New Perspectives on Dostoevsky: Notes, Queries, Translations

A. Meshchersky’s letter to the heir to the throne of Russia in support of Dostoevsky’s enclosed request for financial assistance, and further correspondence.

B. Dostoevsky’s mother’s best friend Ekaterina Alfonsky with British “Gardner” connection?

C. Dostoevsky’s autobiographical note intended for foreign correspondent?

D. Dostoevsky’s appeal to Interior Minister to have police surveillance lifted.

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Abstracts

Some obscure connections that may have affected aspects of F.M. Dostoevsky’s life and works are explored and their implications delved into, with the intention of offering new insights into the forces and processes that encroached onto the dynamics of the writer’s artistic production. First translations into English of the documents are included.

A. Foregrounded is a letter from Prince Vladimir Meshchersky of early January 1872 (first published in 2014), addressed to the heir to the throne of Russia, Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich Romanov. Enclosed with it was a letter from F.M. Dostoevsky in which he asked the heir for financial assistance. In addition, Dostoevsky’s other known letters to the heir are evaluated. These include Dostoevsky’s next letter thanking the heir for the “favour” granted dated 28 January, 1872; Dostoevsky’s presentation of and commentary to his novel Demons dated 10 February, 1873, and to his Writer’s Diary, dated 16 November, 1876.

Keywords

Dostoevsky’s letters to Alexander Alexandrovich Romanov – V.P. Meshchersky – Demons (Besy) – Dostoevsky’s debts
B. Information contained in the *Memoirs* of F.M. Dostoevsky’s younger brother Andrei that reveals the close friendship of their mother Maria Fedorovna with Ekaterina Alfonsky is examined. References to members of the Alfonsky family feature prominently in Dostoevsky’s preparatory notes to his intended major work *Life of a Great Sinner* (*Zhitie velikogo greshnika*), echoes of which appear in his notes to *Demons* (*Besy*) and in later novels. According to Andrei, the two friends met every day, and he considers it remarkable that their mother was buried at Lazarevsky cemetery near her former friend, whom he describes as having been born a “Gardner”, believing she was descended from the British-born Francis Gardner, founder of a porcelain factory. Although some details in Andrei’s reminiscences are incorrect, the information he supplies compels one to investigate Dostoevsky’s mother’s friendship, and through its prism Maria’s input into her childrens’ reading, her encouragement of imaginative games, and the traces her own interests may have left on Dostoevsky’s development and attitudes as a writer.

**Keywords**


C. The third document to be discussed is F.M. Dostoevsky’s only attempt at writing a short autobiographical note that covers his life up to and including 1877. Dostoevsky dictated it to his wife, who took it down in shorthand. We speculate on the identity of the intended recipient, bearing in mind suggestions that it may have been “an editor of a newspaper” or a “French foreign correspondent”. A hypothesis is proposed that the note was drafted through the intermediary of Konstantin Pobedonostsev. Included amongst the possible recipients is the foreign correspondent of *The Times* of London, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace. Examined also are the likely reasons for Dostoevsky choosing to represent some events in his life from a particular stance, emphasizing the significance of some, while deflecting attention from others in the context of an assertive narrative constructed along an ideologically-engendered line (*napravlenie*).

**Keywords**

Dostoevsky’s autobiography – Dostoevsky’s military background – arrest – Slavophilism – Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace correspondent to *The Times* of London
D. The fourth document to be considered is the forgotten draft memorandum composed by F.M. Dostoevsky in 1879–1880 that was intended to be sent to the Minister of the Interior requesting that secret police surveillance on Dostoevsky be lifted. The letter has never been translated into English and is not included in the standard five-volume collection of Dostoevsky’s letters in English translation.

Keywords


Introduction

More has been written about Dostoevsky than probably any other writer in Russia, yet there are still aspects pertaining to his life and works of which we have only partial knowledge. Not having absolute certainty about some obscure connections should not preclude us from attempting to explore them. It is proposed to go on a quest to consider some such examples, delve into their implications, offer our observations, and come up with possible new insights into the forces and processes that encroached onto the dynamics of Dostoevsky’s artistic production. One’s justification is Dostoevsky’s own expressed belief that there is no one, who consciously yearns to make a mistake, and that more often than not, those who come to the wrong conclusions sincerely seek after truth (as reported by N.N. Strakhov in the context of their evening conversation in Florence, regarding Dostoevsky opposing the view that $2 \times 2$ could only equal 4, and defending $2 \times 2= 5$): “By the very essence of the matter, every thought has its cause and its foundation, every thought, both broad and deep, and petty and narrow, moves according to the same logical laws and, consequently, the grossest error contains elements of truth.” [“По самой сущности дела всякая мысль имеет свой повод и свое основание, всякая мысль, как широкая и глубокая, так и мелкая и узкая, движется по одному и тем же логическим законам и, следовательно, самое грубое заблуждение носит в себе элементы истины.”]¹ Hence an attempt will be made to bring to the

fore some significant details relating to Dostoevsky that have been neglected by most commentators hitherto.

A Meshchersky’s Letter to the Heir to the Throne of Russia Supporting Dostoevsky’s Enclosed Request for Financial Assistance, and Further Correspondence.

Dostoevsky’s appeal to the heir to the Russian throne, Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich (1845–1894), the future Alexander III, was forwarded by Prince Vladimir Petrovich Meshchersky (1839–1914) together with Meshchersky’s accompanying letter that introduced Dostoevsky’s appeal and briefly explained the latter’s predicament. First published in Russia in 2014, Meshchersky’s letter is being made available to readers here in its first translation into English. It has been presumptively dated by the editor of Meshcherky’s correspondence as having been written at the “Beginning of January, 1872”, while Dostoevsky’s letter that it accompanied has not been found so far and is presumed lost. A reference to it is included in the “List of letters and business papers that have not been preserved and not been found 1869–1874” in the Complete Collected Works of F.M. Dostoevsky, where it is presumptively dated as having been written between the “Autumn of 1871-first half of January, 1872”. Dostoevsky had returned to St Petersburg with his family on July 8, 1871 after living abroad for over four years from mid-April 1867. He was continuing work on his unfinished novel Demons (also known as The Possessed) (Besy), conceived abroad in 1869–1870 that was being serialised throughout 1871 in the monthly journal Russian Messenger (Russkii Vestnik) in which the first 7 parts had appeared in volumes 1–2, 4, 7, 9–11. He is believed to have met Meshchersky sometime in the autumn of that year through the intermediary of A.N. Maikov.

At the time Prince Vladimir Meshchersky was a civil servant in the Ministry of the Interior, as well as a published writer and was just embarking on his career as publisher of the weekly-newspaper The Citizen (Grazhdanin) that...
was launched in January 1872. He had been a friend of Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov (1843–1865), the heir apparent (and older brother of the addressee of the letter), and since 1863 Meshchersky had corresponded with him and watched him being groomed to succeed his father, Emperor Alexander II to the throne of Russia. But “tragically” the heir succumbed to a malady and soon died in April 1865 in Nice from tuberculous meningitis of the spine, a disease that appears to have been accelerated by an accidental fall off his horse. As befitting his position, Nikolai had become engaged to the daughter of the King of Denmark, Princess Dagmar (1847–1928) on his 21st birthday, 8 (20) September 1864, who was present at his deathbed. The following year the Imperial family arranged the betrothal of Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich, now the Tsesarevich, to Princess Dagmar after she had accepted Orthodoxy. Nikolai Alexandrovich’s passing was the reason why Meshchersky then re-focused his devotion and affection on his grieving younger brother Alexander, the new heir to the throne, and assumed the self-appointed role of becoming his mentor.4

When Meshchersky’s letter accompanying that of Dostoevsky was being planned and dispatched, between late 1871 and early 1872, the close relationship between Meshchersky and the young heir had not yet entirely broken off and almost collapsed, as it did for a period of time shortly after. But Dostoevsky is likely to have believed all the while that Meshchersky’s relationship with Alexander Alexandrovich was solid. Meshchersky’s letter was found amongst his voluminous correspondence with Alexander Alexandrovich begun in 1863, together with the Tsesarevich’s unpublished diaries preserved at the State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiskoi Federatsii-garf). Meshchersky wrote to the Tsesarevich Alexander Alexandrovich: “I hereby take the liberty of passing on to you a letter – a cry of desperation from the poverty-stricken and celebrated [F. M.] Dostoevsky, the finest writer of our era in Russia, who is at this grievous moment in his life setting his hopes on your mercy!” [«При сем позволяю себе передать Вам письмо – крик отчаяния бедного и знаменитого [Ф.М.] Достоевского, лучшего писателя нашего времени в России, – уповающего в самую тяжелую минуту своей жизни на Ваше милосердие!»]5 According to Meshchersky’s explanation: “He (Dostoevsky – I.Z.) came to see me, handed over this letter, and I have been meticulously and conscientiously collecting affidavits in order to have the right to hand this letter over to you. And here it is!” [«Он ко мне пришел, отдал

5 Chernikova, 419.
Dostoevsk[y] has ended up in an impossible debt situation because, on the death of his brother, in order to save his memory and honest name from shame, he undertook to pay all his debts, took money from various implacable creditors, who are threatening him with prison, and in this desperate situation he is suffering daily epileptic fits which are bringing him close to death. On the other hand, restoring his peace of mind by assisting him with a loan would mean restoring him to life and, with his life, his talent! [Достоевск[ий] потому впал в неоплатный долг, что по смерти брата его взялся, дабы спасти память и честное имя его от позора, заплатить все долги его, получил деньги от разных неумолимых кредиторов, которые грозят ему тюрьмою, и в этом отчаянном положении припадки падучей болезни от забот приходят ежедневно и приближают его к смерти. Напротив, возвратить ему спокойствие, помогши ему займом, значило бы возвратить ему жизнь, а с жизнью – талант!]⁶

Meshchersky's assistance in helping Dostoevsky procure some funding or a loan that enabled the writer to pay off his creditors at least partially, challenges the impression that Dostoevsky's widow Anna Grigorievna wished to create that it was exclusively the venerable (and socially reputable) K.P. Pobedonostsev (1827–1908), tutor to the heir, who was instrumental in instigating Dostoevsky's contacts with the Grand Duke. Pobedonostsev did indeed facilitate some of Dostoevsky's communications with the Romanov family, but that was at a later stage and under different circumstances, after Dostoevsky's contact with the Grand Duke had already been established with the help of Meshchersky. Pobedonostsev seems to have waited until Dostoevsky's reputation as a Slavophile-orientated writer loyal to the regime had been demonstrated following the publication of Demons, and proven with the launching of his column Writer's Diary (Dnevnik pisatelia) for 1873. Since Dostoevsky's request for financial assistance or a loan was granted by the heir, it confirms one's impression that Dostoevsky must have felt greatly indebted to him and everything that he stood for, and would have felt even more obliged than before to demonstrate his special devotion and support, whenever his conscience allowed it. He was

⁶ Chernikova, 419.
still in the process of completing the concluding chapters of his novel *Demons* of which two more parts were to be written that would appear in volumes 11–12 in *Russian Messenger* in 1872. These would provide an acceptable ending that would cohere with the exclusion of the chapter “At Tikhon’s” that was again rejected by the publisher M.N. Katkov.

The decision to grant Dostoevsky financial assistance would have been made in consultation with the Grand Duke’s advisors, since the funds assigned may have had to come out of the official budget allocated to the heir’s household, overseen by the Minister of the Imperial Palace, A.V. Adlerberg. It must have been deemed acceptable, or even “gracious and merciful” to give Dostoevsky, a former member of the Petrashevsky circle and political convict, a grant, since he was a popular and respected writer, who proclaimed he had now reformed; besides, he would have been considered valuable to have as an ally. Dostoevsky, in his turn, may have believed that one way of demonstrating his sense of gratitude to the Grand Duke and also to Meshchersky was to offer at the end of 1872 to take up in January 1873 the editorship of the conservative orientated newspaper *The Citizen* published by Meshchersky, after the latter’s current editor G.K. Gradovsky had decided to leave. Significantly, the first issue of *The Citizen* under Dostoevsky’s editorship on January 1, 1873 opened with a tribute to Alexander Alexandrovich entitled: “Joyous tidings on the recuperation of the Heir to the Throne” [“Радостные известия о выздоровлении Государя Наследника”]. In later issues other articles and items in columns followed in which some current and past members of the Imperial family, and decisions of the government were presented in a positive light, while certain trends in the bureaucracy, and in social ranks or estates received a more critical assessment.

Some subsequent letters from Dostoevsky to the heir, Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich have been published earlier and are known. The most frequently cited and significant letter is the one of 10 February 1873 (29(1), 260–261), which, according to Dostoevsky’s wife Anna Grigorievna was written after Tsesarevich Alexander Alexandrovich had indicated through Pobedonostsev, his tutor, of his interest in learning of Dostoevsky’s own interpretation of his novel *Demons* (29(1), 499). However, there does not exist currently any published

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8 Dostoevsky’s letter was first published from a copy made by A.G. Dostoevskaiia: Nedra, kn.2. (Moscow, 1923) 275–276). It contained a number of discrepancies from the original autograph version published in 1986. She had written with the copy: “This letter was addressed to his Imperial Highness the heir, Tsesarevich Alexander Alexandrovich in
correspondence from Pobedonostsev demonstrating this, although he may have mentioned it to Dostoevsky’s at one of Meshchersky’s gatherings in the winter of 1872–1873 in connection with the publication of the first book-version of Demons. His earliest letters to Dostoevsky begin on 21 June/3 July 1873, and concern exclusively formal editorial matters about articles that Pobedonostsev was contributing to The Citizen, while Dostoevsky was its editor, all published anonymously signed with cryptonyms, many relating to his travels in England in early summer and he did not return until the last week of July (29(10, 284).

Dostoevsky’s decision, while explaining the novel to the Grand Duke was to focus on certain elements in Russian social history that he believed had generated the phenomenon of Nechaevism and attempt to justify its emergence in terms of socio-historical processes, describing his work as a “historical study” [исторический этюд]. In Demons Dostoevsky had depicted provocatively the nihilist ideology espoused by the student Nechaev germinating within Tsarist autocracy. A conspiratorial revolutionary with a pathological tendency, Nechaev’s criminal activities were linked by Dostoevsky with the “Westernism” of the liberals of the 1840s, the alleged “fathers” of the nihilists of the 1860s. Now he found himself in the paradoxical situation of having to defend his depiction and justify it to his “august addressee” in a way that would cover all contingencies and possible pitfalls, and simultaneous make his choice of subject matter, that exposed destructive forces in Russian society, legitimate. He advocated a solution by aligning it to an imagined Imperial policy that would accentuate Russian exceptionalism. It was as if he was rearranging the pieces in his kaleidoscopic novel and letting them fall into new patterns that would reshape the outcome accordingly by deflecting blame from Imperial policies and shifting it on to ‘historical processes’. (29(1) 260–261):

These phenomena are a direct consequence of the age-old divorce of all Russian enlightenment from the native and distinct principles of Russian life. Even the most talented representatives of our pseudo-European development have long since come to be convinced of the absolute crim-

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10 Thirtyeight of Pobedonostsev’s anonymous contributions have been identified in: Zohrab (2004), ‘The contents of The Citizen’. 
inality of us, Russians, dreaming of our distinctiveness. Most horrible of all is that they are absolutely right, because having proudly called ourselves Europeans, we have thereby renounced being Russians. In embarrassment and awe before the fact that we have fallen so far behind Europe in intellectual and scientific development, we have forgotten that we ourselves, in the depth and seeds of the Russian soul, contain within ourselves, as Russians, the ability, perhaps, to bring new light to the world, on condition of the distinctiveness of our development. In ecstasy of our abasement, we have forgotten the most immutable historical law that consists of the fact that without such arrogance about our own significance for the world as a nation we can never be a great nation and leave after ourselves at least something distinctive for the benefit of mankind.11

[Эти явления – прямое последствие вековой оторванности всего просвещения русского от родных и самобытных начал русской жизни. Даже самые талантливые представители нашего псевдоевропейского развития давным-давно уже пришли к убеждению о совершенной преступности для нас, русских, мечтать о своей самобытности. Всего ужаснее то, что они совершенно правы; ибо, раз с гордостию назвав себя европеяздами, мы тем самым отреклись быть русскими. В смущении и страхе перед тем, что мы так далеко отстали от Европы в умственном и научном развитии, мы забыли, что сами, в глубине и задачах русского духа, заключаем в себе, как русские, способность, может быть, принести новый свет миру, при условии самобытности нашего развития (29(1) 260–261).]

A later note of Dostoevsky's to the Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich dated 16 November 1876 was indeed sent at the instigation of Pobedonostsev, who suggested that Dostoevsky present the heir with copies of the Writer’s Diary: “I don't know if you are delivering your “Writer’s Diary” to the heir, the Tsesarevich? If not, then it wouldn't be bad if you sent it to him ... but if you want to deliver it with an interpretation, then deign to send them to me and I will send it to him with a written explanation that this is from you.” [«Не знаю, доставляете ли вы свой “Дневник писателя” наследнику цесаревичу? Если нет, то не дурно было бы, когда бы вы ему посылали ... а если желаете доставить с толкованием, то благоволите прислать ко мне и я отошлю их к нему с письменным объяснением, что это от вас представляется»].12

12 Grossman, 132.
Dostoevsky again assumed the role of an instructor (or ‘life coach’ in today’s parlance) taking the opportunity to outline briefly his view of the Russian historical situation and throw in the popular Slavophile concept of the so-called “Russian Idea”:

The present great energies in Russian history have elevated the spirits and hearts of the Russian people with unimaginable power to a height of understanding of much that was not earlier understood, and have illuminated in our consciousness the sanctity of the Russian idea more vividly than ever before. I could not fail to respond either, with all my heart to everything that has begun and appeared in our land, in our just and wonderful people. [Нынешние великие силы в истории русской подняли дух и сердце русских людей с недостижимою силой на высоту понимания многоуг, чего не понимали прежде, и осветили в сознании нашем святн русской идеи ярче, чем когда бы то ни было до сих пор. Немог и я не отозваться всем сердцем моим на все, что началось и явилось в земле нашей, в справедливом и прекрасном народе нашем. В “Дневнике” моем есть несколько слов, горячо и искренне вырвавшихся из души моей, я помню это (29(2), 132–133)].

Until recently this letter of Dostoevsky’s was only available in a draft copy made by his wife, Anna Grigorievna, as reprinted in 1986 in Volume 29(2) of Dostoevsky’s letters. But in 2020 the original autograph of the letter was discovered in the “Archives of the Office of the Successor Tsesarevich in the Ministry of the Imperial Court” and published in 2020 with some discrepancies between it and the earlier version made emphatic. One other letter from Dostoevsky to the Grand Duke Alexander Alexandrovich was also published for the first time in 1986 and dated 28 January 1872. It was a letter of thanks written after Dostoevsky’s request for assistance in the earlier letter (now missing) delivered by Meshchersky (as discussed above) had been granted. Nothing was publically confirmed for over a hundred years following Dostoevsky’s death about the assistance that the Grand Duke had accorded him, until this letter of thanks from Dostoevsky of 28 January 1872 expressing his gratitude

14 E.D. Maskevich, B.D. Tikhomirov, ‘Neizvestnyi avtograf F.M. Dostoevskogo (Pis’mo Tsesarevichu Nasledniku Aleksandru Aleksandrovichu), Neizvestnyi Dostoevskii, 2020, Noi. 5–12. In the introductory ‘Abstract’ to this article by Maskevich and Tikhomirov the dating of the letter is 1878, and not 1876, which must be a misprint, as the correct dating is later illustrated in the facsimile as 1876.
was published for the first time in *PSS* (29(1) 226). In his letter of thanks it is not entirely clear what “favour” precisely Dostoevsky is thanking the Grand Duke for. Perhaps this lack of clarity was deliberate on Dostoevsky’s part because he was expecting this letter to be opened by the heir’s secretary and did not wish to embarrass the Grand Duke for his magnanimity towards a former political convict? He did write however: “My feelings are vague: I am both ashamed of the boldness I exhibited, and at the same time I am filled now with delight at the priceless attention that Your Highness has paid to my request. It is dearer to me than anything else, dearer than the very help that You gave me and which saved me from a great calamity.”\(^{15}\) [«Чувства мои смутны: мне и стыдно за бывшую смелость мою, и в то же время я исполнен теперь восхищения от драгоценного внимания Вашего высочества, оказанного просьбе моей. Оно дороже мне всего, дороже самой помощи, мне оказанной Вами и спасшей меня от большого бедствия (29(1), 226)»].

There were indirect rumours at the time that Dostoevsky may have received some financial assistance from the highest authorities, including hints contained in his own correspondence, though these were not confirmed and Anna Grigorievna never mentioned this in her own memoirs, although her descriptions of the financial hardships experienced by them virtually dominate her reminiscences. She writes of their debts after their return to Russia (i.e. 1871) and that: “with accumulated interest, they totaled twenty-five thousand by the time we returned from abroad. We had to pay them back for 13 years. Not until the year before my husband died did we settle them at last.”\(^{16}\) The impression is created that the debts were paid off solely due to her astute handling of the creditors and the enterprises that she initiated to publish his works independently and supply them to booksellers and to subscribers directly. Finally this culminated in the opening of their new business at the start of 1880: “F.M. DOSTOEVSKY, BOOKSELLER TO THE PROVINCES ONLY”\(^{17}\).

Yet Dostoevsky’s own correspondence provides some evidence of the financial assistance that he received. For instance, he was also able to pay off a long-standing debt to his faithful friend from his younger days, doctor S.D.Yanovsky, who had cared for him whenever he had been unwell (29(i), 228–230) (although Dostoevsky ultimately politely rejected him). Dostoevsky also wrote to his favourite niece, Sonia Ivanova, with whom he had maintained a fairly intimate correspondence saying that he had received “a considerable amount of money” and was able to satisfy some of his creditors (29(i),

\(^{15}\) *Complete Letters*. Vol 4, 16.


\(^{17}\) Ibid. 317.
Correspondence with Feodor Mikhailovich ended shortly after Sophia's marriage. Dostoevsky's letters to Sophia were burned by the descendants of the Ivanovs as discrediting (!?) their family. [«Переписка с Фёдором Михайловичем оборвалась вскоре после замужества Софьи. Письма Достоевского к Софье потомки Ивановых сожгли, как порочащие (!?) их род»].

Rumours had also been circulating in the late nineteenth century that Meshchersky had been receiving subsidies for his newspaper *The Citizen* from the Imperial budget due to his long-standing relationship with the Alexander Alexandrovich, who had been crowned by then as Alexander III, after his father's assassination in 1881. But that was after Dostoevsky's demise. His widow was at pains to point out that Dostoevsky's involvement with *The Citizen* i.e. Meshchersky had turned many people against him. Dostoevsky was always very sensitive about any suggestion that he might have received some special favours from 'the powers that be' and the implication that this could have affected the content and thrust of his writings. In the third issue of *The Citizen*, 15 January 1873, in his column “Writer's Diary” following the assumption of his editorship one of the first things he made sure of was to dispel any such suggestions. He wrote in the chapter 'Something personal' [Нечто личное] (in connection with another topic): “But can anyone ever say of me that I sought or gained anything in that sense in any lieu whatsoever i.e., that I sold my pen?” [«Но когда и кто может сказать про меня, что я заигрывал или выигрывал в этом смысле в каком-нибудь lieu, то есть продавал свое перо» (21, 30).] Yet could Dostoevsky's appeal to the heir for financial assistance not be interpreted other than in terms of Dostoevsky having “sold his pen”?

Alexander Alexandrovich received copies of *The Citizen* and he would have had access to Dostoevsky's columns in 1873–74, including his “Writer's Diary”. He may have seen another authorial commentary on *Demons* in the 50th issue *The Citizen* of December 10, 1873, ‘One of Today's Falsehoods’, the last issue for that column, and Dostoevsky's last chance of writing a personal vindication of himself, and of his depiction of Russian society in *Demons* (21,125–136).

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18 Vera Torzhkova, ‘Vozvrashchenie v proshloe’, *Kolomenskii Almanakh*. 2006. http://kolomna-biblio.narod.ru/TEXT/T/tv1.htm She goes on to say that she read about the fate of Sophia's letters to Dostoevsky in an article by G.F. Kogan in the fifth issue of the *Kolomenskii Almanakh* and believes that the letters might be in the archives of the Zaraisky Kremlin Museum. However, in a recent survey article of *Kolomenskii Almanakh* there is no mention of anything else to do with the topic, see: Elena Safronova, ‘Kolomenskii al’manakh (Literaturnyi ezhegodnik) 15-yi vypusk’, *Znamia*, 10, 2012.
It encapsulates in a defiantly virtuoso performance of paradoxical and bidirectional argumentation the similarities in the political aspirations of young people to become Petrashevtsy, which he had shared, and which he now identified with the aspirations of young people to become Nechaevtsy, which he had exposed and vilified, all the while as he defends and attacks both trends and aspirations. For his part, Alexander Alexandrovich “attached great importance to Dostoevsky”, and the writer’s family “can testify to his care.”

B Dostoevsky’s Mother’s Best Friend Ekaterina Alfonsky with British “Gardner” Connection?

The neglected information to be considered, with its entangled connections and intimations, is contained in some revealing notes in the Memoirs of Dostoevsky’s younger brother Andrei Mikhailovich (1825–1897) relating to their mother, Maria Fedorovna Dostoevsky, who was born 14 Jan (26 Jan) 1800, and passed away on 27 Feb O.S. (11 March) 1837, when Dostoevsky had not yet turned 16. Her influence on Dostoevsky has been the subject of some interest, extending to the belief by some commentators that certain features of her personality are reflected in the characterisations of the mother of Arkady in The Adolescent (Podrostok) and the mother of Alesha in The Brothers Karamazov (Brat’ia Karamazovy). She is also credited with “having taken a great interest” in the reading material of her children. Recently the tombstone on Maria Dostoevskaya’s grave, originally at Lazarev cemetery destroyed in the 1930s has been restored at a grand ceremony in Moscow on March 11, 2017 on the territory of the former Lazarev cemetery, with the launching of an attendant exhibition. On this occasion, near the Church of the Descent of the Holy

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22 L.F. Dostoevskaya, Dostoevski v izobrazhenii svoei docheri (SPb.: Andreev i synov’ia, 1992),
Spirit (near the former graves of Maria and her friend), a church familiar to the Dostoevskys, a speaker (head of Museum-apartment of F.M. Dostoevsky) summed up Maria's legacy noting that it was from his mother that Dostoevsky inherited “an extraordinary emotional talent”, one that might be described as a great maturity or fullness of the heart: [“именно от матери передалась ее сыну необыкновенная эмоциональная талантливость, – то, что хочется назвать развитостью сердца ... ”]; Maria Feodorovna gave birth, raised and educated her children, was the “soul of home readings”, “she was very gentle and tender”, her portrait at the exhibition displayed her countenance “marvelous in its expressiveness and poetry” [“в экспозиции имеется ее портрет – изумительное по своей выразительности и поэтичности лицо”].

The neglected piece of information that we would like to consider here are Andrei’s impressions about his mother and her best friend Ekaterina. Yet these impressions are not confined solely to the cult of Maria’s ‘motherhood’ centering on her children, that has been constructed in Russia in ‘iconic’ terms and promulgated as self-sacrificial, but in the context of her independent friendship with Ekaterina, who according to Andrei’s belief was born into the British family of “Gardner”:

I will also mention Arkady Alekseevich Alfonsky and his wife Ekaterina Alekseevna, born Gardner ... Ekaterina Alfonskaya was a real friend of my mother’s, and according to the stories of the latter, they saw each other almost daily. This Ekaterina Alekseevna Alfonskaya died, and Alfonsky married his second wife, some noble lady ... It is remarkable that mother is buried near her former friend Ekaterina Alekseevna at the Lazarevsky cemetery. [Упомяну еще об Аркадии Алексеевиче Альфонском и жене его Екатерине Алексеевне, рожденной Гарднер... Екатерина Алексеевна Альфонская была настоящим другом моей маменьки, и по рассказам последней, они чуть не ежедневно видались. Эта Екатерина Алексеевна Альфонская умерла, и Альфонский женился на 2-ой жене, какой-то знатной барыне ... Замечательно, что маменька похоронена возле бывшего своего друга Екатерины Алексеевых на Лазаревском кладбище].


24 Ibid. Ponomareva.

Andrei Dostoevsky is generally regarded as a dependable and trustworthy witness. But even if some details remembered by him are not entirely reliable, they always contain an element of truth. In this case he appears to have been convinced of the significance of his mother's friendship with Ekaterina Alfonsky and the English connection associated with her, and compelled to record it in his memoirs. However, he was wrong in his belief that she was born a "Gardner", for it was her sister, who was a Gardner, and her sister's family was known to the Dostoevsky family (which shall be discussed below). Ekaterina was at the time the wife of Arkady Alfonsky (1796–1869), who served as a physician from 1817 onwards at the Moscow Hospital for the Poor, renamed the Mariinsky Hospital, becoming from 1830 a consultant. At the same hospital from January 1821 onwards Dostoevsky's father Mikhail also served as a doctor. Both doctors' families resided for a period of time on the territory of the hospital (the Dostoevsky family resided in the left wing of the hospital from 1821 until just after the death of Maria in 1837), their children were of similar age and would have shared many experiences: "The five children of the Alfonskys' (...) together with the children of the Dostoevskys' wandered around in the large garden of the Mariinsky Hospital".26 After Ekaterina's death in September 1829, Alfonsky remarried. From 1819 onwards he also taught surgery at Moscow University, later was appointed Dean, then Pro-rector and from 1842 as Rector, a position he retained on and off for almost 20 years.27 The names of Alfonsky and members of his family are woven into the preparatory notes to Dostoevsky's intended major work Life of a Great Sinner [Zhitie velikogo greshnika]. Allusions to this family, tied up with incidents from Dostoevsky's own early life, reappear in the Notes to Demons, and are echoed in the text of The Adolescent and Brothers Karamazov.

The most recently published edition of the preparatory notebooks (zapisnye tetradi) to Demons, in a 'diplomatic transcript' (diplomaticheskaia transkriptsiiia) reproduces Dostoevsky's hand-written verbal version of the manuscript combined with the graphical in its exact arrangement on each page enabling one to see allusions to the Alfonsky family in the context of Dostoevsky's process of

literary creation. It makes it easier to trace the genesis of the author’s ideas over a period of time co-existing with other ideas bursting on to the space of the page creating meaning that is inseparable from all its adjacent verbal-graphical and calligraphic levels. New insights are gained into the allusions to the ‘Alfonsky’ name that becomes an important recurrent motif in the emerging narrative about the hero’s teenage years in the context of Dostoevsky’s own family superimposed onto the Alfonsky family and intermingling with it. Sometimes the emblematic sign of the shortened form of “Alf-y” or “A-y” is used to cover up what seem like direct references to the life of Dostoevsky’s own father Fedor and Dostoevsky’s own boyhood, suggesting that for some reason he was reluctant to name his father openly even in his working notes. On the other hand, it also suggests that the two families’ relationships and fates were closely intertwined, making Andrei’s reminiscences all the more significant. The notes also contained the motif of friendship between two women, which was not included into the final text.28

In spite of some of Andrei Dostoevsky’s claims about Ekaterina being incorrect in their detail, his memoirs, in the light of Ekaterina being Dostoevsky’s mother’s best friend (in today’s idiom her ‘Bestie’), as well as having an English connection via the well-known name of ‘Gardner’, and the importance he attaches to the fact of the two friends being buried next to each other, need investigating further. By associating Ekaterina with the well-known ‘Gardner’ family, Andrei was referring to the descendants of the founder of the Gardner dynasty, Francis Iakovlevich (Jacob) Gardner (1714?-1796), who had arrived in Russia in 1746, eventually settled in Moscow and finally in early 1766 received permission from the College of Manufacturers to formalize the establishment of his porcelain factory.29 Not a great deal is known about “the Romantic Englishman” Francis Gardner, who apparently was a Scotsman and traded as a wood merchant in Nemetskaia street (now Baumanskaia street), also opened a banking business and ran a sugar refinery.30 He traveled a great deal around the Russian Empire, including Siberia, Ukraine and the White Sea looking for

30 There has been some uncertainty as to whether Gardner was an Englishman from Staffordshire or a Scotsman. There are various different transliterations of his name and patronymics of his children.
raw materials, such as kaolinite to manufacture porcelain and a suitable location for his enterprise. Eventually, in order to fulfill the Imperial government’s requirements for the purchase of land (tied up with the possession of serfs), he purchased a site from Prince Nikolai Urusov in the Dmitrovskii district of the Moscow Oblast’, called Verbolovo. He remained a British subject never assuming Russian citizenship.

In the early standard text of 1799 by William Tooke31 barely two pages are devoted to the Gardner porcelain business and he is mistakenly referred to as “Henry”, though a longer account is available in a more recent study of Anthony Cross of 1997, where all the available information was summed up, including that from Russian sources, which were also drawn on in the earlier publication by M.C. Ross.32 Cross points out that some confusion has arisen because “there was in St Petersburg at the same period another Francis Gardner of the English Club fame, whose father was also a James (d.1756), a treasurer of the British Factory since the early 1730s and owner of the rope-yard, who, to complicate matters even further, also had a brother named Francis (d.1755)”.33 In recent years Gardner and his porcelain business have been attracting increasing interest on the web, though some of the details that have become available seem contradictory and questionable.34

It is evident that Gardner was not just a run-of-the-mill entrepreneur seeking his fortune in the Russian Empire, but may have had artistic pretensions being knowledgeable about European pottery and ceramics, not just British, but also that produced by the Sèvres factory in France (founded at Vincennes), as well as the Meissen factory in Germany near Dresden (famous for its Chinese vases), and the Du Paquier factory in Vienna, Austria. The success of these firms led to the establishment of other porcelain factories in Europe that propelled Gardner into porcelain production in Russia. Gardner made an unassailable name for himself when he presented a Gardner dinner set to Catherine II, and was then commissioned by her to fill an order for three more dinner sets for the Imperial Court between 1778–1785 comprising altogether

31 William Tooke, View of the Russian Empire during the Reign of Catharine the Second and to the Close of the Present Century, 111 (London, 1799), 505.
32 Cross, By the Banks of the Neva, 73; Ibid., William Tooke; I.Iu. Arbat, Farforovyi gorodok, Moscow, 1957; Marvin C. Ross, Russian Porcelains, (University of Oklahoma Press, 1968).
33 Cross, By the Banks of the Neva, 73; 27, 30–31.
four dinner services for celebrations to honour Knights of the Imperial Orders of St George, Andreevsky, Alexander and Vladimir that were held at the Winter Palace and other chambers on the feast days of the patron saints (ordenskie servizi). From what can be gauged from various genealogical sites and encyclopaedias, the Gardner porcelain factory was owned by several generations of Gardners from its foundation until 1892, when it was sold to the Old Believer merchant M.S. Kuznetsov.

As for Ekaterina Alfonskaya, described by Andrei as a “Gardner” (who is featured with her husband Arkady and their family in Dostoevsky’s Life of a Great Sinner), she is known to have had six children: Arkady (1819–1890), Ekaterina (Ketia) (1821–?), Anna (1822–1888), Aleksei (1824–1872), Sof‘ia (1827–?) and Liubov’ (1828–1901). As noted above, she was not born a Gardner, as Andrei maintains, but her maiden name was Andreevskaya, and her patronymic was not Ekaterina Alekseevna, but Ekaterina Kirillovna. (Her father Kirill Samoilovich Andreevsky was a physician and professor of medicine at Moscow University, achieving the 7th rank in the service as ‘nadvornyi sovetnik’. He had studied at the Kyiv military hospital and is listed in the available records as having been part of the Pereyaslav Collegium.) However, Ekaterina had a sister called Anna Gardner, who was married to a descendant of the Gardner family, Peter Frantsevich Gardner (b. 1791 os). In all of the references to do with Gardner porcelain Manufactory he is referred to as the son of founder Francis senior, (although Francis had an elder son, who died young at around the age of twenty, whose name was also Francis i.e. junior), and the factory had eventually passed on to him (Peter Frantsevich) and his brother. Anna Gardner and her husband Peter Frantsevich (also referred to as Garner) had a large family, who were first cousins to the Alfonsky children, and some of these Gardner sons were known to the Dostoevskys, including the older brother Mikhail, since they attended some of the same educational institutions.

37 Geni World Family Tree.
39 According to O.V. Rozina, ‘Farforovaia fabrika F.Ia. Gardnera i ego potomkov: istoriko-kul’turologicheskoe issledovaniia’ Peter Frantsevich (also spelled Francevic) Gardner was the son of the founder F.Ia. Gardner.
F.M. Dostoevsky definitely knew some of the Gardner youths, since in an early letter to his father, Mikhail, written on July 3, 1837 at St Peterburg when Dostoevsky (and his brother) was attending the preparatory boarding school of Koronad F. Kostomarov and preparing for their entry exams to the Main Engineering Academy, he mentions having seen ‘Garner’ (Тапнер) and another school mate, who had also attended the preparatory school, but had left earlier, and were already attending the Engineering Academy: “Last week we saw our former class mate Garner and Vessel. They visited Koronad Fillipovich (Kostomarov) to say goodbye, since they are leaving for a summer camp at Peterhof. Today is the birthday of K.F.” (28(1), 36). Dostoevsky would have only mentioned these names if he had known that his father approved of these young men, since in his letters Dostoevsky tried not to upset or provoke his father in any way, though this was nevertheless more-often-than-not the case. Dostoevsky was accepted into the Engineering Academy in late 1837 and began studies in January 1838. When one checks the records of pupils at the Engineering Academy in the publication *Historical Outline of the Development of the Main Engineering School 1819–1869* (1869) one discovers amongst the lists in the ‘Attachment’ (Приложение) that there was a student by the name of ‘Gardner’ for the period when Dostoevsky was studying there: an “Alexander Gardner” was a pupil in the Lower Officer's Class of Warrant Officers or Ensigns (Из нижнего офицерского класса: Прaporshchikami), which in the tsarist army was the most junior officer rank in 1841. (See attached illustration of the page for that year.) On August 20, 1841, Dostoevsky had sworn his ‘Oath of Allegiance to Service’ with 20 other warrant officers, who would continue being his classmates for another two years, who are described in detail in a recently published collection of available archival sources. Dostoevsky’s teachers and class-mates are also discussed for the years 1837–1839 (as they had been in an

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40 *Letopis’,* 40, 75. Students at the Engineering Academy spent their summers at camp in Peterhof, as would Dostoevsky in later years.


42 Ibid. 98.

earlier article by I. Yakubovich). However, in all these recent researches led by B.N. Tikhomirov the name of Gardner is not mentioned, perhaps because the focus is on Dostoevsky’s immediate class-mates for other years, and Gardner pursued a different path towards graduation.

Yet Gardner is listed by Maksimovsky (see illustration) together with the well-known name of Ivan Berezhitsky (Berezhetsky), (also not mentioned in the recent collection), who has been described as having been one of Dostoevsky’s

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**Figure 1** Photocopy of document of the original layout of the graves of Maria Fedorovna and the Gardners, including Ekaterina Alfonsky at Lazarev cemetery:


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closest friends at the Engineering Academy.\textsuperscript{45} Regarding this friendship, Joseph Frank in his biography of Dostoevsky goes so far as to suggest that “an element of latent sexuality may have been amongst its components”, citing in his defence Dostoevsky’s own letters.\textsuperscript{46} Another well-known name mentioned in Maksimovskiy on the same page as that of Gardner (see illustration) is Fedor Radetsky (1820–1890), who graduated in 1840 and became an adjutant-general and a ‘hero’ of the Russo-Turkish war. Dostoevsky attended a celebratory dinner in his honour in 1878 in St Petersburg, and gave a short speech.\textsuperscript{47} (31(1), 22). Over 150 former students of the Engineering Academy were present at that dinner, according to newspaper reports, and had Alexander Gardner been in St Petersburg, he is likely to have attended that dinner too (31(1), 80).

Information about the Gardners has been difficult to find and to verify in New Zealand, away from the archives in the Russian Federation. The available records on websites such as geni, Rodovod, Ancestry etc,\textsuperscript{48} as well as specialist sites like Russian Military Engineers or the Ryazan’ District,\textsuperscript{49} or documents about Noble Families of the various regions in the Russian Empire (including ennobled families) of the Moscow region and Ryazan’ etc show many discrepancies regarding the years of birth, death, family relationships and ownership of the Gardner Manufactory etc, which is also reflected in the available articles. But it has been possible to determine that the sister of Ekaterina, Anna Kirillovna Gardner (Andreevskaya), the wife of Peter Frantsevich Gardner, gave birth to ten boys, of whom several died in infancy, but about six survived into adulthood. Of these three attended the Main Military Engineering Academy graduating from the Conductor’s classes in 1836, 1838 and 1840 respectively, which Dostoevsky also completed in 1841. But he continued with his studies graduating from the officer classes of the Main Institute as a lieutenant in August 1843 and was released as a field engineer. The eldest of the Gardner boys and the first one to attend the Engineering Academy (before Dostoevsky

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{47} Belov, \textit{F.M., Dostoevskii i ego okruzhenie}, 11, 75; 139–140.
\bibitem{48} The Geni site is managed by a “Markova Irina”. According to the Rodovod site (that has some discrepencies) nine sons of Anna Gardner are listed. Rozina provides similar information.
\bibitem{49} Shkoly voennykh inzhenerov v 1701–1960 godakh: https://viu-petra2.3dn.ru/Istoriiia, kultura i traditsii Riazanskogo kraia.
\end{thebibliography}
Фигура 2. Имя Александра Гарднера указано в документе студентов, изучающих на Главном инженерном училище в 1841 году, когда Ж.Ф. Достоевский также обучался в Инженерной академии.

had enrolled) was Petr Petrovich Gardner (1816 N.S.-1881).\(^\text{50}\) He is described as a military engineer who had been decorated by the time he retired with a St George Cavalier award, achieving the rank of lieutenant general. Earlier, as part of the troops of the Peterhof detachment (since 3.1854) he participated in the protection of the coast of the St Petersburg province and earned the Tsar’s “Highest Favour” for his work on the “installation of batteries at the mouth of the Neva”. (Would these have been coastal fortifications, or could these have had something to do possibly with the installation of telegraph transmission taking place at the time, which required porcelain insulators?) He took part in the defence of Sevastopol. He is buried at the prestigious cemetery of the Novodevichy Monastery in St Petersburg, founded in 1849, where noble families, prominent statesmen and notable figures were interred.\(^\text{51}\)

Perhaps the best known of the Gardners to have attended the Military Academy was Vladimir Petrovich Gardner (1819–1886), who graduated in 1838 from the Conductor's classes of the Main Engineering Academy. He was released as a Junker.\(^\text{52}\) In 1846 he was seconded to the Moscow Gendarme Division and was staff captain. In the 1850s, together with his brother Alexander, he became the owner of the Gardner Manufactory in Verbilki. He died and was buried in Moscow. What is surprising is that he is buried at Lazarevo cemetery in the same plot as Ekaterina Alfonsky, Maria Fedorovna’s friend. (This will be discussed in greater detail below.)

The youngest Gardner brother to attend the Engineering Academy was Alexander Petrovich Gardner (4.11.1820 -?), whom Dostoevsky definitely knew. He enrolled in the Conductor classes and graduated in 1840, but remained at the Academy to continue his education. In 1841 he graduated from the officer class and was released as an ensign to field engineers. He served in the Life Guards Sapper Battalion, a separate part of the Russian Imperial Guard, stationed in St. Petersburg. He retired in 1847. In the 1850s together with his brother Vladimir, he became the owner of the Gardner Manufactory in Verbilki.\(^\text{53}\) The other Gardner boys’ names were Pavel (b. 1826 -1869), Sergei (b.? -1874), Konstantin (1834 -1898) (as well as four others: Aleksey, Mikhail, Viktor and Nikolai, who did not survive past infancy).

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\(^{50}\) Shkoly voennykh inzhenerov.https://viupetra2.3dn.ru/publ/gardner_p_p/13-1-0-1780


\(^{52}\) He is listed on the site of Russian military engineers as a staff captain: https://viupetra2.3dn.ru/publ/gardner_v_p/13-1-0-

\(^{53}\) Shkoly voennykh inzhenerov v 1701–1960 godakh.https://viupetra2.3dn.ru/publ/gardner_a_p/13-1-0-2518
The older Gardner lads would have been likely to visit their aunt, Ekaterina at the Mariinsky Hospital, as may have another descendant of Francis Gardner’s (described by commentators as his son, Nikolai (born 1798- died 1846), who had six children, second cousins of the Alfonskys. Nikolai retired from military service with the rank of lieutenant in 1826, and was the first member of the Gardner family to be ennobled. He lived at Verbilki, where he proceeded to learn four foreign languages and acquired a ‘rich’ (bogataia) library. One wonders whether he lent his books to other members of the family? This also begs the question as to whether members of the Gardner family may have suggested various educational establishments to Dostoevsky’s father, when the latter was deciding on where to send his sons to further their education, including the various preparatory and boarding schools (Pansiony) that the Dostoevsky brothers attended, at some of which the older Gardner brothers appear to have studied earlier. These include the N.I. Drashusov (Souchard) Day school and the Leonty (Leopold) Chermak Boarding School in Moscow, and in St Petersburg the Konorad Kostomarov Preparatory Boarding School, where Dostoevsky saw Alexander Gardner (28(1), 36). The Gardners seem to have attended the Chermak Boarding school, (as had Arkady Alfonsky apparently), although not at the time when Dostoevsky and his older brother Mikhail studied there. English was taught at that boarding school and the English tutor’s name was “Asppel”, (which is reminiscent of the name of the English character in Dostoevsky’s novel The Gambler (Igrok), whose surname is Astley). One of their classmates at Chermak’s was an English student George Harvey, whose father, Edward Harvey (1798 - 1874) taught English at Moscow University from 1828 onwards. He is the author of an anthology of English literature.

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54 Nikolai’s son Evgeny married the writer Raisa Alexandrovna Koreneva, who was brought up together with D.I. Pisarev, the future critic, at the home of his mother. Pisarev loved Raisa and hoped that she would marry him, but she married into the Gardner clan.

55 Rozina, 192.


57 Rozina, 192.

58 Edward Harvey was the compiler of The English Student’s Manual or Miscellaneous pieces selected from the best English Language prose writers, preceded by a sketch of the rise and progress of the English Language, and followed by a copious English-French and Russian Dictionary of all the words contained in the body of the works, Moscow, 1835, 2 v. See Biograficheskii slovar’ professorov i prepodavatelei Moskovskogo universiteta, ch.1, Moscow, 1855, 175–177.
In the early 1830s amongst students attending his classes were M. Lermontov and V. G. Belinsky.59

How would Dostoevsky’s father have made the decision to send his sons to the Saint Petersburg Engineering Academy, known at the time as the Nikolaevsky Engineering Academy that had only been established in 1810 under Alexander I, unless he had consulted someone informed about the education available at this new institution? Hence the role of the Gardners cannot be entirely discounted from Dostoevsky’s life, nor can the role of the latter’s cousins, the Alfonsky children. In addition there is the confusion between the Alfonskys and the Gardners reflected by Andrei in his memoirs, who must have had some reason for believing that the Alfonsky children were descended from the Gardners on the mother’s side. It has not been possible to find any reference to the ‘Gardner’ connection in any works about Dostoevsky published in English, and only two references in Russian sources (as far as it has been possible to ascertain), both sourced from Andrei’s memoir. In Joseph Frank’s five-volume biography of Dostoevsky there is no mention of the names of Alfonsky or Gardner,60 neither are these names mentioned in the first volumes of the recent “exhaustive” biography by Thomas Gaiton Marullo.61 The two Russian references include the biography of the early years of Dostoevsky by Nina S. Nechaeva, the archivist and researcher of Dostoevsky’s manuscripts and of his surroundings, and related (like Maria Fedorovna by birth) to the Nechaev branch of the family. N.S. Nechaeva directly cites Andrei Dostoevsky’s reminiscences in her work The Early Dostoevsky 1821–1849 (Rannii Dostoevskii. 1821–1849), which is later repeated in the first volume of the Chronicle of Dostoevsky’s Life (Letopis’ zhizni i tvorchestva F.M. Dostoevskogo) compiled by Irina Yakubovich.62

N. S. Nechaeva mentions in a footnote in her book that she visited the Lazarevo cemetery before that cemetery was destroyed and the graves were liquidated and disinterred: “Before the liquidation of the Lazarevo cemetery at the end of the 1920-s when I tried to arrange to have the grave of Maria Fedorovna Dostoevsky moved into the Museum of Dostoevsky, I wrote down the inscriptions on the

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monuments next to it: “Alfonskaya Ekaterina Kirillovna”, born Andreevskaya; Anna Gardner, born Andreevskaya; Vladimir Petrovich Gardner 1819–1862.”\(^{63}\) She continues with the observations that the last named one, Vladimir Gardner, was the same age as the brothers Dostoevsky and could have been known to them in Moscow, and studied with them at the Engineering Academy.\(^{64}\)

In the illustrations that accompany the recent article about the restoration of Maria Fedorovna's tombstone, Pavel E. Fokin, Director of the Russian Literary Museum in Moscow includes a copy of a drawing from the Museum's archives of a rough plan of the original location of the Maria's grave at the Lazarevo cemetery that must have been done just before the graves were exhumed in the 1930s. In the drawing her grave has “M.F.D.” written over it, while an area right next to it is a family plot for the Gardners, at least four times the size of the plot for Maria Fedorovna, which is identified with the names of “Alfonskaya and Gardner” written over it.\(^{65}\) This illustration is being reproduced here with acknowledgement (Illustration). According to the three-volume *Moscow Nekropolis* (1907) several members of the Moscow Gardner family were buried at Lazarevo cemetery in the vicinity of Maria Fedorovna's grave. These are identified in the *Nekropolis* as being in addition to Anna Gardner neé Andreevskaya, listed independently with no dates, also “Gardner, Vladimir Petrovich b. 2 January 1819 d. 8 January 1882; with Ek. Kiril. Alfonsky (Lazarevskoe cemetery).”\(^{66}\) Why is Ekaterina identified in the *Nekropolis* as being buried with Vladimir Gardner? Why is he not identified as being buried with his own mother Anna?\(^{67}\) Apart from Ekaterina there are no other Alfonsky family members listed as being buried at Lazarevo cemetery. Her husband Arkady (and his second wife, neé Mukhanova) were buried at Vagan'kovo cemetery.\(^{68}\) Ekaterina Alfonskaya's sons Arkady and Aleksey, and her daughter Anna were all buried (in 1890, 1872, 1888 respectively) at the more

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\(^{63}\) Yet Vladimir's date of death is cited by other commentators as being 1882, unless it is a copying mistake in the digitalised version of Nechaeva.

\(^{64}\) Ibid. Nechaeva, 277–278.

\(^{65}\) Ibid. Fokin, 154.

\(^{66}\) Nikolai Mikhailovich, Velikii Knyaz'. *Moskovskii nekropol': v 3 tomakh* (St Petersburg: Tipografiia M.M. Stasiulevicha 1907), vol. 1. (A-I), 519 pp. Vol. I, 255. V.P. Gardner is identified here of having died in 1882, while according to Nechaeva's copied version he died in 1862. Why the discrepancy? Also why is he buried together with Ekaterina Alfonsky, friend of Dostoevsky's mother?

\(^{67}\) Ibid. 255. Also listed are: “Gardner, Konstantin Petrovich d. 11 March 1898 at 64 yrs; with S.P. and P.P. Gardner (Lazarevskoe cemetery)./ Gardner, Pavel Petrovich; without dates; with S. P. Gardner (Lazarevskoe cemetery)./ Gardner, Sergei Petrovich d. 28 September 1874; with K.P. Gardner (Lazarevskoe cemetery).”

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 29.
exclusive cemetery of the Alekseevsky convent built in the name of ‘Alexis, the man of God’. The Alekseevsky convent was the oldest in Moscow dating back to the 14th century. (It was transferred in 1837 from its original site and rebuilt in stone in Krasnoe Selo, with its church consecrated in 1853, and the Church of All Saints built between 1887 and 1891.)

What is surprising is that there is no mention of the British name of Gardner in the account of Dostoevsky’s Moscow years by G.A. Fedorov, (who was the first to propose that Dostoevsky’s father was not killed by his serfs, but died a natural death). Fedorov does cite Andrei’s memoirs and expands on them, showing that Dostoevsky’s mother’s friend Ekaterina was apparently in an emotionally abusive relationship perpetrated by her husband, Arkady A. Alfonsky:

Maria Fedorovna, the mother of Dostoevsky had some beloved graves at the Lazarevo cemetery that were of her mother and father, but as she was dying she ‘ordered’ (povelela) that she be buried next to the grave of Ekaterina Kirillovna Alfonskaya. Dostoevsky’s mother was friends with the first wife of Alfonsky, as Andrei Dostoevsky recalls, they met almost daily. And Fedor as a boy knew well the sons of Alfonsky from his first marriage, Arkady and Aleksei, and the daughter Katya. Alexei’s fate will pass before Dostoevsky’s eyes in the 1820s and the 1830s, and then later too after his return from Siberia, when he would live in Moscow in 1864 almost for the whole year./ And later too he used to visit Moscow and while visiting his mother’s grave he would walk past the graveyard monument with the inscription ‘E.K. Alfonskaya, born Andreevskaya’./ We do not know how the marital relationship between E.K. and A.A. Alfonsky developed. We only know of the evidence supplied by the chief physician Kh.I. Oppel about the “cruel deeds” (o zhestokikh postupkakh) perpetrated by Arkady Alekseevich towards his “first wife”.

69 http://www.hram-ks.ru/history.shtml
70 G.A. Fedorov, Moskovskii mir Dostoevskogo. Iz istoriirusskoi khudozhestvennoi kul'tury xx veka, (M.: lazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004) 48. (Unfortunately, Fedorov eschews detailed footnotes and does not provide a source for his quote from Kh.I. Oppel'. According to available information in Encyclopedias his dates are 1768–1835 and he was the chief physician at the Mariinsky Hospital from 1803 to 1830. Nor is there anything substantial about Alfonsky’s private life in the hagiographic official-sounding article: V.K. Gostivshchev, M.A. Evseev, ‘Zaveduiushchii kafedroi obshchei khirurgii, dekan meditsinskogo fakul'teta, prorektor, rektor Imperatorskogo Moskovskogo universiteta Arkadii Alekseevich Al'fonskii i ego rol’ v sovershenstvovanii prepodavanii klinicheskikh distsiplin i razvitii meditsinskogo fakul'teta’, Sechenovskii vestnik. 2013. No 2(12) 5–9.
Alfonsky acquired a second family when he remarried in 1830 the well-off Ekaterina Alexandrovna Mukhanova (1800–1876),71 daughter of the Ryazan governor, and from 1831 to 1841 they had six children of their own, while Ekaterina’s children became Mukhanova’s step-children. The reference to step-mother (machekha) interwoven with references to Alfonsky in Dostoevsky’s Life of a Great Sinner may echo the lives of Ekaterina’s sons, especially the eldest Arkady (the theme of step-childhood subsequently so important in The Adolescent). Fedorov also hypothesises that Aleksei Alfonsky, who was from the end of 1869 Assistant Chief of Police of the Moscow District could have supplied Dostoevsky with some information about the murder of Ivanov by the Nechaevtsy to be used in Demons. (Aleksey Alfonsky, b.1824, was following in the footsteps of his cousin Vladimir Gardner b.1819, who had served earlier as staff-captain in the Moscow Gendarme Division.)

Andrei Dostoevsky would have passed those graves of the Gardners with that of Ekaterina Alfonsky at Lazarevo cemetery when he visited his mother’s grave whenever he was in Moscow, since he spent virtually his entire working life as architect (from 1849 to 1890) serving in Ukraine, which was also known in the Russian Empire as Little Russia (Malorossiia). He designed some important buildings in Elizavetgrad, Yekaterinoslav, Simferopol, and also the Russian town of Yaroslav. Today the first two towns are known as Kropyvnytskyi in the Kirovohrad Oblast', while Yekaterinoslav is now known as the city of Dnipro, that was formerly Dniepropetrovsk. Simferopol has retained its name as the second largest city in Crimea. Andrei moved back to Russia shortly after his retirement in 1890 and completed his memoirs around 1894, two years before his death. He may have shown them to Dostoevsky’s widow, Anna Grigorievna. But the memoirs were first published in 1930 by his son, by which time Anna had been dead for some years (d. 1918). Andrei had a fairly distant relationship with Fedor Dostoevsky and appears to have almost hero-worshipped him. Dostoevsky’s other siblings were more critical of their famous brother, despite the accepted narrative that Fedor Dostoevsky’s older brother Mikhail (1820–1864) had an ideal brotherly relationship with Fedor. Yet Andrei’s reminiscences remain unsurpassed in the context of the boys’ childhood and adolescent years.

What were the reasons for Andrei Dostoevsky pointing out his mother’s close relationship with Ekaterina Alfonsky and associating the latter with an English connection identified with ‘Gardner’? There may be more to this Gardner linkage than we know of today. It might also suggest that the interaction between

71 She was sister of the Decembrist Petr Alexandrovich Mukhanov.
the two friends might have been due to them having interests in common. Maria Dostoevskaya loved poetry, literature and music. She is reputed to have been a voracious reader of novels and very musical, able to play the guitar. She is credited with having inspired in her sons a love of poetry and instilled in them an interest in literature and music. Her remaining fairly heartwrenching nine letters to her husband are written in beautiful handwriting in the ‘sentimental’ mode prevalent at the time, and reveal a poetic and emotionally responsive young woman. All the Dostoevsky boys apparently adored their mother and the two eldest composed the poetic epitaph for her tombstone. Her undeniable influence on them and her own personal friendships merit attention. One wonders at the extent of her guidance on the selection of books that were available in the Dostoevsky household, since her grand-daughter Liubov’ (Dostoevsky’s daughter) specifically mentions Maria’s involvement in her son’s reading, information that could only have come to Liubov’s directly from her father. One cannot help wondering why Dostoevsky in his childhood seems to have had so much access to literature translated from the English and written from a Protestant perspective, as demonstrated repeatedly in Andrei’s memoirs and in the recollections of Dostoevsky himself, some of which we are all familiar with. It’s usually explained solely in the context of it being literature that was available and popular at the time, such as Gothic fiction, epistolary and sentimental novels exemplified by Richardson’s Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded, The Vicar of Wakefield by Oliver Goldsmith, historical adventure stories, such as the numerous Waverley novels of Sir Walter Scott, the novels of Dickens, especially those featuring children and adolescents, or those expressive of ‘humorous idealism’, Sterne’s Sentimental Journey, Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, also Fenimore Cooper’s stories set amongst the native or indigenous populations of North America, and later also Byron and Shakespeare, Maturin, de Quincey, Thackeray, Brontë, etc. Such literature does not sit well with the known stern temperament of Dostoevsky’s father. Even the first stories from the Bible that Dostoevsky was introduced to were translations from the Protestant version of the Bible as narrated by the German writer Johann Huebner (1668–1731).

72 Nechaeva, 8.
Could there have been a connection between the literature favoured by his mother and available to the Dostoevsky household at Mariinskii Hospital, literature that was perhaps also favoured by her closest friend Ekaterina? Could Dostoevsky’s family’s readings in the evenings before bedtime, at a time when he could not yet read himself and would remember for the rest of his life have had any input from the mutual literary and artistic interests of the two women friends? It seems that Dostoevsky’s introduction to and love for much British literature was formed during childhood and indirect evidence suggests that his mother’s friendship with Ekaterina is likely to have facilitated Dostoevsky’s access to such literature. We all remember how in Winter Notes on Summer Impressions Dostoevsky recalls that “even as a small child, when still unable to read, I listened agape, enthralled and terror-struck in turn, to my parents’ bed-time reading of Mrs Radcliffe’s novels, which put me into a fever and kept me awake at night” (V, 46).76 His other dominant memory is of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, corroborated by Andrei, who recalls in his Memoirs that he saw in Dostoevsky’s hands most often the novels of Sir Walter Scott, especially Quentin Durward and Waverley. The older brothers had their own copies and reread them several times, despite the ponderous and dated translation.77 Dostoevskii recalled many years later on 18 August, 1889 while responding to a query about suitable reading for children that would inspire their imagination, that he himself, at the age of twelve, in the countryside during vacations, had read all of Walter Scott, and it had developed his own imagination and sensitivity: “Walter Scott has a lofty educational significance”, and in this context Dostoevsky also recommended all of Dickens “without exception” (30(1) 212).

An example of their mother’s indulgence towards her children is reflected in Andrei’s recollections of the games the boys used to play during the summers they spent at Darovoe from 1832 onwards, their newly purchased estate in the country side in the Kashirsky district of the Ryazan province. Here they were under the sole care of their mother, while their father remained working in Moscow. Fedor invented the game of Robinson, with him playing Robinson, while Andrei had to impersonate Friday. The other games they played were derived from adventure stories about the “tribes” of indigenous populations of North America that seemed to have been based on the stories

77 Ibid. A. Dostoevskii, 70.
of Fenimore Cooper that were translated into Russian from the late 1820s onwards.\textsuperscript{78} As Pushkin had noted: “Chateaubriand and Cooper, both introduced us to the Indians from their poetic side and painted over the truth with the colors of their imagination” [«... Шатобриан и Купер, оба представили нам индийцев с их поэтической стороны и закрасили истину красками своего воображения»]\textsuperscript{79} Andrei recalls some of these games:

Brother Fedya, who at that time already read a lot, probably got acquainted with the description of the life of savages. “Playing being wild” was our favorite game. It consisted in the fact that, having chosen a denser place in a linden grove, we built a hut there, covered it with brushwood and leaves and made the entrance to it imperceptible. This hut became the main residence of wild tribes; (we) stripped naked and painted our bodies with paints in the manner of a tattoo, made waist and head ornaments from leaves and dyed goose feathers and, armed with homemade bows and arrows, made imaginary raids on Brykovo, where, of course, peasant boys and girls were found deliberately placed there. They were taken prisoner and kept, until a decent ransom, in the hut. Of course, brother Fedor, as the one who invented this game, was always the main leader of the tribes ... Of particular interest in this game was that we, the “wild ones”, were not looked after by the elders and, in this way, completely secluded from everything ordinary – that was not wild.

\textsuperscript{78} Cooper’s \textit{The Last of the Mohicans} was translated into Russian in 1833.

\textsuperscript{79} A.S. Pushkin \textit{Pokone sobrani sochinenni v shesti tochkakh}, 5, Academia M. L. 1936, 135. I should apologise for quoting from this rare 1936 edition, but surprisingly this is the only volume that I have here at home in NZ right now of Pushkin’s critical and publicist works.
Their mother's indulgence and encouragement of games is further illustrated by her consent to let the children prolong their games by deciding not to call them in to dinner, as she “ordered the savages to take their dinner in the air in a special dish and put it somewhere under the bushes. This gave us great pleasure, and we ate dinner without the help of forks and knives, but simply with our hands, as befitted the wild ones.” [“маменька, желая продлить нашу игру и наше удовольствие, решилась не звать нас к обеду и велела отнести дикарям обед на воздух в особой посуде и поставить его где-нибудь под кустами. Это доставило нам большое удовольствие, и мы съели обед без помощи вилок и ножей, а просто руками, как приличествовало диким”].

Dostoevsky’s love for adventure stories set amongst indigenous tribes of America continued, as Dmitry Grigorovich, who attended the Engineering Academy with him and later also shared lodgings recalled in his memoirs that Dostoevsky advised him to read various translations, including Cooper’s *Pathfinder or The Inland Sea* (as well as Scott’s *Astrologer*, de Quincy’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* etc).

To get back to the crucial point of our discussion, namely the connection with the Gardners’ clan in Moscow that arose due to the founder’s establishment of the porcelain factory in Verbilki, it might be of interest to mention that Dostoevsky appears to have had a genuine interest in pottery, a love of beautiful ornaments and a special sensitivity towards it reflected both in his life and his works. One need only recall the observations in his widow’s memoirs that when she first arrived at Dostoevsky’s apartment to work as a stenographer she noticed two large Chinese porcelain vases decorating the window sill of his lodgings that he had been given by his friends in Siberia and had brought back all the way to European Russia: “The window sills were adorned by two large beautifully shaped Chinese vases.” While living in Dresden she recalls Dostoevsky spending his hard-acquired cash at an auction because he

80 A. Dostoevskii, 57–58.
81 Ibid., A. Dostoevskii, 58.
could not resist buying some Florentine bowls: “Wouldn’t it be nice to buy these lovely bowls? What about it, Anechka, shall we buy them?” After their return to Russia, pride of place in their modest apartment was a Meissen porcelain lamp that Dostoevsky had brought back from Dresden, plus a matching ashtray and ‘other trifles’, as described in the reminiscences of Anna’s school friend, Maria Nikolaevna Stoyunina (1846–1940).

We all remember the symbolic significance of the Chinese vases in The Idiot, and the numerous motifs to do with porcelain and pottery in the novel (8, 189; 409; 433). Or Dostoevsky employing the visual image of a paradoxical Golden Age in his Writer’s Diary through the medium of decorated porcelain cups. But what I found to be of special interest was quite a sophisticated article on ceramics and porcelain in The Citizen, during his editorship at a time when he was in sole charge over the summer months and entirely responsible for commissioning and selecting articles for publication. It is an unsigned article written by someone quite knowledgeable about pottery and the plastic arts. It appears to be a translation from the German of a commentary on the displays at the World Exhibition in Vienna, the Austro-Hungarian capital being held at that time. It would have been translated into Russian by the critic N.N. Strakhov working for Dostoevsky at the time. All, or the majority of these reviews of the Exhibition in Vienna are likely to have been written by Max Schlesinger (1822–1881), and published in newspapers abroad that Dostoevsky had access to at his editorial office, since The Citizen’s publisher subscribed to some foreign periodical press. Schlesinger used to contribute articles to the Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung, the Kölnische Zeitung, the Brussels Indépendance Belge, and amongst others he was also the correspondent of the New Free Press in 1869–74, and for the Berlin National Newspaper. The article in The Citizen on exhibits at the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair (Weltausstellung 1873 Wien) was placed at the beginning of the issue, following the column ‘Moscow Notes’, reflecting its relative importance. It had been sub-edited and contained

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84 Ibid.160.
86 ‘Otchet o Venskoi Vystavke.viii’, Grazhdanin, № 26, 26 iiunia, 1873, 727–729.
sub-headed sections on topics including the following: Italian marbles and majolica; The focus of the German exhibition; Berlin and Meissen porcelain; Something in general about pottery; Something about the discovery of porcelain soil in Saxony, France and other places; Majolica and faience.88 It provides a short history of the discovery of special clays, the fact that porcelain owed its development in Germany and France to a series of chance-accidents: “Porcelain is now being made everywhere to greater or lesser perfection, as the exhibition shows. For kaolin is everywhere, and where special varieties of it are needed, they are delivered there without any difficulty. (So even today I heard from Mr. Siemens that kaolin for Russian factories is delivered from Cornwall).” [“В настоящее время фарфор делается повсюду в большем или меньшем совершенстве, как это показывает выставка. Ибо каолин находится везде, а где нужны особые его сорта, туда они доставляются перевозкою без всяких затруднений. (Так еще сегодня я слышал от г. Сименса, что каолин для русских фабрик доставляется из Кормула).”]89

The reason Siemens is quoted in the article in *The Citizen* regarding the availability of kaolin in Russia for the porcelain industry, is because the Siemens industrial manufacturing company had been contracted by the Russian Tsarist government already in 1853 to construct a telegraph network in the Empire, and the construction of telegraph wires used hundreds of thousands of porcelain insulators. Initially Siemens constructed a telegraph line from Warsaw to Russia’s border with Prussia. After this a telegraph network was extended to cover the European part of the Empire, connecting St Petersburg, Moscow, Kyiv, Kovno (Kaunas), Revel (Tallinn), Helsingfors (Helsinki), while in the section of the Petersburg-Kronstadt line, the cable was laid along the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

The owner-manager of the Gardner porcelain factory in Verbilki in June 1873, when the above article was published in *The Citizen* appears to have been the daughter-in-law of Anna Gardner (sister of Ekaterina Alfonsky, Dostoevsky’s mother’s closest woman friend). She was Elizaveta Nikolaevna neé Leman (1838–1913), the widow of Pavel Gardner (1826–1869), who was the last one to assume ownership of the factory after the retirement of the older Gardner brothers. She may have visited the Vienna World Fair and viewed the porcelain exhibits, and may have even contributed samples from the Gardner Verbilki factory to the Russian displays, although the majority of exhibits from the Russian Empire at the time consisted mainly of exhibits from the State’s

88 Ibid. ‘Otchet o Venskoi Vystavke’.
89 Ibid. 729.
Imperial factories, rather than private enterprises. Elizabeth Gardner is buried in the cemetery of the Ascension Church in Novo-Nikolskoe near Verbilki, where some other members of the Gardner family are also buried.90

C Dostoevsky’s Autobiographical Note Intended for Foreign Correspondent?

Dostoevsky’s attempt at writing a short autobiographical note that covers his life up to and including 1877 remains the only source of information composed entirely by him (27, 120–121). It was first published in Russia in 1906, titled “Short biographical information about F.M. Dostoevsky” (Kratkie biograficheskie svedeniia o F.M. Dostoevskom)91 and it has remained unpublished in its entirety in English translation, until the current version in Appendix C. As was noted at the time of its first publication, the biographical note was dictated by Dostoevsky to his wife, Anna Grigorievna Dostoevskaya, who took it down in short-hand (27, 384). She had apparently indicated that the note was intended for an “editor of a newspaper”, although she never specified which particular newspaper or editor. The existence of the biographical note was confirmed in the first biography of Dostoevsky compiled by O.F. Miller for the posthumous edition of his works in 1883, where he noted that a biographical note had been dictated by Dostoevsky “a few years prior to his death”.92

Dostoevsky had been displeased with the biographical entry about him by V.R. Zotov that had appeared in the Russian Biographical Dictionary (Russkii entsiklopedicheskii slovar’) in 187593 and expressed his displeasure in the January issue of Writer’s Diary [Dnevnik pisatelya] for 1876.94 Soon after (1876–1877) he was asked to provide his biography by at least two other contemporary literary biographers: P.V. Bykov and P.N. Polevoi. He promised to do so, but apparently

90 Dubnensko-Taldomskoe blagochinie Sergievo-Posadskoi eparkhii Mck Mirop rpts: https://www.facebook.com/dubnablago/posts/1687621238056552
93 Russkii entsiklopedicheskii slovar’ Red. I.N. Berezin. (St Peterburg: 1874–1875), Otd. 11., T.1, 475.
did not fulfil his promise. But then in 1877 an illustrated volume of 50 very short biographies of Russian writers was published: ‘Silhouettes’ of fifty Russian literati and their short biographies (“Siluety” piatidesiat russkikh literatorov i kratkikh ikh biografii). It represented Dostoevsky as a “writer-psychiatrist” (pisatel’-psikhiatr), whose novels were “wonderful in their psychological analysis of character”. The entry contained some minor inaccuracies.95 Also in 1877 he was approached by the editor of the Illustrated Newspaper (Illiustrirovannia gazeta) to provide his photograph and a list of his works for inclusion in a supplement-collection of Modern Russian Celebrities (Sovremennye russkie deiateli), which appeared in December of that year.96 The publication of these biographies may have contributed to motivating Dostoevsky to dictate his own biographical note to his wife.97

When republished in the 30-volume PSS, it was accompanied by an explanation from the editors in which it was stated that the note had been composed probably at the request of some “French foreign correspondent”. As they explained, the dictated version contained the word ‘Revue’, considered to be a French word for a journal, though it wasn’t noted that the equivalent English word ‘Review’ sounded, when dictated in Russian, quite similar to the French ‘Revue’.98 “However, soon, probably at the request of some French journalist, Dostoevsky dictated to his wife the published biography.” [Однако вскоре, вероятно по просьбе какого-то французского журналиста, Достоевский и продиктовал жене публикуемую биографию.] (27, 385)

There has never been any reference as to the identity either of the “editor of a newspaper”, nor of the “foreign correspondent” for whom the note was said to have been intended in the above-mentioned earlier publications in Russia. It is our intention in the current study to speculate as to the identity of these possible recipients of Dostoevsky’s version of his autobiography. Since the pool of possible recipients is a very wide one, we are proposing in this instance to leave

97 The autobiographical note was subsequently decrypted by A.G. Dostoevkaya for the 1906 edition of Dostoevsky’s works. Later it was decrypted again by Ts. M Poshemanskaia for publication in Literaturnyi arkhiv in 1961.
98 Many British periodicals were also designated as ‘Reviews’, including The Edinburgh Review and The Fortnightly Review to which K.P. Pobedonostsev subscribed. There was also Quarterly Review and Saturday Review to which Prince V.P. Meshchersky subscribed for the offices of The Citizen, when Dostoevsky was its editor. Other popular journals included The Contemporary Review.
discussion of possible editors of Russian-language newspapers to colleagues in Dostoevsky’s home country, and to focus instead on possible editors of foreign language newspapers and foreign correspondents, both French and British.

It may be worth noting that shortly before the time when Dostoevsky dictated his biography, he had been in correspondence with Ignaty Horn, the editor of the French-language St. Petersburg newspaper, affiliated to the Russian Foreign Office, *Journal de St.-Petersbourg* (29(2), 318, 334). Horn had asked Dostoevsky for permission to publish his short-story *Krotkaia* (*The Meek One*) in French translation in his *Journal*, to which Dostoevsky agreed. In the previous year (1876) Horn had arranged some receptions for George Augustas Sala (1828–1895), (formerly contributor to *Household Words. A Weekly Journal conducted by Charles Dickens*), who was revisiting Russia as a foreign correspondent and looking for material on popular cultural life. Horn may have had an interest in a short biographical sketch of Dostoevsky either for his own use, or for dissemination to some foreign correspondent (like Sala). However, we are proposing a more likely hypothesis that the autobiographical note may have been drafted on the advice of Konstantin Pobedonostsev, senator and a member of the State Council, who knew some British and French foreign correspondents working in St Petersburg, and in addition corresponded with a number of these and others. This was the case especially in 1876 prior to the commencement of the Russo-Turkish war on 24 April 1877 and lasted until after the war ended on 3 March 1878. During that period, Pobedonostsev translated from English some publicist works on the Balkan crisis and reviewed a number of books and pamphlets by British authors he was in contact with. He and Dostoevsky used to meet fairly regularly throughout the period when the autobiographical note was meant to have been composed, ie a few years prior to Dostoevsky’s death and before he had begun his intensive work on the composition of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

99 Sala, George Augustus, *The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala*, (London, Paris, & Melbourne: Cassell and Co. Ltd, 1895), vol. 11, 317–318: “I was most cordially received by the Ambassador, who, among other favours, introduced me to a clever gentleman named Horn, who was the editor of the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, a daily paper shrewdly suspected to be the organ of the Russian Foreign Office, and published in the French language (...) Mr. Horn was kind enough to hold at his residence a couple of receptions at which I had the honour to meet, so I was given to understand, the flower of intellectual Russian society. One gathering was composed exclusively of university professors and medical men. In 1876 I had, apparently, hopelessly—but such turned out not to be the case—forgotten all the Russian which I had acquired in 1856; so the “medicos” and the professors all talked to me in French."

The British foreign correspondent for *The Times* of London from 1877 to 1878, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1841–1919) may have been a possible intended recipient of Dostoevsky’s autobiographical note. He was in St Petersburg throughout 1877 until he was dispatched to cover the Berlin Congress in June-July 1878. He had published a two-volume book entitled *Russia* in January 1877,\(^{101}\) which was translated almost immediately into French,\(^{102}\) but held up by censorship in Russia.\(^{103}\) In his book *Russia* Wallace writes: “In March 1870 I arrived for the first time in St Petersburg. My intention was to spend merely a few months in Russia, but I unexpectedly found so many interesting subjects of study that I remained for nearly six years – till December 1875 ... Since my return to England I have kept up a constant correspondence with numerous Russian friends, so that I have been able to follow closely what has taken place in the short interval”.\(^{104}\) Wallace met many prominent Russians and consulted them about various topics that interested him. In the Preface to his book he thanks various personages he was indebted to. These include “the late Mr. N.A. Milutine, the late Mr. Samarin, Prince Tcherkassky, and Mr. Koshelef”, as well as a number of others such as “Madame de Novikoff, née de Kireeff”, who resided in London. There were many other Russians he was acquainted with, but does not mention directly in his book. According to Pobedonostsev’s biographer Robert Byrnes, both Pobedonostsev and his friend Catherine Tyutchev had “spent long evenings with Wallace between 1875 and 1877, correcting what they considered his errors in understanding Russia, especially the character and role of the Church.”\(^{105}\) Pobedonostsev approved more-or-less of Wallace’s assessment of social and political life in Imperial Russia, as did other conservative-minded Slavophile orientated Russian patriots at the time, such as I.S. Aksakov (though his opinion may have changed after the Congress of Berlin). In his book Wallace refers to Ivan Aksakov in the following terms: “I have long known Mr. Aksakoff, and have never in any country met a more honest and truthful man”.\(^{106}\)

Dostoevsky and Wallace first met briefly at the house of Aksakov and his wife Anna (sister to Catherine Tyutchev) in Moscow between 1873–74. Aksakov

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\(^{103}\) It was published in a Russian translation in 1880: *Rossiia: Ocherki o sovremennom polozhenii.* (SPb.: Tip. A. M. Volfa, 1880).

\(^{104}\) : Ibid. v.


\(^{106}\) Ibid. Wallace, vol 2, 452.
recalls this meeting in passing in a footnote that he attaches to an article by Apollon Maikov in Aksakov’s journal *Rus’* after Dostoevsky’s death. He mentions that Wallace had been in Russia for about three years by then, which would date it around the end of 1873, as Wallace had arrived in Russia in 1870.107

Once, while passing through Moscow, Dostoevsky came to see us and talked with enthusiasm about the late Sovereign Nikolai Pavlovich (Nicholas I – I.Z.), about how the historical image of the monarch, who believed in his dignity and his right, is majestically drawn against the backdrop of the past, and how sympathetic this image is to him. During the conversation, the famous English traveller Wallace Mackenzie came in; he had lived in Russia for three years, had learned Russian very well and was familiar with Russian literature. When he learned that Dostoevsky was in front of him, he became curious and eagerly began to listen to Fedor Mikhailovich’s interrupted and then resumed speech about Nikolai Pavlovich. Dostoevsky went on talking, paying no attention to the Englishman, and soon afterwards left. “You say that this is Dostoevsky?” the Englishman asked us, – “Yes.” – “The author of *The House of the Dead*?” – Yes, that’s the one. Well, what then? – “But how can he praise the man who exiled him to hard labour?” – It is difficult for you foreigners to understand this, we answered, but for us it is quite clear, as it’s a completely national trait ... Ed. **

[«Как-то раз, проезжая через Москву, Достоевский зашел к нам и с увлечением разговорился о покойном государе Николае Павловиче, о том, как на фоне прошлого величаво рисуется этот исторический образ монарха, верившего в свой сан и свое право, и как сочувствен ему этот образ. Во время разговора вошел известный английский путешественник Уоллес Мэкензи, проживший перед тем уже года три в России, отлично выучившийся по-русски и знакомый с русскою литературою. Когда он узнал, что перед ним Достоевский, он загорелся любопытством и с жадностью стал слушать прерванную было и снова возобновившуюся речь Федора Михайловича о Николае Павловиче. Достоевский продолжал говорить, не обращая внимания на англичанина и вскоре затем уехал ... – Вы говорите, что это Достоевский? – спросил нас англичанин. – Да. – Автор


It was typical of Dostoevsky to have praised Nicholas I to specifically Aksakov, a Slavophile, who became a leading Pan-Slavist, rather than to someone left-leaning, for Dostoevsky had the ability to sense what the person he was speaking to or writing for would appreciate hearing at the time, and could attune himself to it. Similarly, in his autobiographical note he is likely to have attuned himself to whoever was the intended recipient of the note – of course, these are generalisations and one should qualify them by pointing out that sometimes the complete opposite happened. Wallace obviously gained special understanding about Slavophilism from his acquaintance with Aksakov and other Slavophiles, which is reflected in his chapter “Moscow and the Slavophils” in the first edition of his book Russia, being possibly the first wide-ranging critical account of Slavophilism then available in English. In Russia Wallace is considered to have contributed to the Russophile trend that developed towards the end of the century in Britain leading to the English-Russian Convention of 1907. (However, we would not go as far as this, as his assessment of Russian life, no matter how faithfully and affectionately it reproduces the ideal aspirations of society and people, is always combined with a healthy dose of humour and scepticism, even a sense of the absurd). As an ideology, Slavophilism and Russian Orthodoxy (with all its unintended offshoots) became a fashionable object of inquiry amongst some elements of British society, a trend that Wallace doubtlessly did contribute to, and which resulted in it also gaining more significance at home in Russia. The version of Wallace’s book that is mostly reprinted today is an abridged version that includes about two-thirds

of the material in the later 1912 edition. The 1877 edition was translated into Russian in 1880–1881.

The possibility that the foreign correspondent for whom Dostoevsky’s note was intended may have been French has also been investigated in the course of our present study. The two most prominent French correspondents at the time, both contributing at various times to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* were Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu (1842–1912) and Alfred Rambaud (1842–1905). Pobedonostsev was acquainted with Leroy-Beaulieu, who referred to him as “The Russian Torquemada.” Leroy-Beaulieu acknowledges in a Preface dated April 1881 to the first edition of his book *L’Empire des tsars et les Russes* that it was written over a period of eight years: “The work, of which I am offering the first volume to the public, is the fruit of ten years of work and four visits to Russia, from 1872 to last summer.” From 1873 onwards Leroy-Beaulieu published articles on the Russian Empire in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that were later included into the three volumes of his book. Alfred Rambaud in his book *The History of Russia from its Origins until 1877* actually mentions Dostoevsky’s name (Dostoiévski) amongst a list of writers publishing “novels of manner”. Rambaud also lists the name of Meshchersky’s *The Citizen* edited by Dostoevsky in the detailed list that Rambaud provides of newspapers and journals being published in Russia. Nevertheless, after exploring the possible

111 Ibid. Byrnes, 345.
114 Ibid. 699: “… de meurs, mm. Tourguénief, Pisemski, Dostoïéviiski, Gontcharof, Melnikof, Stébnitski, Boborikine, Mme Kréstovski, la Petite-Russienne Marko-Vovtchok; dans le roman historique, mm. Alexis Tolstoi (Le prince Sérébrannyi ou Ivan le Terrible), Léon Tolstoi (La guerre et la paix, étude sur les guerres napoléoniennes), Sahlias (Les compagnons de Pougatchef); dans le roman satirique, le redoutable Chtchédrine; au théâtre, mm. Ostrovski; Potiékhine, Sollohoup; et pour les drames historiques, Meï, A. Tolstoi (La mort d’Ivan le Terrible), Averkief (Vassili l’Aveugle).
115 Ibid., 698. “Les publications périodiques ont pris depuis la guerre de Crimée un développement inouï: on compte environ quatre cent soixante-douze journaux, dont trois cent soixante-dix-sept en langue russe; à Saint-Pétersbourg, le *Goloss*, dont le tirage est le plus considérable, la *Gazette de Saint-Pétersbourg*, la *Gazette de la Bourse*, sympathique à la France pendant la guerre de 1870–71, le *Monde russe*, qui a soutenu d’intéressantes polémiques militaires avec l’*Invalid*, le *Temps nouveau*, dévoûté aux intérêts slaves; à Moscou, la *Gazette de Moscou*, qui a cessé depuis 1863 d’appartenir
identity of the intended recipient of Dostoevsky’s note, the French connection is being discounted for now, with Mackenzie Wallace becoming the more likely recipient.\(^{116}\)

What is beyond dispute in our view is that Dostoevsky’s autobiographical note was written with the intention of publication in a foreign newspaper for the consumption of readers abroad, who knew little about him; hence he introduces himself as a “Russian writer”. On first reading it sounds very precise and formal, and reads almost like an official logbook or register of events presented from the third person point of view. It provides a chronological, authoritative-sounding introduction to his social background, life and works, opening with a few words on his place of birth, his father’s social estate: “a noble, landowner and doctor of medicine”, his early education in Moscow, followed by his passing an entry examination at the Main Engineering Academy in St Petersburg, and his later graduation: “In 1842 he completed a military engineering course and left the college as an engineer with the rank of sub-lieutenant and was retained on service in St Petersburg”. At the time of writing the military was celebrated and a number of his Engineering Academy contemporaries had achieved distinction, and Dostoevsky had been originally a part of that group. The formal, positive tone with emphasis on his military qualifications and service is interrupted with the admission that “other goals and ambitions irresistibly attracted him. In particular, he began to take an interest in literature, philosophy and history.” When taken together with his later statement about his major novels, one is struck that in his assessment of his writing, he is implying that his works should not be judged solely within the framework of realist fiction or belles-lettres, as practised by contemporary realist writers. Could that be the reason why he gives weight to the fact that he took up writing professionally after resigning from service in 1844, but that it was not solely literature that attracted him, but also “philosophy and history”? He highlights three of his major novels: “In 1866, upon the death of his brother and the cessation of the journal *Epoch* (*Epokha*), which he published, Dostoevsky wrote the novel *Crime and Punishment* (*Prestuplenie i nakazanie*) and then, in 1868, the novel *The Idiot* (*Idiot*) followed by the novel *Demons* (*Besy*) in 1870. These three

\(^{116}\) I wish to thank Dr Hilary Chapman for her help with checking *Revue des Deux Mondes* for the relevant years for articles relating to Russian literature.
novels were highly regarded by the public, even though Dostoevsky may have given through them a very harsh picture of contemporary Russian society.”

Dostoevsky omits to mention the fourth major novel published in 1875, *The Adolescent* (*Podrostok*), perhaps because it was less popular than the other three. He would have known that in December 1875 there appeared in the British weekly-newspaper *The Athenaeum* an article on “Russia”, in which his latest novel *The Adolescent*, referred to as *A Young Man* received a critical assessment, noting that ‘Dostoiefsky’ had “fallen into the habit of allowing himself to give too much importance to episodes, to confuse the main subject, and to draw out his reasoning to inordinate lengths; he therefore becomes simply tiresome. Much of this is probably due to the practice of writing his novels as serials, and of publishing part before the rest is written.”¹¹⁷ In his biographical note Dostoevsky seems to suggest that the three novels he refers to should not be judged solely on the “very harsh picture of contemporary Russian society” they present, which was the context in which critics invariably did judge them at the time, but challenges the critics to evaluate them from the wider perspective of philosophy and history, thereby indirectly pointing to a link between these two disciplines and German philosophical thought (especially popular in Russia during Dostoevsky’s younger years) and to British empiricism and moral theory.

But the greatest amount of emphasis in the biographical note is centred on Dostoevsky’s arrest, in the spring of 1849 “for taking part in an anti-government political conspiracy of a socialist flavour”. However, he does not actually refer to the name of Petrashevsky, the founder of the Circle, whose name had gained notoriety not only in Russia, but also abroad. This would have been due to censorship, as he was cautioned twice on 29 January 1877 by the censor of his *Writer’s Diary*, N.A. Ratynsky about a section in the *Diary’s* January issue “The Petrashevtsy in Olden Times” (*Starina o petrashevtsakh*), which the censor wanted removed.¹¹⁸ By directing the reader’s attention at the more positive

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¹¹⁷ Schuyler, Eugene, *Russia*, *The Athenaeum*, No. 2513 (25 December 1875): 874–876. The assessment of Dostoevsky’s latest novel begins with: “The names of their authors compel me to mention ‘A Young Man,’ by Dostoiefsky; and ‘Kudeyar,’ by Kostomarof. Dostoiefsky has chosen as his subject the power of wealth in modern society, and, with his remarkable power of character, analysis, and his really great talent, could have produced, had he chosen, an excellent book; but he has fallen into the habit of allowing himself to give too much importance to episodes ...” etc.

aspects of the sentence, his own attention was diverted away from something that he probably wished to forget, namely his own involvement within a subgroup of the Circle, whose aim was to set up an illegal underground printing press that he escaped being charged for (18, 193–194). Then follows a relatively long account of all the subsequent events connected with his sentence comprising well over a third of the entire autobiographical note. He refers in very positive, deferential terms to Tsar Nicholas I and to Alexander II for the various allowances that they made in relation to his case. His underlying intention appears to have been to publicise an image of himself as that of a reformed political miscreant, who had renounced his former misguided socialist beliefs and youthful associations, with the inference that this had been recognised by the Sovereigns. The biographical note appears designed to serve as one more step in his efforts at having his name completely cleared and removed from the police surveillance files of the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty’s Own Chancellery (Tretie Otdelenie or III otdelenie sobstvennoi E.I.V. kantselarii) (see section D below). Its aim was to express remorse for his beliefs and actions together with renunciation of his former convictions. Dostoevsky could not but sound positive and laudatory in relation to the Tsarist regime. He fully justifies his arrest in 1849 for participation in an anti-government political conspiracy. He focuses on and gives credit to Tsar Nicholas I for commuting the death sentence by firing squad to hard labour and exile, and at the completion of his four-year term in Siberia having his rights as citizen restored: “Similar pardons occurred now and again subsequently, but this was the first instance”. Here he is indirectly, but clearly comparing his fate to that of the aristocratic Decembrists, most of whom had spent almost a lifetime in Siberia (until pardoned in the amnesty granted by Alexander II on his accession), and whose fates had been mythologised in popular Russian culture and consciousness. There is a sense here that by putting himself into the same league as the martyr-like Decembrists, whose fates were known abroad and identified with Russia’s harsh autocratic regime, Dostoevsky was participating in the creation of his own myth as that of a martyr. Yet, at the same time he proceeds to interpret and embellish on the feelings of the late Nicholas I towards himself, stating that “this (the pardon – I.Z.) was sanctioned by the will of the late emperor Nicholas I who took pity on Dostoevsky’s youth and talent”. Dostoevsky appears proud both of having had his civil rights restored and at his successful promotions in the military after he was despatched as a rank and file soldier to the Siberian line battalion no. 7 in the town of Semipalatinsk, where he was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer after a year and, with the accession of the reigning emperor Alexander II to the throne, made a full officer.
Dostoevsky draws to a close with an acknowledgement of his open allegiance to Slavophilism, with the avowal that his former socialist convictions had changed greatly. He does not expand on when or how his convictions changed, nor mention anything directly to do with religious beliefs. It is customary for commentators, while discussing Dostoevsky’s “Conversion” in Siberia to cite in support of this “rebirth” his letter to N.D. Fonvizina of early 1854 interpreting it as Dostoevsky’s confession of his allegiance to Christ (28 (1), 175–177). None the less, his autobiography overall, despite its tone, sounds convincingly remorseful and ‘Christian’. As to his admission of being an “unreserved Slavophile” (otkrytyi slavianofil) by conviction, we shall only note here that the Slavophile sentiment, at its inception and even during later development, before it turned into a doctrine was not identified exclusively with faith and Orthodoxy, but rather with the historical development of Russia, its geography, ethnology and geo-politics (aspects also dealt with in Wallace’s book on Russia).

But Dostoevsky’s other intention in this autobiographical note was to emphasise that he suffered from his ill health for much of his adult life. There is a sense that he feels almost apologetic that he did not publish any major works between 1844 and “his first novel” in 1861 following imprisonment in Siberia, The Humiliated and Injured (Unizhennye i oskorblennye). Poor Folk earned him a place in literature and was received extremely favourably by critics and leading lights in Russian society, being “a rare success in the full sense of the word. But the constant ill health which subsequently affected him for several years in a row impeded his literary activity.” After Siberia: “As a victim of epilepsy, which he had acquired during his period of hard labour, he was discharged from the army in 1859 and returned to Russia”. He underscores his best known work published after his “first novel”: “But during the next two years he began and completed Notes from the House of the Dead (Zapiski iz mertvogo doma), in which he described his life of hard labour and wrote of his former fellow prisoners under fictitious names.” Here he is emphasising the autobiographical elements of the book, rather than fictional ones. This is in contrast to his original intention when preparing it for publication to endow the narrative with elements of fiction, such as an invented narrator, whose crime was the murder of his wife. By identifying his creative work with his biography an artist participates in the creation of biographical myths and its diffusion into public consciousness. Dostoevsky is careful to note, in tune with the rest of his almost exalted assessment of the autocracy, that the practices and customs described in his account have long since undergone change in Russia.

The emphasis on his “constant ill-health” in the early part of his career makes one wonder whether he is also implying that because of it he may have had less control over his physical and psychological condition, which may have been
one reason why he might be excused in retrospect for becoming involved with the Petrashevsky Circle, and the associated complex personal relations that it spawned. Another reason could have been his ongoing desire to counteract rumours circulating about him about the earlier periods of his life, or even to forestall further rumours that he may have known were being spread privately and which he might have been expecting to emerge publicly in the future. In addition, he had been under the medical care of Dr S.D. Yanovsky and dependent on the latter's remedies (including opiates normally prescribed at the time), though his malady was never fully explained or diagnosed. It is significant that later he tried to let his relationship with the doctor become more distant. A similar progression (namely a withdrawal) occurred with his relationship with A.E. Wrangel, whom he also distanced himself from, although earlier Wrangel had zealously helped Dostoevsky in his tactics to attain a pardon, permission to publish his writing and reside in the capitals. Dostoevsky's description of himself being “a victim of epilepsy, which he had acquired during his period of hard labour” was also cited by him in official documents, when applying for a foreign passport for travel abroad, the official purpose always being to seek treatment for his medical condition.

Dostoevsky's focus on his ill health throughout his adult life could have been due also to his realisation from the vantage point of his current age of around 56–57 years (and he was to die some three-four years later in January 1881), that his ongoing neuropsychological deterioration was manifesting itself unrelentingly. Today neuropsychological impairment is regarded as an unavoidable consequence of chronic epilepsy, predating the time it became active and manifested itself in actual epileptic seizures. It is now medically recognised that neuropsychological markers not only antedate the first seizure, but that these continue to influence cognition, and can manifest themselves in various psychiatric, behavioral and other developmental processes. Around the time when Dostoevsky was dictating his autobiographical note he may have been becoming more conscious of some of these processes, especially his increasing loss of memory and deterioration in recognising faces. In a letter dated 27 March, 1878 in reply to an unidentified person named Leonid Vasil'evich, who had written to Dostoevsky as someone, who had known the writer during his early St Petersburg years, Dostoevsky replies that he cannot remember him: “I must tell you that I suffer from epilepsy. Which deprives me completely of my memory, especially of certain events. I don't know if you will believe me, but I do not recognize people in the street to whom I was introduced only a month before. In addition, I completely forget my own works. This winter I reread one of my novels – Crime and Punishment – which I wrote ten years ago, and more than two thirds of the novel was completely
unfamiliar to me, just as if I had not written it, to such an extent had I managed to forget it.” (p. 16–19).

Dostoevsky was about to embark on the composition of his next and last major novel *Brothers Karamazov* that he is likely to have recognised would be a massive task physically and his note was dictated before he was about to submerge himself in his new work. He sounds very proud as he sums up the success of his *Writer's Diary* for 1876–1877, yet he began producing it in 1873, as a column for the newspaper-journal *The Citizen* (*Grazhdanin*), when he was its editor, while the publisher was Prince V.P. Meshchersky. But he avoids any mention of his editorship of *The Citizen*, nor his association with Meshchersky, making it absolutely clear that he is the *Diary’s* sole author-creator: “In 1876 Dostoevsky began to publish a monthly journal in the original form of a “Diary”, which was written by him alone, with no collaborators. This publication came out in 1876 and 1877 with a circulation of 8,000 copies. It was successful.” Shortly before in the biographical entry about him in ‘Silhouettes’ of fifty Russian literati and their short biographies (1877) it was stated slightly ambiguously that “At the moment Dostoevsky is publishing a collection of articles on contemporary life, entitled *Writer’s Diary.*” [В настоящее время Ф.М. Достоевский издает сборник статей современной жизни, под названием «Дневник писателя»]. Dostoevsky seems to want to ensure that *Writer’s Diary* is seen as being exclusively his own work (not as a “collection of articles” that might have been implied).

On initial reading, the account seems acceptable enough in relation to the known events in Dostoevsky’s life, yet when one considers it more closely, the number of emphases and omissions it contains could possibly indicate that by the end of 1877 he had developed almost an instinctive or mechanical strategy regarding his self-representation to the public and to authorities. After the introduction to his early life, followed by a depiction of incidents that includes conflict that engages the reader, the rising action builds up to the essential message of the narrative, like an editorial, leading to the crunch-line: “Even from his literary opponents Dostoevsky has earned the reputation of being a highly honourable and sincere writer.” His final crucial testimony was his admission that he was an “undisguised Slavophile” by conviction and that his former socialist beliefs had changed rather markedly (p. 120–121). Dostoevsky does not mention anything about his private life, his family, his interests, nor his professional associations etc. Though proud of the success of *Writer’s Diary*, there is no reference to his other journalistic and publicist work, his frequent

119 “Siluety” piatidesiati russkikh literatorov, 50.
trips abroad, his experiences while living in different parts of Russia, his contribution to the literary organisations he was a member of etc. The focus is on St Petersburg, as if he wished to be associated only with the St Petersburg tradition in Russian culture, despite expressing allegiance to Slavophilism.

Yet, looking back on his earlier activities and networks one notes that Dostoevsky did not express any adherence to Slavophilism prior to his imprisonment in the Petropavlovsky fortress in St Petersburg following his arrest in April 1849. On the contrary, his allegiances were with the Westerners and the more progressive literary groups in St Petersburg, some of whose members professed revolutionary sympathies. But when he was required to write a formal statement for the specially appointed Investigating commission to outline his contacts with and opinions of members of the Petrashevsky Circle, Dostoevsky tried to downplay his involvement with and the political importance of Petrashevsky by resorting to Slavophile-driven argumentation. The Investigative committee was anxious to be informed of the “threat to society” that the Circle posed, which Dostoevsky successfully eluded, by aligning himself with certain tendencies that were identified with nationalist, conservative Slavophile perceptions of the Russia state. While facing the accusation of practising “freethinking” (vol’nodumstvo), Dostoevsky tried to deflect this by questioning in a disarmingly innocent way, whether by talking about the crisis in the West it followed that he was a “freethinker” or of “republican persuasion”? How could anyone in Russia “even think about a Republic”? Western Europe and Russia had followed completely different historical paths of development: “Our country did not take shape along Western lines. We have historical examples in front of us.”(18, 123)120 The “current crisis” in the West and the revolution there, Dostoevsky explained in his written statement could be attributed to “historical necessity” (istoricheskuiu neobkhodimost’): “There (i.e. in the West – I.Z.) for many centuries, for more than a millenium, a very persistent struggle has dragged on between society and the authority that has imposed itself onto an alien civilisation by means of conquest, violence and oppression (zavoevaniem, nasiliem, pritesneniem).”(18, 123)121 Dostoevsky superimposes onto Russian history an ideological interpretation that has similarities with one expressed by the Slavophiles, which demonstrates that Dostoevsky was familiar with various trends of political thought reflected in the Russian press of the time, including the theoretical debates between the Slavophiles and the

121 Ibid. Knapp, 33.
Westerners. Comparable formulations can be found in a number of articles that had been published in the Slavophile journal *Muscovite (Moskvitianin)* in the 1840s.\(^{122}\)

When Dostoevsky returned to St Petersburg after his imprisonment and exile in Siberia, the public expression of his views from 1861 onwards on all trends in Russian society and culture were confined to the pages of the monthly journal *Time* (to be replaced later by the journal *Epoch*). Official permission from the St Petersburg Censorship Committee was given on the understanding that *Time* follow the official line or “trend” (*napravlenie*) that was set out in its original application. This was to polemicise with all literary factions, as its editors announced in several newspapers in 1860: to expose (*oblichat’*), or polemicise and denounce “all the literary oddities” (*vse literaturnye strannosti*), without taking obvious sides, though nevertheless promoting a specific ideology that was subsequently associated with ‘*pochvennichestvo*’ (18, 39). “We are not talking here about Slavophiles or Westernizers. Our time is completely indifferent to their domestic strife. We are talking about the reconciliation of civilization with the people’s principle” (18, 37). Its various declarations about Slavophiles in the following issues were numerous and contradictory. Dostoevsky’s most explicit declaration regarding Slavophilism was expressed in his *Writer’s Diary*, July-August 1877 (25, 185–195), approximately near the time when the autobiographical note was dictated. But perhaps some of the focus on Slavophilism was prompted by Dostoevsky’s indistinct memory of the possible intended recipient of his note, Wallace, whom he had first met at Aksakov’s some years earlier, and who was known to be fascinated by the phenomenon of Slavophilism, as indeed were many Russophile Britons.

**D Appeal to Interior Minister to have Police Surveillance Lifted.**

Dostoevsky’s memorandum addressed to the Minister of the Interior (who was L.S. Makov at the time), requesting that police surveillance of him be removed has had little exposure, and has never been translated in its entirety into English (until the current translation featured in the Appendix.)\(^{123}\) It has not been included into the five-volume collection of Dostoevsky’s letters in

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\(^{122}\) For example in contributions such as *For Native Antiquity (Za rodnuiu starinu)* (1845), which was unsigned, but whose author was in fact M.P. Pogodin (since he republished this article in a two-volume collection *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryvki* (M.: 1846).).

\(^{123}\) ‘Dokladnaia zapiska ministru vnutrennikh del L.S. Makovu’, *pss*, 30(1), 246.
English translation edited by David Lowe\textsuperscript{124}. The researcher V. Nechaeva first published Dostoevsky’s original draft manuscript in 1934.\textsuperscript{125}

As Dostoevsky explains in his memorandum, after the expiry of his four-year sentence of hard labour in the Omsk prison fortress, followed by service in the 7th Siberian line battalion, his civil rights, that he had lost in 1849 for participating in the Petrashevsky circle, were restored. The passport issued to him upon his discharge on June 30, 1859, in the town of Semipalatinsk, with permission to return to European Russia did not indicate that he would continue to be under police surveillance. Nevertheless, he and his wife believed that this surveillance was continuing. He states that this was demonstrated to him at the Third Section Of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancery\textsuperscript{126} to which he was always required to make a special request when departing abroad. In addition, while spending the winter of 1874–1875 in the town of Staraya Russa, his wife learnt from the local police superintendent that Dostoevsky continued to be under observation. At the time of writing of this appeal, Dostoevsky was convinced that the police surveillance had not been terminated. The appeal is dated in Dostoevsky’s \textit{Complete Collected Works} in 30 volumes as 30 March, 1879 (31(1), 246–27; 397–398), although V.S. Nechaeva’s dates it as 30 March, 1880, while G.F. Kogan is also inclined to date it as 1880.\textsuperscript{127} In his memorandum Dostoevsky assures the Minister of the Interior of his allegiance to the regime: “I have voiced and continue to voice my convictions, both political and religious, over hundreds of pages. These convictions, I hope, are of such a nature as not to give cause for suspicion of my political morality.” (31(1), 246–247).

However, researchers in Russia (specifically G. F. Kogan) have demonstrated that police surveillance on Dostoevsky had been lifted already in 1875.\textsuperscript{128} This occurred after a special commission was set up at the Ministry of the Interior to revise the rules on police supervision and administrative expulsion after it had received notifications from its various offices that too many cases had

\begin{footnotes}
\item[124] See footnote 10.
\item[126] Third Section Of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancery was a division first created in 1826 to conduct secret police operations, functioning in conjunction with the Corps of Gendarmes (formed in 1836) of the military that operated throughout the Russian Empire. It was disbanded in 1880, to be replaced by the Police Department and the \textit{Okhrana}.
\item[128] Ibid. Kogan; Nechaeva.
\end{footnotes}
accumulated to monitor surveilled persons, complicating and burdening police and office work. The commission was instructed to consider in detail the reasons for having taken an “administrative measure” against each person, to collect certificates from the cases being carried out in different places and to trace the governors’ attestations about them. The commission received from the office of the St. Petersburg mayor a list of persons who, having been in St. Petersburg under police supervision at different times since 1854, had not been involved in reprehensible acts and were presented for release from the police surveillance established for them. There were 43 such persons and Dostoevsky’s name was amongst these. Detailed reports were provided of the cases in which his name had been mentioned in the past and the enquiries carried out about him, when he had applied for a passport for travel abroad. A note from the St. Petersburg mayor was included stating that Dostoevsky had been tried in 1849 in the case of Butashevich-Petrashevsky, in 1856 he was pardoned. After that, he was repeatedly allowed to travel abroad, so he was recognized as being quite trustworthy and now there were no obstacles to releasing him from surveillance. The opinion about Dostoevsky’s trustworthiness would have been formed on the recommendation of influential persons from government circles to whom Dostoevsky had become close in the 1870s. But it took a very long time for that decision to be implemented, and for it to trickle down to the offices of governors and mayors, especially in the provinces, and for local administrators to put it into effect. By that time Dostoevsky was a resident at Staraya Russa.

The decision by Dostoevsky to take some action eventually that resulted in his appeal was precipitated originally by some complications that arose, as he explains in his memorandum, when he needed to apply for a passport for foreign travel in April 1875. In her memoirs Anna Dostoevskaya relates that she was helping Dostoevsky to apply through the governor of Novgorod. She went to the local police officer to make some enquiries and during the course of their conversation he showed her a file: “the contents consisted of ‘The Case of Retired Lt. Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, under Secret Surveillance and Residing Temporarily in Staraya Russa’”\(^\text{129}\) She told this news to her husband, laughing at the absurdity of this fact, but he “took the news hard”. They realised the reason why in the previous year the letters she was mailing from Staraya Russa to Dostoevsky in Bad Ems were held up and never arrived on time: “Our letters were being censored, and their mailing depended on the permission of

a police inspector”. Anna’s reminiscences were composed between 1911 and 1916 and published in 1925, so her assessments were made with the benefit of over 35 years of contemplation regarding the narrative’s standpoint.

Although the year 1875 is generally accepted today as being the official date when police surveillance on Dostoevsky was lifted, the fact remains that neither Dostoevsky, nor his wife believed that to be the case. She explains that Dostoevsky did not raise the issue of releasing him from police surveillance at the time, because some influential persons insisted that he would not have been allowed to be editor of a newspaper (The Citizen) and publisher of Writer’s Diary unless the police surveillance had been lifted. She seems to have been the one particularly indignant at the police surveillance. According to her reminiscences, in 1880 “during the Pushkin memorial celebrations, Fyodor Mikhailovich had occasion to speak about it to a highly placed personage by whose order the secret surveillance was finally discontinued.” That “highly placed personage” was Alexander Alekseevich Kireev (1833–1910), a cavalry general and a prominent conservative Slavophile publicist, whom Dostoevsky approached. He was also the brother of Olga A. Kireeva-Novikova (mentioned in Section C above in connection with her having assisted Mackenzie Wallace with his book Russia). Kireev was an adjutant of the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich Romanov. As Secretary of the St Petersburg branch of the Society of Devotees of Spiritual Enlightenment, he and Dostoevsky would have had an opportunity to meet there initially.

Anna Grigorievna may not be entirely correct about Dostoevsky first approaching Kireev at the Pushkin Festivities in Moscow in June 1880, where Dostoevsky delivered his famous Pushkin Speech on June 8. In accordance with a letter from Kireev to Dostoevsky, the researcher G. Kogan believes that the conversation between Dostoevsky and Kireev could have taken place as early as February or March 1880. On March 10 Kireev had written to Dostoevsky citing the Minister of the Interior, who had said that the removal of police supervision would not meet with any obstacles. Kireev repeated the latter’s pronouncement to Dostoevsky that no one but Dostoevsky had the right to make any statements on his behalf and he asked Dostoevsky to deliver to him “for greater speed” his memorandum to the Minister. Kireev’s letter to Dostoevsky does not indicate the year (only the day and month), and Anna Grigorievna has dated the letter by hand conditionally, indicating in brackets the year 1879. Dostoevsky’s memorandum was apparently delivered to the offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (30(1), 397–398).

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130 Ibid. 250.  
131 Ibid. 250.  
132 Kogan, 514–515.
It is characteristic of Dostoevsky to have approached an influential personage, such as Kireev directly in order to seek help. He did the same after his release from the Siberian prison when he approached General Eduard Totlebben in 1856 to intercede on his behalf regarding his promotion to an officer’s rank and for permission to be published.\textsuperscript{133} It is a reflection of how decisions were made in Russia at the highest level, where there were no clear mechanisms within the government for procedures to be followed to achieve justice. However, Kireev instructed him on the process to be followed, as prescribed by the Minister of the Interior, which resulted in the writing of the official memorandum.

Kireev’s impression of Dostoevsky and his favourable attitude towards the writer is reflected in a diary-entry that he wrote at the Pushkin Festivities in Moscow in 1880: “Turgenev is a perfect *ramolli*, does nasty things, allows all sorts of riff-raff (like the editorial staff of *Golos*) to exploit his name in its fight against Dostoevsky, about whom this party tells the devil knows what. Dostoevsky is a Christian and of a conservative trend of mind, and with his enormous talent and growing popularity among young people, he is dangerous to our nihilists in uniforms. *Inde irae!* *(That’s where the anger comes from! (lat.))* Turgenev goes to any lengths because of petty pride (but colossal in its pettiness). *Quelle degringolade!*\textsuperscript{134}

From the time of Anna Grigorievna’s encounter with the police officer (E.M. Gotskii-Danilovich) in Staraya Russa in the spring of 1875, and until the memorandum of 1880, Dostoevsky acted in accordance with his conviction that he was still under police surveillance. The researchers Zhavoronkov and Belov also believe that the surveillance continued throughout the 1870s until the beginning of the 1880s, despite their publication of the contents of the file on Dostoevsky held in the archives of the Governor of the Novgorod region, that included item No. 50, dated 5 January 1876 where it stated that in accordance with the proposal of the regulatory superintendent of the Ministry of the Interior dated July 9 of the previous year Dostoevsky was being released from police surveillance. If one reads carefully Dostoevsky’s letters to his wife

\textsuperscript{133} Military engineer E. I. Totlebben (1818–1884) immortalized his name with the defense of Sevastopol. Dostoevsky met him in the 1840s and turned to him in 1856 with requests for intercession. Totlebben took a lively part in his fate: “All my life I will remember his noble deed towards me.” (xxviii(1) 214–215; 225; 240–241; 342–343; 371–372)

in Staraya Russa written from abroad, or even from the capitals, one can notice a slight change of tone to that of the pre-1875 letters. When examined through the prism of Dostoevsky’s conviction that they were being read by officials, one senses that at times Dostoevsky may have deliberately written in accordance with the expectations that he thought they might have had of private letters to one's wife, and even possibly attempted to liven up provocatively their reading. Nor did he hide from them the fact that he knew the letters were being perused (29(2), 51). Some of the earlier letters have survived only in copies that had been “censored” by Anna Grigorievna by having lines crossed out or erased, and on following occasions the letter transcribed (31(1), 114–115). No doubt, had there been something that she herself would not have wanted to be read in her own correspondence (and not only to her husband), she would have taken appropriate precautions.

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A. Meshchersky’s Letter to the Heir to the Throne of Russia Supporting Dostoevsky’s Enclosed Request for Financial Assistance.

[Beginning of January 1872]

I hereby take the liberty of passing on to you a letter – a cry of desperation from the poverty-stricken and celebrated [F.M.] Dostoevsky, the finest writer of our era in Russia, who is at this grievous moment in his life setting his hopes on your mercy!

I dare not add anything “in support”, for 1) I am myself in your debt on account of a certain person, thanks to whom I must labour for two to three years in order to square up with you! 2) I acted as a plaintiff in the case of [P.K.] Shcheb[alsky] and proved unsuccessful!

But there is one thing I dare and must say: Dostoevsk[y] has ended up in an impossible debt situation because, on the death of his brother, in order to save his memory and honest name from shame, he undertook to pay all his debts, took money from various implacable creditors, who are threatening him with prison, and in this desperate situation he is suffering daily epileptic fits which are bringing him close to death.

On the other hand, restoring his peace of mind by assisting him with a loan would mean restoring him to life and, with his life, his talent!

Yours, K.V.M.

He came to see me, handed over this letter, and I have been meticulously and conscientiously collecting affidavits in order to have the right to hand this letter over to you. And here it is!

B. Dostoevsky’s Mother’s Best Friend Ekaterina Alfonsky with British “Gardner” Connection?

“I will also mention Arkady Alekseevich Alfonsky and his wife Ekaterina Alekseevna, born Gardner. I remember these two people only a little, because they left the hospital more or less at the end of the 20s. Ekaterina Alfonskaya was a real friend of my mother, and according to the stories of the latter, they saw each other almost daily. This Ekaterina Alekseevna Alfonskaya died, and Alfonsky married his second wife, some noble lady. Arkady Alekseevich Alfonsky moved from the hospital to a professorship at Moscow University in the Faculty of Medicine and was subsequently the dean of
the faculty. It is remarkable that mother is buried near her former friend Ekaterina
Alekseevna at the Lazarevsky cemetery."

C. Dostoevsky’s Autobiographical Note Intended for Foreign Correspondent?

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION DICTATED BY F.M. DOSTOEVSKY TO HIS WIFE,
A.G. DOSTOYEVSKAYA

Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, Russian writer, was born in 1821 in Moscow. His father was a noble, landowner and doctor of medicine.

He was educated till the age of 16 in Moscow. In his 17th year he passed an examination in St Petersburg for entry into the Main Engineering Academy. In 1842 he completed a military engineering course and left the college as an engineer with the rank of sub-lieutenant. He was retained on service in St Petersburg, but other goals and ambitions irresistibly attracted him. In particular, he began to take an interest in literature, philosophy and history.

In 1844 he resigned from the service and in the same year wrote his first reasonably sizeable novella Poor folk. This work immediately earned him a place in literature and was received extremely favourably by critics and leading lights in Russian society. This was a rare success in the full sense of the word. But the constant ill health which subsequently affected him for several years in a row impeded his literary activity.

In the spring of 1849 he was arrested together with many others for taking part in an anti-government political conspiracy of a socialist flavour. He was committed for interrogation and trial by a military court appointed at the highest instance. After eight months of confinement in the Saint Peter and Paul fortress he was condemned to death by firing squad. But the sentence was not carried out; a lesser sentence was read out and, after being deprived of his rights of status, rank and nobility, Dostoevsky was despatched to four years of hard labour in Siberia, to be followed by enlistment as a rank and file soldier at the end of the sentence. This verdict on Dostoevsky was the first of its kind in Russia, for everyone sentenced to hard labour in Russia loses his civil rights in perpetuity, even though he has completed his term of hard labour. It was resolved that, upon expiry of his term of hard labour, Dostoevsky should become a soldier—in other words, his rights as a citizen were being restored. Similar pardons occurred now and again subsequently, but this was the first instance and it was sanctioned by the will of the late emperor Nicholas I, who took pity on Dostoevsky’s youth and talent.

In Siberia Dostoevsky completed his four-year term of hard labour in the Omsk fortress; he was then despatched as a rank and file soldier to the Siberian line battalion no. 7 in the town of Semipalatinsk, where he was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer after a year and, with the accession of the reigning emperor, Alexander
to the throne, made a full officer. As a victim of epilepsy, which he had acquired during his period of hard labour, he was discharged from the army in 1859 and returned to Russia – first to the city of Tver’ and then to St Petersburg. Here Dostoevsky took up literature once again.

In 1861 his elder brother, Mikhail Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, began to put out a large literary monthly with the title of Time (Vremia). F. M. Dostoevsky also contributed to the publication of the journal and in it he published his first novel The Humiliated and Injured (Unizhennye i oskorblennye) which was sympathetically received by the public. But during the next two years he began and completed Notes from the House of the Dead (Zapiski iz mertvogo doma), in which he described his life of hard labour and wrote of his former fellow prisoners under fictitious names. This book was read right throughout Russia and is still highly esteemed, even though the practices and customs described in Zapiski iz mertvogo doma have long since undergone change in Russia.

In 1866, upon the death of his brother and the cessation of the journal Epokha, which he published, Dostoevsky wrote the novel Crime and Punishment (Prestuplenie i nakazanie) and then, in 1868, the novel The Idiot (Idiot), followed by the novel Demons (Besy) in 1870. These three novels were highly regarded by the public, even though Dostoevsky may have given through them a very harsh picture of contemporary Russian society.

In 1876 Dostoevsky began to publish a monthly journal in the original form of a “Diary”, which was written by him alone, with no collaborators. This publication came out in 1876 and 1877 with a circulation of 8,000 copies. It was successful. In general Dostoevsky is popular with the Russian public. Even from his literary opponents Dostoevsky has earned the reputation of being a highly honourable and sincere writer. He is an undisguised Slavophile by conviction; his former socialist convictions have radically changed.

D. Appeal to Interior Minister to have police surveillance lifted.

MEMORANDUM TO L. S. MAKOV, MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
March, 1879, St Petersburg

Memorandum from Second Lieutenant (retired) Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky.

By virtue of my most gracious promotion to ensign in 1858 from the non-commissioned ranks in the 7th Siberian line battalion, which I joined upon expiry of my four-year sentence to hard labour (second grade) in the Omsk fortress, all my civil rights, which I lost for participation in criminal propaganda in St Petersburg in 1849, were restored. The passport issued to me upon my discharge on June 30, 1859, in the town of Semipalatinsk, does not indicate that I would be under police surveillance;
nevertheless, this surveillance is continuing, as, for instance, was communicated to me at the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery, to which I was always required to make a special request when departing abroad, and finally, back in 1875, when, spending the winter of 1874–1875 in the town of Staraya Russa, I learned from the Staraya Russa police superintendent that he had me under observation.

Since the time of my pardoning and the restoration of my civil rights some 25 years have passed. I have voiced and continue to voice my convictions, both political and religious, over hundreds of pages. These convictions, I hope, are of such a nature as not to give cause for suspicion of my political morality, and therefore I am taking the liberty of requesting that police surveillance over me be terminated.

To His Excellency Minister of Internal Affairs.

March, 1879.