On March 31, the body was transferred to the Orthodox Church attached to the cemetery in Tegel, and on the next day, April 1, Nabokov was buried.

The March 31 meeting of the House of the Arts found the group in another location, the Nollendorf Casino on Kleiststraße 41. A curious argument developed between A. Belyj and Aleksei Tolstoj, which was reported in the new Russian language daily paper, Накануне:

Между А. Н. Толстым и Андреем Белым разгорелся частный спор, который так воспламенил последнего, что он включил к месту, и, обращаясь уже ко всей аудитории, быстро собрал вокруг себя "род веча"... Спор на модную тему - о "Смене вех", о "Накануне", против которых А. Белый ополчился с горячностью, не соответствующей его обычному спокойствию в частной беседе. (No. 7, April 2, 1922, p. 5).

The tongue-in-cheek description of Belyj notwithstanding, this was an issue of great concern to many and one which would seriously divide the emigre community in Berlin. The Bolshevik newspaper Новий Мир would announce in the April 5 issue that it was ceasing publication with the April 5, 1922 issue, and Накануне had begun just a few days previously. There was widespread belief that the paper was sponsored by and controlled from Soviet Russia. Struve writes of the group and notes that while the established parties were quick to denounce this idealized view of Bolshevism, the movement nevertheless succeeded in attracting a number of followers and in some ways served as an intermediary stage on the road back to Russia. Aleksei Tolstoj would become the literary editor of the newspaper and many found it difficult to reconcile the one time "Count" with his newfound political views. Tolstoj would become a figure of considerable controversy over the next few months, and Belyj would be unable to avoid taking a stand. There was also the arrest in Russia reported in March of the Social Revolutionaries, which would further divide the Berlin community.

April was a troubled month for Belyj. On April 5 he spoke at a meeting of "Vol'fila" in the Flora Diele on the subject "Индивидуализм и коллективизм" (GR, 934, April 5, p. 4). He again participated fully in the meetings of the House of the Arts. On April 7 at the House, Tolstoj, Vengerov and Belyj were supposed to speak about the theater. Instead, Belyj delivered an impromptu explanation on Eurythmy (the basis of his idiosyncratic "Глоосодания" based on Rudolph Steiner's teachings) (Накануне, 13, Apr. 9, 1922, p. 4). Another meeting was held on April 14. Belyj was listed as the moderator for the April 15 meeting of "Vol'fila" (GR, 942, Apr. 14, 1922, p. 6). But at a public lecture by Minskij on April 24, Belyj who had been announced as one of the discussants did not appear (Рул', 438, Apr. 26, 1922, p. 5). On April 28, he did show up at the House to attack the journal Веч. The first issue (March–April, I–II) was an attempt to expand the cultural horizons of Russians. The title page is in three languages, German, French and Russian. Edited by I. Erenburg and E. Lisitsev, the journal was defended at the meeting by both. Накануне in its customary fashion reported:

Во время прений выяснилась любопытная подробность: А. Белый, громивший "Веч" со всех точек зрения, увидевший в ней даже "личинку Антихриста", — признался в конце концов, что самой "Веч" он никогда не читал и даже не видел. Публика, по обыкновению, смешалась.

If Belyj was still comical at this point in time, he would soon become pathetic. Earlier in the month he had signed an introduction to Московский Альманах (April 6, 1922). The collection published by Ogon'ki contained a number of works brought from Moscow by Pil'njak plus works by Belyj and Remizov (both who had been former "Moscow" writers). In his introduction to this collection of writers in one volume Belyj writes:

Встреча авторов под покровом одной, их сплетающей, книги, должна не случайна быть... В самом деле: книга, в которой

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54 The demise of Новий Мир caused few tears at Голос Россiи which reported in its article: "Кончина 'Нового Мира'" as: "This is simply a renaming and a change of clothes. 'Новий Мир' is dying, so that its heir can be immediately born in its own successor - 'Накануне'" (No. 935, Apr. 6, 1922, p. 2).
57 This theme of "Individualism and collectivism" had appeared in Belyj's article "О duxi Rossii i o 'duxe' v Rossii."
58 Накануне, 29, April 30, 1922, p. 5.
May and June of 1922 are marked by an attempt at imposing solitude. Belyj moves to Zossen around May 5, a village to the south of Berlin.

The Telnyj Saint of St. John of Kronstadt, a reply to Vjačeslav Ivanov’s “Вселенское и родное”, caused Belyj to apologize for his failure to check the proofs of the work written in 1918. In Belyj’s words: “Понятно, что в начале 1918 года можно было иметь романтическое отношение к событиям в России... Мне тревожно грустно, что, забыв содержание перепечатываемой статьи, я не произвел ее сквозь собственную цензуру.” Unfortunately the issue did not end here. Five days later Belyj publishes an article “Ду gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst” (ГР, 954, Apr. 30, 1922, pp. 1–2) which in spite of the title was a reply in Russian to an attack on him and the publishing house Skify in a Nakanune article “Самоубийство” of April 28, 1922.

Belyj’s inner peace was also shattered by the departure of Asja. Their conversation had made clear that Belyj’s hope of a reconciliation were unrealistic. “Надеялся, что она - изменит; худая - и бедная. Мы поселились с ней в кафе; раза два говорили о прошлом, но мало: ей нет еще времени разговаривать о пустяках: Прощай!” (Записки чудака, p. 232). The break-up was described prosaically, with uncharacteristic understatement by Belyj, but the reality, unembellished in prose was cruel, painful and physically and psychologically almost disabling.\footnote{Alekssandr Baxrav, The Berlin Years 1921–1923, 300, recalls: “I visited Belyj several times in Zossen and only recall that the trip there was very difficult, that from the architectural paysage of the town came the smells of melancholy and barracks life (it was not for nothing that during the war some important headquarters was located there and that the house in which Belyj lived lay on a wide highway, across from a spacious cemetery. But I also recall that there in isolation, no one to disturb him, he could write almost a printer’s page per day.”}
Russia began to exercise its rights under the Treaty of Rapallo. At the end of May A. Tolstoj would be expelled from the Berlin Union of Russian Writers and Journalists. There was a June 1 deadline for Russians to apply for Soviet passports or find their citizenship revoked. In June the trial of the Social Revolutionaries began; Rathenau was assassinated and the printers in Berlin went on strike.

Still, Zossen was within commuting distance of Berlin, and Belyj had several occasions to visit the city. On May 10, he attended a closed meeting of Vol’f’ila to discuss “Мир и сосредоточение.” A similar meeting was scheduled for a week on May 17 later on the same topic. Esenin arrived in May in one of the first regularly scheduled flights between Moscow and Berlin and with Isadora Duncan caused a mild scandal at the May 12 meeting of the House of the Arts when they demanded that all join in a rendition of the International. Capitalizing on Esenin’s arrival in Berlin in May, Skify reprinted “Россия и Иностранный” (Belyj’s “Христос вскорее” and Esenin’s “Товарищ Иностранный” with an introductory article by Ivanov-Razumnik first published in 1920).44

The most important event of the month was the encounter on May 16 at the Prager Diele with Marina Cvetaeva. Cvetaeva and her daughter, Ariadna Efroin, had arrived in Berlin the previous day (May 15) and taken up residence in the Prager Pension where Erenburg and his wife lived. Here on Pragerplatz was the famous Stammische of Ijja Erenburg, who had been helpful in establishing contact with Cvetaeva’s husband, Sergej Efroin, and instrumental in publishing her “Разлука” with Gelikon.45 It was at the Prager Diele that Belyj would meet Marina. It was not their first encounter:

44 Without Belyj’s participation Vol’f’ila will gradually drop from sight. Skify, the publishing house closest to it, had only published “Сирин ученого варварства” by Belyj. There was also a curious note that a new philosophical society “The Free Philosophical Cooperative (Свободное Философское Сотрудничество)” had been founded as a counterweight to Vol’f’ila and Lev Sestov had been chosen honorary president on April 22. (See Golos Rossii, 954, Apr. 30, 1922, p. 8). Also known as “Zwovierson” the society “Accepts as members all those who are searching and those who have found something, whether physical or spiritual, in things or in ideas, is irrelevant.” Baxrak in a letter to me indicated this was probably another practical joke of Remizov’s.

45 Ijja Erenburg has recalled the Berlin period in his own memoirs “Люди, гоody, žizn’”, III, in Sobranie sočinenij, 8, Moscow 1966, pp. 399–433.

Marina had seen Belyj as a schoolgirl when he was already an established literary figure. There was also a curious connection between Marina and Asja Turgeneva, for whose affection she and Belyj somehow competed. But for Marina, the first real encounter with Belyj was the Berlin one. At the Prager Diele she recalls their first conversation in which Belyj eagerly grasped at the straws which connected their lives, not only the earlier meetings but the fact that both were offspring of professors, Professor Cvetaev and Professor Bugaev. That same evening, Belyj was given a copy of “Разлука”, Cvetaeva’s slim volume of verse dedicated to her husband, whom she had not seen since 1916. Cvetaeva’s separation from her beloved seemed amazingly similar to Belyj’s own separation from Asja. The coincidental in Belyj’s life had almost supernatural significance for him. Hadn’t he and Asja experienced identical dreams and curious encounters in 1912 which drove them both to seek out Rudolph Stern? Could this be the beginning of a new life?

We do know that “Разлука” had a profound effect on Belyj. He read the book that very evening and immediately dashed off a letter to Cvetaeva “Позвольте мне высказать глубокое восхищение перед совершенно крилатой мелодией Вашей книги “Разлука”.”46

Marina replied and Belyj answered with both a letter and a review article “Послесловие-повесть” in Golos Rossi on May 21 (No. 971, pp. 7–8).47 Belyj was also probably at the May 19 meeting of the House of the Arts at which Cvetaeva read. Soon thereafter, Belyj, in a burst of poetic inspiration, writes several new poems. His diary for May has the following entry: “обладает лирическое настроение: начинаю пишать стихи цикла Послед разлуки”. Cvetaeva, recalling the affair, exclaims that she did not understand the metrical explanations of Belyj (familiar to his readers of Simvolizm) and the actual effect of her upon his own poetry is difficult to assess. Belyj’s own perception, however, was that her work was a miracle: it

46 Cvetaeva has described her own version of the events in “Пленный дук” Sovremennye Zapiski, 55, 1934, pp. 198–255. A recent description of this encounter is provided by Anna SAAKJANG, “Встреча поэтов: Andrej Belyj i Marina Cvetaeva.” In: Andrej Belyj: Problemy tvorchestva, Moscow 1988, pp. 367–385. See also Thomas Beyer: “Marina Cvetaeva and Andrej Belyj: Razluka and Posle razluki.” (forthcoming)

47 Note Marina incorrectly identifies the newspaper as Dni. The article is reprinted in SAAKJANG, op. cit. 374–376.
Andrei Bely, The Berlin Years 1921-1923

Thomas Batters

wasn't a poet, but music, a song and for the next few weeks Bely's
himself would try to capture the same music in his own poetry.

After that, Bely wrote a frequent visitor, often staying with
his editor, Vinjak. The kids put rubber animals filled with water
in his bed. He helped arrange for publication of his "Proza",
poems and her article on Pasternak, and published a few of her
poems in his magazine. He wrote for a week or ten days. What Pasternak did not
know was that he was working for the month concludes that in June, "Thespo-
let" has been captured, and his diary ends in the following month. The significance of this poem
is that he is a 'true man'. Everyone knows but I, but me unhappily

Bely was in love with Anna Petrovskaia, and then the tragic affair with Lithov. Dmitrieva,
and finally Anna. In early May, Bely wrote: "Anna is a new
woman." But Bely had been wounded and was outraged by Anna's
parading of Alekseev, then before his eyes. He was convinced
that Bely's behavior was revenge for the "Thespolet". T. I.
which had appeared in May, Bely wrote: "Anna is a new
woman." On a conversation, actually a letter of June 24 in which he
quotes a conversation, actually a letter of June 24 in which he
claims.

Bely in Zossen reads to Pasternak from "Thespolet". She
quotes a conversation, actually a letter of June 24 in which he
claims.

It is difficult to agree with Pasternak's assertion. In 1923 he wrote to Kirov,
"It is difficult to agree with Pasternak's assertion. In 1923 he wrote to Kirov,
"I have difficulty that Bely's 'Thespolet' and Pasternak's 'Proza' may be discouraging.

"J. B. says, 'I have difficulty that Bely's 'Thespolet' and Pasternak's 'Proza'
may be discouraging." It is difficult to agree with Pasternak's assertion.

The brave poet, who in 1923 wrote to Kirov, "I have difficulty that Bely's 'Thespolet'
and Pasternak's 'Proza' may be discouraging. It is difficult to agree with Pasternak's assertion.

Anna Alekseeva, Turgenev, Pasternak, Kirov..."
чтобы еще удержать на земле. Рядом со мной сидел пленный дух” (Cvetaeva, p. 250).

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 Asia was just beginning.

Other memories of Belyj which characterize the Berlin period date from this second half of his stay. Xodasevič 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 “Плоскоголание” – “his best poem.” It and “Стихи о России” are published that summer by Эпоха, which also announces the forthcoming Сребрёныг голубь and Петербург as well as После Развалики. Also in July Belyj agrees with “Der Kommende Tag” publishing house to publish a German translation of his “Crises” series.44

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

Тогда новая клевета возводится на меня: Я де написал насильник на Сухольф Штейнера “ДОКТОР ДОННЕР” (тема романа, изображающего католического инсуита, направленная против традиций Церковь; клевете верят!”

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

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. Xmel'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 Xodasevič, Berberova and Geršenson; a five minute walk in either direction could bring them to Erenburg 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 Xodasevič, 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, Xodasevič, Baxrakh, remember when Belyj “плыкал фокстрот”.

“Поселен” в жизни Белого продолжался весьма недолго и прикладывенская комната была успешным так и там, и там – не убежится от него слова – трагически. Это переезда сошлось с апогеем его “безумие”, с тем, что двойное пристрастие к алкоголю и танцу (можно ли, страшно говоря, назвать танцами его плясовые упражнения?) стало общезвестным. (Baxrakh 301, 302).

76 “Поселен Андрея Белого.” In: A. Belyv, Stixotvorenija i poemy, Moscow 1966, p. 65.
77 Klavidia Nikolaevena Vasilev’a lists the house as No. 118 but in a letter from Belyj to Nadežda Štopak in November 1922, he gives the address as No. 9, and the “Berliner Adreßbuch” lists the Crampe Pension at No. 9.
78 John Malmstad, “Notes” pp. 342–343, reviews the literature on Belyj’s dancing. Xodasevič speaks of hysteresis 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 Nekropol’, 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 cafes. 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 Petrogard House of the Arts in the group Заукача 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 whole-heartedly 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 Osup, Vera Lur'e and Xodasević on the program, and the September 22 meeting which featured Tolstoj who read from his novel "Алита" 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 "Макар Čudra."81 Berberova recalls a meeting of Belyj and Xodasević 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 Rossii (No. 1069, September 24, 1922, pp. 6-7) and a third version signed "Редактор" appeared in issue No. 3 of Ėpopeja in 1922. On September 30, messages and flowers were presented to Gor'kij by a delegation which included Belyj as the representative from Vol'fia. 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:


80 Belyj's presence is noted in the daily list of meetings by Xodasević. 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 light. After their return to Russia, there would evolve a correspondence. Pasternak signed along with Pil'njak 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 Uncle Kostja in the novel "Договор же карать" is based on Belyj, Ron Peterson, "Andrej Belyj and Nikolai Vedenjapin", In: Wiener Slavistischer Almanach, 9, 1982, pp. 111-118.

81 See I. V. Koreckaja, Gor'kij i Andrej Belyj. In: Gor'kinskie čtenija, Moscow 1968, pp. 189-206.

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."
Andrei Belyj. The Berlin Years 1921–1923

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, Minskii, Èrenburg, Tolstoj, Škovskij, Xodasevič and the painter Ivan Punin. (Nakanune, 176, Nov. 3, 1922, p. 5). Belyj’s reign would be short-lived: a lovely caricature in Vremenniki (No. 3, Nov. 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 Xodasevič and others. Vera Lur’e, who is not invited along will write:

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

Vera’s absence is not all that surprising. Belyj, according to Xodasevič’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 “Rakurs”：“С Вольфиллом не идет. С Эпопее — не идет; с Домом искусств — галимать.”

Even so in October he continues work on the fourth and final section of his “Воспоминания о Блоке.”

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 Rossii (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-

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83 “Zovy vremen: Vmesto prediaslovija”. In: Novyi žurnal, 102, 1971, p. 91.
84 “Iz osenmix pesen” (My balagurim .. ) Ruł, 550, Sept. 20, 1922, p. 2. This is the only work by Belyj which I have been able to identify in Ruł. “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.
85 Vera Lourie, p. 104.
tor 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 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 Burliuk, Chagall, Kandinsky, Kustodiev, Malevich, Benois, Wasiliev, Zetlin and Tatlin.68 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.67 The major controversy which erupted was followed by a request that Alekseej Tolstoj be expelled from the House of the Arts. On the next evening, November 4, Belyj with Xodasevič 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.68

Belyj continued his activities in other forums, and he would be confronted with a memory of the past, “Осенью появилась в Берлине Нина Петровская, сама полунежная, нищая, старая, исхудавшая, хромая. 8 ноября, как раз накануне того дня, когда исполнялось одиннадцать лет со дня ее отъезда из России, они у меня встретились, вместе ушли и вместе провели вечер. Оба жаловались потом. Даже безумства никакого не вышло. С ними случилось самое горькое всего, что могло случиться: им было просто скушно друг с другом.”69 On November 11 Belyj was at the Writers' Club and on the 12th he went with Xodasevič 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 Nadezhdé Oseevna Shechupak.60 He became an active contributor to the newspaper Dni and published excerpts from his Memoirs On November 5 and 19.61 He also could read in Dni a review of “Glossolalija” by Vera Lure, most of it dictated to her by him (No. 10, Nov. 9, 1922, p. 12).62

Belyj would journey again to Saarow – a two hour trip from Berlin – on November 23 to visit Xodasevič, 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.63 He attends and speaks at a lecture of Fedor Stepun on December 11. The newspaper accounts attest that Belyj had not lost his ability to captivate an audience.

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

67 See BRYER “The House of the Arts…” pp. 27–32.

68 ALEKSANDR BAXRA, Po pamjati, po zapisjam: 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 had no rules and no records. (This account for the sporadic nature of meeting announcements and reports in the press.) I think K. N. Bugaeva errs in her note that Belyj continued to work in the House of the Arts in November and December 1922. Baxra indicated to me that after the Nov. 3 meeting, the subsequent resignations from their positions and the simultaneous founding of Klub pisateley, that Belyj, Xodasevič 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 Xodasevič 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.

69 XODASEVIČ, p. 91.

70 See Boris SAPIR, An Unknown Correspondent of Andrej Belyj in SEER, XLIX, 116, July 1971, pp. 450–452. Curiously, Belyj will indicate that he considers “put’ otrezan” for his return to Russia.

71 The following articles appeared over Belyj's signature in November in Dni: “Gergardt Gauptman”, No. 19, Nov. 19, 1922, p. 11 (the speech was apparently written by Belyj and then copied in his own inimitable script by Alekseej Remizov.) “Iz vosproinaniy” No. 7, Nov. 5, 1922, p. 16, 17; “Na put’ax” No. 13, Nov. 12, 1922, p. 10; “Na Ivanovskoj Bašno” No. 19, Nov. 19, 1922, p. 9. He also published his article “My idey k pred’očuščenju novyf form” in Veretnyč, 3, Nov. 1922, p. 2.

72 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, усиленной 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 Николая Летаева” 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 развалу буржуазной культуры, произошло, якобы, на почве того, что преобразованный изобретатель теософии Рудольф Штейнер вместо теософии занялся спекуляцией, открыл лавочку и бойко торгует.”

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 Xodasevič 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. (Baxrax 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 взволнен: какие же это воспоминания о Блоке? Где Блок? (Эпопея, 4, 1922, p. 128).95 There is a clear -cut sequence of Belyj examining his own life through his poetry and prose. In “Glossolalia” he had written “воспоминание есть начало мыслительной жизни” (p. 97). The death of Blok and the subsequent work on the memoirs would provide an alternative method for self-examination, evaluation and analysis. But it was still one step removed from the purely personal. Belyj would spend the next ten years examining his life one more time, but this time more directly, without the filter of poetry, prose or third person memoirs.

As the year drew to a close, Belyj could recall good times and bad - professional triumphs and personal failures and tragedy. He writes in the “Ранкур”: “Ужасный . . . месяц . . . все бросаю” and his troubled state of mind can be examined in “Россия в России и Россия в Берлине”, which he writes in December. Had he taken stock of his accomplishments in Berlin, he would have found that his expectations for writing and publishing were amply fulfilled. Močul’skj cites sixteen works printed between 1922-1923. Seven are republications: “Звезды”, “Серебряный голубь”, “Путевое заметки”, “Чистые записи”, “Воспоминания о Блоке” in Эпопея (1923).96 Belyj had continued to contribute to the journal Записки мечтателей in Russia and to Современные записки in Paris.97 He had published in Die Drei, the Anthroposophical journal published in Stuttgart, and his “Krisis des Gedankens” would be published in 1923.98


96 Močul’skj, p. 239. Most other scholars have quoted these same figures. The list omits “Поеzija slova” and “O smysle poznaniia” and the republication of “Первое свидание.”


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 Xodasević, 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 "Гетеанума" (с которым Я был так связан); и — точнее: приездом в Берлин К. Н., появившейся для меня в самую опасную минуту простоя; с этого начинается незаметное присутствие болезни в медленное выздоровление: с желанием выздороветь; в нашем общении с К. Н. (январь — до июля 23-го) вызревает во мне жажда 1) вернуться в Россию (оживает тема "Москва") 2) оживает "доктор" (К. Н. невольно мирил меня с ним); в марте 23 года доктор мне "все" объясняет, что казалось неправдой.99

After spending the first and second in Saarow with Xodasević, 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 Doevev and Vera Lur'e read from their works. (Novaja Russkaja Kniga, 1, Jan 1923, p. 37). Vasil'eva-Bugaeva notes that Belyj participated in at least one of these evenings. Belyj's "Кайрун" appeared in Воля России (1, Jan 15, 1923, pp. 1-19) and he published an article written in Moscow in 1920: "Проблема культуры" in Струи, 1, Berlin: 1923, pp. 163-188.

The central event of January 1923 was the arrival of Klavdija Nikolaevna Vasil'eva, who would serve as the catalyst for Belyj's reconciliation with Steiner and his return to Soviet Russia. Granted a visa by Mohnzinsky, 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.100 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 faite — an image of Asja or Nina Petrovskaja or Ljubov' Dmitrievna; Bakhraf remembers her as "миловидной и очень ласковой женщиной."101 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.

Мне здание это особенно близко; с ним связаны для меня несравнимые, может быть, самые значительные воспоминания жизни моей; ... Ограниченным людям, постившим себе целью освобождать нас, распространять кресты на нас, не объяснять,


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. BAXHRA "Po pamjati, ..." p. 313. DOLGOPOLOV says "In a state of mind close to frenzy Belyj was taken away [uvezen] ...", see "Neizvedannyj materik". In: Vopropj literatury, 3, 1982, p. 135.

что в сгоревшие ныне формы действительно вколотил я часть жизни (и – лучшую часть)...

Иоанново здание соединялось со светом: вспыхивало и взвенялось в атмосферу воздушную.

Но оно не погибло.

Мы – выстроим новое здание: новой любви, совершенного мира и братства народов! Пожар Гетеанум не запугивает нас: он – лишь вливает в нас новые силы: к созданию – Иоаннова Здания!  

Vera Lur’e has recalled that the burning of the Goetheanum in which 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 Rafaelovič spoke on “Современный театр”. Belyj along with Stepan and Zajcev 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 Beseda were in high gear.  

On March 7, Stepan read at the Writers’ Club about the “Стихия 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 сожжения” 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, Beseda, although Gor’kij would later write that Belyj’s participation was nominal. He would, nonetheless, make lengthy contributions to the first two issues of the journal.  

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.  

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 не 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 Штейнера” Belyj recalls the crucial nature of their conversation. The significance and lasting effect of the encounter is attested to by others. Asja recalled, “После разговора с Штейнером в Штутгарте, перед отъездом в Россию. Бугаев говорила моей сестре, что данное ему на прощание Доктором будет ему помощно во всей его последующей жизни.” The week also served to close the book on Belyj’s relationship with Asja: “При нашей последней встрече в Штутгарте Ан. В. 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)." Novyj Żurnal, 29, 1952, p. 207.


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была между нами на жизненный путь. Но его путь был иной."

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 Дни (No. 128, Apr. 1, 1923, pp. 9–10). On April 4 he attends a reading at the Writers’ Club by Xođasević (NRK, 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.” In April, he also resigns from Эпос and with Volume 4 the journal ceases publication.

Многообразные занятия и отсутствие свободного времени не позволили мне продолжать редактирование “Эпос”; оставался постоянным сотрудничеством мне близкого журнала я все же должен выйти из состава Редакции.

Local news items indicate the changing scene in Berlin for Russians: “В последнее время в советское представительство на Унтер-ден-Линден замечается усиленный наплыв желавших получить разрешение на въезд в РСФСР” (Рул’ 716, April 8, 1923, p. 9). On April 26 Рул’ 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 Nikolaevna moved to Harzburg. Belyj’s ties with the emigre community in Berlin would be further shaken by his article which appeared in the first issue of Беседа.

Rul’ announced on May 6 that the first issue had appeared. The article, which had been written in December of 1922, “О России в России и о России в Берлине” is a rationale for Belyj’s return to the Soviets.

Увы, понял ненужность теперешних выступлений в Берлине. Работа культурная здесь представляется в данных условиях вряд ли возможной мне: факт восприятия это – не более. Знаю: в Берлине так много учащихся; молодежь современной России (интеллигентская и рабочая) мне понятна, известна; я был с ней в контакте; ... здесь в Берлине, я чувствую часто чужим себя, непонятным, ненужным; и молодежи – не знаю; настроение русской публики кажется мне “курфюрстендамским” каким-то; а лени отдыхая отнимающими драгоценное “кафеландграцное”, “прогрессивное” время.

One can see the old themes of “why I can’t do cultural work” reappearing. Belyj was terribly impatient, and in spite of large number of works which he successfully completed, his vision was always beyond his grasp. He was too intolerant, a work-horse who lacked the ability to see most projects through to their conclusion and a polished end product. Somehow the image of him working on the Goetheanum with a hammer and chisel seems appropriate.

He was equally blunt about Soviet Russia.

Пищу об унках современной России; есть ужасы – да: утекает сырье, нет пособий учебных, нет школы (развалена); ели друг друга; быть может, едят еще где-нибудь... Вы не думаете, что я слепой, что не видел я “зверя” (pp. 218–220).

Belyj tries to persuade himself, as it were:

И нет спора: в России писать тяжело (нет бумаги, чернил, типографий); ... очень трудно конкретно работать в России; и – вот же: работают. Этим – все сказано.

Человек – не “субъект” “прогрессивных” продуктов. От хлеба я сыт и от пива я пьяен, но я ... голоден, голоден: дайте мне хлеба духовного! Холодно мне в этом “теплом” месте культуры “берлинской России” (pp. 228, 232–233).

Belyj the polemist, a role he had enjoyed in the heydays of Symbolism, would emerge even more forcefully that month of May. In

Andrey Belyj. The Berlin Years 1921–1923


109 See the note in Дни, 139, Apr. 15, 1923, p. 13. Belyj and others will later refer to this work as “Нацало века”. In Беседа, 2, 1923, which appears in August, an advertisement by Эпоха announces the publication of “Нацало века” by Andrej Belyj: “Vol. I: Blok i ego vremja, Vol 2: Sumerki, Vol 3: Krizis, Vol 4, Revoljucija”. 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.


112 Беседа, 1, 1923, p. 213.
the same issue of Beseda, there was an article by Dr. Hans Leisegang, "Anthroposophy," a translation from the German which began with a short biography of Steiner but went on to characterize his philosophy as "mystical speculation." The exposition type of article prompted Belyj, who at the end of the month was in Harzburg with Klavdiva Nikolaevna to come to Steiner's defense in the next issue of Beseda. In the article dated May 26, 1923 Harzburg, Belyj characterizes himself as "student of Dr. Steiner and a member of the Anthroposophical Society." (p. 392) Belyj would ultimately fall victim to the same sin of memoir writing that he had criticized in 1921. Harzburg was a particularly productive spot; his article "Околица прежней Москвы" is also dated May 23 at Harzburg (Sovremennye zapiski, 16, 1923, pp. 190–209). There was also a long section of "Воспоминания" in Beseda which recalled Belyj's first encounter with Steiner and Anthroposophy and the early mystical experiences of him and Asja. Asja was not exactly pleased with this publication of intimate details of their relationship; but, of course, by this time all communication had ceased.

These memoirs pick up where the "Путевые Заметки" had left off in Brussels in 1912 where the mystical experiences of Asja and Belyj caused them to take a train to Köln to see Steiner. This more factual account (as opposed to previous stylized fictional memoirs such as in the article) indicate a major trend in Belyj's work from this point on. Belyj had from the beginning of the century reviewed almost his entire life in his prose. "Котяк Иеремия" and "Крещенный китай" had moved him from childhood to adolescence. "Петербург" and "Серебряный голубь" dealt with the writer of 1905 and the following years. "Записки чудака" covered the life of Ledjanoj and Nelli (Belyj and Asja) in Dornach. Belyj had already begun to review his life in the "Воспоминания о Блоке" which encompassed the years 1904–1909 and the "Путевые заметки" for 1910–1911. From this point on, beginning in 1923, Belyj would work for a third and final time review the experiences of his life - this time not through the rosy-colored filter of fiction, or the third person of Blok.

Belyj and Klavdiva Nikolaevna spent June at Harzburg and it was here that the final decision to return to Russia was made, although it was not made public to friends. "Изъ проводим с К. Н. в Гарцбурге; здесь пишу этюд 'Москва' (часть 3-го 'Начала века') и твердо решая везде за уязвяющей К. Н. вернуться в Россию." "Ужасно скучал по России... Трудно жить с берлинскими русскими!" he writes on June 27 to P. Zajcev. What were the reasons for the decision? Klavdiva 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, Xodasenčič. But others like Alekseej 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 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 Anhalter Bahnhof (sic)." Xodasevič 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 Ahlbeck. On July 23 he takes K. N. Vasil'eva to Stettin and then travels on to Ahlbeck where he anxiously awaits permission to return to Russia. Writing from Ahlbeck to Baxrax on July 26 Belyj complains that he cannot work.

114 An excerpt of this article appeared in Dni, 202, July 1, 1923, pp. 9, 11.

116 Quoted in Bugaeva, Letopis', p. 121.
117 Belyj's letters to Baxrax of July 26, 1923 and August 16, 1923 are found in