

## The Pashkovite women in Russia<sup>1</sup>

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### *Abstract*

Neither the secular nor ecclesiastical Russia of the second half of the nineteenth century left much room for women's activity outside the home. The situation slowly began to change by the turn of the century when women started to gain access to higher education, jobs, and so forth. From the outset the Radstockist-Pashkovite movement was strongly characterised by the active participation of women. In fact the movement started with women inviting Lord Radstock to St. Petersburg and opening their homes to his sermons/preaching. This article reveals the Pashkovite women to be the main missionaries as the movement spread across the capital. They participated actively in various philanthropic projects. Finally they spared the Pashkovite movement in St. Petersburg some difficult times after the exile of its original leaders in 1884.

### **Introduction**

The place and role of women in Russian Evangelical-Baptist churches has been an issue almost from the very beginning of their history. One should remember that at all stages of the evangelical movement in Russia the number of women (normally addressed as "sisters") in the churches surpassed the number of men (normally addressed as "brothers"). Nowadays, over a century after the start of the movement it is apparent to any visitor that women in churches are significantly outnumbering men. And despite oft-quoted verses about women keeping silent in church and the demand to wear head coverings, women still play an important role in Russian evangelical churches. A close look at the beginning of evangelical history in Russia might cast light on how and why the situation developed the way it developed. What is the proper place of women in the ministry of evangelical churches? This question is still relevant today even in an age of equal rights. In this article the authors examine the initial phase of the Pashkovite movement and review the Pashkovite ladies' input, which can contribute to answering the above questions.

1874 was a very important year in the history of Russian Protestantism: it was then that the Radstockist-Pashkovite movement, one of the main streams of Russian evangelicalism, emerged in the Russian capital of St. Petersburg. Although various Protestant churches existed in Russia prior to Lord GW Radstock's arrival in St. Petersburg in 1874 (he was a travelling Open Brethren preacher), it was his ministry that marked the beginning of the movement, which eventually produced evangelical Christian churches.

Radstock saw his special calling to evangelise the nobility and he preached the message that salvation could be attained by faith right then. It was through his gospel preachings that evangelicalism penetrated the high society of the Russian capital and a number of the Russian elite became Radstock's followers. By the end of Radstock's six-month stay in St. Petersburg, during which he regularly preached in the salons of the aristocrats, there appeared a core of capable people who could carry on his meetings: Colonel Pashkov, Count Korff, Count Bobrinskiy, Princess Lieven, Princess Gagarina, and others.

According to Corrado, Radstock's meetings were disproportionately attended and hosted by women (Corrado 2000:56). Famous Russian writer Leskov argues that it was due to E. Chertkova's activity that Radstock enjoyed such a warm welcome among the aristocracy of St. Petersburg (Leskov 1877:286). Later on, it was also women who provided a link between the Pashkovite group and the Evangelical-Christian congregation after the male leaders were exiled from Russia.

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Nineteenth century Russia was not a place of political or religious freedom. As Peter I at the beginning of the eighteenth century opened Russia's windows on the West, Nicholas I (1825-1855) wanted to close them. It was during his reign that Count Uvarov summarised a principle of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality". This was also a favourite principle of Konstantin Pobedonostsev, procurator of the Holy Synod from 1880 to 1905, a layman appointed by the tsar and the *de facto* ruler of the Orthodox Church. For centuries it was considered a violation of law for a person baptised into the Orthodox faith to convert to Protestantism. This changed only after the Edict of Toleration of 1905; still, for all but the last few years of imperial Russia, traditional Protestant evangelistic outreach and foreign missionaries were almost always legally proscribed. In people's perception, to be a Russian meant to be Orthodox and vice versa. This phenomenon has been noted by many and is partially true even today.

Needless to say, the young evangelical movement in Russia was born in a rather unfavourable religious climate. The established Orthodox Church of the nineteenth century had official laws against proselytising, and possessed in the minds of people the sole authority in all matters of faith. It also held the key to scriptural interpretation. Being obedient to the state, the Church had the state's "sword" at hand to deal with its disobedient "sons" and "daughters". Unfortunately, it did not care much for the spiritual wellbeing of its "subjects", which caused those subjects to seek spiritual sustenance elsewhere. It is no wonder then that different branches of the evangelical movement (Molokans, Stundists, Pashkovites) sprang up independently in several corners of the great empire and were even unaware of each other.

### Literature survey on the issue

The schism in the high society of St. Petersburg during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was presented in numerous works of the Orthodox writers such as V Sakharov, FN Ornatsky, D Skvortsov, I Ayvazov, IA Kushnev, and D Bogolyubov. These authors viewed evangelical movements as nothing but heretical. They accused Pashkovites and other evangelical groups in Russia of preaching "easy" salvation by faith alone, of reading and interpreting the Scriptures for themselves, of rejecting the Orthodox Church with its rites, services, and priesthood.

There were also more liberal and even sympathetic examples of Orthodox literature on Russian evangelicalism. N Zhitov's *Tserkovnyy raskol Peterburga* [Church split in Petersburg] (1891) is a collection of sketches presenting a general picture of a "sectarian" St. Petersburg by the 1890s. AS Prugavin's *Raskol vverhu. Ocherki religioznykh iskanii v privilegirovannoy srede* [Schism in the upper society. Sketches of religious searching in the privileged society] (1909) contains descriptions of the Pashkovites' meetings.

The third group of books has greater value as being more informative and scholarly. These Orthodox writers are more interested in facts than in ideology and propaganda. A detailed description of the Pashkovites is given by Terletsky in *Sekta Pashkovtsev* [The Pashkovite Sect] published in 1891. N Kutepov in two volumes, following each other, and published in 1891 and 1910, provided a brief history and description of beliefs of various Russian "sects", including the Pashkovites.

There are also a number of important sources. *Svedeniya o sekte Pashkovtsev* [Information about the sect of the Pashkovites] by an anonymous author includes important documents addressed by KP Pobedonostsev (the Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Synod) to Russian tsars concerning the "danger" of Pashkovism. Another important collection of reports made at the Third Orthodox Missionary Congress on the Pashkovites was published in Kiev under the name *Pashkovshchina* [Pashkovism]. As for Pashkov's correspondence, a special collection is housed at the University of Birmingham.

A number of articles on the Pashkovites were published in religious reviews or journals of the corresponding period. A partial list includes the following: *Grazhdanin* [The Citizen] (1875 (16), 1876 (13,16)); *Tserkovno-Obshchestvennyy Vestnik* [Church Community Messenger] (1874 (38), 1875 (30), 1876 (55), 1880 (35, 41, 146)); *Pravoslavnoe Obozrenie* [Orthodox Review] (1876 (1, 3), 1877 (1), 1878); *Moskovskie Tserkovnye Vedomosti* [Moscow Church News] (1886 (9, 13), 1887 (18, 38), 1880 (16)) and *Tserkovnyy Vestnik* [Church Messenger] (1883 (24, 36), 1886 (45)). Most of these publications showed a negative attitude towards the Pashkovite movement.

A few valuable memoirs were written by those who either personally played an important role in the movement or were eyewitnesses. Modest M Korff, one of the pioneers of the St. Petersburg evangelical revival, wrote down his memoirs *Am Zarenhof*, which were published in Giessen in 1956. Sophy Lieven, Natalie Lieven's daughter, wrote a book called *Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie v Rossii* [Spiritual revival in Russia] (1967) about the development of the evangelical movement in St. Petersburg. For a few decades the meetings were held right in their mansion in Morskaya Street.

Prominent Baptist leader VG Pavlov wrote an autobiographical sketch *Vospominaniya ssyl'nogo* [Memoirs of an exiled one]. The approximate date of writing is 1899.

There is a body of fiction literature both in Russian and in other languages pointing to the widespread character of the movement. VP Meshchersky presented a sarcastic portrait of Lord Radstock under the name of Lord Gitchick in a voluminous novel, "Lord-Apostle in High Petersburg Society" (1876), which has almost been forgotten nowadays. LN Tolstoy described Radstock under the name "Sir John" in *Anna Karenina*. Dostoevsky wanted to be critical of a movement that seemed to endanger Russian Orthodoxy, but he was too honest not to admit some good points of Radstockism. In 1877 Russian novelist N Leskov wrote *Velikovsky raskol* [The schism in high society], in which he tried to do justice to Lord Radstock and a circle of new converts. Besides this novel, Leskov wrote a number of articles and sketches about the Radstockists. A sympathetic description of Radstockists-Pashkovites is found in the now forgotten novel *Serge Batourine. Scenes des Temps Actuels en Russie* written by Elisabeth Ward (1879), first published in French and later in German. The author was born in St. Petersburg and lived in the Russian capital up to 1881. The last pre-revolutionary Russian novelist who wrote about the movement of Radstockists-Pashkovites in St. Petersburg was the prolific writer PD Boborykin (1836-1921). His novel *Ispovedniki* [Confessors] was published in 1902.

After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, there were almost seventy years of silence on the subject. Among Marxist-oriented studies there were a number of works on evangelicalism in Russia ranging from outright antireligious propaganda to attempts to give a fair treatment to the movement. The latter ones include a volume by a Marxist scholar, AI Klibanov, *Istoriya religioznogo sektantsva v Rossii* (1965), translated into English as *History of religious sectarianism in Russia, 1860s-1917* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), and LN Mitrokhin's *Baptizm: istoriya i sovremennost'* [Baptism: history and contemporaneity] (1997).

Since the late 1980s a stream of literature on the history of the movement has appeared. Most books written in Russia and abroad, present a quest for an historical understanding of Russian evangelicalism. Latest research shows that interest continues to grow, shedding new light on forces, influences, movements, and individuals.

The more recent official history of the evangelical movement in Russia compiled by AUCECB *Istoriya evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR* [The history of the Evangelical Christian Baptists in the USSR] was published in Moscow in 1989. It is based on several primary sources and tells the story from "inside", emphasising the original Russian roots of the evangelical movement. Then in 1999 and 2001 one of the compilers of the "History", SN Savinsky, published two volumes of his own called "History of evangelical Christian Baptists of the Ukraine, Russia, and Byelorussia" covering a period of one hundred years, 1867-1917 and 1917-1967.

Important biographical material on foreign evangelists who laboured in Russia is presented by Fountain's *Lord Radstock and the Russian Awakening* (1988), and Latimer's *Dr. Baedeker and his apostolic work in Russia* (1908). The two latter books were translated into Russian and published in 2001 and 1913 respectively. A special place in researching the beginning of the evangelical movement in St. Petersburg belongs to Professor E Heier of the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, who wrote an excellent study of Pashkovism, *Religious schism in the Russian aristocracy, 1860-1900: Radstockism and Pashkovism* (1970), which was translated into Russian in 2002. He tells the story of the mission of Lord Radstock to the drawing rooms of St. Petersburg in the 1870s and its lasting results, including Pashkov's ministry. Heier points out that the movement, which was intended as a renewal within the Orthodox Church ended in schism. Popular surveys from an evangelical perspective include Hans Brandenburg's *The meek and the mighty* (1977) and GH Ellis and LW Jones' *The other revolution: Russian evangelical awakenings* (1996), translated into Russian and published in 1999.

Of dissertations written on the subject, one should mention Samuel Nesyoly's *Evangelical sectarianism in Russia: a study of the Stundists, Baptists, Pashkovites, and the Evangelical Christians, 1855-1917* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Kingston, Ontario: Queens University, 1971). Sharyl Corrado's thesis entitled *The philosophy of ministry of Colonel Vasiliy Pashkov* (2000) is fundamental research on the history of the Pashkovites. In 2005 the dissertation was published in Russian. That, along with Gregory Nichol's thesis *Pashkovism: nineteenth century Russian piety* (1991), takes studies of Russian evangelicalism to a new level. Nichols and Corrado both point to the connection of the St. Petersburg Pashkovite movement with British evangelicalism. Both authors worked with Pashkov's archive, which makes their research especially valuable. Within the last ten years there appeared four editions of *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* [Almanac on the history of Russian baptism]. They contain a number of articles on the evangelical movement in St. Petersburg in pre-Soviet Russia including those of M Karetnikova, one of the best native Russian experts on the evangelical movement in Russia.

## Historical development

Going back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century it should be noticed that among those who were at the heart of the evangelical movement in St. Petersburg which grew out of salon meetings held by Lord Radstock were two sets of sisters. Madames Chertkova and Pashkova were born into the family of Count Chernyshev-Kruglikov, a hero of the Patriotic War of 1812 (Leskov 1877:278). Princesses Natalie Lieven and Vera Gagarina were daughters of Count von Pahlen. The palaces of Lieven and Gagarina, situated next to each other in Morskaya Street, were among the first homes to be opened to the evangelical meetings of Radstock. Some details concerning the activity of the Pashkovite ladies set a pattern for women's ministry in Russian evangelical churches ever since. A few names deserve special attention.

### *E Chertkova*

Madame Elizaveta Chertkova (1834-1923), "the main Radstockian lady" (Leskov 1877:268), was the wife of the General Adjutant to Tsar Alexander II. She was one of those who first invited Radstock to St. Petersburg after she had met him abroad, heard his sermons, and decided that he was a man who was much needed in Russia (Karev 1999:129). According to Kovalenko, she returned to St. Petersburg a born-again Christian and started devoting herself generously to the work of charity (Kovalenko 1996:70). Even an Orthodox writer Leskov noticed that she came back to Russia "a completely different person, more secure" and immediately offered a large sum of money to establish a shelter for the homeless (Leskov 1877:283).

Soon she introduced Radstock to her high-ranking friends in St. Petersburg. Her home was among the five original homes opened to regular evangelical meetings. The others belonged to Princesses Lieven and Gagarina, Colonel Pashkov, and Count Bobrinskiy (Karev 1999:130). Years later when the other homes stopped holding evangelical meetings for various reasons, hers continued to function as a church for almost forty years until about 1912 when Dom Evangeliya was completed, the church building project that she personally and generously supported.

She was commended by Leskov for the "exemplary holiness of her private life". Although Leskov did not speak very favourably of the movement in general, he made an exception regarding Chertkova, "she is considered an example of strict honesty, free of any suspicions like a Caesar's wife ... In spite of her straightforwardness and boiling activity, she is completely clean of any censures" (Leskov 1877:277-278). Her "boiling activity" was mostly revealed in the areas of philanthropy and evangelism. Along with other Pashkovites she was active with sewing and laundry shops, also used as evangelistic tools (Lieven 1967:47-48).

Madame Chertkova used to evangelise in the Voronezhskaya gubernia (Ornatsky 1903:9). The result of her work was that in a village called Perly a congregation of evangelical Christians appeared (AUCECB [All-Union Congress of Evangelical Christians-Baptists] 1989:104) after one of the peasants started gathering "sectarians" in his home to read the Gospel and sing from "Favourite verses" (Terletsky 1891:81). S Lieven also recalled that Chertkova sometimes "participated in the ministry of the word" (Lieven 1967:112), a common Russian evangelical idiom for preaching.

Along with her friends and relatives Madame Chertkova got involved in prison visitation being a member of the Lady's Committee for Prison Visitation. S Lieven recorded two accounts of how Chertkova kept coming to a prison hospital to read to the prisoners from the gospel and "gained souls of dying people" (Lieven 1967:37-42). It was through her ministry that a sailor-nurse Shilov who had been considering a suicide was converted and later became a presbyter of the Evangelical Christian church in Dom Evangeliya. A Karev, the head of the post World War II Union of Evangelical Christian and Baptists in the Soviet Union, admitted that Chertkova had a prominent place among the founders and first leaders of Stundism in the north of Russia (Karev 1999:130).

*N Lieven*

Another active Pashkovite lady who opened her home for evangelical meetings was Princess Natalie Lieven. She was married to Prince Lieven, the Master of Ceremonies at the court of Alexander II. In the words of Brandenburg (1977:25), the palace of Prince and Princess Lieven became “a focal point of the evangelical movement in St. Petersburg”. Princess Natalie Lieven and her husband had a conversion experience in England prior to Radstock’s visit to St. Petersburg (Nichols 1991:22). Before her marriage, Natalie Lieven visited England with her mother. There she found out about meetings in Blackwood’s home. She went out of curiosity, but “the Word of God touched her heart and by faith she received forgiveness of sins and redemption in the blood of Jesus” (Lieven 1967:15-16).

Once the revival in St. Petersburg had started, the Lieven’s home was opened to meetings on Sundays and during the week. The meetings were usually held in the spacious white drawing room (Latimer 1908:79). Lieven’s daughter Sophy recalled that, “Our guests often admired our house and my mother used to tell them, ‘This house belongs to the Lord, I am nothing but Christ’s servant’” (Lieven 1967:69). The Lieven household also held 8:30 a.m. devotions which believers from among the servants also attended (Corrado 2000:85).

N Lieven became a widow in 1881 when her husband died soon after Tsar Alexander II was assassinated by a group of revolutionaries. N Lieven had to raise her five children alone (Lieven 1967:67). She paid special attention to bringing her children up “in faith” and in understanding the importance of conversion. N Lieven’s son Anatoliy was highly respected among Protestant Christians and in 1909 he was elected as the chairman of the Russian Evangelical Union (AUCECB 1989:154).

The palace at Bolshaya Morskaya 43 was functioning not only as a church but also as a hotel for preachers. N Lieven kept inviting Radstock, Baedeker, Müller, and others to stay with her family as guests. Many of Baedeker’s meetings, as well as those of G Müller, were held in her home (Latimer 1908:9). The room usually set apart for the use of Dr Baedeker was known as Malachite Hall. “This was the ‘prophet’s chamber,’ and many honoured servants of the Lord have enjoyed the hospitality provided by the noble hostess in that beautiful room, among others Mr and Mrs Müller” (Latimer 1908:79).

Besides Radstock, Baedeker, and Müller, a number of other outstanding men preached in this palace: Stockmayer, Kargel, Fetler, Prokhanov, Nikolaii, Mazaev, and Odintsov, quite a mixture of Open Brethren, Keswick speakers, Russian evangelicals and Baptists. Baedeker and his wife, as well as Kargel and his wife and their four daughters, stayed there for extensive periods. The delegates of the 1884 and 1907 congresses had both sessions and meals there; Lieven also housed the six-week Bible courses for young preachers (Pavlov 1884?:28-29; Prokhanov 1993:125). The palace at Bolshaya Morskaya 43 remained the centre of evangelical meetings for over 30 years, long after the first leaders of the movement were exiled. Kahle dates the end of the meetings in Lieven’s palace as late as 1910 (Kahle 1978:83).

In fact, N Lieven did much more for the movement than just open her home for meetings and guests. After Pashkov and Korff’s banishment in 1884, she assumed leadership of the meetings held in her palace. Princess Lieven was reported to the tsar Alexander III, and was told to stop meetings, with the threat of exile. Her famous response was, “Ask His Majesty whom I have to obey, God or Emperor.” Alexander III supposedly responded, “She is a widow; leave her in peace”, so the meetings in her home continued for many more years (Fountain 1988:40; Lieven 1967:68).

N Lieven did a lot to preserve the original identity of the Pashkovite movement. Although she was among those Pashkovites who decided to get baptised by Müller in 1883 (Savinsky 1999:354), at the meetings in her home a believer’s baptism was never a condition of having fellowship or sharing the Lord’s Supper with those who held onto infant baptism. Nichols finds that “Lieven’s ministry was crucial to the survival of the Evangelical Christians in Russia” (Nichols 1991:24).

Once all the male leadership had been removed, her leadership successfully fended off the aggressive Baptist doctrine. The Baptists attempted to take leadership of the Bible studies by asserting their doctrines, which were more restrictive and prohibitive than those of the Pashkovites. Princess Lieven, in keeping with Colonel Pashkov’s teaching, maintained an open fellowship in her home (Nichols 1991:22-23).

Nichols’ statement holds a lot of truth, but it seems to be an exaggeration. If one considers a list of guests and speakers at Bolshaya Morskaya 43, it becomes clear that Baptists were welcome there along with other evangelicals. Nichols rightly calls Lieven’s palace “the incubator for many of the future leaders of the Evangelical movement”. Among those future leaders he mentions Prokhanov, radio evangelist Earl Poysti, and student leader Baron Nicolaii (Nichols 1991:23). Kargel was also very close to Lieven’s family and played an extremely important role in the history of the congregation that held meetings in Lieven’s palace.

## V Gagarina

Princess Vera Gagarina was a sister of Princess N Lieven. At the time of the St. Petersburg revival she was young, attractive, happily married, and rich. At one of Radstock's meeting she went through a conversion experience being struck by the verse in Genesis 3, where God addressed Adam with the words, "Where are you?". At the end of the meeting Lord Radstock said he had a feeling that somebody among those present should give oneself to Christ or maybe had already done so. He asked that person to stand up and Gagarina did so. Since then even her appearance changed. S Lieven recalled that Gagarina "began to dress simply and modestly, though with good taste" (Lieven 1967:34). She undertook hospital and prison visitation reading the Word of God to the sick and imprisoned. She had no children and was especially devoted to this ministry (Corrado 2000:102-103). According to Dalton, prison work was carried out in such an unpretentious way that scarcely anyone would think of recognising in the gentle and kindly Bible-reader who day after day makes her appearance in the prison-cells, one who bears an honoured and noble name in the Russia metropolis (Dalton, *Lord Radstock and Colonel Pashkoff*, 110, in Corrado 2000:102).

For the rest of her life Gagarina was known for her generosity toward the poor and for her zeal in spreading the Word of God (Lieven 1967:34-36). Among different projects Gagarina was also responsible for two sewing rooms (Lieven 1967:48). Together with Konstanza Kozlyaninova, Princess Gagarina oversaw the visitation to poor women in the Pesky district of St. Petersburg (Lieven, *Eine Saat*, 43, in Corrado 2000:99).

During summer, Gagarina along with Konstanza Kozlyaninova (both ladies were members of the Society of Encouragement of Spiritual and Ethical Reading), used to visit Gagarina's husband's estate Sergievskoe (Tul'skaya gubernia). They took along religious literature and gathered many people both at home and at the Gagarin's school for girls. There they explained the Gospel and sang hymns (Terletsky 1891:80-81). Gagarina's evangelistic activity in the country is described by an Orthodox archpriest Sakharov as follows:

Princess Gagarina, Pashkov's cousin, is the most zealous preacher of the Pashkovite falsehood in the province. She diligently propagates this heresy in her Sergievsky estate, in Tula gubernia, Krapivensky. She gathered listeners to her place or visited homes of her acquaintances where listeners gathered, mainly women, distributed books and brochures, etc. There were occasions when right in the middle of the village trade fair her home analogion was brought out to the market place and among loud market crowd the sonorous voice of this preacher was being heard. She argued that works did not mean anything in the matter of salvation, and a man was saved only by faith. We heard this teacher ourselves and were convinced that she was straightforward and hid nothing. "We have sinned", said the preacher during one of her talks, "we were born in sin and do not have power to gain God's forgiveness of sins by ourselves; but the Lord in His love towards us sent His only begotten Son for our salvation; He took our sins upon Himself and suffered death on the cross. So, after we are saved, we have a heavenly home prepared for us; and we will enter there. He invites and waits for you to come. He says, "Come to me". He wants only your faith in the Saviour who has redeemed us from sin and death ... When a peasant woman mentioned that they often address their Lady, and She, their Heavenly Mediatress, helps them, and they address also the Saints, and they intercede for them before God, the preacher noted that such prayers are useless ... Then she added that, "you may if you like address our Lady or Saints but this will be of no use for your salvation" ... After Gagarina finished with a prayer, she said that those who had heard her should not keep this to themselves but pass it on to other people so that they could also be saved (Sakharov 1897:21-23).

Sakharov admits that Gagarina established an excellent school in her estate and an exemplary hospital for common people, and used these establishments to spread her teaching (Sakharov 1897:23). During Gagarina's absence the meetings were held by local Pashkovite activists. The "Pashkovshchina" (Pashkovism) continued to exist in Sergievskoe even after it was forbidden on 24 May 1884 (Terletsky 1891:80-81).

Later, when Saveliy Alekseev (a man of simple origin and a future presbyter of the Second Evangelical Christian congregation in St. Petersburg) was exiled and his wife and daughter followed him to the Caucasus, their son was left with V Gagarina who brought him up in her home (Lieven 1967:77). Gagarina also helped with nondenominational work among students. S Lieven recalled that

when this ministry was developing V Gagarina always remained a “proven source” of financial help (Lieven 1967:120).

#### *A Pashkova*

Madame Pashkova, Alexandra Ivanovna, is best known as E Chertkova’s sister and Pashkov’s wife. She came to believe in “the pietistic gospel” when she met Radstock in England (Nichols 1991:41). Later she became instrumental in introducing her husband, a future leader of the Pashkovite movement, to Lord Radstock. Lord Radstock was a regular guest in the Pashkov’s home in St. Petersburg (Nichols 1991:41). At first Colonel Pashkov tried to avoid Radstock, but upon returning from his Moscow estate he could no longer do so as Radstock was to dine in his home. As usual the dinner was followed by Radstock’s sermon and prayer. It was Radstock’s prayer that deeply impressed Pashkov (AUCECB 1989:83). During the prayer Pashkov experienced something that changed his life for good.

Madame Pashkova also actively participated in musical ministry at the meetings in her home. She frequently played the organ while her three daughters sang during the meetings (Lieven 1967:18; Nichols 1991:42). Along with Madame Chertkova and Countess Gagarina, Madame Pashkova participated in running sewing rooms for poor girls in St. Petersburg (Lieven 1967:47-52). This bold project was undertaken to combat social injustice and help the poor earn a living. Two sisters, Madame Chertkova and Mrs Pashkova, along with Princess Gagarina continued the work which had been handed to them by a stranger: sewing rooms for poor girls in St. Petersburg. These women taught mostly single girls how to sew, provided material, sold the finished products, and paid the girls a commission for their work (Brandenburg 1977:111-112; Lieven 1967:47-52; Kovalenko 1996:78). The Pashkovite ladies gathered poor women once or twice a week in the evenings to sew and complete various handicrafts. The city was divided into five districts between Count Korff’s wife, Colonel Pashkov’s wife, Madame Chertkova, and Princess Vera Gagarina who oversaw two districts. Sometimes Count Korff would read aloud and testify about Christ to women gathered at his wife’s sewing circles (Corrado 2000:121). The Pashkovites also arranged social events, especially at Easter and Christmas, at which women and their children were fed, entertained, and introduced to the Bible (Corrado 2000:121-122).

The sewing women completed most of their work at home and received payment immediately. In order to sell the products, annual bazaars were held in the Pompeii and Malachite Halls of the Lieven palace. Later the Pashkovites temporarily rented a place on Voznesenskiy Prospect until a lower store in the palace was set up for the bazaar. This work continued until the beginning of World War I (Corrado 2000:121-122; Lieven 1967:51-52). These Pashkovite ladies also set up laundry rooms in each district of St. Petersburg which operated in a similar way creating jobs for the poor and rendering inexpensive services to districts (Nichols 1991:22).

During the 1877-78 Russian-Turkish War, Pashkovite society ladies left their homes to serve as voluntary nurses (Dalton, *Lord Radstock and Colonel Pashkoff*, 110, in Corrado 2000:127). They also organised sewing evenings to help wounded soldiers, and they visited soldiers in the Mikhailovskiy Palace, where some rooms had been converted into a military hospital (Krusenstjerna, *Im Kreuz*, 85-86, in Corrado 2000:127).

Another area of Pashkovite ministry was founding schools, workshops, and homes for poor children. According to the newspapers, twice a week at a children’s shelter in Galernaya Harbor, Pashkov and the Pashkovite ladies preached, sang, and distributed booklets (Pobedonostsev 1882:8). Pashkovites also started a home for boys and a home for girls (Nichols 1991:22). The Pashkovite school located in Lomonosovskiy Pereulok was in existence before January 1883 (Corrado 2000:125). Orthodox Archpriest Ornatsky considered this area of Pashkovite activity the most dangerous (Ornatsky 1903:8-9). Other schools were opened on the estates of the Pashkovites where aristocratic ladies taught peasants to read (Dillon, 332, in Corrado 2000:125).

#### *Y Zasetskaya*

Madame Yuliya Zasetskaya, a daughter of Denis Davydov, the famous soldier-poet of the Napoleonic wars, became another “ardent follower of Radstock” (Fountain 1988:32). Pobedonostsev reported that Yuliya Zasetskaya had care shelters for the homeless on the outskirts of St. Petersburg where she went to preach and to pray; in her prayers she avoided mentioning the Mother of God and the Saints (Pobedonostsev 1880:3).

She and her youngest sister, Countess ED Viskonty, provided a strong link between the movement and such famous Russian writers as Leskov, Dostoevsky, and Solov’ev (Heier 2002:68). Upon Y Zasetskaya’s invitations Dostoevsky visited Radstock’s meetings, “but found it difficult to see

any good in it” (Heier 2002:69; Fountain 1988:32). She was a close friend of Dostoevsky and his wife Anna Grigor’evna. Many times the great writer argued with her about religious issues but could not win her back to the “national” church. She considered herself no less Russian than he was; besides she knew the Bible and modern works of English and German theologians well (Heier 2002:69-70).

It was Zasetzkaya who provided Leskov with material for his book about Radstock, “The great schism”, but she found the book offensive and felt guilty (Heier 2002:80). However, two years later, in 1878 Leskov admitted in *Religiozno-obshchestvennyy vestnik* (Religious Community Herald) that he had been too harsh with Radstock and his friendship with Zasetzkaya was restored (Heier 2002:80). Zasetzkaya employed her giftedness in literature and translated into Russian John Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress”, an extremely popular book among the Radstockists. It was published in 1878 in three parts and was highly commended by Leskov in the same year in *Religiozno-obshchestvennyy vestnik* (Religious Community Herald) (Heier 2002:69). Zasetzkaya also translated Bunyan’s “The Holy War” (Fountain 1988:32). In 1877 she published a collection of devotional sketches called *Chasy dosuga* (The hours of leisure) (Heier 2002:69).

Zasetzkaya was the only person among the Radstockists who openly announced her break with the Orthodox Church, which was an act of great courage at that time (Heier 2002:69). She died in 1883 before the Pashkovites started experiencing real pressure from the authorities.

#### *M Peuker*

Madame Maria G Peuker, nee Lashkareva (died in 1881), was another passionate follower of Radstock. She was highly educated and had many high-standing friends in major European cities. In 1872 she participated in the World’s Prison Congress held in London and was a chairperson of the St. Petersburg’s Prison Committee, which upon her initiative founded in St. Petersburg a shelter for women released from prisons. She personally ran this shelter for a few years (Heier 2002:82-83). In 1875 while abroad, M. Peuker and her daughter Alexandra underwent a conversion experience on hearing the preachings of D Moody (AUCECB 1989:84).

M Peuker was an editor of a monthly magazine *Russkiy Rabochiy* [Russian Workman] that was being published in St. Petersburg from 1875 to 1886. Leskov, who at first was very critical of this enterprise, later changed his opinion and wrote to Madame M Peuker in 1879 that the magazine should be restored. That same year he became its consultant and published some of his own articles on its pages. Leskov’s participation made the magazine very popular. M. Peuker’s daughter, Alexandra Ivanovna, continued her mother’s work of publishing the magazine (Heier 2002:81-82).

Peuker evangelized both in writing and orally. Ornatsky points out that she used to evangelise in Novgorodskaya gubernia (Ornatsky 1903:9). Well after Pashkov’s banishment, Alexandra Ivanovna Peuker often spoke at the meetings held by Madame Kamensky in the workers’ neighbourhoods. Those meetings were attended by some foreign guests who also spoke there. The daughters of Colonel Pashkov, who had returned to their homeland, sang there (Lieven, *Eine Saat*, 105, in Corrado 2000:86-87). Women played an especially important role in musical ministry. S Lieven recalled that AI Peuker played the harmonium and a group of young girls, including Pashkov’s daughters, three daughters of the minister of justice Pahlen, and two Golitsyn princesses sang evangelistic songs (Lieven 1967:18). Women made a significant contribution to the hymnology of the movement, translating Western hymns into Russian.

#### *E Shuvalova*

Countess Elena Ivanovna Shuvalova was another zealous follower of Radstock’s teaching (Prugavin 1909:194). According to Kovalenko, she was among those few people who were converted during Radstock’s visit to Moscow, an ancient Russian Orthodox citadel (Kovalenko 1996:70). Countess Shuvalova was the wife of statesman Petr Shuvalov, the head of the Main Police Department. Due to her position, she was quite successful in interceding on behalf of the evangelical believers who did not have a “voice” and were suffering persecution. Ironically, some evangelical meetings took place right in the room of Shuvalov’s coachman, who was a believer, after such meetings had been strictly forbidden (Lieven 1967:74-75).

Along with Pashkov, Korff and a number of Pashkovite women, Countess Shuvalova regularly visited hospitals (Lieven 1967:19, 25-26, 38). Stead described this in the following way:

It was no uncommon sight to see a great lady, to whom all the salons of St. Petersburg were open, scurrying through the streets on a humble drozhky, to read and to pray by the bedside of some dying girl in the foul ward of the local hospital. No infection deterred

them from the discharge of their self-imposed duties; no place was too dark for them to illuminate it with the radiance of their presence (Stead 355-356, in Corrado 2000:100).

### **The ministry of women**

Overall, the authors have listed examples of the active ministry of the Pashkovite ladies in different areas: hosting evangelical meetings, inviting and hosting preachers, evangelising, praying in public, translating and publishing religious materials, visiting prisons and hospitals, running shelters, managing sewing and laundry rooms, translating hymns and leading in music, translating sermons, and even preaching. As the movement was growing and getting more organised questions were raised about the boundaries of women's ministry. For instance, at the United Congress in April 1884 an Englishman Reginald Radcliffe insisted that women not be allowed to preach. However, a woman speaker was present at the conference, most likely Princess Lieven, who spoke on the topic "Do not love the world" (Pavlov 1884:29).

The decision about women's ministry was unanimous: "gifted sisters should be allowed to preach" (Karetnikova 2001:43). Nevertheless, the issue was not settled and the question would arise many more times. In fact, a number of Pashkovite ladies (Chertkova, Lieven, Gagarina, the Kozlyaninov sisters, the Kruezer sisters, Peuker, Zsetsckaya, and many others) not only evangelised but saved the Petersburg Pashkovite congregation from closure during the difficult times. They preached and counselled, especially until Kargel returned in 1885 from Finland and Alekseev was chosen as presbyter in 1888 (Karetnikova 2001:43-44).

As a matter of fact, after Pashkov's and Korff's exile most of the local "brothers" in St. Petersburg were of simple origin and lacked education. Some of them could hardly read or write (Lieven 1967:70-71). They did not lack zeal and fervour, but there was a huge gap between being simple "brothers" and highly cultured and educated "sisters" (Lieven 1967:71); this was a gap in upbringing, education, mindset, and experience in Christian service between the "old" Pashkovites and newly converted ones.

S Lieven's memories shed some light on the changes that were taking place in the congregation. Her memoirs are almost the sole source that helps decipher what was happening among St. Petersburg evangelicals during the years of Pobedonostsev's persecution. S Lieven graciously does not mention the names of the preachers who could base their argument on a misread word of the Scripture (Lieven 1967:71). According to Corrado this was "a result of inexperience and insecurity":

the newly converted preachers clung closely to the literal Word of God, with no room for discussion. While an admirable solution given the circumstances, this led to pride, one-sidedness and disagreement, and conflict arose between the uneducated men and educated society women of broader views (Lieven, *Eine saat*, 61, 64, 90-91, in Corrado 2000:171-172).

Untrained preachers could produce nothing but low standards of preaching. The irony of the situation was that at the same time there was no lack of well-educated "sisters", who sometimes preached during the meetings and conducted Bible studies in small groups (Lieven 1967:71-72).

The differences in culture and upbringing were another cause of social clashes. Certain incidents could not be avoided, such as one with Duchess Shuvalova. S Lieven recalled, "Our leading brothers were strict and once they found something inappropriate in sister Shuvalova's behavior. They forbade her to take part in the Lord's Supper ... After a while she was restored" (Lieven 1967:74-75). This kind of church discipline would have been unthinkable under the ministry of Radstock or Pashkov. In general it appears that "simple" folk were not very gracious to the "noble" ones (the opposite was true during the first years of the movement).

Finally, the most important cause of "misunderstandings" was a difference in theology and mentality. The more strict Baptist views of new preachers clashed with the more Open Brethren position of the Pashkovites. Newly converted, simpler folk were more receptive to rules and regulations, whereas the "old school" of Pashkovites was dedicated to spiritual freedom. Besides, the brothers who were coming to St. Petersburg from the south and southwest of Russia were mostly Baptists with Molokan heritage. Strictness was in their blood not only when it concerned Baptist doctrine on believer's baptism, the Lord's Supper, ordination, church membership or discipline, but also when dealing with all kinds of details regarding lifestyle and dress.

However, the meetings in Lieven's home preserved the openness of their original nature including open communion. But Lieven's influence was limited to her home and did not reach other evangelical groups around the city. Reportedly, many Pashkovites joined the Stundists and Baptists.

Pashkov was aware of some tension among St. Petersburg evangelicals, and he returned to Russia in 1887 or in 1892 (Nichols 1991:71; Kovalenko 1996:75; Savinsky 1999:181). The official reasons for his visit were the illness of his son and some business matters, but Nichols points out another important reason for Pashkov's visit to Russia, and that is the leadership struggle within the Evangelical Christian group, because his young disciples clashed with the older ladies who did not want to submit to the inexperienced leaders (Lieven, *Eine Saat*, 90, in Nichols 1991:72). Gradually this submission did take place, as the noble members of the congregation used to spend summers in the country while "simple brothers" stayed in the city. Thus the leadership functions (choosing of the board, admitting new members, excommunication of the backsliders) completely fell into their hands (Lieven 1967:103).

### **Theological interpretation of the role of women**

It is of course difficult to transport oneself into the world of the 1870s when the Bible was first made available to Russian people in the native language. In St. Petersburg, Lord Radstock called his audience to study and interpret Scripture for themselves. New converts, including the high-society St. Petersburg ladies, found great joy in newly discovered biblical truths. Many of them discovered the freedom of reading and searching the Scriptures. And as they did so, the Bible took on an enormous significance for them, even more so than the Church regulations held. This gradually led to a break from the Orthodox Church. The Pashkovites conceived the Bible as being a disclosure of God's very will. To this belief they added a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit's assistance in the process of interpretation and application of Scripture.

Another important feature was the great importance that they placed upon obedience to the revealed truths and following Christ. The Pashkovites, most of whom were women, did not preach good works. They did them. After having conversion experiences they felt that the evangelical calls found in the New Testament were addressed to all believers regardless of their gender.

Besides, women's role in ministry was one of the features that the Pashkovites inherited from the Brethren and Keswick circles. Although the Brethren did not allow women to speak in public, Sunday schools, a soup kitchen, and other ventures, were the things in which women actively participated (Coad 1968:73). Keswick conferences opened even more opportunities for women. They were actually allowed to speak at these. It was the age when not only in England, but also in Russia, "avenues for women into any sphere outside the home were being closed" and "Christian zeal brought them into prominence" (Bebbington 1989:26).

One must also remember that the Brethren and Keswick workers had a formative influence upon St. Petersburg Pashkovites. Being actively involved in evangelistic ministry the Pashkovite ladies found a worthy application for their energy and riches. So, it is the evangelical movement both in Russia and abroad that is greatly responsible for "freeing" women for Christian ministry.

### **Final conclusion**

Unfortunately, the historical succession between the Brethren and Keswick tradition and the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Russia was seriously violated after the Revolution of 1917, when the main carriers of the Open Brethren and Keswick influence – the Pashkovite ladies – dissolved within the evangelical Christian churches. Nevertheless, there are a number of features that remind one of the Brethren and Keswick influence within Russian evangelicalism today, not the least of which is the active role of women in churches.

It is true that a more organised segment within Russian evangelicalism – the Baptist movement – won. The Russian Evangelical Baptist churches adopted a number of doctrines and practices that the Pashkovites would not approve of. Among them one can mention doctrines concerning baptism and communion, church membership, and so forth. However, as the Soviet persecution became violent, the role of women grew once again.

So, what were the reasons that women were (and still are) so numerous and active in the evangelical movement in Russia? Firstly, men were the prime target for persecution. Men were imprisoned, exiled, and killed in greater numbers than women. Secondly, the movement gave women opportunities for self-expression; they no longer stayed in the background. Philanthropy was an important outlet for the Pashkovite women. Helping those less fortunate was something that Christian women continued doing under the Soviet regime. Thirdly, after the banishment of the male leaders, the women had no choice but to take upon themselves the responsibility for the movement, at least for a time. This assuming of leadership was in a way repeated a few decades later in Soviet Russia when the persecution swept away almost all male leaders.

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