His little room, filled with buzzing flies, the Persian blinds drawn to block out the sun, was the scene of heated discussions. Turgenev, I remember, got rather hot under the collar." Then, as if pondering something, Lev Nikolaevich added: "Yes, Turgenev could love people with touching tenderness – I'm sure he would have been quite a different person had it not been for his unfortunate attraction to Viardot." By this time, Gol'denveizer had sat down at the piano and everyone stopped to listen to this musician play. Lev Nikolaevich was delighted with several of the pieces he performed. After the concert Lev Nikolaevich sat at his side-table with a cup of tea. Remembering that a chum from Tolstoy's younger days whom I had recently seen had asked me to convey a friendly greeting, I did this. Lev Nikolaevich was excited and asked me whether he had aged a great deal and what he was doing now. This was about a certain Konstantin Fedorovich Noverezhskii,<sup>32</sup> who had once served with Lev Nikolaevich in the artillery in the Sevastopol' campaign and had been close friends with him. At the time Noverezhskii, already in his senior years, was an assistant to the head of the Moscow customs service. "And did Konstantin Fedorovich ever tell you," Tolstoy asked me, "how the two of us made merry and played cards and how I often borrowed money from him?" I said that Noverezhskii had told me nothing about that. "Why not? why not?" said Lev Nikolaevich, and added: "You know, I'd love to see him again. Give me his address, and when you see him give him mine. Perchance we'll get together somehow. After all,

there aren't many friends from my youth still alive. They've all been going quietly, only I'm growing tired of waiting for my turn."

At this point a relation of Timiriazev's, Ekaterina Ivanovna Boratynskaia, who had been sitting and working, started talking about her translations of Darwin into Russian. Lev Nikolaevich expressed the opinion that it must be very boring to translate Darwin in view of the unusual proliferation of shallow factual material in his writings. "Here it's been 40 years," Lev Nikolaevich went on, "that I've been hearing about Darwin, and both people trained in science and non-scientists see him as a final authority, as though he had had some kind of revelation; in the meantime, he has said absolutely nothing new about what mankind really needs to know. What he's been involved in and what he's celebrated for has to do only with man's body, the material shell of his spiritual essence, – and that [spiritual essence] is the only thing that is valuable and apart from it, in the final analysis, nothing exists." "Tell me," said Lev Nikolaevich, turning to me, "have you read Shpir [yet]?" I replied that I read more than two volumes, and that what I had read to date captured my imagination and that I was looking forward to read all four volumes Lev Nikolaevich had given me, and after that I hoped to offer a more detailed account of my impressions. "This is what I wanted," said Lev Nikolaevich, "and I'm very glad that Shpir has caught your interest and I think he deserves it. When you finish your reading, we'll definitely have a talk about him, you and I."

In the meantime supper was served and we were invited to take our seats at the large table. Lev Nikolaevich was offered boiled vegetables separately from the others. One of those present (I think it was A. V. Pogozeva), started talking about the unrest among the workers that was then taking place at Moscow factories. "Yes," said Lev Nikolaevich, "the other day I happened to be walking through Devich'e Field and had a chat with the workers, who told me that they are being prevented from holding meetings and discussing their situation, and that is why they are on strike. They are rather firmly entrenched in their position and really want to achieve their goal, even if they're opposed

<sup>32</sup>Correct spelling: *Neverzhevskii*—a lieutenant, later staff-captain.

with force. It is reported that their meetings are being broken up by Cossacks and the police. I advised them not to provoke violent actions on the part of the authorities, and if they aren't permitted to meet in one place, then they should disperse and get together in another. Already someone noticed my conversations with the workers and has probably reported them to the place one might expect. Yesterday my wife told me that the Grand Prince *a une dent contre moi*,<sup>33</sup> and that the matter is serious and may even end up with my being exiled from Moscow – I only don't know where, to the countryside or out of the country." "Yes, yes," said Sof'ia Andreevna, "the Glebovs were talking about that yesterday, they heard it from Trepov. Well, anyway, if it's to be out of the country, I'll be happy, we'll settle in Switzerland. I can just imagine how they'll look after me there – *la femme de Tolstoi* – that's even interesting!" she concluded. At these words Lev Nikolaevich raised his eyebrows slightly; evidently he was quite displeased by this not altogether tactful remark by his wife. "Of course one can live and work anywhere," said Lev Nikolaevich, as if speaking aloud the thoughts that came to him regarding this conversation. "It's just that I'd still prefer to go to Iasnaia Poliana. It's a strange thing, how much unnecessary suffering people cause themselves by not caring to clarify for themselves the meaning of life. And it's so simple, so clear, that it seems there's nothing to add to Christ's words about children.<sup>34</sup> Really, there's only one thing that's needed – we need to be like them, so that the meaning of life will unfold all by itself. And yet people go on philosophising, looking for it where there's absolutely no possibility of finding it, and the more persistent their efforts in the wrong direction, the further and further away they get from it, imagining all the time that if they just go a little farther they'll find it, and life will become happy as paradise. For example, the thought that evil cannot bring forth good is abso-

lutely clear to me, and yet people, stubbornly insisting on their so-called rights, do violence to one another, whereas both sides hold to completely opposite points of view and are convinced that they are perpetrating violence in the name of good and so justify themselves, and thus act more and more cruelly toward each other and the possibility of mutual understanding becomes more and more difficult. But they have only to understand each other on a loving and inner plane in order for a complete opportunity to unfold to direct their will – and, it follows, their actions – in accordance with God's will, and this is all that is necessary. If each one of us as individuals sincerely strives to do God's will, what is there to prevent us from collectively doing God's will, no matter how many of us there are? It is quite strange how some kind of shroud masks people's spiritual views on this question, even, it seems, people with the soundest minds. Yet they, out of a mistaken concern lest they appear unscholarly, begin to let themselves drift into philosophising that do no one any good, [in an attempt] to get to the meaning of life, unaware that they are thereby leading themselves and others into hopeless error. Many is the time I have tried to explain this in my writings, but [people] don't understand me – or, for some reason, don't want to understand. And from personal conversations and the questions I've received in writing, I see how little I am understood."

"It seems to me," I said to Lev Nikolaevich, "that it has a lot to do with worshipping a fad of a so-called scientific understanding of the world, and this kind of worship restricts the true freedom of the spirit."

"Yes, yes, that's it exactly," Lev Nikolaevich replied animatedly. "You mustn't forget," interjected Countess Sof'ia Andreevna, "that in view of the censorship policies, your works are becoming more and more inaccessible for the majority of Russian readers, and now, after your ex-communication from the church, it is all the more likely that they will only be read abroad."

"What I said," countered Lev Nikolaevich, "applies in equal measure to my readers abroad and to my Russian readers. As for ex-communication, it's one of those measures that will have the

<sup>33</sup>*a une dent contre moi*—roughly equivalent to: "has a bone to pick with me."

<sup>34</sup>See, e.g., Matthew 19:13-15.

opposite effect of what was intended, and the only thing that bothers me is that I am indirectly serving as an excuse for a new step in hypocrisy on the part of those whose hypocrisy is already evident enough to me.”

It was already growing late, and some of the guests were beginning to take their leave. Lev Nikolaevich got up from the table and, shaking hands with those departing, found a friendly word to say to each one. When it came my turn, Lev Nikolaevich retained his grasp on my hand and gently said to me: “When will you and I have a talk about Shpir? Leave me your address, in any case.” I wrote my address in the guestbook and, handing it to Lev Nikolaevich, said that I hoped to finish reading Shpir in a couple of weeks and then hoped to come and see him again, by his leave. Lev Nikolaevich replied with a smile: “Yes, do come; I hope that they won’t chase me out of Moscow that soon.” Lev Nikolaevich accompanied his guests to the stairway landing, where once again we said our good-byes.

So ended my second evening at the Tolstoys’ house: I remember leaving together with Aleksandr Sergeevich Buturlin. I walked with him as far as Znamenka, where he was living at the home of his brother, General S. S. Buturlin, about whom he said, referring to his military service: “my brother’s no stupid fellow, and yet all his life he has found no more intelligent occupation than sabre-rattling.”

As I took my leave of Buturlin, we agreed that the next time I planned to go see Lev Nikolaevich I would let him know and we would go together.

### III

During St-Thomas’ week in April, some time around six o’clock one evening, Buturlin dropped by and invited me to go with him to see Lev Nikolaevich. I was delighted to accept the offer, as I myself was planning to go see Tolstoy, this time to talk with him about Shpir, whom I had finished reading. Buturlin at the time was very interested in the works of Mechnikov on the theory of leucocytes and phagocytes which the famous scholar was then propounding and which had attracted a lively interest on the part of medical scientists and

biologists. I remember Buturlin explaining its basic tenets to me over the course of our extended route from one end of Moscow to the other, and fretting over the fact that Mechnikov had first published it in French, along with the first few chapters of his later work which appeared in Russian under the title “*Études on the philosophy of optimism*,” in which he questioned the possibilities of human longevity; Buturlin discovered in this that these works by Mechnikov had been written in a not altogether successful French. “I don’t consider myself a particular expert on the French language,” said Buturlin, “but I think that if I were to write a thesis in French, I would write it in better French than Mechnikov.”

During this discussion we arrived, almost without realizing it, at Khamovniki. Lev Nikolaevich turned out to be at home and received us cheerfully. There were no other guests.

Tolstoy was apparently glad to see us and launched into an animated conversation, sitting in his favourite spot, on the chesterfield by the stove, right in the downstairs corner room to the right of the dining room. Buturlin, of course, was in a hurry to share Mechnikov’s theory with Lev Nikolaevich. Tolstoy heard him out with rapt attention, and then said that this theory, like many others in the natural sciences, after making a lot of noise and causing internal quarrels among scholars, would probably be short-lived and would be forgotten just as quickly as it had attracted scholars’ attention, as well as the attention of the general public who slavishly followed their opinion. Buturlin, a devotee of the theory, tried to object, but it was apparent that Tolstoy was not persuaded by his arguments and he held to his view.

From Mechnikov the conversation turned to Russian emigrants in general, to the school of higher sociology founded by Kovalevskii in Paris.<sup>35</sup> “Those are all useless ideas,” said Tolstoy. “Revo-

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<sup>35</sup>Maksim Maksimovich Kovalevskii (1851-1916) —law scholar, historian, and political activist of liberal orientation; an acquaintance of Tolstoy’s; appointed professor at Moscow University in 1880; lived abroad from 1887 to 1905.

lution on the outside cannot lead to anything good unless people themselves change, unless they understand that it is only by seeking God *within one's self* and loving one's neighbour that they can change everything, and that only then life will become bright and joyful. All the paths of contemporary society are false, and one cannot arrive at truth while following a false path; people basically need only one thing – to live in God, but this is not happening and no external revolution will bring it about, since it does not have and cannot have the means of bringing people closer to God. The paths of revolution, no matter how mistaken people may be in respect to its ultimate goals, are also paths of violence, and therefore an evil, and evil cannot bring forth good.”

Buturlin asked Lev Nikolaevich whether he considered social revolution in Russia a possibility: “Revolution in Russia, of course, is a possibility sooner than anywhere in Europe,” Tolstoy said. “But in that case what would become of all culture and civilisation, Lev Nikolaevich?” – “Culture and civilisation, of course, must perish, and they *will* perish,” added Lev Nikolaevich, after a moment's thought. “But doesn't it seem to you, Lev Nikolaevich,” said Buturlin, “that once social revolution comes about, even if it should be aided by an external push, and those barriers which hinder all people from being equal are eliminated, it will still be easier for people to enter that path of enlightenment by divine truth about which you speak?” – “No,” countered Lev Nikolaevich with a tone of deep conviction, “the elimination of an external evil in itself will not change people, and external evil, if eliminated by violence and evil, will only bring forth a new evil. It's the vicious circle in which mankind is revolving, and it will go on that way until people understand that it is only through good, through drawing closer to God, that evil can be eliminated – the evil that we have to seek within ourselves, and once it is no longer within us, it cannot be outside either. I speak about this in all my writings, but few people want to or are able to understand me.”

Someone came down from upstairs to call us to tea. There we met, as usual, several guests in the company of Sof'ia Andreevna, already seated at

the large tea-table. Lev Nikolaevich sat down at his small side-table. They brought tea, cream, honey, sugar for those who wished it, preserves, and dry Einem biscuits.<sup>36</sup> Lev Nikolaevich invited me to sit down with him. Tea was accompanied by general conversation, not distinguished by anything outstanding that I can remember. Finally, when the guests began to disperse to various rooms, Lev Nikolaevich turned to me and asked: “You've probably already finished reading Shpir?” And upon my confirmation he said: “I'd like to know what kind of an impression he made on you.” And with these words he got up and, taking me by the arm, added: “Well, tell me what you think about his philosophy.” Walking about the salon, I began to pour out to Lev Nikolaevich my thoughts on the Shpir books that I had read. I shall not impose here upon the reader's attention by offering a detailed re-telling of what I then expounded on to Lev Nikolaevich, dwelling on the details of Shpir's philosophical system which were still fresh in my mind from the reading. I shall say only that I, agreeing with the basic thought of his theoretical constructs, put great store by his initial point of view of the Absolute, which cannot be a sufficient basis for an empirical order, since it brings forth, within itself, a quite different superempirical order; that Shpir quite correctly rejected the three methods of cognising experiential reality traditional for nineteenth-century philosophy; that the permanent significance of his philosophy, in my opinion, consisted in the fact that, after realising with full theoretical clarity the insufficiency of traditional concepts of God, he nevertheless did not reject the concept itself, declaring on the contrary that without Him neither a true philosophical *Weltanschauung* nor a moral life would be at all possible; that joining one's self by the human spirit to this higher superempirical world order opens up before us an infinite perspective for moral self-perfection, from which one constantly derives the conviction of the utter insignificance of anything earthly and human and penetrates the divine consciousness of

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<sup>36</sup>A brand of high-quality biscuits manufactured at the Einem factory, re-named “Red October” in 1922.

the magnificence of good and righteousness, revealed to one in simple and irrefutably clear standards of reason. Pursuant to this I spoke about the contradictions in Shpir's philosophy, pointing out the logical (in my view) errors from which they resulted, as is clear from the train of his theoretical deductions. Lev Nikolaevich listened attentively, and after allowing me to finish, said: "Yes, that is exactly the way I picture to myself Shpir's meaning. In my opinion he has explained better than any other philosopher the essence of man's moral life and proved the futility of attempting to explain to one's self the origin of evil in the world; such attempts on the part of his predecessors only drove them into such a state of hopelessness. After all, even Kant and Schopenhauer couldn't cope with that problem. There's only one point where I fundamentally disagree with him, and that is in his understanding of Christianity. There is no point to Shpir's negative reaction to Christianity, but he couldn't relate to it in any other way, since he completely failed to understand it. Look here," exclaimed Tolstoy fervently, pausing in the middle of the room, "people have said many times, and will probably keep on saying it, that I have created my own religious doctrine. But that is not true; I have no religious doctrine of my own; I have only tried in all my writings to explain the real meaning of Christ's teachings as I understand them. I consider my contribution simply that I have managed to untie the knot which human thinking has pulled so tightly around itself, accepting the final arguments of the pessimists, especially Schopenhauer, yet at the same time being unable not to admit the aspiration to infinite moral perfection that exists, in spite of everything, in all of us; after all, we don't need a nirvana, or the absence of any desire, but we need desire to be directed toward good, toward truth, toward the highest moral world order, and we shall arrive at this point if we follow the teachings of Christ, doing the will of the Father – that is, if we live not according to our own finite, wicked human will, but according to the will of God, which is revealed to us as the highest moral earnest of love. In the volume of Shpir's where he deals with questions of morality, you probably found the notes in the margin which I made during my read-

ing. I think that Shpir, without realising it, in a lot of ways is repeating the teachings of Christ. I am still thinking of sometime, God willing, gathering together what I consider to be true in his moral philosophy, what coincides with my understanding of the true moral life."

These words brought to an end my conversation with Lev Nikolaevich on Shpir's philosophy. Buturlin walked into the room and began saying good-bye to Tolstoy. The hour being already late, I followed his example. Lev Nikolaevich gently held my hand in his and said: "I hope you and I will meet once more before my departure to Iasnaia, then we can go on discussing what we didn't finish today."

Unfortunately this hope of Lev Nikolaevich's was not fulfilled. Because of various activities I was not soon able to go back to see Tolstoy. Granted, one day at the beginning of May I awoke, to my shame, at 10.30 in the morning, and couldn't help feeling embarrassed when my servant handed me an issue of *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* [Questions of philosophy and psychology] which Lev Nikolaevich had borrowed from me, and said: "Some gentleman came to see you around ten o'clock this morning, a grey-haired old man with a large beard, asking for you. I said you hadn't got up yet. They said: 'In that case don't disturb him, just give him this volume, thank him, give him my regards and tell him that Lev Nikolaevich stopped by to say farewell'." The day after next I learnt from some acquaintances that Lev Nikolaevich had left for Iasnaia Poliana.

*Vasilii Stepanovich Morozov*  
Fire at Iasnaia Poliana

There was a fire at Iasnaia Poliana. Four families lost their homes: two houses belonging to Frolkov households,<sup>37</sup> one was Boriskin's,<sup>38</sup> and one my brother's.<sup>39</sup> The heat was unbearable, we were in the middle of a drought. All the buildings suddenly caught fire like powder. Lev Nikolaevich showed up while they were putting out the fire, and he plunged into fetching pails of water from the well and pouring them into tubs. And then the people carried the tubs to the fire. Someone in a hurry struck Lev Nikolaevich in the forehead with a pail and a right big bump swelled up.

The fight with the fire, however, proved of no use. The peasant houses burnt to the ground and Lev Nikolaevich was sad and went home, regretting that they had not managed to save them.

As it turned out later, the fire had started in my brother's house. It was a samovar that did it. It was standing in the *seni*<sup>40</sup> and a spark hit the eaves and burst into flame. My brother lost everything: his rye, oats, a new coach box, trunks with his wife's and mother's dresses. At the time I was in Ovsianiki at M. A. Shmidt's.<sup>41</sup> By the time I reached

Iasnaia there was nothing left of the houses except some charred stumps and ruined stoves. The weeping and wailing of the victims tore at my soul. My brother wasn't in the village; he had left that morning to take a fresh load of wheat to the mill. The fire occurred while he was away. I couldn't even imagine the horror he would feel upon his return home. But here he showed up at the edge of the village. He was driving his horse like a madman. From the high speed the wagon had become tilted to one side and flour was spewing out of the back and on to the road. My brother jumped down from the driver's seat, looked at the burnt-out scene, and let out a piercing cry like a wild animal. His eyes were misty, his hair was all bristly, he tore open his caftan, then grasped hold of himself by his shirt collar and, tearing it open, began beating his fist with all his might on his bare chest. And his chest gave off sounds like an empty barrel.

"Lord, what have you done with me? I've been buying oil for You, and I've been praying all the time, and what have You punished me for?" he cried out in despair.

I was afraid to approach him. "He might have gone mad and could even bite." Finally I overcame my fear and spoke to him.

"Vania, that's enough fretting – calm down!"

He gave me a wild look, then grasped hold of my arms and began kissing my shoulder. "My dear brother, I'm a pauper, a pauper!" he howled. Our stepmother and his wife were wailing too. They were howling and bellowing at the top of their lungs, along with the other victims. The children were wailing in despair. Groans and cries filled the air over the whole village. At that point, just as I was comforting my brother, I noticed Lev Nikolaevich come out of lane, from the direction of the well. He had already changed into clean clothes and was wearing a bandage on his head. He headed over our way. Seeing my brother and me standing there hugging each other, he walked on past us, just giving a silent glance in our direction. He went up to the weeping women and said:

<sup>37</sup>Andrian Ignat'evich Frolkov (b. 1831), son of Ignat Andreevich Frolkov, and Frolkov Dmitrii Iakovlevich (b. 1852), son of Iakov Andreevich Frolkov—Iasnaia Poliana peasants. The latter was a pupil at Tolstoy's school on the estate in the 1860s.

<sup>38</sup>Petr Samoilovich Boriskin (Borisov)—a Iasnaia Poliana peasant, nephew of Tit Borisovich Boriskin.

<sup>39</sup>Ivan Stepanovich Morozov (1857-1930)—a Iasnaia Poliana peasant, half-brother of the author of these reminiscences.

<sup>40</sup>*seni*—an unheated porch or entryway in Russian peasant houses.

<sup>41</sup>Mariia Aleksandrovna Shmidt (1843-1911)—former form mistress at the Moscow Nikolaevsk Academy, an acquaintance and correspondent of Tolstoy's since 1884, a friend and follower of his teachings.

"Anis'ia,<sup>42</sup> Marfa,<sup>43</sup> you're still weeping and wailing? That's not going to help matters. Let's think instead about what we should do now."

Upon hearing Lev Nikolaevich's voice, my brother let me go and headed over to Lev Nikolaevich, staggering as though drunk, and said with great bitterness:

"Lev Nikolaevich, my home is gone! Now this is the only thing left [for me to do]!" and he drew his finger across his throat. "Just the other day I bought a new coach box, paid 8 whole roubles for it, and now it's gone. What am I to do? What am I to do? All I've got left are these trousers!" And lifting up his leg he showed his bare knee.

"Well, somehow, Ivan, we'll get beyond all this. God will help us. There's no need to despair!" observed Lev Nikolaevich.

"Oh, Lev Nikolaevich! Why has God punished me? I keep all the holidays, I don't work [on the holidays], I light candles to all the saints. Oh, Lord, who are You angry at?!"

"No need to complain, Ivan! God often sends us misfortunes, even as He loves us, and we are to bear these trials with patience."

My brother gave a grunt and continued:

"Lord, Lord, You've found someone to be angry at! After all I just finished putting up a new wattle-fence around the house."

He sniffed and was again on the point of breaking out into a howl, but Lev Nikolaevich distracted him with a question:

"Ivan, where did you go?"

"To the mill at Goriachenskoe, to mill a *chetverik*<sup>44</sup> of rye."

"Well, Ivan, I'll give you some brushwood for the fence, and something besides that too. Calm

down, and comfort your mother and your wife."

All three of them wanted to throw themselves at Lev Nikolaevich's feet, but he said with a slightly irritated tone:

"You don't need to do that!" and he walked away.

He did not like people bowing to him.

I was standing a little distance away. Lev Nikolaevich, after adjusting the bandage on his head, asked in amazement:

"Vasilii, and where did you appear from?"

I told him.

"A terrible drought, Vasilii," said Lev Nikolaevich. "Even while I was running from the main house, all four buildings were already ablaze. There was nothing powerful enough to save them. It's good that the air is quiet, with no wind, otherwise it would have been even more horrific, half the village would have gone."

I was standing by the wagon. Lev Nikolaevich looked inside. He opened up the grain-sack to get a look at the flour. But there was hardly more than a seedbag-full left, it was down to just enough for one loaf of bread.

Lev Nikolaevich asked:

"Ivan, where's your flour?"

"On the wagon. Where else would it be?" my brother replied.

With my eyes I pointed out to Lev Nikolaevich the flour strewn along the roadway. Lev Nikolaevich guessed that Ivan didn't know about this yet. Lev Nikolaevich said, looking at me:

"Well, some timely help is so needed right now!" and he headed off to see the other victims.

Mother said to my brother:

"Vania, child, you have to cover the flour, or it might rain."

My brother went over to the wagon and opened the grain-sack. Again his face went something wild. He exploded, his eyes went crazy. He looked at his wife, and then at me.

Lev Nikolaevich's words "some timely help is so needed" penetrated deep into my soul I hurried to tell my brother:

"Vania, you let the flour spew out along the roadway, and the grain-sack emptied while you were going so fast."

<sup>42</sup>Anis'ia Timofeevna Morozova—a Iasnaia Poliana peasant-woman, the second wife of Stepan Mikhailovich Morozov, mother of Ivan Stepanovich Morozov and stepmother of the author.

<sup>43</sup>Marfa Sergeevna Frolkova—a Iasnaia Poliana peasant woman, wife of Dmitrii Iakovlevich Frolkov.

<sup>44</sup>*chetverik*—an old Russian measure equivalent to 26.2 litres.



I was afraid that he would once again start to blurt out something wild and, in anticipation of that, told him:

"But don't worry. There'll be grain tomorrow," and taking out my wallet from a side-pocket, I gave him 45 roubles.

"That's for the re-building – make sure you choose carefully so you won't end up with any worm-rot. And you'll have your flour tomorrow."

They hugged me and began kissing me. My stepmother started asking the Empress of Heaven and Grandpa St. Nicholas to send all sorts of blessings upon me. Just as Lev Nikolaevich didn't like being bowed to, I really didn't like this kind of flattery and wanted to leave as quickly as possible. At this point I said good-bye to everyone, promising to return tomorrow. On the way I stopped by to see the Frolkovs and the Boriskins, gave them each a three-rouble note and, satisfied with myself, walked quickly down through the village, to Ovsianiki, where my horse and cab were waiting. A struggle was taking place in my heart. "See, what a benefactor I am!" I thought at first, but then regretted [parting with my] money. "I gave away a lot, a huge sum – 54 roubles. And they were brand new notes, too, I got them changed when I collected from my passengers."<sup>45</sup> But then I remembered Lev Nikolaevich's words: "some timely help is so needed," and my heart felt relieved. "After all, I was only offering this needed timely help."

The next day I came to see my brother. I planned to set out round the villages with him to collect flour. I told him to harness the horse and we set off. My brother began saying that it would be shameful for him to beg [for flour], that he couldn't possibly ask for charity, but I comforted him, saying I myself would do the asking. We chose villages where we had the least number of acquaintances – Miasnikovka, Vyselki, Gretsovka – and avoided the rich and commercial Kolpna. From Kolpna I would have expected nothing more than a few pennies of alms. And even if they gave us something there, they would have asked for change.

<sup>45</sup>Note by N. N. Gusev: Vasilii Morozov was a coachman in Tula.

I've seen things like that in the city too. They'll hand you a trinket, or simply say "God will supply," and yet pour out hundreds and thousands toward decorating the temple to assure themselves a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. The last village we went to was Dvoriki. We filled up a cartload of rye there and were scarce able to tie up the sack.

When we got back home to Iasnaia Poliana the scene was one of indescribable joy. My stepmother thrust her hand into the cart and said:

"It's so dry already, it won't need any more drying. It can go straight to the mill."

I felt happy and said:

"There's rye and flour for you. 'Let the rich feast their eyes on what the poor's feasts comprise'."

There were no more tears, and everyone's faces showed joy and satisfaction. I said good-bye to my brother's family and promised to return in a week or two. As I passed through the avenue gates I stopped and thought:

"Maybe I should stop by and see Lev Nikolaevich?" But I paused, waved my hand and went on. "Maybe later," I thought. "Could be he's got visitors or isn't home."

I went home to Tula. As the saying goes, "Miss a day's work and your whole week's shot." My worker got himself drunk, didn't bring in the receipts, several times spent the night in police custody. I suffered huge losses, and my family greeted me with murmurs of suspicion.

It took me a whole month to straighten things out at home. Finally it all got worked out and I remembered my brother. "I'll go pay him a call, see how his construction's coming along, and stop by to see Lev Nikolaevich – haven't seen him for a time."

My brother was doing a good building job, he had built a spacious cabin, seven by eight *arshins*,<sup>46</sup> the logs placed even all round, without any worm-rot, the yard was already enclosed with a new wattle fence, one link for each section; only the roof remained to be covered. I was so glad to

<sup>46</sup>*arshin*—old Russian measurement, equivalent to 0.71 m.

see all this. Where recently there had been sadness, now there was joy. Over tea my brother told me a lot about Lev Nikolaevich. My stepmother all the while made signs of the cross, went to the icon corner and prayed "The three-handed Empress of Heaven" to multiply my joy and Lev Nikolaevich's tenfold.

\* \* \*

"Yes, my dear brother, Vasilii Stepanich," my brother recounted, "Lev Mikolaevich<sup>47</sup> is not an easy man to fathom. It takes a smart, intelligent person to understand him. We really haven't understood him up to now, we've been blind."

"Lev Nikolaevich, he's a holy man," my stepmother whispered and dried her tears on her apron.

"After the fire," my brother went on, "Lev Nikolaevich began coming by our burnt-out place everyday, not just once, but twice and three times a day. He would talk to people, give them advice. He would walk through the ashes, kick at some boiler handle with his foot, pick at something with his walking-stick, dig up some piece of iron, lift it up, turn it over in his hands, then toss it off to one side, saying: "Don't forget to hang on to this little piece of hardware, it still might come in handy." Then he would walk around the yard, measure the distance by his steps, take out a notebook and jot something down with a pencil... He went up to the stove, took a look inside and said: "Ivan, only the year-old part of your stove is good; rebuild the rest along with the chimney – we'll have to buy about three hundred or so [bricks]..."

At one time he told the victims to come and see him that evening. So we go. He comes out and we see in his hand money, notes. He started handing them out to us.

"Here's 25 roubles each to start with, and later I'll try to get more. If I have any visitors, I'll ask them."

We thanked him, we felt like kneeling at his feet, but remembered he didn't like that, so we held back.

"Well, do you all have insurance?" he asked.

"We have," we answered.

"Does any of you have special insurance?"

"No," we replied, "only regular insurance."

"You're looking to rebuild, and I'll try to get the insurance money sent to you as soon as possible. You can start now by cutting some wood and preparing the furrows for the fences. Then you'll need beams, roof-timbers, lines and miscellaneous stuff. I'll ask the Countess for you."

"Lev Nikolaevich, what about seeds? All my rye got burnt up," said Dmitrii Frolkov.

"Did you lose yours too?" Lev Nikolaevich asked me.

"The same."

"Well, all right, all right. You tell me how many seeds you need. I'll write you out a voucher for Ziabrev's, in Kolpna – he'll let you have them."

We left him and were besides ourselves with joy. As though the fire had never happened.

My brother paused in his recounting, lit a *papirosa*,<sup>48</sup> spit out and then continued.

"On the third or fourth day we see Lev Nikolaevich walking quietly up from down below. (At the time I was cleaning out the site for rebuilding.) He goes in to see Boriskin. He had a talk with him and gave him something. Then he comes over to me and hands me three five-rouble notes, saying: 'My visitors gave me this money for you.'

"Then he went to the Frolkov families and gave them each an equal amount. And a few days later he came again and handed us more money, only 5 roubles each this time, and said:

"These visitors weren't as generous'."

My brother spit, threw the stub of his *papirosa* on the ground, and straightened his leg. Our stepmother spoke:

"You know, Vasiushka, there aren't any people like this in the world any more. He knows about everything in the world, down to the last blade of grass. He's looking after all our needs. He's even cut wood for us, put it on carts, he's worn himself out for us, banged himself up quite a bit doing things for us. How can we not pray to God for him?"

<sup>47</sup>*Mikolaevich*—a peasant dialectal variant of *Nikolaevich*.

<sup>48</sup>*papirosa*—a cheap Russian variant of a cigarette.

“And you’re not going to be mad at me?” my brother asked me. “After all, I told him all about how you and I went around begging.”

“Why should I be mad? He did ask you, didn’t he, how things went?”

“And how he asked! And who had the idea of going and what villages we went to. I told him, but he still kept smiling and saying over and over, ‘Oh, that’s good! that’s good!’ – ‘And how did you beg [for grain]?’ he asked. I told him. We tie up the horse somewhere in the middle of the village, you go up to someone, tell them about our need, and they bring it out to us – an eighth, or half full, or sometimes a full seedbag full, sifted. One woman dribbled out a fistful and said: ‘Bon appétit!’ and went her way.

“‘Oh, that’s good! Oh, that’s good!’ Lev Nikolaevich repeated. ‘That’s how everybody should help each other in times of need. When you see your brother, tell him to come and see me.’ Now, brother, it’s up to you to go and see him, after all, he’s curious, and will ask you questions too.”

My brother told me one more story which made me very angry, about how he deceived Lev Nikolaevich. He gave the following account:

I needed some more even logs for the corner of the barn. There were some, but they were too soft. I thought I’d go and ask Lev Nikolaevich for a pair. I come up to the house, and there he is standing underneath a little bell by a tree, talking with some barefoot lad. He’s amazing, that’s the word for it, he likes talking with everyone – people another person wouldn’t even look in the eye. He looked at me and says:

“What do you need?”

“A couple of logs, I don’t have enough.”

Lev Nikolaevich thought for a moment and said:

“Ivan, if there are some already cut and ready, take a couple, and if not, then cut yourself some, but try to do it right under the root itself, so that it won’t be noticeable.

“Thank you, Lev Nikolaevich,” I said and asked: “Well, should I go tell the Countess, as you said?”

“No, go on. I’ll tell her myself.”

I left, and he started talking with the barefoot lad again. Well, I thought, now I’ll make a tidy profit! I know when the steward rides around the forest, if only I can avoid being seen. I came to the forest, picked up two oak logs – the kind that are so heavy to get a hold of, I almost tore my guts out –, carried them off and no one saw me. I marched in a second time, again no one saw me. Lemme see, maybe I’ll be lucky one more time. So I went back five times, and on the fifth time the steward saw me, and says: “Ivan, where did you take that log from?” I say, I took it from the preserve. “And who told you to?” “I asked for a couple from Lev Nikolaevich and he told me to take them.” “And does the Countess know?” – “Lev Nikolaevich told her.” – “Well, I’ll check it out,” and rode off. So all told instead of two logs I got myself ten.

After listening to my brother’s account, I said:

“That was a foolish thing to do. You stole the logs. If the Countess finds out, she will have it out with Lev Nikolaevich. You know how obstinate she can be. And if you hadn’t seen the steward, you probably would have gone back ten times more and wouldn’t have any guts left at all!”

I poked my brother and chided Lev Nikolaevich, saying that all his goodness only breeds thieves, and I decided to have a talk with Lev Nikolaevich about this.

It wasn’t long before I happened to meet with Lev Nikolaevich. I went to ask him about some sort of booklets. I arrived at five o’clock, right at the dinner hour. There were a lot of people sitting on the terrace, making a clatter with their spoons and plates. I could hear animated conversation. I walked by, unnoticed, to the tree where the bell hung. But I began to feel embarrassed about possibly being visible from the terrace. There weren’t any faces I recognised. Lev Nikolaevich sat in the middle and didn’t talk very much, occasionally glancing at someone. Turning away from his plate, he would say something and again [pick up his] spoon from the plate. I walked from the tree through the ditch to the garden. The dinner was over. Everyone left the terrace. One servant stayed behind to clear away the dishes. I went over to him.

The servant, Sergei Petrovich Arbuzov,<sup>49</sup> was a fine person, a classmate of mine at school. He said: "Lev Nikolaevich is going to Kozlovka to fetch the post; if you wait a bit, you can go with him."

I was very glad at this opportunity and went on ahead to meet Lev Nikolaevich somewhere on the other side of the estate.

I sat down by the ditch. I didn't have long to wait. I see Lev Nikolaevich coming from the estate. On his left elbow hangs a crutch or walking-stick. I got up from the ditch and wanted to say to him, as I had done as a child:

"Hi, Uncle Agafon, Mister Butler, sir!" but thought it wouldn't be appropriate, and simply said:

"Hullo, Lev Nikolaevich!"

Lev Nikolaevich threw up his head and uttered in amazement:

"Oh, Vasilii Morozov! Is that you I see? Where're you going?"

"To see you, Lev Nikolaevich, to ask for some books."

"And what have you been reading?"

"Oh, various novels, newspapers. Lately I've been reading a book about Churkin the bandit."<sup>50</sup>

"Oh, my goodness, Vasilii, it isn't worth reading such junk. That folderol was written by somebody named Pirogovskii in Moscow. I'll give you some good books to read."

"No offence, Lev Nikolaevich, but I read your book too, the one that there's so much talk about, all over the world – *War and Peace* – but I have to honestly say I didn't like it."

"Why not?"

"I don't know how to explain it. All those Volkonskys, Pierres, Bonapartes, Kutuzovs – our brother doesn't understand them."

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<sup>49</sup>Sergei Petrovich Arbuzov (1849-1904)—a peasant from the village of Danilovka in the Krapivensk district of Tula Guberniia. For a short time he was a pupil at the Iasnaia Poliana school. He was a servant in the Tolstoy household.

<sup>50</sup>*Churkin the bandit*—an adventure story immensely popular in comic-book publications.

"Yes, Vasilii, it was written for idle worldlings and at the time I led a pretty worldly life myself. Now I regret that I spent so much time on writing things like that."

As he said that, Lev Nikolaevich looked at the ground gloomily, seriously.

We crossed the main highway, turned off to the side, and took a pathway through the woods. Lev Nikolaevich walked silently. I kept silent too, but a flood of reminiscences was going through my head. I remembered myself as a schoolboy twenty-five years back. There I was, walking with my teacher Lev Nikolaevich – back then his skin was dark as a beetle, like a gypsy, he had a passionate love of all kinds of merriment, entertained us with all sorts of fantasies. Oh, how quickly that happy time passed! Now I'm already forty, have a beard, and now I'm no longer little Vas'ka, but Vasilii, and I'm not walking with my dark-skinned teacher, but with an old man with a white beard and a tense, serious look on his face.

We had walked a little farther through the forest when Lev Nikolaevich, as though releasing himself from some thought, said:

"Vasilii, see those fallen logs over there? Let's sit down for a spell," he said, pointing with his stick.

We sat down on the fallen logs, which were overgrown with moss. Lev Nikolaevich tapped the end of his stick against the logs and said:

"Rotted through."

Lev Nikolaevich took off his hat, put it down beside him and said:

"It's warm. God isn't giving us any rain. We can't plough the fallow ground." (At that time Lev Nikolaevich was tilling land belonging to some peasant widows.)

We kept silent for a bit, and then Lev Nikolaevich turned to me and put his hand on my shoulder. His face began to broaden, his nose puffed out and he broke into a gentle smile.

"I know, after all, Vasilii, I know about your behaviour."

"About what behaviour? I don't think I've done anything wrong, although I can't boast of anything good, either."

"No, no, I'm talking about your *good* behav-

your – how you and your brother went around collecting rye for him,” said Lev Nikolaevich, all the while keeping his hand on my shoulder and looking at me with tenderness. “After all, you did such a good thing, such a good thing, straight out of the Gospel. You took pity on your brother, and people took pity on you. Love was aflame in them too. And that woman who brought a handful of rye, poured it out for you and said ‘Bon appétit!’ – that’s just like the widow’s mite.<sup>51</sup> Yes, if only we understood the power of this love and lived by it, then all human calamities and sufferings would cease. This is the sum total of human happiness.”

He spoke this in a sad and serious tone, almost on the point of tears, but he held them back.

Lev Nikolaevich’s words softened my soul and I felt I could no longer criticise his goodness toward mankind. I even became ashamed of having thought that way.

It was a damp day. I felt concerned about Lev Nikolaevich and said:

“Lev Nikolaevich, put on your hat, it’s damp and you might catch cold.”

Lev Nikolaevich put his hat on his head and said:

“You’re probably in a hurry to get to Tula? Well, let’s go, then, out to the road.”

Heading for Kozlovka, Lev Nikolaevich asked me whether I might soon be leaving the city and moving to the country. He was constantly asking me this, and my reply was always that I could not do that because of not enough land.

At Kozlovka we parted, and Lev Nikolaevich again expressed the wish that I come back to the countryside.

Not long afterward I received from Lev Nikolaevich books by Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, teachings, Diogenes, Socrates, *Tsvetnik*,<sup>52</sup> along with excerpts from the works of Tikhon Zadonskii.<sup>53</sup> All these books I read and re-read.

Now Lev Nikolaevich is no longer with us. When I have the occasion to walk from Kozlovka to Iasnaia Poliana to visit Lev Nikolaevich’s grave, I never miss noticing the spot where the two of us once sat on the moss-covered rotten log. And I can clearly see his face and his gentle smile and can hear his words about people’s happiness being found only in love.

V. S. Morozov

July, 1912. Chertkov farm.

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<sup>51</sup>See Mark 12:41-44 or Luke 21:1-4.

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<sup>52</sup>*Tsvetnik*—a collection of stories compiled by the staff of the Posrednik publishing house, which appeared in various editions.

<sup>53</sup>Tikhon Zadonskii (1724-1783)—Russian religious writer and preacher.