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She would leave Berlin in a few weeks for Prague. Her separation from Sergej Efron had finally come to an end. Belyj’s post-separation from Asja was just beginning.

Other memories of Belyj which characterize the Berlin period date from this second half of his stay. Xodasević and Berberova arrived in Berlin at the end of June 1922. For a good part of the summer Belyj escaped to the sea along with the other members of the Russian community to Swinemünde on the Baltic coast. Cvetaeva speaks not of a farewell but simply of a disappearance. On July 1, 1922, Belyj initials the introduction to his “Глоссолалия” – “his best poem.”73 It and “Стихи о России” are published that summer by Еропха, which also announces the forthcoming Серебрянный гобуњ彼得бург as well as После Разлуки. Also in July Belyj agrees with “Der Kommende Tag” publishing house to publish a German translation of his “Crises” series.74

In August Belyj sees Xodasević and “Петербург” with major corrections appears in an edition of 3000 copies for Еропха. Golos Rossi publishes an announcement by the publishing house Logos: “Готовится к печати: Андрей Белый Доктор Доннер, роман . . .” (1037, August 20, 1922, p. 9). Belyj would later refer to this as new slander:

Тогда повад-克莱вера возводится на меня: Я не написал пас-Кивиль на Рудольфа Штейнера “ДОКТОР ДОНИЕР” (тема романа, образующего католического незуита, направленная против традиции церковности); клевета верти.75

Belyj will characterize the summer months which he spends at the resorts of Swinemünde, Heringsdorf and Misdoj as “неугоревая жизнь”. His “encounter” with Cvetaeva had given him a brief re-

73 According to Margarita Woloschin, Die grüne Schlange, Stuttgart, 1968, p. 373, Belyj had first become acquainted with Lory Smits and Eurythmy in 1913 in München.
74 “Die Krisis des Gedankens” is the only volume to appear. Also in 1922 Belyj publishes an article in German in the Anthroposophical journal Die Drei: “Anthroposophie und Russland”. This is one clear indication that his ties with Steiner and the teachings of Anthroposophy had not been severed completely.
75 “Поему я стал смиловистым”, p. 115.

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spite from the stress and strain of his professional and personal life. But as the summer came to a close, Belyj would find himself again involved in too many projects. Xmol’nickaja writes: “Творческий тупик и распад он пережил в недолгий период своего пребывания за границей в 1922–1923 годах.”76 The peak had been reached, the descent was about to begin.

On September 6, 1922 Belyj returned to Berlin, this time to the Crampe Pension at Viktoria-Luise Platz 9.77 (This is one of the few houses connected with Belyj which remains standing in Berlin today.) Here lived Xodasević, Berberova and Gerşenson; a five minute walk in either direction could bring them to Єренбург at the Prager Diele or to the House of the Arts meeting place on Nollendorf Platz. This arrangement would place Belyj in almost daily contact with Xodasević, who with others witnessed Belyj’s “dancing” – a phase which Cvetaeva did not experience, perhaps because her own departure was a partial cause of Belyj’s behavior. At any rate, most of those who recall Belyj at this time, Berberova, Xodasević, Bax- rax, remember when Belyj “плыквал фоксторп.”78

“Цессен” в жизни Белого продолжался весьма недолго и прикладненская комнатурка у цессенской хозяйки, . . . сме-нилась огромной светлей комнатой в пансионе Крампе, в самом центре западного Берлина, где жили “все”.

Сразу следует отметить, что этот переезд из мрачного Цессена в светлый Берлин – “Бе” – “Вестен, то есть Запад” отразился на жизни Белого довольно – не убоялся этого слова – трагически. Это переселение совпало с апогеем его “безумства”, с тем, что двойное пристрастие к алкоголю и танцу (можно ли, строго говоря, называть танцами его плясовые упражнения?) стало общезвестным. (BAXRAX 301, 302).

76 “Поезия Андрея Белого.” In: A. Belyj, Stixotvorenija i poezy, Moscow 1966, p. 65.
77 Klavdija Nikolaevna Vasil’eva lists the house as No. 118 but in a letter from Belyj to Nadežda Šupak in November 1922, he gives the address as No. 9, and the “Berliner Adreßbuch” lists the Crampе Pension at No. 9.
78 John MalmsTad, “Notes” pp. 342–343, reviews the literature on Belyj’s dancing. Xodasević speaks of hysterics in Belyj’s variations on the foxtrot: “It was not just a dance of a drunken man: it was, of course, a symbolic violation of the best in himself, a blasphemy of himself, a diabolical grimace at himself – to demonstrate through himself against Dornach.” “Andrej Belyj” in Nekropot’, Paris 1976, p. 89.
Belyj was constantly in motion, his lectures were accompanied by gesticulations, and he was fascinated by eurythmy. For a while this internal rhythm and pent up nervous energy expressed itself in dancing in German cafés. Vera Lur’e (Lourié), his twenty year old dancing partner, does not recall the dancing as exceptionally wild. Perhaps the generation gap played some part in the reaction of Belyj’s contemporaries. Nonetheless many felt his conduct was improper, if not ridiculous and pathetic.

In the cheap bars of Berlin noted then and now for its night life, Belyj apparently tried to drown his sorrow or drive it away. Most were repelled. Belyj has a history of alienating those close to him. During this time one woman in particular stayed close to him. Vera Lur’e, a young poetess, had been a student of Gumilev’s in the Petrograd House of the Arts in the group Звучаная Раковина. She left Russia with her parents in the Fall of 1921 and arrived in Berlin where she met Belyj and others at the Berlin House of the Arts, and like others, she fell under his spell. In her own words – there was “some sort of affair.” Baxrax remembered that she loved him like a kitten while he treated her like a dog. Lur’e clearly loved him in those days, and when others abandoned him, she watched over him until Klavdija Nikolaevna arrived in January of 1923. In 1922 and 1923 she published several reviews of his works for Novaja Russkaja Kniga and Dni and a number of her own poems appeared in the press at that time. She was one of the few who remained in Berlin and has recently borne witness to those events of Russian Berlin.79

In spite of his frenzied state and maybe because of it, Belyj threw himself into several activities wholeheartedly for the remainder of 1922. He attended the first meeting of the new season at the House of the Arts now in a new home, the Cafe Leon at Bülowstraße 1, held on September 15 with Viktor Šklovskij, Nikolaj Ocup, Vera Lur’e and Xodasevič on the program, and the September 22 meeting which featured Tolstoj who read from his novel “Азярва” and Boris Pasternak, who read his poetry.80 There was also a flurry of activity surrounding the thirtieth jubilee of Maksim Gor’kij’s debut as a writer, with the publication of his story “Makar Čudra.”81 Berberova recalls a meeting of Belyj and Xodasevič at the Gržbin publishing house on September 18 to discuss the jubilee and another on Sept 25. Belyj published a few articles on Gor’kij: one dated September 20, 1922 in Novaja Russkaja Kniga (No. 8, Aug. 1922, pp. 2–3). A slightly different version appeared in Golos Rossi (No. 1069, September 24, 1922, pp. 6–7) and a third version signed “Редакция” appeared in issue No. 3 of Епохеда in 1922. On September 30, messages and flowers were presented to Gor’kij by a delegation which included Belyj as the representative from Vol’fìla. Belyj was also frantically working on his re-edition of his poetry for Gržbin, a milestone in his poetic career, and the largest collection of his poetry published in his lifetime. Belyj dates the introduction – September 21, 1922 (the volume appeared in 1923). The alterations are part of the never-ending attempt of the poet to re-examine his personal experiences and to re-evaluate them from the standpoint of the present. All this was, of course, directed at breaking through the limitations of time and space in the phenomenal world, to gain entry into the noumenal sphere of reality. Friends, critics, scholars felt that the artistic merit of the revised works almost always suffered, but little attention has been paid to the underlying aesthetic assumptions which guided the work.82 Belyj’s own theory and practice of revision was defended years later:

light. After their return to Russia, there would evolve a correspondence. Pasternak signed along with Pil’’naj in Izvestija, Jan 9, 1934, p. 4 a statement of support for Belyj. But even here we can see the difficulty of explaining the Berlin period for Soviet critics. “From 1921 to 1923 A. Belyj was abroad, in Berlin he was a literary watershed, determining Soviet and anti-Soviet literature and a confirmation of Soviet culture, whose banner he carried for those abroad.” After Belyj’s death Pasternak interceded on behalf of Klavdija Nikolaevna’s pension with the authorities. Ron Peterson has written convincingly that Uruchtaa in the novel “Доктор Живаго” is based on Belyj. Ron Peterson, “Andrey Belyj and Nikolai Vedenjapin”. In: Wiener Slavistischer Almanach, 9, 1982, pp. 111–118.

80 Belyj’s presence is noted in the daily list of meetings by Xodasevič. I am indebted to Nina Berberova and Professor David Bethea for making a copy of them available to me. Belyj’s encounters with Pasternak are an interesting side

82 Typical is the opinion of VLADIMIR PJAST in Vstreči, Moscow 1929, pp. 154–155. “Reworking, developing, so to say, his poems, – Andrej Belyj, actually, ruined them to such an extent, that you had to wonder, where had his ‘inherent good taste’ gone to. And we got together to institute the Society for the Preservation of Andrej Belyj’s Works from his own harsh treatment of them.”
Под переводом разумел я критический пересмотр инвентаря моих написанных и переработки тех стихотворений, которые казались поправимыми. Особенность моих стихов — их рыхлость; все, написанное в стихах, в разгаре лет стоит, как черновики, с опубликованием которых я потормозил; стихи писались заливами; “Золото в лазури” я в общем написал в два месяца; “Пепел” явился на свет в итоге усиленного писания стихов летом 1907 года. “После разлуки” написана в две недели. Между “запомни” стихами годами не писал ни одной строчки.

“Запой” отразился рыхлый, подчас ужасной формой; вставала мысль об отказе от себя, как “поэта”; если бы я мог собрать иные из моих книг стихов, я бы сжег их; этого я не мог технически выполнить. Книги мои, находящиеся в чьих-то руках, уличили б меня.

Отсюда и мысль о переводе, т. е. редактировании, правке, переложении, переделке.83

Also in September, Belyj had published poems in Golos Rossi and Rul’84 “Эпопея” II is on sale and “После Разлуки”, and “Серебряный голубь” are promised any day now, as well as “Записи чудака”, I—II. Roman Gul’ has a review of “Стихи о России”.

On October 1, a special meeting in honor of Gor’kij at the Cafe Leon replaced the customary program at the House of the Arts. Belyj was one of the speakers (Nakanune, 149, Oct. 3, 1922, p. 5). He frequently meets with Xodasevich — twenty times in all. The life of the House of the Arts is varied and alive. On October 6, Erenburg reads from his new stories (“Трубы”). On October 13, Yu. Aksen’val’d, recently expelled from Russia with other intellectuals, appeared and Belyj read “Афоризмы.” The election of new officers which had been scheduled was postponed to a later meeting. On October 20, Vladimir Majakovskij, another recent arrival, gave a brief introduction to Futurism and read from his works. On October 27,

83 “Зовы врения: Vместо предисловия”. In: Novyi žurnal, 102, 1971, p. 91.
84 “Iz osemnix pesen” (My balagurim . . .) Rul’, 550, Sept. 20, 1922, p. 2. This is the only work by Belyj which I have been able to identify in Rul’. “Zamanja .. .”. In: Golos Rossi, 1067, Sept. 24, 1922, p. 6. The typography of the poem is curious. Belyj uses three different styles of indentation in his never ending search for a way to capture his own inner rhythms.

Škovskij read on “Literature and the Cinematograph” and Belyj took part in the discussion afterward (Nakanune, 172, Oct. 29, 1922, p. 6).

Elections were also held that evening and Belyj was chosen president. The other officers included Remizov, Vengerov, Minskij, Erenburg, Tolstoj, Škovskij, Xodasevich and the painter Ivan Punin. (Nakanune, 176, Nov. 3, 1922, p. 5). Belyj’s reign would be short-lived: a lovely caricature in Verhennyiš (No. 3, Nov. 22, 1922, p. 15) would capture the wildly gesticulating contortionist presiding over his single meeting. Belyj celebrated his birthday (October 27 n. s.) in Berlin with Xodasevich and others. Vera Lur’e, who is not invited along will write:

Я буду по твоим стопам
Безвольная идти,
И все продам, и все отдал
За доброе “прости”.
А в праздник твой совсем одна
Я лягу на постель.85

Vera’s absence is not all that surprising. Belyj, according to Xodasevich’s notes, took on a German Mariechen for a time at the end of October, an innkeeper’s daughter from a cafe on Lutherstrasse. But Belyj was not happy. He writes in “Rakkurs”: “С ’Вольфганг’ не идет. С ’Эпопея’ — не идет; с ’Домом искусств’ — галимать’.” Even so in October he continues work on the fourth and final section of his “Воспоминания о Блока.”

As the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution approached, Soviet Russia was flexing its muscles. The country had re-established relations with Germany and formally re-occupied the old Tsarist Embassy. In the process, they closed the Orthodox Church attached to the Embassy and confiscated its holdings. Public show trials of the Social Revolutionaries had been held and sentences passed on in spite of world public outrage. Pressure was being put on the emigré to choose between Soviet citizenship or risk never being able to return. Perhaps symbolic of the change was the closing of the newspaper Golos Rossi (The Voice of Russia) which was almost immediately replaced by the more modestly titled Dni which began publication on October 29, 1922. Belyj would be a frequent contribu-

85 Vera Lourie, p. 104.
in the early days, but as November 7 approached, Soviet Russia looked like it was here to stay.

On November 3, Ivan Puni, one of the House of the Arts’ officers and founding members, spoke on Continental Russian Art and the Russian Exhibition in Berlin. This exhibition which had opened on October 15 at the Galerie Von Diemen at Unter den Linden 21, presented 500 works by over 150 artists. Among those displayed were Burliuik, Chagall, Kandinsky, Kustodiev, Malevich, Benois, Wasiliev, Zetlin and Tatlin. After the talk, the discussion turned into a shouting match with a number of insults hurled around the hall, in spite of Belyj’s plea at the beginning of the meeting. The major controversy which erupted was followed by a report that Aleksei Tolstoj be expelled from the House of the Arts. The next evening, November 4, Belyj with Xodasevich and others organized the Klub pisateley as an alternative outlet for their artistic and creative energies and within days they would resign their positions at the House of the Arts. Belyj was there and at a subsequent meeting of the Club.

Belyj continued his activities in other forums, and he would be confronted with a memory of the past, “Osemy pojavila se v Berlin" Ninya Petrovskaya, sama polu-bezumna, nića, stara, iskudana, hromada, 8 november, kak raz nakonu toga dina, kada ispolnjoslo otdinadac let sadja e otkaza iz Rossii, oni umena...

66 A catalogue of the “Erste Russische Kunstaustellung”, Berlin 1922, can be found in Berlin’s Bibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz.


68 ALEKSANDR BAXRAK, Po pamiatu, po zapisi: Andrej Belyj, Kontinent, 3, 1975, p. 293 writes: “I ought to write separately about the formation of the Writers’ Club after the unavoidable schism [of the House of the Arts].” In an interview on August 9, 1984 and in a letter to me of March 3, 1985 he recalled only that the organization had no rules and no records. (This accounts for the sporadic nature of meeting announcements and reports in these books.) I think E. N. Bugaeva errs in her note that Belyj continued to work in the House of the Arts in November and December 1922. Baxrak informed me that after the Nov. 3 meeting, the subsequent resignations from their positions and the simultaneous founding of Klub pisateley, that Belyj, Xodasevich and others would never again go the House of the Arts. While many writers would speak on alternate evenings first at the Home of the Arts and then at the Writers’ Club, Belyj and Xodasevich were never again mentioned as participants at the House of the Arts. For a good description of the Writers’ Club see the article in Dni, 111, Mar. 11, 1923, p. 15.

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встретились, вместе ушли и вместе провели вечер. Оба жаловались потом. Даже безумства никакого не вышло. С ним случилось самое горькое всего, что могло случиться: им было просто скучно друг с другом.”

On November 11 Belyj was at the Writers’ Club and on the 12th he went with Xodasevii to Saarow. Together with Remizov, Belyj was present at the meeting to celebrate the 60th birthday of Gerhart Hauptmann on November 15 (Dni, 17, Nov. 17, 1922, p 6). In a letter of November 17, Belyj writes to Nadezhda Oseevn Shchupak. He became an active contributor to the newspaper Dni and published excerpts from his Memoirs on November 5 and 19. He also could read in Dni a review of “Glosso-lalija” by Vera Lure, most of it dictated to her by him (No. 10, Nov. 9, 1922, p. 12).

Belyj would journey again to Saarow – a two hour trip from Berlin – on November 23 to visit Xodasevich, who had moved there not far from Maksim Gor’kij. Finally there is a report that Belyj attends the opening of the Russian Religious Philosophical Academy on November 26, capitalizing on the recent arrival of so many prominent philosophers and other intellectuals expelled from Russia. (Dni, 25, Nov. 28, 1922, p. 4). Some of these same figures would be regular attendees of the Writers’ Club.

In December, Belyj continued to publish extensively in Dni. He attends and speaks at a lecture of Fedor Stepin on December 11. The newspaper accounts attest that Belyj had not lost his ability to captivate an audience.

80 XODASEVIČ, p. 91.

81 See BORIS SAPIR, An Unknown Correspondent of Andrej Belyj in SEER, XLIX, 116, July 1971, pp. 460-462. Curiously, Belyj will indicate that he considers “put’ otrezan” for his return to Russia.

82 The following articles appeared over Belyj’s signature in November in Dni: “Gergardt Hauptman”, No. 19, Nov. 19, 1922, p. 11 (the speech was apparently written by Belyj and then copied in his own irimitable script by Aleksei Remizov.) “Iz vospominanj” No. 7, Nov. 5, 1922, p. 16, 17; “Na put’ja” No. 13, Nov. 12, 1922, p. 10; “Na Ivanovskoj Bašne” No. 19, Nov. 19, 1922, p. 9. He also published his article “My idem k pred’ošučeniju novox form” in Veretjeng, 3, Nov. 1922, p. 2.

83 Vera Lure in an interview with me admitted that she understood little of the work and that Belyj provided her with a general outline for the article.

Во время вдохновенной речи Андрея Белого, усвоенной философскими терминами, в публике раздаются смехи, но по окончании речи слушатели горячо приветствуют этого замечательного оратора (Rul', 621, Dec. 13, 1922, p. 6).

On December 16 Belyj read from “Преступление... Летева” at the Writers’ Club meeting at the Cafe Leon. (Dni, 41, Dec. 16, 1922, p. 5). On December 17, another curious note concerning the elusive “Доктор Доннер” appeared in Dni:

“Известия” сообщает: “Андрей Белый выпустил памфлет “Доктор Доннер” на доктора Рудольфа Штейнера, в связи с крупным столкновением между Штейнером и Белым. Столкновение это, крайне показательное для современного развития буржуазной культуры, произошло, якобы, на почве того, что преображенником изобретателем теософии Рудольф Штейнер вместо теософии занялся спекуляцией, открыл лавочку и бочко торгуешь.”

В этом сообщении “Известия” [sic] верно только слово “якобы”. Рудольф Штейнер теософии не обретал, а Андрей Белый памфлет “Доктор Доннер” не выпускал.94

For a few days he travels to Saarow to visit Xodasević on the 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13. Most importantly, he finishes the fourth and final installment to the "Воспоминания о Блоке". This section is especially important because in it Belyj will make the transition from the painful memory of Ljubov’ Dmitrievna Blok to the subject of Asja. There was always this coincidental correlation of Ljubov’ and Asja. (Baxtrax recalls a conversation in which Ljubov’, Asja and Rudolf Steiner are all grouped together. [p. 306]) It also marks a shift in focus in the memoirs from Blok to Belyj himself. Belyj will ask rhetorically: Читатель наверно возмущен: какие же это воспоминания о Блоке? Где Блок? (Эпопея, 4, 1922, p. 128).95 There is a clear-

94 Dni, 42, Dec 17, 1922, 11. Nina Berberova in a letter to me of March 7, 1982 noted that Belyj often referred to Steiner as Doktor Donner and raises the possibility that Donner - “thunder” was an allusion to Zeus. Belyj almost certainly was the source of this denial. The timing is important, because it illustrates that even before the arrival of Klavdiva Vas’ileva in Berlin, Belyj does not want to offend Steiner, at least in public.


96 Močul’skij, p. 239. Most other scholars have quoted these same figures. The list omits “Поезия слава” and “O smysle poznanija” and the republication of “Pervoe vedenie.”


But his attempts at reconciliation with Asja had lead not only to a final break with her, but with a loss of faith in Rudolf Steiner. What were his resolutions for the New Year? New Year’s Eve was spent with Xodasevič, Berberova at Gor’kij’s. At the same time, the Goetheanum in Dornach was burning!

The new year (1923) did not bode well for the Russians in Berlin. German inflation mixed with civil unrest would reverse the favorable conditions which had fostered the outburst of publishing the previous year. Indeed, most of the Berlin Russian language publishers had agreed upon a uniform multiplication co-efficient to replace the set prices on their books in Germany. Belyj would awake in Saarow with plans for a gigantic work, which would only be realized some ten years later. He describes the high points of the year in his letter to Ivanov-Razumnik:

23 год открывается: пожаром “Гетеануа” (с которым Я был так связан); и – тотчас: приезд в Берлин К. Н., появившейся для меня в самую опасную минуту прострации; с этого начинается незаметное пресуществление болезни в медленное выздоровление: с желания выздороветь; в нашем обиении с К. Н. (январь – до июля 23-го) вызревает во мне жажда 1) вернуться в Россию (окипает тема “Москва”) 2) оживает “доктор” (К. Н. небольшо мirit меня с ним); в марте 23 года доктор мне “все” объясняет, что казалось нейсным.

After spending the first and second in Saarow with Xodasevič, Belyj returned to Berlin. On January 10 he was back in Saarow. The Writers’ Club had several meetings during the month: on January 15 – Pasternak; on the 22 Viktor Šklovskij; on Jan. 29 the “young poets” Georgij Ivanov, Nikolaj Ocup, Irina Odoevceva and Vera Lur’e read from their works. (Novaja Russkaja Kniga, 1, Jan 1923, p. 37). Vasíl’eva-Bugaeva notes that Belyj participated in at least one of these evenings. Belyj’s “Katev” appeared in Volsa Rossii (1, Jan 15, 1923, pp. 1-19) and he published an article written in Moscow in 1920: “Проблема культуры” in Строег, 1, Berlin: 1923, pp. 163-188.

The central event of January 1923 was the arrival of Klavdija Nikolaevna Vasíl’eva, who would serve as the catalyst for Belyj’s reconciliation with Steiner and his return to Soviet Russia. Granted a visa by Menžinsky, who was hoping to convince Belyj to return to Russia, some speculate, that she was sent by the Anthroposophists concerned about Belyj’s drinking and wild behavior. She had known Belyj in Moscow, where they worked together and Belyj had often taken meals at her house. In 1921, Klavdija Nikolaevna had been given the task of transcribing the Belyj-Blok correspondence.

The picture of Klavdija Nikolaevna among Russians in the West was not a very complimentary one. She was clearly not a femme folle – an image of Asja or Nina Petrovskaja or Ljubov’ Dmitrievna; Baxrax remembers her as “миловидной и очень ласковой женщиной.”

Even though she would ultimately divorce her husband and marry Belyj, her interests seem maternal, in a long line of Russian women who have made it possible for their husbands to write.

When she came to Berlin in 1923 Belyj was like a wounded animal, snarling and lashing out in all directions, often most venomously at precisely those people, even Klavdija Nikolaevna, who most wanted to help. Her quiet stability, her undemanding devotion, constant companionship, and shared anthroposophical faith nursed him back to life (Malmstad, p. 28).

An additional consideration was the death of Belyj’s mother in 1922. If Steiner was a foster father, then Klavdija Nikolaevna became an adopted mother. The main point is that in 1923, Anthroposophy as a theme and driving life force returns to Belyj.

Life continued in Berlin, but Belyj’s gradual return to Anthroposophy was made public in his article on the Goetheanum. Mein znanje esto osobennoe blizko; с ним связаны для меня несравнимые, может быть, самые значительные воспоминания жизни моей; ... Ограниченным людям, поставившим себе целью осмеивать нас, распространять клеветы на нас, не объяснить, ...


100 Malmstad, “Introduction”, p. 15 cites this from the unpublished memoirs of Nina Ivanovna Gagen-Torn. Malmstad provides an excellent overview of the relationship which we need not repeat here. Baxrax “Po pamjati, ...” p. 313. Dolgopolov says “In a state of mind close to frenzy Belyj was taken away [uvezhen] ...”, see “Neizvedannyj materik”. In: Voprosy literatury, 3, 1982, p. 135.

что в сгоревшие ныне формы действительно вкочотил я часть жизни (и - лучшую часть). . . .

Иоаниново здание соединилось со светом: вспылало: и взялось в атмосферу воздушную.

Но оно не погибло.

Мы - выстреливое новое здание: новой любви, совершенного мира и братства народов! Пожар Гетеанум не запугает нас: он - лишь взвивает в нас новые силы: к созданию - Иоанинова Здания. 102

Vera Lur’e has recalled that the burning of the Goetheanum in whose construction Belyj had participated was extraordinarily painful for him. It was as if “he had lost his head.” This return to earlier beliefs is paralleled by a more outspoken defense of the intellectual and artistic life in Soviet Russia. But Belyj still refused to cut off all ties with the Berlin community. He continued to lecture and enliven discussions at the Writers’ Club. On Feb. 3, Remizov read; on the 12 Rafałovič spoke on “Современный театр”. Belyj along with Stepun and Začev was at the February 26 meeting where Jaščenko read “О кризисе интеллигенции”. Part of the month was spent with Xodasevič and four days together with Gor’kij where preparations for the initial issue of Беседа were in high gear. 103

On March 7, Stepun read at the Writers’ Club about the “Стихи актерской души” to which both Belyj and Pasternak replied. (NRK, 2, Feb. 1923, p. 40). On March 11, Belyj lectures on “Революция духа” written in February for the Union of Russian Students. (Dni, 112, Mar 13, 1923, p. 5). On March 14, he reads from his “Трагедия сознания” at the Writers’ Club. (Dni, 113, Mar 14, 1923, p. 5). On March 16, he goes with Klavdija Nikolaevna to visit Xodasevič. He spends a week there along with a few evenings with Gor’kij. Belyj, Gor’kij and Xodasevič were all editors of the journal, Беседа, although Gor’kij would later write that Belyj’s participation was nominal. 104 He would, nonetheless, make lengthy contributions to the first two issues of the journal.

102 Dni, 100, Feb. 27, 1923, pp. 6-7. The article was reprinted with an introduction by Thomas R. Bayer, Jr. in the Andrej Belyj Society Newsletter, 3, 1984, pp. 18-27.

103 Belyj was in Sarov with Xodasevič on February 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 and from the 18–21 and 25 with Gor’kij.

104 XODASEVIČ also remembers “The literary editorship was composed of

The crucial event of the month was the meeting which took place at the end of March in Stuttgart, where Belyj had travelled on March 23 to attend a meeting of the Waldorf Schule teachers and spoke with Steiner face-to-face. The meeting was the result of a number of behind the scenes negotiations. Klavdija Nikolaevna was clearly instrumental in arranging for the meeting. She had travelled to Stuttgart in February and met with Steiner. On March 11, 1923 Belyj sent a letter to Marie von Sivers-Steiner. 105

Я не знаю, сколько продлится мое пребывание здесь; но при отъезде в Россию мне нужно было бы иметь несколько Ваших советов относительно культурной работы, с которой я неизбежно в России буду связан. Конечно, у меня есть и личные вопросы, но в них дело; я уже 15 месяцев в Германии и доселе не имел случая видеть Вас и Доктора Штейнера; думаю, что необходимость Вас видеть и с Вами говорить для меня имеет не только субъективный смысл, но и объективный.

Finally on March 30 came the long overdue face to face discussion with Steiner. It was decisive by all accounts. Maksimov recalls that in 1930 Belyj had a portrait of Steiner above his bed in Kucino. (p. 175) In “Почему я стал символистом” and “Воспоминания о Штейнере” Belyj recalls the crucial nature of their conversation. 106 The significance and lasting effect of the encounter is attested to by others. Asja recalled, “После разговора с Штейнером в Штутгарт, перед отъездом в Россию. Бугаев говорил моей сестре, что данное ему на прощение Доктором будет ему помощь во всей его последующей жизни.” 107 The week also served to close the book on Belyj’s relationship with Asja: “При нашей последней встрече в Штутгарте Анд. Б. меня понял и примирился но конечно осталась горечь. Ему трудно было не переносить глубокую связь кот.

Gor’kij, me and Andrej Belyj (the latter - only nominally).” Novyi Žurnal, 29, 1952, p. 207.


 была между нами на жизненный путь. Но его путь был иной."108 Slowly but surely Belyj was resolving old issues, even as he prepared for his return to Russia.

On April 1 he returns to Berlin and his article "Из эпигетских воспоминаний" appears in Dni (No. 128, Apr. 1, 1923, pp. 9-10). On April 4 at a reading at the Writers’ Club by Xodasević (NKR, 5/6, May-June 1923, p. 430). Other meetings of the Club were held on April 11, 14, 18, and 25. He is working feverishly on his revision of the Blok memoirs, which he now envisioned as a four-volume opus: "Блок и его время".109 In April, he also resigns from Эones and with Volume 4 the journal ceases publication.

Многообразные занятия и отсутствие свободного времени не позволяют мне продолжать редактирование "Эонес"; оставаться постоянным сотрудником мне близкого журнала я все же должен выйти из состава Редакции.110

Local news items indicate the changing scene in Berlin for Russians: "В последнее время в советское представительство на Унтер-ден-Линден замечается усиленный наплыв желающих получить разрешение на въезд в Россию" (Rul’ 716, April 8, 1923, p. 9). On April 26 Rul’ reported that the League of Nations was discussing the issue of passports for Russian emigres and on the 27th it reported on increased difficulties for Russian publishers abroad, including economic, but also the new refusal of Soviet government to accept works printed in the old orthography.

The Writers’ Club held meetings in May on the 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, but Belyj spent the 9, 15, 18, 22 and 23 at Saarow and at the end of the month he and Klavdija Nikolaeva moved to Harzburg.111 Belyj’s ties with the emigre community in Berlin would be further shaken by his article which appeared in the first issue of Beseda.

109 See the note in Dni, 128, Apr. 15, 1923, p. 13. Belyj and others will later refer to this work as "Našalo veka". In Beseda, 2, 1923, which appears in August, an advertisement by Époxa announces the publication of "Našalo veka" by Andrej Belyj: "Vol. 1: Blok i ego vremja, Vol 2: Sumerki, Vol 3: Krizis, Vol 4: Revolyucija". Volumes 1 and 2 were scheduled to go on sale on September 25 – but they never appeared and the fate of the manuscript is unknown.
111 Dni, 172, May 27, 1923, p. 12 reported that Belyj had departed for Hamburg. The paper printed a correction in No. 174, May 30, 1923, p. 4.
though it was not made public to friends. “Июнь проводим с К. Н. в Гарцбурге; здесь пшу этюд 'Москва' (часть 3-го 'Начала века') и твердо решаю вслед за уезжавшей К. Н. вернуться в Россию.”113

“Ужасно скучно по России... Трудно жить с берлинскими русскими”, he writes on June 27 to P. Zajcev.116 What were the reasons for the decision? Klavdivja Nikolaevna was clearly a major factor. He needed someone desperately, not physically as much as intellectually and spiritually to be by his side. He longed again for recognition and his memory passed over the sickness and deprivation he had experienced in Russia. His renewed faith in Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy had taken hold. Belyj had always been the teacher, the prophet. He was going back to continue Steiner’s mission – the apostle of the New Creed called upon to spread the faith among the Russians. Did Steiner give him instructions or advice to return? And, of course, the lure of Asja was now truly only a memory. Belyj still had acquaintances in Berlin: Remizov, Jaščenko, Xodasevich. But others like Aleksey Tolstoj had gone back and more would soon follow. The material conditions in Berlin were rapidly deteriorating. There was a dramatic, almost incredible inflation. On January 1, 1923, Rul’ cost 70 RM. On June 1, it was 400 marks, July 1–1000 marks. By October 1 it would be 5,000,000 marks. When Belyj had arrived in 1921 $1 (one U.S. dollar) was worth 209 marks, by October 23, 1923 $1 was worth 40,000,000,000 marks. There were strikes and shortages in Berlin. The entire structure of the state seemed ready to collapse. For anyone who had lived through the events in Russia of 1917, the situation was like a newsreel rerun of that time. If things were indeed to get that bad, wouldn’t he be better off where friends and language could be valuable? Belyj would actually move in with the Vasil’evs upon his return to Moscow.

Having returned to Berlin on June 29 Belyj takes up residence “в трущобе у Анталтер Бахнахоф (sic).” Xodasevich sees Belyj in Berlin several times at the beginning of the July (1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11). From July 14–17 he travels to Ahlebeck. On July 23 he takes K. N. Vas’ileva to Stettin and then travels on to Ahlebeck where he anxiously awaits permission to return to Russia. Writing from Ahlebeck to Baxrax on July 26 Belyj complains that he cannot work.117

114 An excerpt of this article appeared in Dni, 202, July 1, 1923, pp. 9, 11.
On August 1 Belyj is notified that he has been granted permission to return by the Berlin Narkompros. He will still have to wait for a visa. Part of the month is spent at Ahlbeck — there is another letter to Baxrak on August 16 in which he expresses the hope to leave in the beginning of September and stating that he needs his suitcases between the 26th and 28th of August. Apparently he visits Prerow four times, but never gets to reside there as was his wish.

On August 27 Belyj was back in Berlin and his intention to depart was common knowledge. “Andrey Bely, завершивший свой большой четырехтомный труд ‘Воспоминания о Блоке’, на днях переехал в Россию.” He would join an ever increasing flood of Russians leaving Berlin. Berberova recalls a farewell photograph taken on September 8: B. Zajcev, Xodasevich, M. Osorgin, A. Baxrak, A. Remizov and Belyj, plus Berberova and P. Muratov. Xodasevich was insulted by Belyj that evening and there is no indication that they ever met again. On the next day Dni announced a forthcoming Романтический Альманах edited by V. A. Kadašev containing “Петр, Иоанн, Павел” by Belyj. (No. 260, Sept. 9, 1923, p. 10).

The final months for Belyj must have been excruciatingly lonely. He himself writes of the “томительное ожидание”. Nonetheless he read from his memoirs on September 15 at the Writers’ Club. (Dni, 265, Sept. 15, 1923, p. 6) and again there on October 6. The Writers’ Club would continue weekly meetings until October 20 its last meeting, after which it dissolved because of a lack of members. Stepun remembered Belyj as a sick and nervous shortly before his departure. Vera Zajcev gave him an icon of the Virgin which he apparently took when he left.


Belyj’s stay in Ahlbeck is also recalled by Vadim Andreev, “Возврашенин на изн” in Zeszyty, 6, 1969, pp. 105–107.


I have not found other references or evidence of its publication.

“On Saturday October 20, the ‘Writers’ Club’ is closing in light of the departure from Berlin of a significant majority of the organization’s members. It is possible that the activity of the Club which originated in Moscow and was then transferred to Berlin, will be resumed in Paris.” See Rut, 880, October 20, 1923, p. 5.


Andrey Belyj. The Berlin Years 1921–1923

There is a brief flurry of activity at the beginning of October. Belyj had apparently one last doubt before his final departure. He writes to Cvetaeva in desperation.


On October 4, Cvetaeva contacts Baxrak, claiming she has found a position for Belyj and will care for him. But it is essential to get Belyj to Prague.

У меня к Вам большая просьба — если Вы еще в Берлине — п. с. если не в Берлине, то уже ничего не можете сделать. Дело в том, что необходимо перевести (перебезить!) Белого в Прагу, он не должен ехать в Россию, слава Богу, что его не пустили, он должен быть в Праге, здесь ему дадут изнурение (стрите ненеса) и здесь, в конце концов, я, которая его нежно люблю и — что лучше — ему предана.

Did Baxrak get the message to him in time? There was more than a little confusion concerning Belyj’s intentions. “Андрей Белый, не получивший визы на съезд в Россию, переселяется из Берлина в Чехословакию” (Dni, 290, Oct. 14, 1923). But then two weeks later Dni recorded: “Андрей Белый уехал из Берлина в Москву, где предпочитает читать лекции по вопросам искусства” (No. 302, Oct. 28, 1923.). Belyj left Berlin on October 23 and arrived in

Cvetaeva, “Пленный дук”, p. 251. Cvetaeva clearly mistakes the month. Her own letter in reply to Baxrak comes early in October. She must have received Belyj’s letter before then.

Mosty, 6, 1961, p. 337. See also her letter of July 20, 1923 to Baxrak “I love B. N. (Boris Nikolauievich) tenderly… He is a lonely being. In life he is even more helpless than I am, he is completely mad. When I am with him I feel that I’m a dog, and he is a — a blind man!… My finest memories in Berlin are about him.” Mosty, 5, 1960, p. 311.

Moscow on October 26, almost two years to the day when he had left. Baxrax recalls seeing Belyj off at the station with Kaplun-Sumskij, the publisher of Época.126 Years later, Berberova recounts how she was told by Vera Lur'e who described his departure in glowing terms.127 It is all too long ago, perhaps we'll never know. And the mystery of memory is more comforting than the reality which no longer matters. A week later, on November 4, Xodasevič and Berberova left for Prague.

Belyj returned to Russia and began to write. His Moscow novels would be monuments to Belyj's verbal fireworks but they are not masterpieces. They are simply too inaccessible, the mysteries enclosed are locked away from the eyes of most readers. Soviets have largely ignored them and most Western scholars are at a loss to explain anything but the bare outlines of plot. He continued his studies of poetic form. On January 3, 1924 he gave a talk on “Трехольники” for the Moscow Circle of Poets. On January 14 he delivered a talk “Одна из обителей царства теней” which would later grow into a short book primarily concerned with the Berlin experience. Later he performed a rhythmical-mathematical analysis of Puškin's “Медный всадник” and engaged in a polemic with Viktor Žirmunskij. There was also a comprehensive study of Gogol's style – a dictionary of stylistic devices – “Мастерство Гоголя”. For many readers, critics and scholars, his most important contribution was the three published volumes of memoirs “На рубеже двух столетий” (1930), “Начало века” (1933) and “Между двух революций” (1934). There was also significant work still unpublished in the Soviet Union which has only come to light in the last few years, including “Почему я стал символистом” (1982) and “Воспоминания о Швейнере” (1982).

Back in the USSR Belyj was highly critical of his two year stay in Berlin. Later he would admit that he was ill at the time, and the memories were, of course, painful. “Одна из обителей царства теней” is a searing indictment of Berlin, its mores and its morals. There were also plans to publish a full-scale novel entitled “Германия”.128

Was he happy upon his return? Perhaps that isn't the right question. Belyj remained until his dying days an enigma, both to former friends in emigration and to those who knew him in Russia. The Silver Age of Russian literature and Symbolism had already become a historical memory, and Belyj was a living relic. Even the youth of the country upon which Belyj had placed so much of his hope would disappoint him. The saddest commentary is delivered by Maksimov, who notes that when he saw Belyj in 1924 after his return from Berlin the light, that “сияние” in Belyj's eyes, had been extinguished.129 It would never return.

Belyj's death in 1934 brought remembrances and reappraisals from Cvetaeva, Osorgin, Stepin, Pasternak, and Xodasevič. And the Soviets would find themselves ever trying to justify Belyj, who was one of the least Soviet “Soviet” writers.

In Berlin – the papers folded, the printing houses which did not fall victim to economics disappeared in the 1933 Verlagseränderungen. Most of the “Russian Berlin” intelligentsia departed, some to Prague, others to Paris, then later to America. Jaščenko remained in Berlin but little of his archive is left. Most of the newspapers and journals, and even many of the books, did not survive the war. What remains are the cemetery and the antique shops selling icons and Easter eggs. Vera Lur'e remained behind, but even her voice is one of memories:

Berlin

Не узнаять старых улиц Берлина,  
После долгих годов сатаны,  
Оставались там только руины  
И кладбища от бомб и войн.

А в двадцатые давние годы  
Ехал мимо балкона трамвай.  
На балконе писала и однажды  
С улицы слышен собачий был лай!

dreja Belogo (Plan romanu ‘Germanija’), Russkaja literatura, XVII, 1, 1974, pp. 197-200.

126 BAXRAH “Po pamjatи ...”, p. 320.
127 BERBEROVA, Kursiv moj, p. 188.
128 See S. S. GREČIŠKIN and A. V. LAVROV, Neosuščestvlennyj zamysel And.
Свеж был воздух, не пахло бензином,
Не торчали под небом дома
И белые не стирали машины.
Холоднее казалась зима.

Это время давно миновало ... 
Новый город восстал из руин,
Только я еще не уставала
Вспоминать тебя старый Берлин!  


130 In November 1989, I received complete cooperation and extensive access to the archival holdings concerning Belyj's stay in Berlin at the Institut Russkoj Literatury ANSSSR (Puskinskij Dom), the Rukopisnyj otdel Gosudarstvennoj publičnoj biblioteki im Saltikova-Schedrina, the Rukopisnyj otdel Gosudarstvennoj biblioteki im. Lenina and the Central'nyj gosudarstvennoj arxiv literatury i iskusstva (CGALI). Information in A. Belyj, Rakurs k "Dnevniku" (CGALI, f. 53, op. 1, ed. x. 100), which has just recently been made available to scholars, generally coincides with the information presented in my article. For the Berlin period, composed primarily from memory, the Rakurs contains several inaccuracies, mostly concerning with months in which a particular lecture or meeting took place. A. Belyj, Shebe na pamjat'. Perečen' pročitannych referatov, publičnych lekcij, besed (na zasedanijax), opponirovanij s 1899 do 1932 goda (CGALI, f. 53, op. 1. ed. № 96, p. 14/2, 15/1) admits on pages devoted to the Berlin years: "My memory is failing, and perhaps there are errors (omissions, or an inaccurate record of the months) in the list." Three new points, not reported in the press or other sources, do emerge from these documents. Belyj did see Asja in Berlin in November 1921 and there was a painful encounter with her again sometime in the last ten days of June 1922. He was exceptionally active in the Berlin section of Vol'f'sa, attending sixteen lectures and business meetings between November 1921 and May 1922. In October 1922 a meeting of Vol'f'sa was held to dissolve the organization. Finally, Belyj's fascination with dancing in the summer and fall of 1922 was partially a attempt to increase his physical activity for medical reasons. The Rakurs, perhaps the most frank and honest of Belyj's memoirs, provides its own footnotes to the Berlin period. Under the heading of October 1923, Belyj writes: "I know that in Moscow after Trockij's article about me partipation in journals and literary-public life are off-limits to me (p. 116/2). Stopping to characterize the period between 1916 and 1923, he adds: "An active literary-public seven year period; I sum it up, because after it I ended up in different conditions; with literature, and public life, you could say, - the accounts were closed"(p. 117/1).

I want to thank A. V. Lavrov for his insights and useful suggestions on use of the archives. Prof. Dr. P. Brang kindly brought to my attention the important addition of the article by H. Riggenbach and R. Merti "Eine Grussadresse russischer Schriftsteller an Gerhart Hauptmann".