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***Russkoye Bogatstvo (Russian Wealth):
Narodniki's Magazine and the World Economic Crisis of 2020***

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Abstract. Russia was proud of *Russkoye Bogatstvo (Russian Wealth)* magazine for a long while. It was among the most reputable and influential periodicals in the country. Not only had many Russians known of the magazine, but they were also its dedicated readers. On the one hand, the interest in *Russkoye Bogatstvo* could have been justified by the excellent selection of its authors among the best Russian writers and scientists. On the other hand, its publishers were Russia's most famous critics, publicists, and outstanding literary figures recognized in the cultural and scientific circles. The magazine publications stood out due to their excellent style and availability for people of various social levels: both educated readers and those without profound knowledge of literature, science, and arts. The readers' pool included older and experienced people and very young students. Later, the name of the magazine became a symbol of the great intellectual wealth of Russia.

Keywords: Zlatovratsky, Mikhaylovsky, magazine, circulation, *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, cooperative, Korolenko, critic, censorship

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«Русское богатство»: журнал народников и мировой экономический кризис 2020 г.

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Аннотация. Этим журналом гордилась Россия. Долгое время «Русское богатство» считалось одним из самых авторитетных и влиятельных ежемесячных периодических изданий страны. Многие россияне не только знали о существовании журнала, но и становились его читателями. Интерес к «Русскому богатству», с одной стороны, объяснялся великолепным подбором его авторов, к числу которых относились лучшие российские писатели, ученые, деятели культуры. С другой стороны, его выпускали известные всей стране критики, публицисты, литераторы, пользовавшиеся глубоким уважением в культурных и научных кругах. Публикации журнала отличались великолепным стилем и были понятны людям самых разных социальных слоев, не только образованным читателям, но и тем, кто не обладали глубокими знаниями в области литературы, науки и искусства. Его читатели и те, кто достигли преклонного возраста, и совсем юные гимназисты. Само название журнала со временем стало символизировать колоссальное интеллектуально богатство, которым располагала Россия.

Ключевые слова: Златовратский, Михайловский, журнал, тираж, Русское богатство, артель, Короленко, критик, цензура

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Introduction

The title of this article could be considered a joke, if not for the recently published book by Adam Weiner, associate professor of Russian at Wellesley College. The book is named *How Bad Writing Destroyed the World: Ayn Rand and the Literary Origins of the Financial Crisis* [1].

The author details the impact of Ayn Rand's objectivism ideas on the fateful decisions made by Alan Greenspan, the 13th Federal Reserve Board of Governors Chairman (1987–2006), that led to the 2008 financial crisis.

Some of our economists believe that this crisis has been continued until now, and at the moment we are watching just another wave of it, but also burdened by the pandemic. However, it is not necessary to think that Adam Weiner meant by “bad writing” Ayn Rand's literary “masterpieces”. Although Alan Green-

span invited only two people to the swearing-in ceremony: his mother and the notorious writer.

By “bad writing” the American specialist in Russian philology means another literary masterpiece – the novel *What to Do?* by Nikolay G. Chernyshevsky. It is about the Russian intelligentsia idol of the pre-revolutionary era who set out the theory of rational egoism with inexpressible clarity. The point is that rational actions, including unification and mutual assistance, mutual support of people in their work help you achieve your own goals. Reasonable pursuit of self-interest should become the basis of human relations. And only such “reasonable selfishness” will lead to harmonious economic and political relations and universal happiness on Earth. Alice Zinovievna Rosenbaum, known in America as Ayn Rand, according to A. Weiner, could not help but know, read and admire the ideas of Chernyshevsky who, as the author writes, became an inspiration for Rand’s generation of the early 1900s [1. P. 9].

In our article, we intend to go further, not limiting ourselves to blaming Nikolay G. Chernyshevsky for the global financial crisis. In the end, the idol of the pre-revolutionary youth was not only Nikolai Gavrilovich. Other equally revered rulers of the intelligentsia minds, especially the youth, were Nikolai Konstantinovich Mikhailovsky (1842–1904), by the way, the successor of Chernyshevsky’s ethical quest, and Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko (1853–1921) [2].

Moreover, the magazine they headed for several decades, *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (*Russian Wealth*), was considered “very progressive in its political and social views” [3. P. 379]. It often occupied top positions of literary magazines ratings according to the reader demand statistics by the Imperial Public Library in St. Petersburg which was the largest library at that time in Russia [3. P. 374]. Hence, using the methodology of Mr. Weiner, we can conclude that the literary origins of the world economic crisis should be sought not only in “bad writing” by Nikolai Gavrilovich but also in “the great monument of talent, work and constant love” [3. P. 340], a magazine that was able to attract the best literary forces of that time to cooperate.

Russkoye Bogatstvo (*Russian Wealth*) was a classic type of magazine. It consisted of a literary section that replaced a book, an information and political section that was like a newspaper, and scientific and encyclopedic chapters that could be considered as a textbook. Moreover, there was a lot of material in the magazine, because its volume was from 300 to 500 pages.

Although at first there was little evidence of its future fame, of its readers’ success. The magazine originated in 1876. At the very time when the student youth, who five years earlier had taken to heart the ideas of Mikhail A. Bakunin and Petr A. Kropotkin, went to the villages to incite the peasants to revolt, suddenly realized that Bakunin was wrong: appeals are not enough for a nationwide revolt. The experience of going to people has shown that the peasantry does not rise to revolt and does not perceive either radical revolutionary and socialist appeals, or explanations of the current needs of the people, as they were understood by the narodniks.

Moreover, fruitless attempts to raise the people to fight drew the attention of the government to the revolutionary propaganda of the narodniks. More than 4 thousand people were arrested, many of them were handed over to the authorities by the peasants themselves. The disillusioned revolutionary intelligentsia, especially

the young people, returned to the cities, and the most feverishly continued to seek new opportunities to participate in the liberation of the people. Against this background (do not forget that two exciting public trials are about to begin—193 and Fifty) Nikolai Frantsevich Savich was of moderate political views, he previously published the newspaper *Narodny Listok of Agri-farm and Natural Science* to introduce peasants to active economic activity, and then he sets up the magazine *Russian Wealth*. It was dedicated to economic problems, industrial and agricultural issues – all that, in the opinion of the publisher, was the wealth of Russia.

Journal of Trade, Industry, Agriculture, and Natural Science was a trade magazine, which purpose was to educate those who were engaged in farming: no internal review and no politics. But Savich's problem was that his magazine did not reach the peasants, and it was unlikely that it could have reached them at that time, and the intelligentsia was not interested in the problems of the real economy. As a result, despite all the efforts of the publisher, the magazine did not find its reader, and in 1878 N.F. Savich abandoned the magazine, passing it into the hands of his sister Alexandra Frantsevna Savich. She, in her turn, in 1879 sold the magazine to Dmitry Mikhailovich Rybakov who in 1880 sold it to Serafima Nikitichna Bazhina, who was an ardent admirer of Chernyshevsky and Pisarev realism and enthusiastically preached the need for independent women's work. Sophia N. Bazhina, inspired by the workshops of Vera Pavlovna from Chernyshevsky's novel *What to Do?* had an idea of publishing the magazine on an artel basis.

Russkoye Bogatstvo (*Russian Wealth*) is especially noticeable in the composition of its authors in 1880–1882, for the most part, employees of *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (*Domestic Notes*) and *Delo* (*Business*), were supported in every possible way by Sophia's husband who used to be an employee of magazine *Delo* (*Business*), and before that was *Russkoye Slovo* (*Russian Word*).

Results and discussion

Russkoye Bogatstvo belonged to the classical magazines which included a literary part, a kind of a book; an information and politics part, an equivalent of a newspaper; and scientific and encyclopedia parts, which could be compared to a textbook. The material was impressive and one issue could have 300–500 pages.

In the beginning, the magazine was unlikely to become popular and successful among readers. It came out in 1876, and, at first, was published three times a month, being rather a newspaper than a magazine. Retired Lieutenant N.F. Savich, the former publisher of *Narodny Listok Selskogo Khozyaystva i Estestvoznaniya* (*People's Leaflet of Agriculture and Natural Science*) meant it for rural workers. The *Leaflet* served as a foundation for *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, which, in turn, was dedicated to economic, industrial, and agricultural matters; in other words, to everything that, according to the publisher, embodied Russia's wealth.

Though, the magazine was quite irregular. At first, it was published in Moscow, then in St. Petersburg. Then, Savich left it but the magazine stayed and changed owners. They did not have time to develop a decent concept that could have turned the publication into a popular periodical.

All the mess with the owners and chief editors continued until 1880 when famous critic and literary figure N.N. Zlatovratsky took the lead. He invited a group of writers and popular columnists and formed a partnership, which owned the ma-

gazine. This was a new magazine with the old name. Therefore, the *Russkoye Bogatstvo* was founded by a group of young publishers of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. The cooperative publishing of the new magazine was formed in the summer of 1879, just before the first issue went out. As noted above, the magazine came out in 1880 and existed until 1881; the cooperative fell apart after the third issue.

The publishers of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* tried to bring the best Russian authors to the magazine. Once, they addressed Ivan Turgenev, the patriarch of Russian literature. He met the publishers twice. Before the meetings, the writer G.I. Uspenskiy asked him to send something for the magazine. As Zlatovratsky recalled, Turgenev “was touched by the request” [1. P. 303]. He sent a small poem called *Croquet at Windsor*. However, due to the delicacy of the theme, the editors had to reject it; it was anti-British. Diplomacy intervened and it was not published. Meanwhile, the first issue included V.M. Garshin’s story *Attalea Princeps* earlier rejected by *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. At the same time, M.E. Saltykov-Schedrin, the head of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* was very skeptical about *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, emphasizing, as Zlatovratsky wrote, that “we would weaken *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* by taking more work that does not make any sense” [1. P. 312]. Zlatovratsky went to Saltykov-Schedrin to show the first issue. “...It took me a while to defend our new baby in front of him (Saltykov-Schedrin. – N.S.), reassure his fears and doubts awakened by the future of the magazine and ours,” he wrote. However, in the end the relations between the two magazines went smooth.

In the time of Zlatovratsky, the magazine acquired its three sections: fiction and social articles, literary critics, and miscellaneous. Experienced manager, Zlatovratsky turned *Russkoye Bogatstvo* into a popular publication within a very short time. He left very interesting memoirs [1]. Zlatovratsky was a famous author but his works did not get everyone’s appraisal. Once, L.N. Tolstoy noted “I read something profound; one can see the author as a kind man but his head is in a terrible mess” [2. Vol. 2. P. 57].

The magazine stepped into its new epoch in October 1882, when A.E. Obolensky, a writer, and a philosopher took the lead. With him, the magazine turned into a philosophical publication and attracted L.N. Tolstoy’s attention. The writer suddenly changed his attitude towards the magazine as soon as Zlatovratsky left it. The new leader tried to combine the successes of the natural sciences of the end of the 19th century with his religious and ethical principles, which echoed in Tolstoy. He was keen on Au. Comte’s philosophy of positivism. Obolensky became an active promoter of Tolstoy’s non-violent resistance idea.

Tolstoy appreciated *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, differentiating it among “all that exists” “in its field” [2. Vol. 1. P. 592]. In 1886, the fourth issue of the magazine featured his story *How Much Land Does a Man Require?* [4]. Earlier in 1885, three abstracts of his philosophical treatise came out with editor’s cuts including *What Is to Be Done?* [4]. *Urban Life, About Census in Moscow, Rural and Urban Life* [4. No. 4, 9, 10, 12]. An abstract from his other philosophical treatise *What I Believe?* was also published there [4].

In 1892, N.K. Mikhaylovsky, the leader of populist publicists became the head of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. Before starting his cooperation and taking the leadership of the magazine, he went through an excellent school in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*

which closed in 1884. Mikhaylovskiy reintroduced the cooperative principle. In April 1893, an agreement was signed to appoint the magazine's principal employees S.N. Krivenko, G.I. Uspenskiy, K.M. Stanyukovich, and others as co-owners along with Mikhaylovsky. Later, other writers including V.G. Korolenko joined them.

As a populists' magazine, *Russkoye Bogatstvo* actively disputed with the Marxists and Mikhaylovsky ran this dispute. Even V.I. Lenin, while seeing him as an ideological opponent recognized that "the great historical merit of Mikhaylovsky in a bourgeois-democratic movement to free Russia was that he passionately sympathized the oppressed situation of peasantry, and energetically fought against any signs of villeinage tyranny, and stood in legal and open media at least with the hints of sympathy and respect to 'underground resistance' where the most consistent and decisive democrats and intellectuals acted, and even helped this underground himself" [3. Vol. 2. Pp. 333–334].

Populist publisher S.N. Krivenko also contributed a lot to the magazine. Like Mikhaylovsky he was closely connected to *Otechestvennyye Zapiski* where he prepared the main program articles. In 1892 Krivenko became one of the leaders of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, turned into a liberal populist body. He also published articles against Marxism and subjected to critics in Lenin's work *What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats?* [3. Vol. 1].

With Mikhaylovsky in charge *Russkoye Bogatstvo* reached its climax, first of all, thanks to publishing the works of both recognized and emerging talented authors famous among Russian readers.

One could say, Maxim Gorky discovered the magazine to the world. In 1895, the sixth issue featured the literary masterpiece of the young author, *Chelkash* with a lead *Episode* [4. Pp. 5–35]. Gorky wrote it in 1894 in Nizhniy Novgorod. The story was published thanks to the efforts of V.G. Korolenko, who met the young author and suggested him writing something for *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. Korolenko highly assessed Gorky's draft manuscript calling the author a gemstone with "unquestionable literary talent" [5. Vol. 1. P. 201]. Thus, thanks to the publication of *Chelkash* in the magazine Gorky entered Great Russian literature.

The magazine then followed the writer's successes and failures. Evaluating his story *Boredom* Mikhaylovskiy noted in his article *More about Maxim Gorkiy and his Characters*, published in the tenth issue of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* in 1898, "The most sensitive ear does not hear any fake note, the strictest hand cannot cross out or add a single word here" [4. Sec. II. P. 93]. Mikhailovsky focused on the literary advantages of the story *Malva* and the sketch *Goltva Fair* in the same article. The critic compares *Malva*, the main character, with the feminine images of Dostoyevsky. He says "Gorky's *Malva* ... is clearer and simpler than mysterious women of Dostoyevsky... and it is not about Gorky's power but rather about that rough and comparatively simple atmosphere in which *Malva* grew and lived and thanks to which her psychology is clearer and easier, preserving though the same typical features which Dostoyevsky tried to catch in vain" [4. Sec. II. Pp. 65–66, 68].

Goltva Fair is assessed as a "small sketch, written without any claims for profoundness or 'insight', a bagatelle full of soft light humour which makes a bigger impression, taken that the element is not present in other Gorky's works" [4. Sec. II. P. 93].

Later, in the article *Stories of Gorky and Chekhov* published in the second issue of 1902 the same Mikhaylovsky criticized the author for his superficial description of the essence and the worldview of the vagabondage in his latest stories. This gap, according to the critic, is observed in Gorky's stories *Foma Gordeyev* and *The Three* which have "separate beautiful pages and even the whole episodes, in general, are long and full of long contemplations of the main characters" [4. Sec. II. P. 176]. According to the critic, those contemplations repeat what had already been told in previous works.

A.P. Chekhov also received his portion of criticism from Mikhaylovsky who didn't understand the author. Considering the author of *The Steppe* and *A Boring Story* as talented, the critic regularly attacked Chekhov's work for objectivism, indifference, and the absence of big ideas. In the article, written on the occasion of the publication of the first volume of the A.P. Chekhov's selected works in A.F. Marks publishing house, Mikhaylovsky wrote "the author is very unscrupulous and puts on paper everything that his observation and memory tell him" [4. 1900. № 4. P. 120]. Mikhaylovsky also did not like Chekhov's *Peasants* which lacked "general idea" [4].

P. Pertsov, another critic from *Russkoye Bogatstvo* echoed Mikhaylovsky by reproaching Chekhov for being indifferent towards social problems and for random subject selection. In the same article, the reviewer criticized the image of the main character Layevsky in the novel *The Duel* "the character of Layevsky is not properly spelled out" [4. 1893. № 1. P. 62].

It is interesting to note that despite the continued critics of Chekhov for several years in a row, this magazine was among the first to support the emerging author. Back in 1886, the twelfth issue featured an article by L.E. Obolensky entitled *On Everything. Critical Review (Young talents: Chekhov and Korolenko. Comparisons)* [4].

Journalist V.A. Fausek wrote about the meeting of Chekhov and Obolensky in Yalta. Before the meeting, the great writer noted that "he (Obolensky) was the first critic who noticed and encouraged me! Back then I needed and appreciated a word of encouragement from the literary critics" [6. P. 269].

Finally, Mikhaylovsky himself had to admit that Chekhov was a writer capable of creating the constructs of life. In his article *Literature and Life. Notes on Chekhov*, published in the fourth issue of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* in 1900, the critic recognized the writer "grew up beyond recognition." "Short stories *About Love, Gooseberries, Man in a Case, A Doctor's Visit* are well thought and written. *In the Ravine* is a new step ahead" [4. Pp. 135–140].

In his turn, Chekhov carefully followed all-new critical reviews about himself published in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. Thus, his doctor I.N. Altshuler in Yalta remembered that once he caught Chekhov reading the mentioned article *Literature and Life. Notes on Chekhov*. Despite all the compliments, the writer was not too excited about it [6. P. 536].

Indeed, Chekhov did not like the attitude of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* towards his work. Therefore, when living in Yalta in the 90s of the 19th century, he refused to cooperate with the magazine despite all the offers as well as with such magazines as *Mir Bozhiy, Mir Iskusstva*, preferring them to *Russkaya Mysl, Severniy Vestnik*, etc. [7. Vol. 10. P. 338].

A.I. Kuprin published several stories and novels in *Russkoye Bogatstvo* as well. He started his cooperation with the magazine early in his career. In 1893, his novel *In the Dark* was published in the sixth and seventh issues, and the eleventh issue featured the story *On a Moonlit Night*. The author sent it N. Mikhaylovsky and wrote “in the lead I noted it is a short story, as I didn’t dare to write a psychological essay” [8. Vol. 1. P. 489]. In 1894, the eighth issue featured his *From the Distant Past* which was later renamed into *The Inquiry* [4]. The same year, another Kuprin’s story *Lidochka (A Story of an Experienced Man)* was published in the twelfth issue, which was later included into the writer’s collection entitled *To the Fame* [4].

In 1896, the twelfth issue of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* featured Kuprin’s novel *Moloch* [4]. He also wrote *Deep in the Forest* especially for the magazine with the lead *I. Dosvitok* published in the ninth issue in 1898. Later the story was renamed into *Deep Forest*. The lead proved Kuprin’s desire to continue the series of stories written after his visit to Polesye. As researches suggest, the second in the series could be his famous novel *Olesya* which he offered to *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. However, the editors rejected it [8. Vol. 2. P. 488]. Therefore, the writer had nothing to do but to offer it to the newspaper *Kiyevlyane* where it came out in several issues in 1898.

Despite that, Kuprin continued his cooperation with *Russkoye Bogatstvo* even after he took the lead of the fiction section of the other popular Russian magazine *Mir Bozhiy*. In 1902, *Russkoye Bogatstvo* published his story *In Retirement* in the eleventh issue, and in a year another story *The Horse Thieves* [4].

Nonetheless, the talent of V.G. Korolenko bloomed the best on the pages of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. In 1892, he published *At-Davan* one of his first stories in the tenth issue of the magazine, which immediately caused a conflict situation. Outraged by the illegal activities of the Siberian bureaucrat Alabin, the author presented him as a scoundrel, Cossack cornet Arabin. The bureaucrat recognized himself and sent a protest note to the publishers of the magazine, requiring Korolenko to state that the subject was fictional. However, the author refused to do so, saying that though he “wrote fictional story, the facts were taken from the reality and they were worse than any fiction” [9. Vol. 1. P. 489].

In 1895, *Russkoye Bogatstvo* published Korolenko’s story *Without Language* [4] in its several issues, written under the impressions of the writer’s visit to the International Expo in Chicago. He went there in 1893 as a reporter of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* [9. Vol. 4. P. 383].

Korolenko also proved to be a great publicist in 1893, when he published series of reviews *In a Hungry Year* in several issues of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. During winter and spring in Lukoyanovskiy Uezd (county) in Nizhegorodskaya Gubernia, Korolenko observed the miserable state of the farmers of Povolzhye due to the failure of the crop [9. Vol. 5. P. 512].

Another essay written by Korolenko about the Cossacks of the Urals was published in the 10–12 issues of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* in 1901. It was called *With Cossacks* [4]. An article about the death penalty called *Everyday Happening*, published in the third and fourth issues of the magazine in 1910, caused passionate feedback from L.N. Tolstoy. On March 26, 1910 he made the following note in

his diary: “In the evening I read Korolenko’s article. It is wonderful. I couldn’t help but cry. I wrote him a letter” [9. Vol. 6. P. 405].

In 1907, the fourth issue of the magazine featured Korolenko’s article *The Tragedy of Sorochintsy* [4]. It was based on the bloody confrontation between the farmers of Sorochintsy village with the Cossacks squadron on December 19, 1905. During this fight, dozens of farmers were killed or wounded and the deputy head of the district police Barabash was wounded to death. In his essay, the author condemned the violent massacre of the farmers, where the offenders were not punished at all.

However, the most resonate publication of Korolenko was his essays about the Multan case. Later the essays were named *The Multan Sacrifice* [9. Vol. 6. P. 5]. The case of the bloody crime which lasted over four years in the court supposedly committed by the farmers of Stary Multan (nowadays in Udmurt Republic) was one of the most famous legal proceedings of the end of the 19th century. All country was following the process. The murder of a Russian vagabond was evaluated as ritual and several Udmurts or Votyaks as they were called back, were charged in human sacrificing.

Most likely, the defenders would be imprisoned if not for V.G. Korolenko. For a long time, his materials on Multan case were published in *Russkoye Bogatstvo* and other periodicals of Russia. Korolenko entered the fight with the merciless court machine and won it. In large part, thanks to his bright, persuasive and highly professional publications the court acquitted the defenders on all charges. And he did not defend them at the process!

Years after the events in Stary Multan the author of the article visited the village where the memories of V.G. Korolenko are carefully preserved. There are a memorial and the first museum exposition honoring the writer. From my own experience, I dare to state that the civil feat of Korolenko, which he committed through his publications in *Russkoye Bogatstvo* defending the Multan farmers, even today inspires to follow his path, and encourages people of all ages and occupations to visit Stary Multan.

It was Korolenko who became the chief editor of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* after the death of Mikhaylovsky in 1904. In September 1914, the magazine changed its name. Until March 1917, it was called *Ruskiye Zapiski*. The magazine was hostile towards the October revolution and demanded All-Russia Constituent Assembly taking the power. This position defined the destiny of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, which in 1918 was closed for anti-Soviet publications.

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Bio notes:

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