

Russian princess (from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Zinaida Volkonskaya

Princess **Zinaida Aleksandrovna Volkonskaya** (14 December 1792 – 24 January 1862), was a Russian writer, poet, singer, composer, salonist and lady in waiting. She was an important figure in 19th-century Russian cultural life. As an amateur opera singer, she performed in Paris and London.

She was born in Turin in the family of a Russian ambassador, Prince Alexander Beloselsky-Bezozersky, and descended in the male line from the medieval rulers of White Lake City. Her mother was a Tatischev, also of Rurikid ancestry. Zinaida was lady-in-waiting to Queen Louise of Prussia in 1808 and was close to Emperor Alexander I of Russia, who became her lifelong correspondent and, possibly, lover. To stem gossip, Zinaida married Alexander's aide-de-camp, Prince Nikita Volkonsky, in 1810. They were prominent during the Congresses of Vienna and Verona. She moved to Russia in 1817, and to Moscow in 1822. In the 1820s the "Corinna of the North" hosted a literary and musical salon on Tverskaya Street in Moscow, in a mansion later rebuilt into the Yeliseyev food store. Adam Mickiewicz, Yevgeny Baratynsky, Dmitry Venevitinov, and Alexander Pushkin frequented her house. Pushkin's verse epistle to her, "The queen of music and beauty", is well known.

After Alexander I's death her brother-in-law Sergey Volkonsky led the Decembrist Revolt against his successor Nicholas. The Decembrists were exiled to Siberia, and their wives decided to follow them. Zinaida threw a farewell party for these women, incurring the displeasure of Nicholas I. She also came under suspicion as a secret convert to Catholicism from Russian Orthodoxy and possible Jesuit agent. These pressures led to Zinaida's moving to Rome in 1829. She was accompanied by her son and Stepan Shevyrev, the son's tutor. Among her lodgings in Rome were Palazzo Poli, Villa Wolkonsky, and a smaller house in the Via degli Avignonesi. Her salon was frequented by Karl Brullov, Alexander Ivanov, Bertel Thorvaldsen, Vincenzo Camuccini, Stendhal, and Sir Walter Scott. Nikolai Gogol wrote much of *Dead Souls* at her villa. Princess Volkonskaya died of pneumonia (apparently after giving her warm cloak to an old street woman) and was buried at Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio a Trevi.

Ekaterina Alekseyevna Dolgorukova

Ekaterina Alekseyevna Dolgorukova (1712–1747) was a Russian noble, engaged to Tsar Peter II of Russia. She was the daughter of the Russian Prince Alexei Dolgorukov and niece to Prince Vasily Lukich Dolgorukov. She grew up with her brother Ivan in Warsaw in the house of her grandfather Gregory Fjodorovitj. Reportedly, she and the Austrian ambassador Melissimo were in love with each other. On 19 November 1729, she was officially engaged to the Tsar, given the title "Her Highness the Bride Empress", and installed the day after in the Golovinskii Palace. Melissimo was exiled. The wedding never took place because of Peter's death in 1730. Her family, the Dolgorukovs, tried to install her as ruling Empress in the manner of Catherine I of Russia but did not succeed. She left the palace, and at the installment of Empress Anna Ivanovna, she was deported with her family to Volosjin. In 1740, she was placed in the convent of Tomsk. In 1741, she was freed by Empress Elizabeth of Russia and appointed lady-in-waiting. In 1745, she married General Lieutenant Count Bruce. She died of a cold in 1747.

A Russian prince (from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Platon Zubov

Prince **Platon Alexandrovich Zubov** (1767–1822) was the last of Catherine the Great's favourites and the most powerful man in Russian Empire during the last years of her reign. The prince was a member of the Zubov family and had several siblings, including Nicholas, Valerian, and Olga Zherebtsova. It was through his distant relative, Russian Field Marshal Nicholas Saltykov, that he met the Empress. Saltykov presented the young officer at court on the understanding that Zubov would then help Saltykov in his feud with Catherine's long-standing favourite, Prince Potemkin.

In August 1789, Catherine wrote to Potemkin that she returned to life after a long winter slumber "as a fly does". "Now I am well and gay again," she added, telling about her new friend, "a dark, little one". "Our baby," as she called him, "weeps when denied the entry into my room," Catherine informed Potemkin in the next letter. As young minions succeeded each other monthly in Catherine's heart, Potemkin did not attach importance to her new liaison. Catherine was over 60, Zubov was just 22. The old courtier did not believe that the connection would last for an extended period of time.

Zubov, however, managed to establish a strong hold of Catherine's affections and character. In 7 years, he was made a Count and then a Reichsfurst, or Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, becoming the fourth (and last) Russian to receive the title. Upon Potemkin's death, Zubov succeeded him as the Governor-General of New Russia. As Fyodor Rostopchin reported to Semyon Vorontsov on August 20, 1795, "Count Zubov is everything here. There is no other will but his. His power is greater than that of Potemkin. He is as reckless and incapable as before, although the Empress keeps repeating that he is the greatest genius in the history of Russia".

During his years in power, Zubov amassed an enormous fortune. The Empress conferred on him tens of thousands of serfs, while simultaneously the courtiers rivaled each other in lavishing presents on him. In the last year of Catherine's reign even most trivial matters came to be decided on Zubov's advice. Crowds of petitioners thronged in his bedroom every morning, trying desperately to attract the attention of his pet monkey if not himself. The old generals prepared coffee for him. Zubov's secretaries enriched themselves on bribes from petitioners. One of them, the Spaniard Jose de Ribas, is remembered as the founder of Odessa.

Zubov's apartments in Tsarskoe Selo stand next door to the Catherine Palace of the Empress. Zubov's character was capricious and unstable. To the heir apparent, Tsarevich Paul, he paid no respect. Unsurprisingly, Catherine's death all but brought him to the verge of madness. For ten days, he concealed himself in the house of his sister Olga. On the 11th day, he was visited by Emperor Paul who drank to his health and wished him "as many years of prosperity as there are drops in this beaker". Nevertheless, he was stripped of his estates, relieved of all his posts and was strongly advised to go abroad.

During Paul's reign, Zubov traveled in Europe, where he was shown as a curiosity. In Teplitz he fell in love with the Countess de la Roche-Aymon, then proposed to the Princess of Courland but was refused. Following one obscure duel, in which he refused to take part and which resulted in his aide's killing Chevalier de Saxe, son of Prince Francis Xavier of Saxony and cousin of Louis XVI, Zubov withdrew to his Rastrelliesque Rundale Palace in Courland, formerly the seat of the Biron ducal dynasty. He ended his days living in seclusion.

Zinaida



Ekaterina



Platon

