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Catherine Cooke



Pavilion by Shekhtel for products of Russian marble, granite and building-stone mines, in the Russian section of the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901 (from The Builder, 14.9.1901).



ФЕДОР ШЕХТЕЛЬ

The Russian pavilions at the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901 drew extensive but mixed reactions from the British architectural press. With suitable neutrality on the aesthetics, *The Builder* described them as 'undoubtedly picturesque, though to English eyes somewhat bizarre'.¹ *The Studio* declared them 'not representative of modern Russian architecture', but 'striking and effective' and 'a monument to architectural skill and clever craftsmanship'.² *The Art Journal* differed diametrically on the latter count. The 'elementary fretwork' looked 'cheap' and technically the whole was 'very disappointing'.³ Its aesthetic denunciations became increasingly high-pitched as the summer progressed. One correspondent's 'extraordinary, zigzag sort of architecture' became another's 'architectural nightmare' and 'outrageous display of eccentricity'.⁴ *The Architectural Review* saw the complex more calmly as the advertisement that it was. By magnifying domestic details to 'colossal proportions' a 'fantastic effect' had been created, and 'for the purpose of attracting attention nothing could be more effective'.⁵

The *Review* named the architect wrongly however, despite the fact that he had been over here for four months supervising the specially imported construction team of 180 peasant carpenters. The 'prominent Russian architect . . . of Moscow' who designed the buildings was not 'Mons. Zelenko' (though such a man existed).⁶ As *The Builder* rightly said, his name was Shekhtel.

A number of countries were represented by their own pavilions in Kelvingrove Park, most notably Canada, but 'the Russian section far eclipsed them all',⁷ being 'quite the most important display made by any foreign power'.⁸ Since the then enormous sum of '£30,000 was voted for its support' in the previous year, it was also 'the largest and most costly section ever staged by the Tsar's government at any exhibition'.⁹ Why were they bothering with Glasgow?

Britain as a whole was Russia's trading partner on many fronts, and Russia's economy was in recession. But Scotland had old established trading links with Russia in her own right, and in particular with the Tsar's Baltic capital of St Petersburg. At that time many essential building items like salt-glazed pipes were being imported from Scotland in lieu of any home production. Scottish engineers, and other professionals and craftsmen, had long found it a congenial and profitable place of emigration; those circles in Russia were peppered with more or less Russianized Scottish surnames. It was a measure of these trading links' importance that they launched such a sales pitch now.

The Russian timber industry, always amongst its biggest earners here, had an entire pavilion with informative technical displays which *The Builder* described in great detail. Opposite it stood another large pavilion devoted to agriculture whose 'most

interesting exhibits' were about irrigation on imperial lands in Central Asia.¹⁰ Its interior was also specially prepared 'for the reception of the Tsar, who will visit the Exhibition'.¹¹ Closing the space to the east were two smaller buildings. Mineral specimens gave scientific background on coloured granites and building stones in the mining industries pavilion. The pavilion variously called 'central' and 'miscellaneous' displayed 'furs, carpets, trinkets . . . inlaid cabinets and screens'. Two 'very small' ones were 'devoted to flour and cereals'.¹² These probably stood to the west; they are not recorded in available photographs.

Most pavilions in the show drew more or less eclectically upon historical styles. Four years and much fibrous plaster had been spend constructing the central exhibition buildings as 'architectural pageantry' in styles ranging from 'Indian' to 'Spanish Renaissance with Moorish influence'.¹³ James Miller, their architect, had beaten Charles Rennie Mackintosh, amongst others, in competition.¹⁴ Holland, Canada, Ireland and the rest produced nothing of much greater distinction. Polychrome decoration described as 'thin and not particularly harmonious' by the *Review* had been lavished over the British interiors,¹⁵ but most of the exteriors were fashionably pale, if not white. For its astonishing colour as well as its vigour and rigour of forms, 'the Russian village' in the park's north-east corner was certainly outstanding. The low-slung walls of the south-facing agriculture pavilion were painted 'chiefly in pale green and salmon', with shingles of 'Indian red'. The central pavilion beside it had walls of 'salmon colour and the shingles reddish brown'. The shingles of the mining pavilion were green. The north-facing, more cubic, forestry building had walls of 'warm light brown and buff' and shingles of 'grey-blue'. There were splashes of local colour in restrained mural decoration and 'large expanses of gilding and silvering', the latter focused particularly on the 'flamboyant' skyline, where 'aluminium, put on in leaf and then lacquered, gives a silver effect'; in short, said *The Studio*, 'brilliant contrasts in colouring which are as novel as they are effective'.¹⁶

Most national displays at Glasgow had come straight over from the Paris International Exhibition the summer before. *The Art Journal* commented on the 'shrewd calculation' of Glasgow City Council in foreseeing the attractiveness to governments of getting two for the price of one. The Russian pavilion in Paris had also been very large, but the display material for Glasgow seems to have been prepared specially, with more explicitly commercial intentions. In Paris, Russia had scored what *The Studio* called 'one of the artistic successes of the Exhibition' with examples of furniture and design from the arts-and-crafts colonies of Abramtsevo and Talashkino. This 'New Russian Decorative Art', as Netta Peacock called it, had taken artistic circles entirely by sur-

prise. 'Until last summer', as she wrote, 'the majority of Western Europeans had but little notion of the artistic genius of this people.'¹⁷ The latest Russian work may have been new to readers of the always parochial *Studio*, but in the opposite direction there was no such ignorance. On this front, Glasgow was the exporter.

With other progressive art and design journals of Europe, *The Studio* was read by the progressive circles in Russia. In contrast to 'the verbose Stile Floreale of Italy or the whimsical Belgian Style Horta', however, as one recent Soviet commentator has put it, 'which were alien to Russian architects, the constructive style of the English, and in particular of the Scottish masters' was very sympathetic. 'Amongst the Group of Four', she says, 'it was C.R. Mackintosh who achieved greatest popularity in Russia, his work being reproduced, albeit without commentary, more than once in the pages of *The World of Art*.'¹⁸ Benois's *World of Art*, however, was a Petersburg journal. The first people who actually showed Mackintosh furniture and design in the flesh in Russia were the Muscovites. Shekhtel was to be one of the initiators and organizers of the extensive *Exhibition of Architecture and Design of the New Style* which opened in Moscow in December 1902, almost two years after his stay in Glasgow. It showed Viennese and Scottish work, in particular, amidst that of Russians like Shekhtel himself, W. Walcot, I.A. Fomin and K. Korovin, at times 'mixing them into single ensembles', as for example a Korovin table with Mackintosh armchairs.¹⁹ There can be no question that Shekhtel's four months living and working in Glasgow were seminal to the genesis of this influential show in Moscow.

What was happening in Russian architecture, though, if an architect who produced these vigorously coloured, peasant-inspired exotica of the Glasgow pavilions; who regarded them as so central to his thinking that they became 'my trademark' — later emblematically recorded, for example, on his personal bookplate²⁰ — was simultaneously propagandizing the urbane lines and white modernity of Olbrich and Mackintosh? As the synthesis of these two themes was to be a central thread of Shekhtel's contribution to Russian architecture, that background deserves some brief elaboration.

The Russianist tradition

Since the early eighteenth century, Russian architecture had been dominated by Classicism. The start of the process, and the translation under Peter the Great of the Renaissance texts which served as professional handbooks, has recently been charted in detail by Lindsey Hughes.²¹ Through many variations of mood and philosophy, under different tsars and empresses, classical architecture remained an unchallenged component of the 'new', post-Petrine Russia until the Napoleonic period. Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, and in particular populist objections to the story of a victory by officers not men, were stimuli to a widespread re-assertion of those inherently Russian cultural values and forms which had been programmatically suppressed by Peter in favour of European 'enlightenment'. Very much as nineteenth-century Europe looked back to a pre-industrial period of 'naturalness', where it saw an indigenous spirit of national culture being freely expressed, so growing circles of Russians looked back across the watershed of Peter's reforms to a 'pre-Petrine' period of happy symbiosis between the classes now locked in a web of alienations.

In architecture, the latter half of the nineteenth century had seen extensive amateur research into their half-forgotten medieval heritage, and then a range of interpretations put on these national traditions, as perceived, to create numerous 'Russianist' styles. Some drew on formal and compositional features of stone archi-

tecture — which in Russia had been almost exclusively ecclesiastical. Others drew on the timber building traditions manifested mainly in domestic and community buildings. Inseparable from politics, each variant was rooted in some politico-religious aspiration for a future, 'modern' Russia, and chose its particular historical model appropriately.

Fedor Shekhtel's one year of architecture school, in 1876-7, coincided with the peak of free debate around these themes, and indeed the peak of the Russian freedom movement in general. Tsar Alexander II was a relative liberal under whom there was optimism and considerable social progress. The Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture which Shekhtel attended was the city's nearest equivalent in scope and status to the Petersburg Academy. It too had imperial patronage. At the same time — and this was of central importance for architecture — it was a focus of anti-academic, anti-classical attitudes and increasingly of realist, anti-statist aesthetic experiment.

Shekhtel's student year coincided exactly with the publication in Paris of Viollet-le-Duc's invited contribution to these Russianist debates in his book *L'Art russe*, though it did not appear in Russian until two years later.²² In the event it was not a particularly valuable or clear-headed contribution, but it was a significant landmark in the developing East-West traffic in anti-classical architectural ideas.

In the Shekhtel connection it is of interest too for the source of the invitation. Viktor Butovskii belonged not to the religious or, in a conventional sense, political front of Russianism, but to the bourgeois-industrial front. A teacher at Moscow's other art school, the Stroganov, he invited Viollet-le-Duc's analysis as part of his campaign to create for Russian manufactured goods a clear design identity on world markets, that was rooted in something more substantial than folkish motifs. Two decades later it was to be members of this same, so-called 'forgotten class' of Russian history, the industrial bourgeoisie, who would seek from Fedor Shekhtel a corresponding synthesis; who demanded designs that were right up to international standards technically, whilst in aesthetic respects satisfying their passionate identification with Russian, traditional culture.

Around Shekhtel, however, by the turn of the century, was a world of both industrial wealth, and connoisseurship in Russian art, which differed by a whole order of magnitude from anything in Butovskii's time. So fast had many of the Russian industrial and merchant dynasties created their wealth that in the 1870s the Morozovs or the Riabushinskiis, for example, were still the single household of one commercially brilliant patriarch. The children who would expand the families into whole clans, and build their cultural influence, were still in youth or infancy. By the time Shekhtel started practising, these nurseries of children had grown into a generation of industrialists, bankers, city mayors, newspaper tycoons in their own right. Many of them were from the Old Believer sect of Orthodoxy, whose absolute probity and sense of public duty, as much as their extraordinary capacities for work, were rooted in their strong family adherence to these somewhat Quaker-like beliefs.

Where the absence of primogeniture in Russia had reduced most aristocratic families to a genteel poverty of 'keeping up appearances', this new plutocracy were still making their first appearances. The buildings they needed were not rambling palaces, but modern mansions; not follies on their estates but business headquarters. Their philanthropic endowments were not chapels, but Moscow's first great public hospitals; medical research clinics; buildings for the education and technical training of industrial workers; museums and galleries to house their collec-

tions of Russian art and craft for the public in perpetuity; almshouses, orphanages and low-cost apartment housing. They regarded the tired ritual and bureaucracy that constrained their lives and terms of trade from Petersburg as a 'yoke' akin to the Tatar suzerainty under which the burgeoning merchant-states or early-Christian Russia had been culturally and financially repressed for centuries.²³ These people's money, like their energy, was going into Moscow. They were the clients that Shekhtel left behind to spend four months in Glasgow in early 1901. His finest domestic work for them was already done, or then in progress. The most innovative commercial and public buildings were still to come.

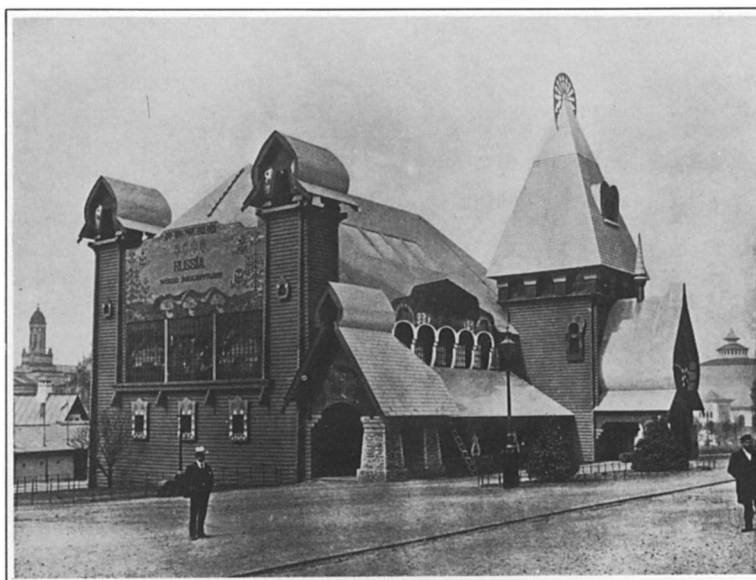
In their nationalistic Russianism, Shekhtel's Glasgow buildings followed the pattern established for major exhibitions by V.A. Gartman and I.P. Ropet in the 1870s, the former with his Military Section of the All-Russian Polytechnical Exhibition in Moscow in 1872, the latter with designs for the Paris World's Fair of 1878.²⁴ Both men had connections with industrialist Mamontov's arts-and-crafts colony at Abramtsevo, and they were pioneers of that strand of the revival movement which developed the most intricate fantasies from elements of medieval timber architecture. Already, though, the difference between these two pavilions is instructive in relation to Glasgow.

Gartman's was manifestly a piece of construction, using traditional timber techniques to produce non-historical forms that made allusion, only, to identifiable models. Ropet's, for Paris, was a fantasy stage-set by whose exotic decorativeness — as is clear from the top-hatted gentlemen in his original drawings — Parisians were intended to be astonished. The overall volumetric composition was based on the clustered-pavilion model of the medieval royal palace at Kolomenskoe, with every roof different in a picturesque whole; every motif of Russian medieval architecture was applied to the surfaces in exaggeratedly decorative form.

By its choice of the defensive Moscow Kremlin walls as its model, the Paris pavilion of 1900 was equally far from being a structural tour-de-force. Designed by the painter-designer Konstantin Korovin with the historian and architect Il'ia Bondarenko, it had none of the inventive fantasy of which both were capable.²⁵ Gate-towers of the Kremlin were the most statist model possible. The effect was as stolid and routinized as most recent architecture in Russia itself had been during the reign of Alexander III, whose physiognomy, as well as his politics, it had embodied to perfection. The applied arts exhibition which so surprised the Western art world took place in low structures between.

In Glasgow Shekhtel had returned to the approach of Gartman: the structural ingenuity of his enormous timber roofs in the agricultural and forestry pavilions so impressed *The Builder* that it published a special article with structural sketches. He had returned to that branch of Russian medieval architecture which created the supreme structural and constructional tours-de-force in timber, namely the North Russian area whose most famous architectural centre is Kizhi.

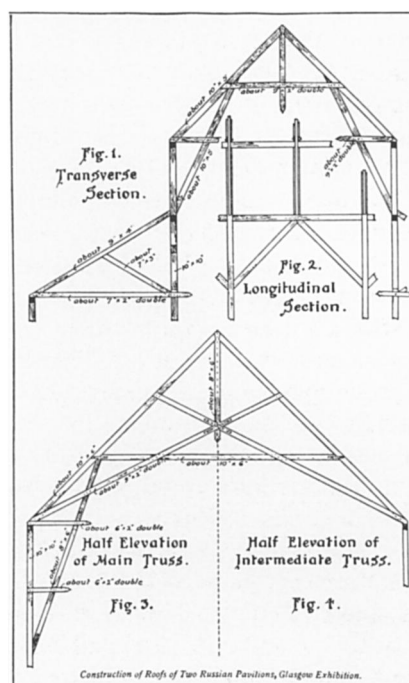
Least of all is this an architecture of decorated boxes. Its sometimes extraordinarily complex forms are created through the geometry of interpenetrating structural volumes. In particular it mixes cubic and the polygonal plans and, on top of them, linear and centroidal roof forms. Always their composition is freely built upon the demands of function, be that the domestic activity of a household, its animals and crops, or religious activity. It expresses symbolic importance and hierarchies clearly through physical scale, and levels of technical or aesthetic refinement. In Glasgow this already virtuoso tradition had been reinterpreted by a young eye attuned to the dissonances and formal tensions



Pavilion by Shekhtel for the forestry industry, Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901 (from The Builder, 14.9.1901).



Russian Pavilion, by I.P. Ropet, Paris World's Fair, 1878.



Sketches of Shekhtel's roof trusses for the Agricultural Pavilion and the Forestry Pavilion, Glasgow (from The Builder, 14.9.1901).



The seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century churches and bell tower of Kizhi, timber architecture of Northern Russia that provided Shekhtel with models for the Glasgow pavilions.



Interior of the Upper Trading Rows (today's GUM), 1889-93, by A.N. Pomerantsev, on which Shekhtel worked for a period.

underlying the latest Art Nouveau and Jugendstil work in Europe. Given Netta Peacock's admission in *The Studio* of Europe's ignorance about Russia's aesthetic traditions, it is revealing to read *The Art Journal* correspondent's judgement on these buildings. For him it was 'impossible to take such aggressively strange architecture at all seriously, or as truly representative of anything but "the new art" seen, as it were, through Slavonic distorting glasses'.²⁶ Were it not so dismissive, the latter comment comes close to the truth, but from the designer's point of view it was the other way round. 'The Slavonic' was being seen through the distorting glasses of Art Nouveau.

If Shekhtel as PR-man had erred, it was in grossly underestimating the cultural parochialism of his island hosts and target audience. Ignorant of historical architecture beyond its own backyard, *The Art Journal* blasted out a judgement which is breathtaking in its presumption of technical and aesthetic authority. Clearly knowing nothing of the buildings' origins, they measured them against an alien tradition thus:

Least of all is this strange architecture to be accepted as the genuine expression of rude semi-Asiatic peasant art. That would have expressed itself in frankly workmanlike timber-construction. Here the outer construction, apart from the log-built walls, is wood-like only in so far as it would have been difficult to execute the fantastic and absurd devices of the architect in any other material. It looks as if the designer knew what timber construction should be, but had done his best, if not to avoid the lines it naturally takes, to disguise them It is mere wilfulness and affectation — as though the new thing were worth doing . . . without art or reason!

Quaint it may be; what of that, when it is so ungainly, so contrary not merely to what is accepted, but to what is acceptable by any one appreciating the logical development of design out of given conditions?

. . . We are not for a moment to be persuaded that such an outrageous display of eccentricity is anything but the wilful creature of twentieth century men determined to be new. They will have so many gables to a roof that you shall never have seen the like before; their doors shall be shaped so as to suggest that they were never made out of planks, but fretted out of the solid; their window frames shall take the form of uncouth cartouches planted upon the log-built wall; and so forth, to the end of the chapter. It is the mad imagining of the newest of artists, in short an architectural nightmare.²⁷

In Kizhi, of course, and across Northern Russia, it was no nightmare but a glorious architectural reality.

Rationalism: the other half of a synthesis

To see why these buildings were important to Shekhtel himself, we need a broader view of the architectural problem he was trying to resolve in his work as a whole. Why was this very direct immersion in the rigours of structure and construction plainly a stage, in his mind, in the crystallization of something wider?

Shekhtel had served his professional apprenticeship amongst Moscow architects of considerable scholarship in the Russian historical tradition. From Alexander Kaminskii in the early eighties, and from M.S. Terskoi at the end of that decade, he would have derived a thorough and accurate education in historical fact. But in public architecture that tradition had degenerated into a mode of articulating facades that cloaked spaces of a wholly alien scale produced by modern building techniques. In Shekhtel's own elevation for Terskoi's Paradiz Theatre, for example, he must have felt the dilemma of this incommensurability. In Alexander Pomerantsev's design for the Upper Trading Rows (today's GUM), on which he worked in the early nineties, the bold iron vaults of the internal *galleria*, and the small-scale wallpaper of 'Russian' motifs on Red Square, were even more divergent in both spirit and function. Ieronim Kitner, now doyen of the Rationalist school, fired a rhetorical broadside on this theme at his Russianist colleagues in 1892: 'How exactly are we supposed to

subordinate our modern life and the organization of our modern dwellings to the forms, let alone the dimensions, of a former epoch? The result of such mixtures will plainly be an extremely undesirable disharmony.’²⁸

Launching the Rationalist attack upon ‘designers of the historicist school’ forty years earlier, Apollinari Krasovski had identified this divergence of decoration from structure as the root of falsity in architecture, and had unequivocally asserted the primacy of construction over ‘art’ in the process of generating form. In the Introduction to his great treatise and textbook *Civil Architecture*, of 1851, he wrote: ‘The main source of architectural form is technology, or construction. Art participates in the creation of this architectural form only by communicating an aesthetic finality to the crude forms of technology.’²⁹ His ‘slogan’, as he called it, was to ring through many discussions of architectural style at the turn of the century. ‘The true path of architecture’, he had said, ‘lies not in the exclusive pursuit of *either* the beautiful *or* the utilitarian, but in the transformation of one into the other: in the transformation of what is functional into something beautiful.’³⁰ And the aesthetic principles governing that ‘transformation’ must conform to the larger, inherently realist, principle that ‘it is art’s purpose to be a mirror of the contemporaneity which surrounds it’.³¹

The most important reassertion of these principles in the context of early twentieth-century work was to be V.P. Apyshkov’s, in his lectures and book *The Rational in the Latest Architecture*, of 1905. His own criteria for selecting the ‘healthy’ developments in recent European architecture originated, in Apyshkov’s detailed account, from the re-evaluation of medieval architecture by that ‘extraordinarily sensitive . . . young circle of artists in Oxford of the fifties’; from ‘the enemy of classicism’, Ruskin, who provided a ‘rigorous basis’ for their ideas, and from Morris, ‘leader of English socialism’, who ‘effected a genuine revolution in . . . furniture and architecture’. To Apyshkov, and to many others in Russia, England’s role in ‘the new art’ was equivalent to Italy’s in giving birth to the Renaissance, ‘where art also flowed alongside the development of humanism’.³²

Though Krasovski is Apyshkov’s most quoted authority, the latter’s specification for what he now calls ‘modernism’ was broader. ‘The new architecture, while being based upon the practical and the useful, does not ignore requirements that are purely artistic’, said Apyshkov.³³ His notion of the design operation matches Krasovski’s in its general order of priorities:

The basic cell of a rational architecture is a form — maybe still crude and unrefined — but satisfying its functional purpose. The architect then has to achieve a further perfection of that form from the aesthetic point of view, not destroying that level of functional suitability which the form already possesses, but merely bringing to it a more refined delineation or underlining its function. The observation of this rule leads to so-called constructiveness of forms and to architectural truth.

‘Function’, however, is now much more broadly understood. In the generative stage it includes climate, hygiene and all aspects of ‘use’. In the latter stage, Apyshkov describes it as the ‘function’ of refinement ‘to produce an artistic expression of the inner purpose of the object its subject’. The building must not merely satisfy the material requirements elegantly. It must also satisfy ‘the *dukhovnye* requirements’: it must satisfy the needs of the spirit; it must express the spirit of the client and of the whole enterprise. ‘Thus the radical basis of the latest architecture’ is a dual one: it involves ‘the satisfaction of the material requirements of a civilized human being, and the aspiration to a beauty which will serve as the artistic expression of the idea of the thing being created.’³⁴ ‘Originality’, or literally ‘the possession of a life of its own’

(*samobytnost’*), derives from a resolution of these two.

In the book’s final paragraph Apyshkov identified this ‘modernism’ explicitly with a general political view: ‘No single individual to whom art is dear is in a position to resist this movement’, he said, ‘whose strength derives not from the subjective views of individual people, but from a profound and solid link with our culture, with our technology, and with the best democratic aspirations of our age.’³⁵

His survey of ‘modernism’ in the latest architecture of England, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria and Finland was based upon wide and up-to-date reading. Coming to Russia, ‘it has to be recognized that the ideas of the new architecture are percolating into society extremely slowly here.’ Many buildings going up ‘in the new style’ were ‘no more than blind imitations of the external forms of Western European work. Here you suddenly see corrupted Wagner; there Otto Ritte, there Olbrich; or in iron railings Horta or Van de Velde.’ Very few, said Apyshkov, embodied ‘the fresh and healthy new ideas from which forms follow as a result’. In even fewer ‘have the forms been ennobled by a talented hand’. In his own city of St Petersburg he could name but three works of this radical originality: a bank by Leontii Benois, one apartment building by Lidval and another by Siuzor.³⁶ And ‘a similar position will be found in Moscow’, where ‘only works by Kekushev, Shekhtel and Val’kot (*Walcot*) attract one’s attention’ for ‘manifesting the new thinking and the individuality of their designers’.³⁷

At least he found three architects to praise here, not just three works. Of these, William Walcot, at thirty, was the youngest; he had built the new Hotel Metropol and some one-family houses which certainly deserved Apyshkov’s accolade. During the ensuing year, however, he was to leave Russia for his father’s birthplace of England. Architectural practice abandoned, he was to acquire a European reputation in etching, and as a master perspectivist for Lutyens, amongst others. Lev Kekushev, the middle one at forty, had entered architecture by a more conventional path than the forty-five-year-old Shekhtel. He had a series of increasingly fine houses behind him, and some commercial work, but though he lived till 1919, this was to be the best of his *oeuvre*. When Apyshkov was writing, however, he and Shekhtel were already rightly regarded as the big stars of the Russian *moderne*.

For reasons that are clear in Apyshkov’s discussion of its political ethos, this new school was to flower in Moscow as never in Petersburg, and both these men enjoyed an abundant clientele. But where Kekushev’s clients were very agreeably rich, Shekhtel’s were the Russian Gettys and Rockefellers. Kekushev’s style had evolved, but at any given date the Kekushev client would have known what stylistic features to expect.³⁸ With Shekhtel, the greater radical, the position was different.

During the early years of architectural practice up to about 1896 when he built his own first house, while he was developing his new free and functional approach to planning, Shekhtel’s buildings wear the outward devices of his two main sources of inspiration: either the English Perpendicular Gothic, or the medieval Russian. In his mature period, however, every building confidently wears its own synthetic style. As a class, his clients constituted a quite new ‘idea’ in Russia. Personally, each of them was a unique and extraordinary bundle of ‘ideas’. In Apyshkov’s phrase of 1905, ‘the idea of the thing being created’ differed dramatically in each case, and at that date Shekhtel was already producing an ‘artistic expression’ of corresponding uniqueness for each one. He was certainly, in Apyshkov’s other phrase, the most ‘talented hand’ of his generation.

Shekhtel was a builder *par excellence*; he left almost no verbal evidence of his thinking. The only extant text is illuminating, but it dates from the end of his career, after the Revolution. No significant personal archives have survived. However, recent research by Evgeniia Kirichenko, author ten years ago of the only Shekhtel monograph,³⁹ has produced important new facts about his family background. When combined with vignettes in the writings of his theatrical friends, for which sources I am indebted to the Chekhov specialist Patrick Miles, these make it possible to reconstruct some of the steps by which he moved towards architectural practice. We can also trace here some of the connections through which he became plunged, at a relatively early and, in legal terms, 'unqualified' stage, into the world of these exceptionally interesting, and wealthy, clients.

These clients were central members of a class that has never, by its nature, figured in history books. Survivors in emigration have commented on the absence even of accurate genealogies for these new 'dynasties', and it is only their own memoirs, indeed those of one man in particular, written in old age, that enable us to locate Shekhtel's most important clients precisely within these ramified clans, or give us a rounded picture of them as public and private people.⁴⁰ As to Shekhtel himself, our best published sources are Chekhov family memoirs and correspondence. His stay in Glasgow must have been a sharp culture shock, but the picture of an adaptable and attractive character which emerges from these suggests that he probably enjoyed it.

The young bachelor wizard

Fedor Shekhtel was born on 16 July 1859 in the small city of Saratov on the Volga. His father Osip was an engineer. The surname, their Catholic faith, and the fact that Shekhtel was often known familiarly as Frants, suggest that the family's origins may have been German. However, his mother, Mariia Karlovna Shekhtelia, came from a long-established merchant family of Saratov named Zhegin. A near relative of hers — perhaps brother — T. Zhegin, 'a sparkling and well known personality', was a close friend of the leading Moscow merchant and industrialist Pavel M. Tret'iakov, who was then assembling, and would later donate to the nation, the survey collection of Russian painting that forms the nucleus of Moscow's Tret'iakov Gallery.⁴¹

At some time in Shekhtel's adolescence the family must have travelled 900 miles west, for the scanty file on his year as a Moscow architecture student contains a leaving certificate from the Catholic High School of Tiraspol, a small regional centre north-west of Odessa. The same file records that he attended the Architecture Faculty of the Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture for the single year 1876-7. Then aged seventeen or eighteen, he completed 'the third academic class'.⁴²

Plainly he had great talent for drawing, painting and graphics himself, and it was a painting student, one year his senior and also new to Moscow, who became his best friend. This Nikolai P. Chekhov had several brothers, among them Anton, one year younger than Shekhtel, and Mikhail, younger still. In his memoirs Mikhail dates the Shekhtel family's arrival in Moscow to 1875, just the year before Fedor started college.⁴³ Whether these moves followed his father's work is not clear. In Moscow, however, his mother became 'housekeeper', or general domestic manager, to the large family household of her close relative's friend Pavel Tret'iakov, located in the Transriver district of central Moscow where the gallery stands today. It is not clear whether the Shekhtels 'lived in', but in their position, as Kirichenko puts it, 'they were effectively members of the family'.⁴⁴

Perhaps it was Tret'iakov who got Shekhtel into the architec-

ture school. He was amongst the most generous members of the small, élite Moscow Arts Society of rich merchants — Mamontovs, Morozovs, Yusupovs, von Mekks and Tret'iakovs among others — which gave the Moscow College financial backing and had the right to enrol there any student of their choice at their own expense.⁴⁵ Always interested in the young, and contributing imaginatively to the college by such schemes as his travel scholarships, Pavel Tret'iakov seems a very likely benefactor to his new housekeeper's talented young son. This is speculation, but the fact that Shekhtel's first professional experience was to be with Tret'iakov's architect brother-in-law lends it weight.

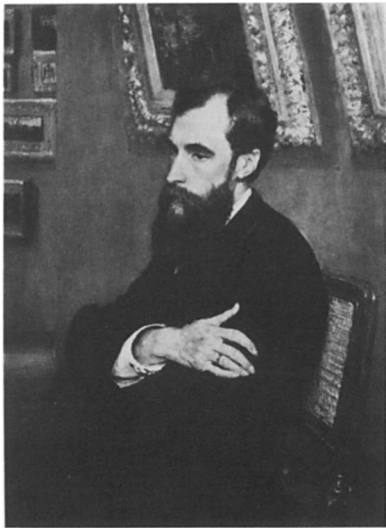
As a student in the arts, Fedor Shekhtel had an ideally sympathetic and stimulating home environment here. The Tret'iakovs were much less *nouveau*, and much less rich, than their peers in the very top group of Moscow's new 'dynasties'. Their wealth, derived initially from flax, was enough, but they held their central position through a quiet wisdom dedicated to public service that commanded universal respect. Domestic life, even by Russian standards, was very family-oriented. Outside that, though, Pavel and his younger brother Sergei were the intimates in business, in public affairs, in their research and patronage of Russia's artistic heritage, with just those flashier and much less united families who would later become Shekhtel's clients.

Nikolai Chekhov's family lived in the same district, but in struggling poverty. They had arrived even more recently, in 1876, following bankruptcy in their native Taganrog. Mikhail's memoirs recall how Shekhtel 'would often come round to our house' during that student year 1876-7. As evidence of his thoughtfulness and practicality, he recounts that 'it only needed our mother to complain at her lack of firewood, for him and his friend Khelius to arrive with a pair of sturdy logs for her tucked under their arms, stealthily removed from another household's log-pile somewhere along the way'.⁴⁶ The only surviving Shekhtel scheme that appears to be student work is for a historical museum in Moscow, the real version of which, by V.V. Shervud, was then under construction at the north end of Red Square. Shekhtel's too was in a pseudo-Russian style, but was already lively and sophisticated in its volumetric planning.⁴⁷

Mikhail Chekhov describes the Shekhtel of this time as 'very inventive and ingenious, and endowed by nature with a wonderfully sociable and amiable character'.⁴⁸ Herein, perhaps, lies the reason he left college: Moscow, still new to him, offered bigger challenges to his talents. Shekhtel started working free-lance. Whilst Anton Chekhov pursued medical studies in Moscow University, from 1879, Fedor Shekhtel and Nikolai were working together painting everything from icons to vast murals, and producing humorous publications. Shekhtel also made a reputation for graphics. Kirichenko lists 'book illustrations and designs, journals, vignettes, calling cards, theatrical posters, covers for notebooks, menus for celebratory dinners',⁴⁹ but we have only much later examples.

His work in the office of Tret'iakov's brother-in-law Alexander S. Kaminskii started about 1880. The husband of Pavel and Sergei's younger sister Sofiia, Kaminskii had executed several Tret'iakov commissions in the city during the early 1870s.⁵⁰ Not so active now, but well versed, like the whole family, in Russian traditions, he would have been a good first tutor on their architectural aspects. However, Shekhtel's first ten years of work were to be dominated by the theatre, in various forms then popular amongst Moscovites.

Like many of their peers, the Tret'iakovs worked extraordinarily hard, and descriptions suggest that Shekhtel followed their pace. On the one hand he did costumes and sets for the renowned



Pavel M. Tret'iakov, founder of the Tret'iakov Gallery, Moscow, to whose family Shekhtel's mother was housekeeper. This portrait of 1883 by Repin now hangs in the Tret'iakov Gallery.



*Shekhtel's drawing for the cover of Chekhov's first successful book of stories, *The Motley Tales*, published in 1886. His signature appears at the bottom right. At this stage Chekhov was using the pseudonym 'A. Chekhonte', as appears here.*



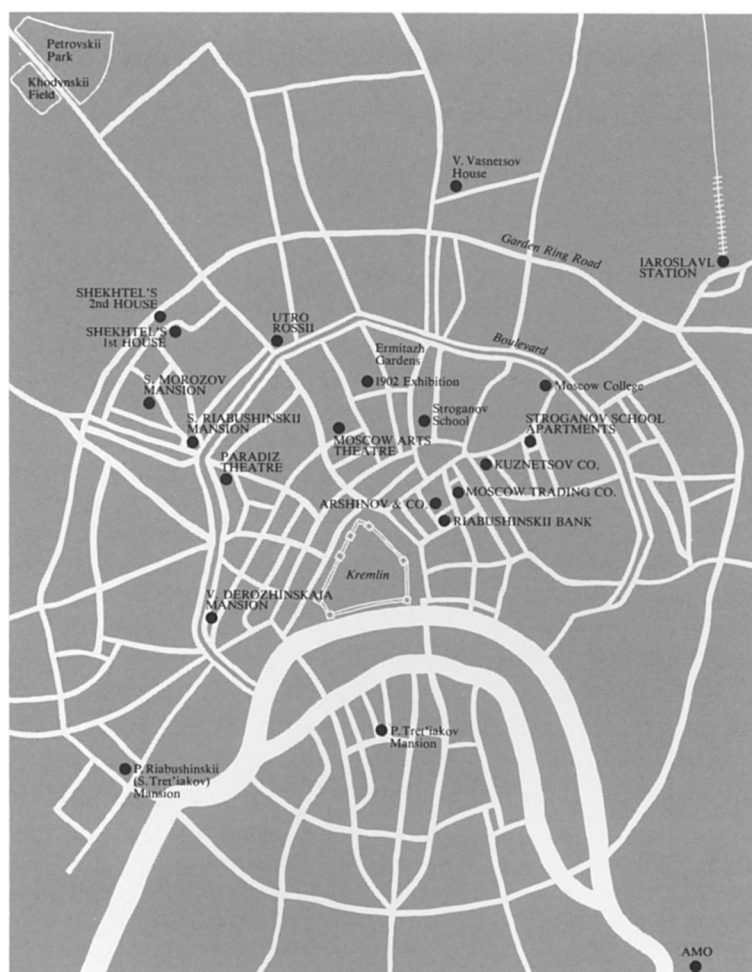
Shekhtel's facade for the Paradiz (now Mayakovskiy) Theatre, Moscow, designed in the 1880s whilst he was working in the office of Terskoi.

'wizard' of theatrical special effects K.T. Val'ts, designer to the Bolshoi. Much of this was for opera. On the other, he developed a reputation for wizardry himself in devising all manner of spectacles and events for the famous M.V. Lentovskii, whose Ermitazh pleasure gardens in the north of the city provided fun and light entertainment for every level of the Moscow public.⁵¹

An interest in theatre and opera must have been the basis of his growing friendship with Nikolai Chekhov's medical-student brother. Anton Chekhov was then only just beginning to write himself, with humorous stories at five kopeks a line for popular weekly magazines.⁵² To Shekhtel he dedicated one of these, called *Two Scandals*, itself about musical and theatrical life.⁵³ The next year saw what Mikhail Chekhov calls 'the start of enormous publicity' for Shekhtel, when he devised and produced a spectacular procession for a fête on Moscow's Khodynskii Field to honour Tsar Alexander III's coronation. No doubt with an eye to business, he published his designs for this 'Beautiful Spring' in a special souvenir album.⁵⁴ Henceforth he was increasingly in demand, as such entertainments were the delight of fantasy- and spectacle-loving Moscovites. Whilst remaining the devoted and ever helpful friend of Nikolai, through many feckless periods and eventually fatal tuberculosis, correspondence between Shekhtel and Anton during these years indicates the development of the close friendship and mutual respect that would flower in their joint contributions to launching the Moscow Arts Theatre, as something more revolutionary and more serious, fifteen years later.⁵⁵

Early in 1886 Shekhtel drew the cover for Chekhov's first successful collection of stories in book form, *The Motley Tales*, and from the related correspondence it is clear that one of Shekhtel's favourite catchphrases, very characteristically, was 'No Problem!'. 'Ochen' prosto!', he keeps saying of the practicalities: literally, 'Very simple!'.⁵⁶ Chekhov was now travelling frequently, and their regular correspondence is full of vigorously boyish and sometimes intimate humour, between close friends exhilarated by their growing popular successes. Shekhtel was doing some professional architectural work now, in the late 1880s, for the minor but respected Russianist M.S. Terskoi. His one attributed work for that office was itself close to his interests: the elaborate brick elevation of Terskoi's Paradiz (now Maiakovskii) Theatre. He was also getting some varied and sizeable commissions himself. When Chekhov writes to him with joint holiday plans in March 1887 as 'Most talented of all the world's architects!',⁵⁷ the friendly flattery indicates that Shekhtel was now beginning to identify himself with this profession rather than theatre design. Chekhov himself refers later to a commission for a chapel in his own native Taganrog.⁵⁸ There were interiors, and a small house or two, but his biggest job, executed between 1887 and 1889, was an extensive country-house complex with chapel and stud-farm on the von Derviz family's estate of Kiritsa, near Riazan'.⁵⁹ Stylistically it was an eclectic confection of Russianist, Classical and Perpendicular Gothic with a slightly Moorish flavour to the central arcades. But it was controlled — just — by a strong composition of slight asymmetries, and the theatricality of its dramatic relationship to a winding approach road.

In the spring of 1887, soon after Chekhov addressed him jocularly in one letter with the Latin superlative 'Elegantissime!', Shekhtel got engaged to his cousin N.T. Zhegina, daughter of the maternal relative through whom the domestic connection with the Tret'iakovs had developed.⁶⁰ When he married that autumn,⁶¹ he was clearly already decided upon a future in architecture and enjoying his successes with the same boyish delight as Anton Chekhov, now equally seriously reoriented from medicine to



Sketch map of Moscow in the 1900s showing the location of Shekhtel's buildings and other features referred to in this article.



Anton Chekhov at his Melikhovo country estate near Moscow, where Shekhtel helped get him established in 1892, in a characteristically practical manner, by sending him seeds and chickens.

writing. Chekhov's latest collection of 'sketches and tales', entitled *In the Twilight*, had just appeared. On 15 September he inscribed a copy 'To my friend and patient Frants Osipovich Shekhtel, who is just as talented as myself (!?!), in everlasting remembrance.'⁶² Perhaps it was intended as a souvenir of their salad days.

Clients at the top of the ladder

Around 1890, Shekhtel spent time working for Pomerantsev on his Upper Trading Rows, the vast modern shopping complex that was replacing covered stalls alongside Red Square.⁶³ It was the biggest application of the *galleria* principle in Russia at that date and, as I have commented, must have brought home forcibly to him the incompatibility of Moscow architecture's two central enthusiasms: for new technology, on one hand, and for pseudo-Russian decoration on the other. By 1892, however, Shekhtel was getting plenty of jobs himself. Most significant in that year were his first commissions from the Morozovs, Moscow's top family in wealth and influence, who were to be the most loyal clients of his early career.

Pavel Buryshkin, the member of these circles to whose invaluable memoirs I have already referred, identified twenty-five families 'who must be put on the very highest rung of the genealogical ladder' of Moscow's new *élite*. He divided these into five categories:

In the very top place must be put five families which preserved an important influence either in industry or in trade, from generation to generation; which participated equally continuously in public life, both in professional aspects of commerce and in city affairs, and which immortalized their family names either by endowments, or by the creation of cultural and educational establishments. These were: the Morozovs, the Bakhrushkins, the Naidenovs, the Tret'iakovs and the Shchukins.⁶⁴

The extent of Shekhtel's debt to his Zhegin relative is immediately clear. The provincial boy had entered Moscow at the very top.

Buryshkin's 'second group' comprised 'families who also played a distinguished role but who had moved out of the spotlight by the immediate pre-Revolutionary period, either through the absence of any outstanding members or, more typically, through moving (*from the self-created commercial élite*) into the noble class (*of the official 'table of ranks'*)'.⁶⁵ Of this group — the Prokhorovs, Alekseevs, Shelaputins, Kumanins, Soldatienkovs and Iakunchikovs — none were Shekhtel's clients in a conventional sense. The experimental theatre director Constantin Stanislavsky, however, for whom he designed the Moscow Arts Theatre as colleague and friend, was a leading Alekseev behind the pseudonym.

The third category, comprising the Khlydovs, Mamontovs, Botkins, Mazurins and Abrikosovs, 'had formerly been in the absolute front line, but had either declined, or moved into other spheres of public or cultural life'.⁶⁶ Amongst these, Shekhtel's closest contact was with the Mamontovs. Pavel Tret'iakov's wife, lady of the house to whom his mother was housekeeper, was Vera Nikolaevna *née* Mamontova.⁶⁷ She was a first cousin of Savva I. Mamontov, founder of the railway for which Shekhtel rebuilt the Iaroslavl railway terminus, and from whose arts-and-crafts colony at Abramtsevo he drew both his acknowledged artistic mentor, Viktor Vasnetsov, and artist-collaborators to embellish his buildings, like Mikhail Vrubel and Konstantin Korovin.

Amongst the fourth category, 'prominent by now for public, rather than commercial activity', the Rukavishnikovs were to commission a large business headquarters in Nizhni-Novgorod; the others were the Guchkovs, Vishniakovs, Konavalovs and Krestovnikovs. Buryshkin's last group comprised six families

which were 'each remarkable in their own different way'.⁶⁸ These included the Tarasovs and Vtorovs, both of whom commissioned fine houses during this period, but not from Shekhtel;⁶⁹ the Shvetkovs and the Krasil'shchikovs; the Iushkovs, for whom Shekhtel did a big interior conversion on the Moscow Boulevard; and finally the Riabushinskii's, remarkable indeed for the diversity of fields in which they pioneered, and second only to the Morozovs in providing vehicles for Shekhtel's talent.

The Morozov's was a rags-to-riches story that illuminates the extraordinary position of serfs as 'non-persons' in Russia right up to their emancipation in 1861, and also the rewards of the Old Believers' assiduous capacity for hard work. By Shekhtel's time, they had expanded in three generations from a single peasant tradesman in silk ribbons who built a textile empire, via his five sons, to a clan of six extraordinary patriarchs in business and art patronage (and several equally powerful matriarchs); and thence, with three or four children in each new household, to an enormous fourth generation in the same mould.⁷⁰

The Riabushinskiis also derived from a peasant who made good in post-Napoleonic Moscow. Also strong Old Believers, they too built their fortune in textiles but moved into banking rather than heavy industry. Not yet ramified like the Morozovs into a clan, the significant members in Shekhtel's period were the six active sons (amongst sixteen children) born between 1871 and 1882 to Pavel M. Riabushinskii, the second-generation founder of the giant conglomerate P.M. Riabushinskii & Sons.⁷¹

These two families had much in common, in background and attitudes resulting from it, that was to be mirrored in Shekhtel's work as an architect. Much of it was typical of their whole peer group. Far from disguising their roots, they generally believed peasant values to be superior as a basis for Russia's future. This conviction was asserted, on one hand, in their pioneering research, collection and fostering of traditional craftsmanship and decorative arts. More or less consciously and polemically, it was also an essential part of many families' hostility to the assumption that a commercial magnate's natural aspiration must be ennoblement. It was a central tenet of the Riabushinskiis, for example, and of their newspaper for which Shekhtel would create the headquarters, that such a move was genuflection to the very power-base whose irrelevance they were successfully challenging by commerce.⁷²

Another aspect of their conscious break with the old hierarchy was manifested in a principle held particularly strongly by Pavel Tret'iakov, that merchants and industrialists had no place buying land, that their proper domain was their economic base, the city.⁷³ Others did not adhere to such rigid principle; the Morozovs, for example, had numerous country estates. When in Moscow, however, they lived within walking distance of the office. Maxim Gorki said of Savva Morozov that 'the speed of his walking testified to his energy and health'.⁷⁴ Shekhtel's mansion for him, as for Pavel Riabushinskii, would be as central as Tret'iakov's, though north of the Moscow river. Shekhtel was to be largely responsible for creating a new house-type which embodied this idea of their new relationship to the land in its name as well as its form.

The city home on this vast scale had previously been a *dvorets* (palace). The word derives from *dvor*, a courtyard, and like the English 'court' its spatial connotations had become transmuted into the social idea of 'The Court'. Even when the palace was a European shoe-box along a street, as in St Petersburg, it was still firmly associated — through the *dvorianstvo*, or nobility who inhabited it — with possession of lands. The traditional upper-class homes of the older, semi-rural Moscow were conceived as, and called, 'urban manor houses' or 'urban country houses':

gorodskie usadby. They spread expansively to make a welcoming forecourt of annexes, stables, staff quarters as the focus of a slow-moving, multi-generational household.

In conception as in name the new *osobniak* was the exact opposite. I translate this word as 'mansion'. Its root is in *osobyi*, meaning 'special, particular, apart'. The *osobniak* is a 'special' in precisely the everyday architectural sense. It is a 'one-off'. Where the classical box or court was a generalized solution, a 'loose-fit' accommodating changes over time, the *osobniak* is meticulously tailored around the requirements of specific activities and tastes in a given nuclear family. It stands as a villa in its garden, defensively drawing all activity inside into a single, functionally free-formed mass, and by the same token preens its highly particularized exterior form to public display. The type, like the client class, was to disappear with the 1917 Revolution.

The house for Savva Morozov

Shekhtel's first Morozov jobs, in 1892, were still traditional in conception. For the magnificently bearded and strict Old Believer Vikula Eliseevich, son of the founder's eldest son and director of the world's largest textile plant, in Nikolskoe, he built a country estate with farm buildings in the Odintsev area outside Moscow. Kirichenko describes the house as being 'in a luxurious Renaissance-Baroque style', but some modernity, at least, was provided by its independent power-station.⁷⁵ An amusing letter from Chekhov shows that Shekhtel found time during this year to help with his friend's new country home at Melikhovo by sending seeds and chickens, to get him established,⁷⁶ but he was also building a dacha near Vladimir for S.T. Morozov, son of the founder's youngest son Timofei.⁷⁷

It is not clear whether this 'S.T. Morozov' was Savva, Timofei's eldest son, or the slightly younger Sergei. The latter had no interest in the family businesses. His wealth went into researching and reviving peasant crafts, for which he would found and build the Moscow Museum of Handicrafts in 1902. Savva, however, inherited his father's central position in the industrial empire.

By 1880, the ruthless Timofei had become Russia's most powerful industrialist. Five years later, as young Savva was graduating from Moscow University, his father became the first Russian industrialist whose workers went on strike. Savva later reacted by building model housing for his employees, and by supporting the growing revolutionary movement as 'the only path to achieving a Europeanization of Russia and arousing her strength'.⁷⁸ He gave funds to Lenin's newspaper *Iskra* (The Spark), and bought such close friends and revolutionaries as Nikolai Bauman and Maxim Gorki out of prison.

As Gorki later said, it was extraordinary to hear such radical views being expressed by an industrialist. He described their first encounter at the All-Russian Trade and Industry Congress of 1896, where Morozov's 'round, close-cropped head' arose 'from a row of bald and grey ones' to argue over customs tariffs with 'the well known chemist D.I. Mendeleev', creator of the Periodic Table of Elements, then working in the weights-and-measures department. He was 'thick-set . . . with the face of a Tatar'. Its 'soft lines manifested benevolent good-naturedness, but in his ringing voice and the sharp gaze of his penetrating eyes one felt a disdain towards people and an accustomedness to imperiously ordering them about'.⁷⁹ Had he been a free man, Morozov 'had dreamed of a professorship' and 'would have set up a research institute for chemistry'. To him this was 'the field where the greatest victories of rational thinking will be made' for 'the happiness of mankind'. One minute, said Gorki, 'he would be talking of



Savva Morozov, client for Shekhtel's first central-Moscow mansion.



Painter and sculptor Mikhail Vrubel, habitué of Mamontov's colony at Abramtsevo who collaborated with Shekhtel on Savva Morozov's mansion and several buildings thereafter.

Rutherford's experiments and of intra-molecular energy', and the next, 'majestically reciting Pushkin, most of whose poetry he knew by heart'.⁸⁰

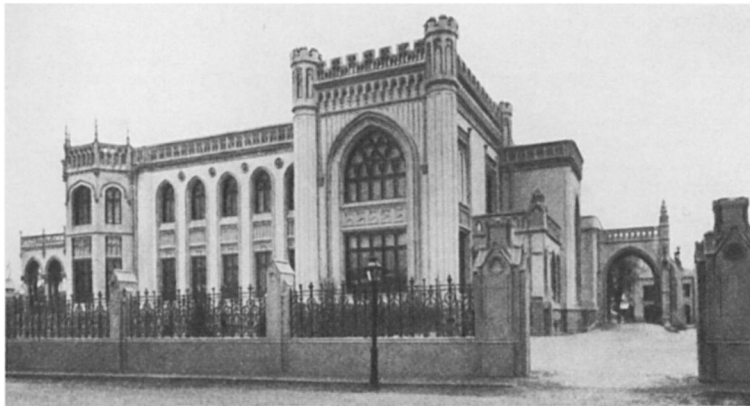
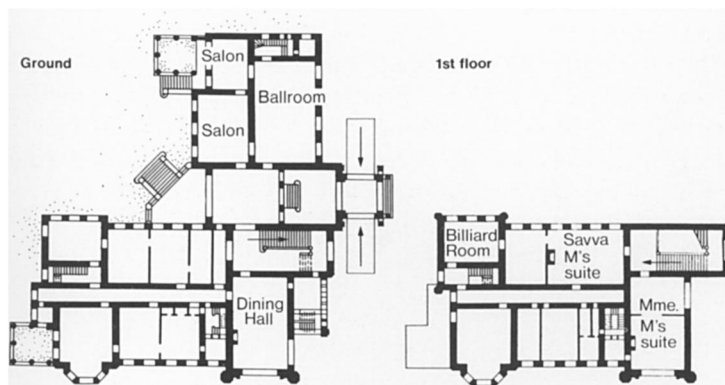
Behind these sunnier interests was a complex personality, obsessed by each activity till he dropped it for another, and living in constant fear of going mad. With statistics on 'a long series of Russian and American families' he had proved madness to be highly probable 'in a third generation of larger-scale industrialists'.⁸¹ Though Morozov was apparently happily enough married, to a village girl once employed in the Nikolskoe textile mills, Gorki recorded that his 'communications with women seemed a burdensome and unpleasant necessity to him'.⁸²

This man was the client for Shekhtel's first great mansion in central Moscow. Commissioned in 1893, it would occupy him for the next two years. In some areas there was plainly a strong basis of sympathy between architect and client. Already in March that year Shekhtel was writing to Chekhov that he was 'working an enormous amount'. 'However,' he continued, 'this is the only thing that satisfies me and makes me more or less happy. I am convinced that without work I would be useless — like a clock that isn't constantly and accurately wound up.'⁸³ Morozov was to express a similar sentiment to Gorki a few years later: 'It is perfectly clear to me that the only thing which extends, enriches and organizes the world and my own consciousness is work.'⁸⁴

As a practical man, and as the antidote to his own tensions perhaps, Savva Morozov's preferences in clothing and environment seem to have been simple. Gorki recounts that he would shamle 'in worn-out slippers' through his home's ornate reception rooms, 'screwing up his eyes' to avoid seeing them.⁸⁵ The ornateness, one suspects, and the very presence of those rooms, reflect the aspirations of his simple-minded wife. Indeed the building is always described, even on Shekhtel's original drawings, as 'Z.G. Morozova's house'.⁸⁶ Gorki described her as a lady conducting correspondence with friends on deep blue paper about the significance of her dreams, and wrought 'with a tension she didn't always manage to hide' as she 'played the role of elegant lady and patroness of the arts'. Whilst Savva went out 'with patched snow-boots', the front door at home was opened to guests 'by a massive man with long moustache, dressed in Circassian costume and with a dagger in his belt, who didn't seem to belong at all in the heavy, Moscovite luxury of the broad entrance hall'.⁸⁷

For these super-large, complex and *nouveaux* clients, Shekhtel produced a house that thoroughly exemplified Apyshkov's criteria for 'the latest architecture', that it should functionally 'satisfy the material requirements of a civilized human being', and aesthetically 'serve as the artistic expression of the idea of the thing being created'.⁸⁸ The functionality of Shekhtel's plan was one of its most truly original features in the context of Russian domestic architecture at that date. Its free planning responded carefully to the site orientation, and orientation was then used as the basis of its spatial theatricality. Plainly, it is a man fluent in the creation of atmosphere with artificial light who has manipulated here so dramatically the varieties of daylight. Rich little gouache-and-watercolour 'paintings' of two interiors were among seven of Shekhtel's drawings for this house exhibited recently in Moscow. Light effects are their subject matter; they are palpably the thinking of a theatrical designer 'in the round'.⁸⁹

The house is entered from a drive perpendicular to the street, on the north side. From the shadowed darkness of the *portecochère* the visitor rises into a vestibule, and again, through a gothic screen into a small hall, towards a vast gothic window of pinkish, mica-like glass through which the sun moves, southeast-south-southwest, during the day. Over the visitor's left shoulder,



Plan of ground floor and first floor; period view from the street; and view from the entrance lobby to the hallway, with the pink-glazed window onto the garden ahead.

in north light filtered through two storeys of milky blue-green glass, the grand staircase moves back and forth behind three arches, its banisters, by Vrubel, 'a line of girls in billowing white frocks, dancing, lightly taking-off upwards' to the personal suites of host and hostess.⁹⁰ In plan these suites are the interface between public and private. In character they were entirely different. In Gorki's description Mme Morozova's drawing-room and bedroom were thick with collected porcelain 'which even encrusted her bed' and was mixed in the former room with fine works commissioned from Abramtsevo artists: a Vasnetsov painting and 'superb embroideries by Polenova'. By contrast the asceticism of Savva Morozov's rooms 'gave the impression of a bachelor's quarters'. In his 'modest and simple' study the sole decoration was 'a bronze head of Ivan the Terrible by Antokolskii standing on the bookcase'.⁹¹ Beyond lay the billiard room where he gave refuge from arrest on one occasion to the revolutionary Nikolai Bauman, Editor of Lenin's journal *Iskra*.⁹² Beyond these suites, the two-storied domestic wing was compactly planned about a central corridor and was essentially self-contained, looking north-east to the street and south-west across the garden lawns.

The other wing, to the visitor's right on entering, contained grand enfiladed rooms for entertaining. Stanislavsky recalled from his youth the balls given by Savva's mother, and the next Mme Morozova plainly fancied herself as a comparable hostess.⁹³ On the northern side, alongside the carriageway, ran the great ballroom, in pink marble with fountains. Interconnecting from the garden side were two reception rooms, the first almost rococo, the second simpler, in the English Perpendicular Gothic of the rest of the house. Here in the extreme south corner of the house a loggia and stairs gave onto the garden through an entirely glazed wall which in turn lit Vrubel's specially commissioned panels, 'Morning', 'Mid-day' and 'Evening', on the other three walls.

Here Shekhtel was giving Mikhail Vrubel his first direct involvement in a major architectural project. The central staircase in particular was a multi-media collaboration between architect and artist. Besides the banisters, an interior stained-glass window at ground level and a glazed ceramic sculpture, both on mythological themes, complemented the depth of carved timber, marble and brass in a celebration of natural materials. Alternately dappled and splashed with coloured light, the palette was like the medieval Russian world of Viktor Vasnetsov's paintings. Completing the sequence of formal rooms lay a vast dining hall, left of the grand stairs, that is medieval in its dark panelling and dominant stone fireplace. The very separateness of these formal rooms from the domestic circulation pattern manifested their superfluity to the owner's natural lifestyle.⁹⁴

Whether Morozov grew to like it or not, the house's drama and intensity reflected the darker side of his own character as much as his wife's aspirations. At a public level, the Gothic was a natural medium for expressing his democratic convictions. At its more dramatic and Germanic, inside, it evoked to Russians the Shellingian romanticism, the supremacy of individual psyche and personality, which had been a strong thread of Russian literary and aesthetic debate earlier in the century. In the English Perpendicular form which Shekhtel adapted for the exterior and simpler interiors were quieter connotations of an English liberal-bourgeois order rooted in industry and trade — in short, of the political model closest to Morozov's own aspirations for Russia. There had been Gothic architecture in Russia since the late eighteenth century, but this was its first programmatic use as the public face of so powerfully anti-autocratic a persona. When Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, Governor General of Moscow, asked to view this soon famous new landmark of the city, Savva Morozov

gladly let him be shown the building, but declined to be present to kotow to the Tsar's uncle and brother-in-law in person.⁹⁵

For Shekhtel as architect, the Gothic was playing a transitional role here, akin to that which — as Apyshkov rightly noted later — it had played for 'the initiators of modernism' in England later. Shekhtel too saw that this medieval design approach had generated a system of formal and compositional rules rooted in construction and function, rather than historical canon, which offered an alternative to Classicism. For him, it was a stage in refocusing his attention onto constructive, rather than decorative, elements of Russia's own medieval tradition; it was thus a stepping-stone in moving the present impasse between Russianism and rationalism towards a new synthesis.

At a professional level, this extraordinarily special *osobniak* served Shekhtel as the *Meisterwerk* for a recognized qualification. On 26 January 1894, with the drawings approved, the Interior Ministry's Technical and Building Committee accorded him 'the right to execute works in accordance with regulations of the civil and building departments'.⁹⁶ It was not 'the right to call himself engineer or architect', but legally it sufficed.

Towards a new Russianism

Amongst the Morozovs, Shekhtel was clearly a personal and professional success. His next three jobs, in 1895, were for sons of Vikula, though in style they were closer to their great uncle Savva's new *osobniak* than their father's country estate.

The men were directors of the advanced textile plant 'Vikula Morozov & Sons' in Nikolskoe, but their domestic habits, like their father's, were dominated by strict observance of such Old Believer practices as eating only with a single, personal fork, not smoking and never shaving.⁹⁷ Most similar to Savva's mansion were the new Gothic interiors Shekhtel did for Aleksei Vikulaevich's house in Podsosenskii Lane. For this leading but very private collector of Russian porcelain and portraits, he produced a series of intimate Gothic rooms centering on a double-height study with internal staircase and gallery. Again all furniture was specially designed, and the sculpture and wall-paintings on Faustian themes, again by Vrubel, were integral with the architecture. In the planning, activities were carefully zoned and the circulation flows bold. If anything there is a greater delight in materials and their articulation here, and an atmosphere more conversational. For Elisei and Ivan Vikulaevich he did interiors of their house in Leontevskii Lane. For Ivan he also built an extensive complex of dacha, stables and manège in the fashionable Petrovskii Park on the road towards Petersburg. Now destroyed, and in published material ill-documented, this was plainly an important stage in Shekhtel's journey towards a new interpretation of Russian traditions.

The free plan of Savva's house had involved bringing together some structurally bold volumes, but the construction was homogenous masonry, and a continuous skin was wrapped around the final organism. The complex for Ivan Vikulaevich, on the other hand, though still very large, was semi-rural in location and function. Here Shekhtel juxtaposed timber secondary structures to a massive main volume in stone, each articulated in its surface treatment and fenestration to maximize the contrasts between these two structural systems. A strong cornice in stone was played against the slender verticals of tent-shaped roofs in timber which moved and regrouped as the spectator moved, in the manner of spires and cupolas on the Russian church.⁹⁸

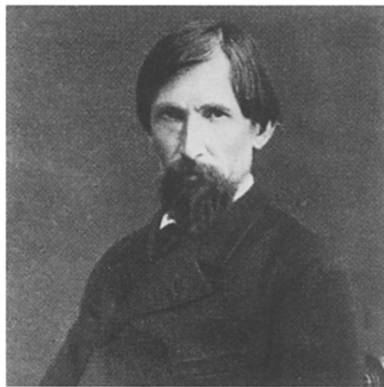
Here, I suspect, we are seeing the reason for Shekhtel's later acknowledgement of the Abramtsevo painter and designer Viktor Vasnetsov as 'my teacher'.⁹⁹ He more than any others in that

pioneering generation had sought to elicit the constructive rather than decorative aspects of Russian traditional architecture, and in this respect he was the closest parallel to the Western Arts-and-Crafts pioneers who pursued the Gothic. His own central-Moscow house of 1892 had been a programmatic demonstration of this juxtaposition of static stone volumes to fluid timber ones common in traditional architecture.¹⁰⁰ A masterly design, though a mere cottage by Morozov standards, it was the source, I suspect, of a new clarity in Shekhtel's composition and handling of materials. It indicated a starting-point for a dialogue between Russianism and rationalist concerns with honest and manifest structure.

It was a symptom of Shekhtel's success that one of his next two houses, in 1896, was for himself and, though small, it was located in a smart district round the corner from Savva Morozov's. Though all masonry, the basic plan form was similar to Vasnetsov's, and indeed to Morozov's, with two wings, one domestic and one for appropriate 'work' (in Shekhtel's case, it seems, an office), hinged, here non-orthogonally, about a staircase tower. The handling of public and private space on an awkward site is ingenious. The simple Perpendicular Gothic details, executed in beautifully dressed cream stone against mid-brown brickwork have an extraordinarily English air in the Moscow street, and the smooth, tight skin is quite different from the soggy handling of its big sister nearby. In view of Apyshkov's later bracketting of their names, a comparison with Lev Kekushev's own first house of two years later is instructive. There the external palette is similar, but traditional references are made through massive detailing and folkloric decoration rather than composition.¹⁰¹ Significantly it was composition that Shekhtel started teaching during that year, to the upper courses in architecture at the Stroganov School.¹⁰²

Despite the increasing refinement of his own style, Shekhtel the stage-designer was not above giving the G.K. Iushkovs a Moorish bathroom amongst other new interiors in 1897: such was their taste.¹⁰³ Other projects brought him more directly back to his theatrical roots. In February of the previous year his advice was being sought about a new theatre for St Petersburg.¹⁰⁴ Then on 13 April Chekhov had written, having given his name to a 'ladies circle' around Baroness Shteven that had conceived the idea of 'a People's Palace for Moscow . . . containing a popular theatre, reading rooms, libraries and accommodation for Sunday classes', plus a teahouse and shops.¹⁰⁵ Chekhov had told them they needed realistic advice 'from a specialist'. Though 'full up with work' for the new Tsar's coronation celebrations in Moscow that May, as well as the houses, Shekhtel replied to Chekhov that the fascinating proposal 'kept me lying awake in bed all night' resolving the basic configuration of such a building.¹⁰⁶ Thus in 1897, as the project progressed towards funding, he designed them an expansive, curvilinear building, compactly planned but approachable in its porches and foyers, in a strong simple Russianist style of red brick dressed with stone in the old manner. With a popular theatre project for Sokolniki Park — likewise unbuilt — this was an important exploration of a new 'democratic' approach to theatre buildings.¹⁰⁷

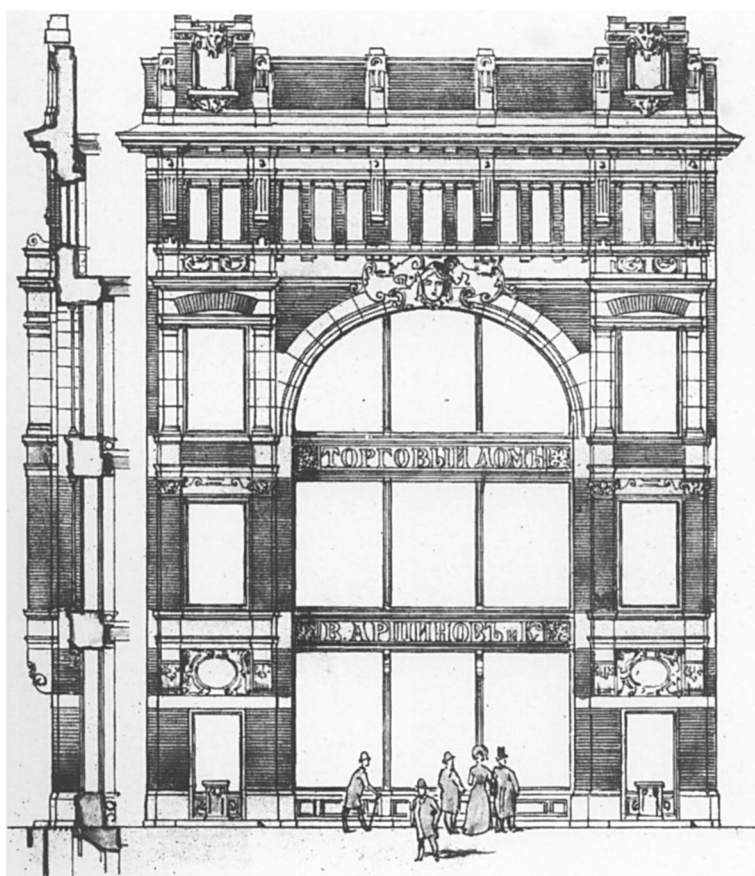
In 1898 there was a mausoleum for his first Morozov client, old Vikula Eliseevich. That year and the next saw his first significant commercial buildings: offices and showrooms for the porcelain company M.S. Kuznetsov on a broad corner-site on Kirov Street, and a trading headquarters for V. Arshinov & Co. in the business district nearer Red Square. On the problem of commercial architecture, as on so much else, Apyshkov was later to express thinking that must have been very close to Shekhtel's:



The artist and designer Viktor Vasnetsov, a founder-member of Mamontov's colony at Abramtsevo whom Shekhtel acknowledged as 'my teacher'.



Vasnetsov's house (1892) off the Garden Ring Road in Moscow.



Drawing by Shekhtel for the headquarters of V. Arshinov & Co., Moscow, 1899, showing street elevation and section (left). The facing bricks are glazed in turquoise blue, with stone trim in cream.

The non-correspondence between the forms of our architecture and the requirements of real life is evident in the fact that our rapidly-developing commerce requires on its elevations not jagged rustication and hoists, but smooth signboards advertising its name; not overhanging galleries that plunge the shopping accommodation into darkness, but ample daylight.

This non-correspondence becomes even clearer when we observe how life, when unable to cope with the conventionalized dictates of academic traditions, mercilessly destroys the old forms and generates its own. They may be deficient aesthetically, but they have a real meaning.

This yet further convinces us that the starting-point of architecture must be function, and that it is not the task of the genuine artist to fight against signboards, like Don Quixote tilting at windmills, or to fight the practical and functional, but only to transform them into beauty and to fight that routinization which shrouds our buildings in garments quite alien to them.¹⁰⁸

Shekhtel's commercial buildings were also the first in Russia to express boldly on their external skins 'the means offered us by iron and steel to use space with maximum economy through minimizing the dimensions of bearing members and floors'.¹⁰⁹ Though not altogether at ease in its residual eclectic decoration, the Kuznetsov elevation was almost entirely glazed, with six main arched bays of plate glass on three storeys providing 'ample daylight', and slender typographical spandrels between as the integral 'signboards'. The single-bayed plan of Arshinov's building was one still larger arch, but the main innovation here was in colour. For the first time Shekhtel covered an elevation in coloured glazed brick — here deep turquoise blue, with trim and decoration in cream stone. As Apyshkov noted in 1905, the use of this surface facing in Viennese modernism manifested the new concern with 'eliminating every possible dirt collector'.¹¹⁰ In Russia, the two-colour effect created by Shekhtel was far more immediately redolent of the two-colour effects characterizing Russian Classicism.

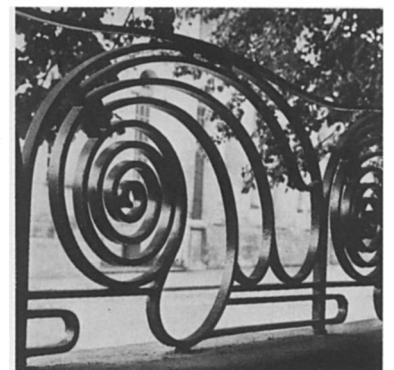
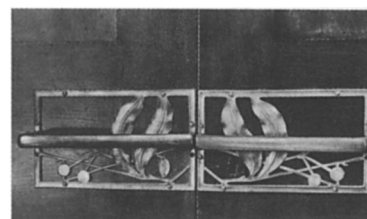
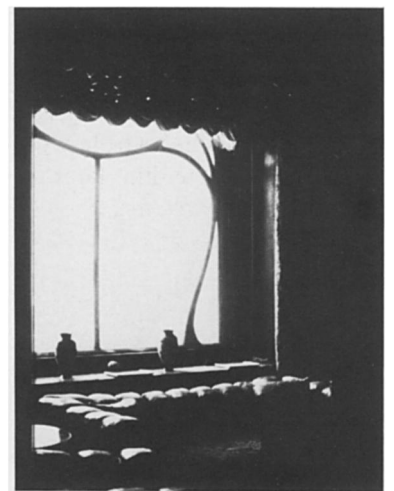
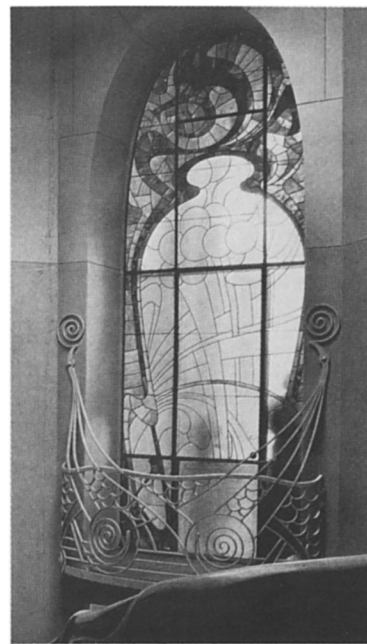
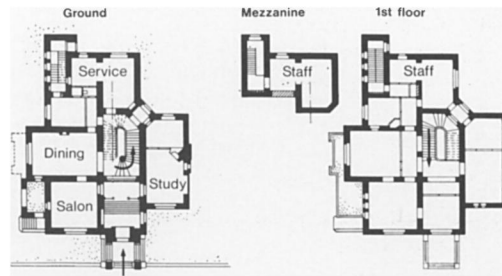
Maturity and the *stil moderne*

By the turn of the century all the elements of Shekhtel's new architecture had been established. Planning was closely tailored around function as the starting-point of free-flowing space and asymmetrical volumetric compositions. Where its expression was appropriate there was a subtle but muscular feeling for structure. There was a manifest delight in manipulating natural materials to produce richly expressive forms, but also 'hygienic', cleanable surfaces. Controlling all these, and particularly his own, was the theatrical designer's skill in creating atmosphere, and in expressing what Apyshkov called the 'idea' or 'spirit' of the building, through decorative embellishment of its components, through integration of specially commissioned art works, and through the manipulation of colour and light. In all these characteristics, and in his proportional systems, Shekhtel's reference points were simultaneously contemporary European, and medieval, pre-Petrine Russian.

These characteristics came together perhaps most spectacularly in his first commission from the Riabushinskiis, which was one of the domestic masterpieces of this period in Russia. Stepan Riabushinskii was the third of old Pavel's six sons. All were sophisticated in a way that Savva Morozov, for example, never was; their mother, too, the daughter of a Petersburg millionaire, had been accustomed to money. Where the complex Morozov used to say 'In Russia it is easy to make money but difficult to cope with living',¹¹¹ the Riabushinskiis seem to have found it easier. Though unified, as their close friend Buryshkin comments, by the strict hierarchical discipline of traditional Old Believer families, they were all very different.

The youngest, Dmitri, was the scientific brain and in 1900 was an eighteen-year-old student. Four years later he would establish the world's first aerodynamic laboratory at their country estate of

STEPAN RIABUSHINSKII'S MANSION, 1900-2



Plans of ground floor, half-landing mezzanine, and first floor; street elevation; detail of west elevation onto the garden; main staircase; view from staircase to mezzanine-level stained-glass window; south-facing window of salon; door handles; and detail of garden railing.

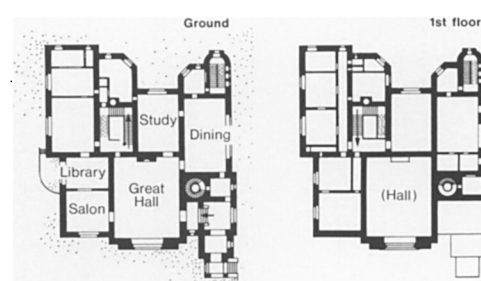
Kuchino, and was soon a Corresponding Member of the French Academy with a world-wide reputation. Mikhail, two years older, was a director of the family bank who early collected paintings by Degas, Renoir, Picasso and Vrubel. After Savva Morozov's death in 1905 he bought his mansion, and played host there to Matisse in 1911. Nilolai, four years older still, was a playboy on a truly Russian scale, to whom 'living' presented no problem. As a socialite, gambler, lover and patron of the latest painting, his 'pink face', 'red beard' and 'suits from a fashionable tailor' were seen 'wherever Moscow's élite congregated'.¹¹² The first collector of paintings by Larionov and Goncharova, he later commissioned much from Vrubel. From 1906 till his financial collapse he funded the Blue Rose group's elaborate exhibitions and the luxurious art journal *The Golden Fleece* (*Zolotoe Runo*). Family correspondence shows him being frequently, and wearily, bailed out of his 'financial embarrassments' by Stepan, two years his senior, who vainly urged that he start to 'tread the happy road of a hard-working man'.¹¹³

These letters would no doubt have been written by Stepan from the house he commissioned from Shekhtel in 1900, a few minutes walk south, towards the Kremlin, from Savva Morozov's. Old Pavel had died in the previous year and Stepan, at twenty-six, now headed the trading side of the family interests. He was best known, though, as an outstanding authority on icons who was developing one of Russia's finest private collections. We have no period pictures of the house's interior to indicate where the icon collection was displayed. In their stylization of natural forms, their rich colour and flowing line, however, they must have harmonized marvellously here with the same features of Shekhtel's modernism. They were probably hung on the first floor, where there are several fine reception rooms as well as bedrooms.

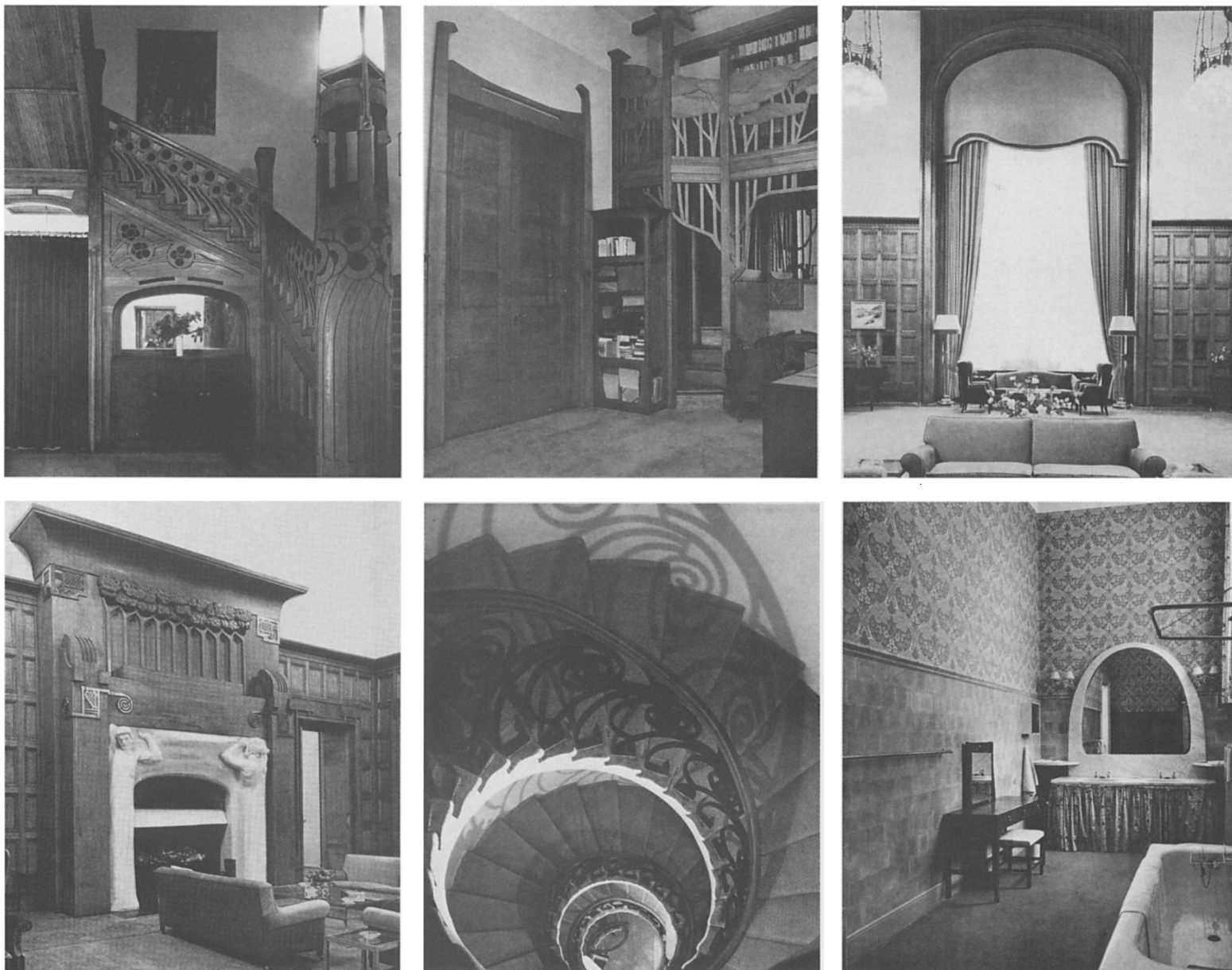
In this resplendent but very domestic house there is no 'public side' to create a duality of scale or circulation. Even the service accommodation at the rear is modest. In the compact plan that results, the free-flowing space of Morozov's central hallways is now the sole circulation system. It swirls around a massive, fluid staircase in white marble whose main baluster sweeps up into a dripping, Lalique-like lamp, and down, with Shekhtel's typical concern for convenience, into a capacious curved hall seat, scaled like everything else he did to the ample, fur-coated Russian figure, and carved from solid marble. Via its bold porch the house engages directly with the street, across which its big, square, south-facing windows take the sun. The square recurs constantly throughout the house, as a proportion characteristic of medieval Russian architecture, and as a source of the house's placidity and repose. For the Petersburgian Apyshkov, the 'freedom' of the curvilinear apertures at ground level went too far. This was 'the non-serious *moderne*', and they were 'incomprehensible' forms 'of which one tires quickly'.¹¹⁴

The exterior delicacy owes much to colour. The whole outside is in pastels. The main surfaces are glazed brick with stone trim, and a deep mosaic frieze of exotic flowers, with gold-edged windows inset, runs under the broad overhanging eaves above. Inside, the deeper colours of polished timber and brass are contrasted with the fluid core of white marble. This staircase has typically complex lighting. Filtered sunlight comes through the great double skylight above, whilst a double window of bluish stained glass at the landing level is north-facing and cool. Whilst extravagantly crafted in every detail, the absolute size of the house is modest: no larger than the solid Edwardian villas in England whose conception of domestic comfort it echoes. Sunny and lyrical yet always solid, the house speaks as clearly of a stable, attractive and free-

ALEXANDRA DEROZHINSKAIA'S MANSION, 1901



Plans of ground floor and first floor; period view of street elevation; and view of side wall onto the carriageway.



Main staircase; library; great hall; fireplace in great hall; inner staircase; bathroom.



Upholstery fabric designed by Shekhtel, used in study and elsewhere, based on the configuration of rotated triangles also used in the garden railings; and menu designed by Shekhtel, possibly used for the housewarming, with Derozhinskaia's initials, lower right, against a background based on the triangle motif.

thinking client as it does of a limitlessly rich one. The contrast in atmosphere with Savva Morozov's house is dramatic.

Between this and Shekhtel's next two major buildings came Glasgow, and they bear the marks of it. The vast *eau-de-nil*-tiled mansion for Alexandra Derozhinskaia of 1901 was the latest thing in comfort and technical convenience, but absolutely medieval in its volumetric composition around the twelve-metre cube of its two-storied, panelled central 'hall'. It was the gift of a less prominent textile magnate, Ivan Butikov, to his daughter as she married the Managing Director of his company, Vladimir Derozhinskii, and in common with their class they chose a site convenient to their work: Butovskii's plant was located in nearby Pervyi Ushakovskii Lane.¹¹⁵ Here more than in any other house a single theme runs through the decorative detailing, from the garden railings to fabric designs inside (specially made perhaps by Ivan Butovskii & Co.). Complexity reduces with increasing privacy until bedrooms and bathrooms are utterly European in their simplicity.¹¹⁶ That same simplicity, but with even more Scottish character in its geometrical furniture, screens and fittings, ran through the office interiors of Shekhtel's large business complex of that year for the Moscow Insurance Company.

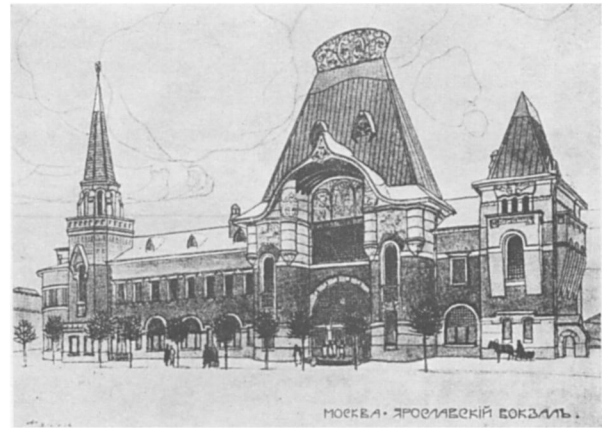
In 1902 the North Russian architecture which inspired the Glasgow pavilions became the basis for an evocative 'gateway to the North' in Shekhtel's reconstruction of the Moscow terminus for Savva Mamontov's Iaroslavl and Archangel railway. His interiors here, much praised by railway managers for their economy, were like Otto Wagner at his simplest, but heightened in mood by vast murals of expansive North Russian landscapes and wildlife commissioned from the Abramstevo painter and theatre designer Konstantin Korovin. Cool polychrome tiling on the exteriors came from the same workshops, just up the line. Here, even more than in Glasgow, was a piece of 'architecture as advertising', for in this case the audience unequivocally understood the references to destinations lying beyond.

If the station's purpose was to excite and divert the Moscovite spectator's senses, Shekhtel's other work of that year — also a conversion — was conceived to calm and focus them. The new theatrical realism launched by that scion of the Alekseev dynasty, Stanislavsky, was proving highly successful with Moscow audiences sated with the current sugary superficialities elsewhere. In 1898 Chekhov's difficult new play *The Seagull* had been a prestigious and important success for Stanislavsky's company where its Petersburg première had fallen flat. By chance Savva Morozov had attended an earlier production in their rented theatre and had been greatly attracted by Stanislavsky's theatrical style and aspirations.

Morozov loved playing with electricity, and he soon took over not only financial responsibility for the company, but also the lighting arrangements. Stanislavsky later described his contribution:

He spent the summer in Moscow, . . . and as soon as his family left for the country he converted the parlour of his house into a laboratory for his scenic experiments, and various methods of electrical lighting were tried out there before we introduced them into the theatre. The mansion's great bathroom was turned into a chemistry lab in which we prepared lacquers of various tones and colours for painting electric light bulbs and glass, so that more artistic stage lighting could be achieved.¹¹⁷

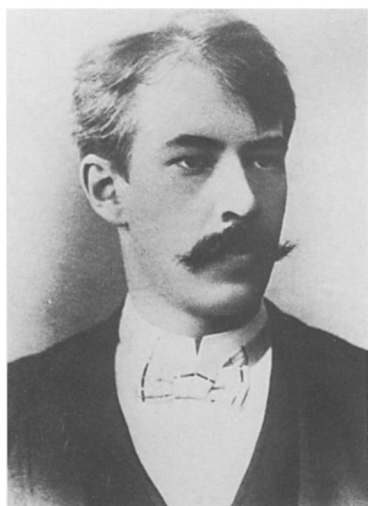
When a lot of space was needed, 'trials of all sorts' would be made 'in the large garden'. 'Dressed in working clothes,' Morozov 'laboured alongside the electricians and tradesmen, astounding the specialists with his knowledge of electricity'. Once a production had opened, he would 'keep in touch with the theatre by telephone' regardless of business commitments. On one occa-



Original drawing by Shekhtel; detail of facade showing polychrome and relief tile work from Abramtsevo workshops; main entrance; and detail of main entrance.



*Anton Chekhov posed with members of the Moscow Arts Theatre company as if in an author's play-reading, with Stanislavsky, also seated, looking over his right shoulder. This photograph was taken in 1898, the year of the famous production of Chekhov's *The Seagull*.*



Constantin Stanislavsky (Alekseev), founder-director of the Moscow Arts Theatre, in 1900.



Shekhtel's logo for the Moscow Arts Theatre, using a seagull motif, an evocation of their reputation-making production which was his own idea. The motif and typography are still used by the Theatre.

sion an enforced change of programme demanded improvisation of sets and, as Stanislavsky recalled, 'It was touching to see him, the president of countless banks, institutions and companies, with an extraordinary position in the commercial world, carrying furniture and climbing ladders to hang draperies and pictures, in the guise of a simple stage-hand.'¹¹⁸ Then, 'when the question of finding another building could no longer be delayed', Morozov 'undertook to settle it in his own . . . broad and generous way'.¹¹⁹

One Soviet source states that Shekhtel had been a member of Stanislavsky's Theatrical Society since 1899; others do not mention this.¹²⁰ But when Morozov decided to buy them a theatre of their own and fund its conversion to accord with Stanislavsky's conception, Shekhtel was the obvious architect.

Stanislavsky's archives contain a letter of 9 December 1901 from the builders, the Moscow Industrial and Construction Company, to say that drawings for converting the old Lianozovskii Theatre just off today's Gorki Street had been modified in response to comments by Stanislavsky, and awaited discussion by himself and Morozov.¹²¹ Chekhov was down in Yalta convalescing from illness, but his wife, the actress Olga Knipper, wrote to him on 1 January 1902 that all the talk at the Moscow Arts Theatre Company's New Year's Eve party the night before had been of their new theatre and the wonderful internal arrangements proposed.¹²² The building had to be ready for the opening of their next season, and in late May Stanislavsky was on site daily, supervising technicalities of a new revolving stage 'which at that time was rare, even abroad'.¹²³

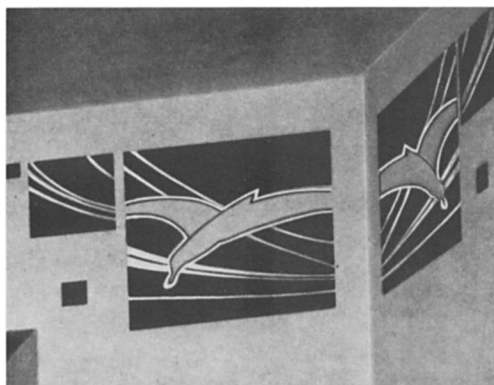
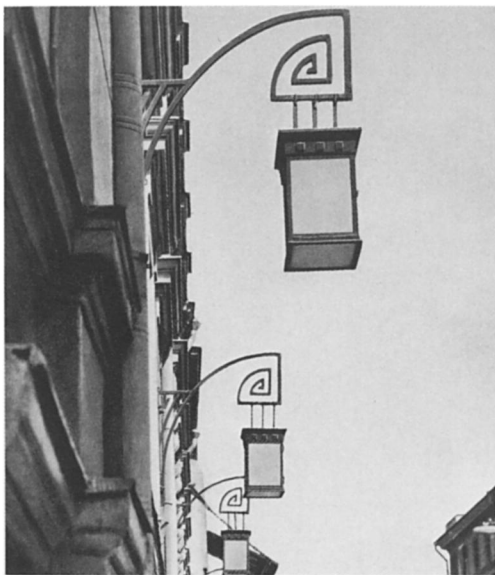
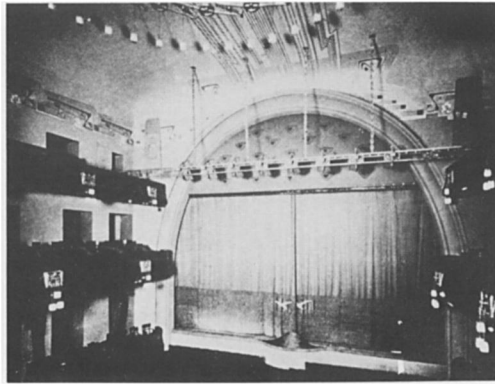
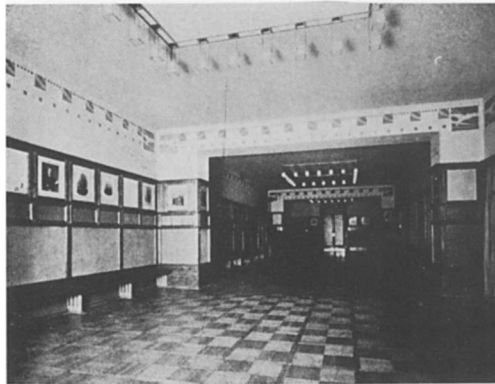
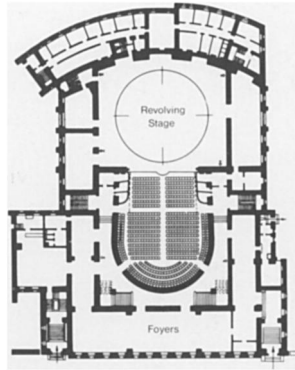
The whole thing was a collaborative project. Savva Morozov forewent a much needed holiday 'in the woods and fields of his numerous country estates', and 'for the whole summer he lived in a small room near the theatre office, in the midst of noise, dust and cares . . . in order to oversee the work', which was costing him 300,000 rubles.¹²⁴ Shekhtel did the design job without fee, often drawing on site one step ahead of the builders, and inscribing the final decorative motifs directly onto plaster for the painters.

In this case, the 'idea' of the building existed already in the clearly formulated priorities, both aesthetic and functional, of Stanislavsky and his collaborator Nemirovich-Danchenko. No longer was 'three-quarters of the theatre given over to the comforts of spectators' and 'only a quarter to the people who work in it' as in every traditional theatre building. No longer would 'such dust be created at the raising of the curtain . . . that the majority of prompters end up with TB', nor would 'actors have to rehearse in overcoats . . . breathing frozen air'.¹²⁵ No longer would the building compete with the play for attention. As Stanislavsky wrote of their earlier experiments,

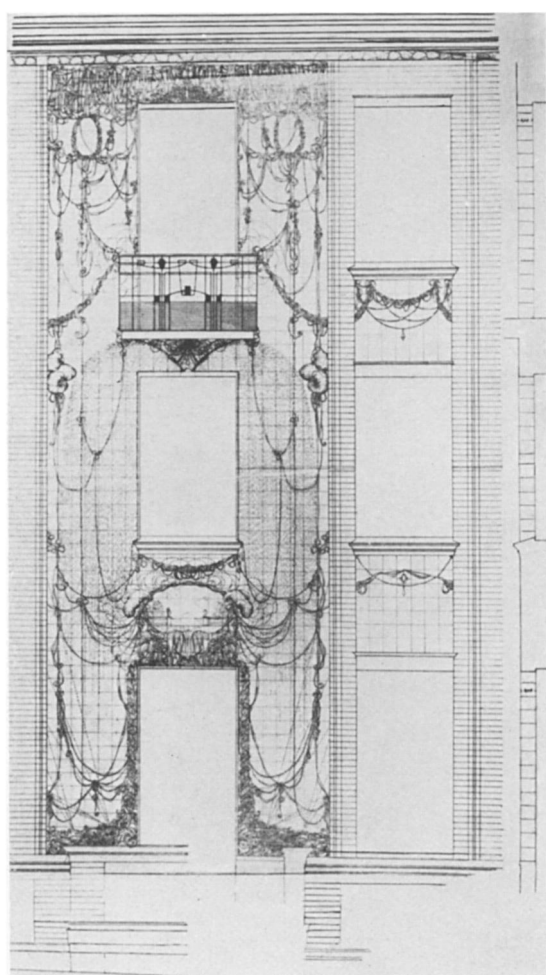
In our destructive and revolutionary aims, in order to rejuvenate the art, we declared war on all the conventionalities of the theatre wherever they might occur — in the acting, in the properties, in the scenery, the costumes, the interpretation of the play, the curtain or anywhere else in the play or the theatre. All that was new and that violated the usual customs of the theatre seemed beautiful and useful to us.¹²⁶

In place of the conventionally ornate backdrop for a social occasion, Shekhtel produced an 'extraordinary simplicity'¹²⁷ that builds up through entrance and foyers, in a co-ordinated scheme of neutral colour and details, to a highly charged climax of curtain and proscenium: 'A high wooden panel with cloth in frames; above the panel portraits of great writers, poets, actors and artists; along the panel wooden benches with cushions, white walls with a slightly darker border — that was the foyer, simple, modest, without one spot of colour.' And again in Stanislavsky's description:

MOSCOW ARTS THEATRE, 1902



Plan at street level; period photograph of entrance foyer; period photograph of view towards proscenium, with seagull motif on curtains; Shekhtel's lamp fittings for the street elevation, which was never completed to his designs; The Wave over the porch by A.S. Golubkina; door handles; seagull motif applied in the banded wall decoration around the theatre foyer.



The east corner, with north-facing studios for professors of painting on the top floor and a stair in the corner below; corner, showing majolica decorative panels; and drawing by Shekhtel of the decorative panels on the south elevation.

The auditorium was finished in seasoned oak, and the balustrades of the boxes and balconies, the furniture, the doors, the embrasures and panels were made of the same wood. The walls here were also white, with hardly noticeable borders, without any bright spots or gilding. All the other rooms for the use of the audience were finished in the same style. This was done in order not to tire those sitting in the auditorium and to limit all colour effects to the stage.¹²⁸

Linear patterning that focuses the eye on the stage has a charged quality that evokes the artifice of lighting — and Morozov's love of electricity as its medium. Amidst simple linear 'borders' elsewhere, the only decorative motifs, all in grey, were a geometrized wave, which appeared more realistically in Anna Golubkina's relief over the main entrance, and the stylized Chekhovian seagull which Shekhtel designed, and is retained, as the theatre's emblem.

This extensive use of white, the rectilinear gridded patterns and the highly geometricized fittings certainly bore the influence of his European and Scottish contemporaries. In December 1902, very soon after the theatre opened, and on Petrovka Street nearby, the work and particularly furniture of Mackintosh, Olbrich and others went on display to Moscovites for two months alongside items by Shekhtel himself, Walcot, Fomin, Korovin and other 'modern' Russians. This was the *Exhibition of Architecture and Design of the New Style* which Shekhtel himself had largely initiated.¹²⁹ That August Chekhov had resigned from the Academy, despite its valuable privileges of free speech, because the government had blackballed the election of Maxim Gorki.¹³⁰ Ironically enough, he was telegraphing Shekhtel two months later, on 30 October, with 'Heartfelt congratulations my dearest academician', as he was honoured for the success of Glasgow.¹³¹ The Glasgow Institute of Architects and the RIBA had already made him an honorary member.¹³²

It was also in 1902 that the Riabushinskiis founded a bank. Riabushinskii Brothers was the creation of Stepan's two older brothers Pavel and Vladimir, aged thirty-one and twenty-nine, who were already beginning to get a name in Moscow politics as leaders of the bourgeois-industrial cause in their generation. In another conversion job the following year Shekhtel gave an ultra-modern air to their new headquarters. His face-lift to an old building of load-bearing walls in the central business district created the most unadorned image yet in Moscow of a framed building. Quite small, and now much altered, its simple piers of white glazed brick were the starting point for his next, more truthful Riabushinskii headquarters. Before that, however, the Stroganov School of Art, where he taught, commissioned a housing complex for professors and others to fill a whole block on the present Kirov Street. Yet again Shekhtel produced a complete re-assessment of the established type.

The result was the most advanced piece of middle-class housing in Russia at this date. It uniquely exemplified Apyshkov's 'radical bases of the latest architecture', that it start from 'satisfying the material needs of civilized people'; that 'the internal fitting and planning of accommodation take account of the growing requirement for hygiene and cleanliness';¹³³ and that it be a clear expression of structure. The four upper floors contained four- to seven-roomed apartments of exceptional convenience, a major innovation of the whole plan being dual staircases giving 'front' and 'back' doors to each apartment. On the north face several apartments for Stroganov professors had large studios. The complex contained its own boiler house, electricity generation, coach-house and stables, laundry, basement storage rooms and dispensary. Other shopping and office accommodation was incorporated at street level on the outside. This commercial ground floor

was a concrete-framed platform on which rose the domestic structure of brick. As ever, Shekhtel 'applied materials and forms to which dust, soot and dirt of all kinds will not adhere'.¹³⁴ The sleek exterior mixed matt-glazed grey-brown brick with cream stone spandrels, and panels of flowing, Olbrich-like tile-work in pinkish cream and blue. Colour and decoration made a gentle and sensitive domesticity out of highly economical land use and internal planning.

Revolution and the optimism of commerce

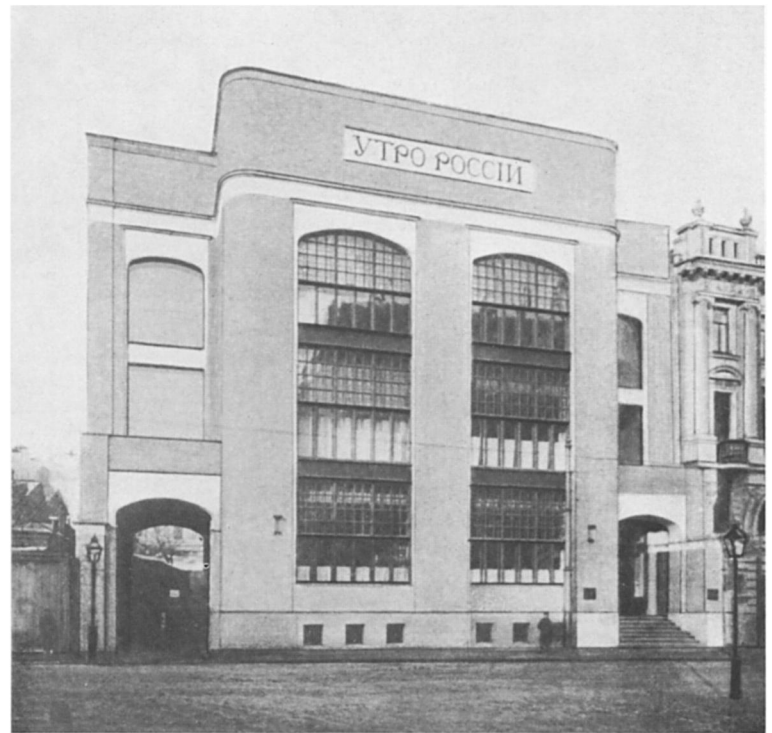
Apart from small jobs, this building occupied Shekhtel right through to 1907. Intervening, of course, was the 1905 Revolution, whose street fighting and political restructurings were a disruption that left Shekhtel's circle of clients and friends far more sanguine, and more powerful. They had achieved a *de facto* recognition of their role, and representation in an elected parliament. Even more than before could Shekhtel's architecture be the confident spearhead — in Apyshkov's words at this time — of 'a movement whose force lies not in the subjective opinions of individuals, but in a profound and robust connection with our culture, with our technology and with the best democratic aspirations of our age'.¹³⁵

For Shekhtel's personal circle there were other upheavals. After years of illness his intimate friend since youth Anton Chekhov died in 1904. Gorki describes a quiet cup of coffee with Savva Morozov in his garden after the funeral.¹³⁶ Within a year Morozov himself was dead. He had been ousted from chairmanship of the industrial empire by his fierce mother in protest at his support of the industrial proletariat's cause; he went to Nice, and shot himself. His widow buried him in Moscow and sold her great house to the fifth Riabushinskii brother, banker and modern art collector Mikhail. His Picassos must have looked startling in that environment. The new mistress of the house, who would receive Matisse in 1911, was a ballet dancer.

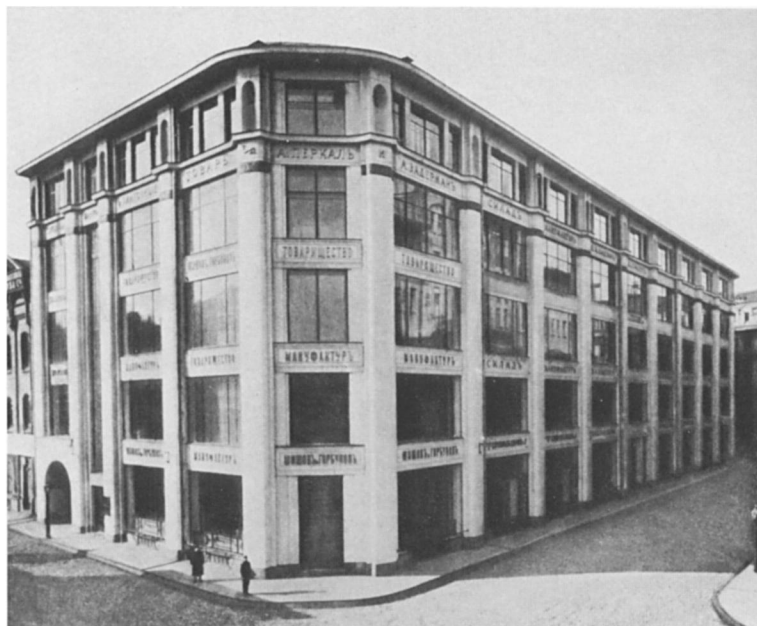
As the mouthpiece of their increasingly powerful politics, Mikhail's two eldest brothers formed a newspaper called, literally, *Morning of Russia (Utro Rossii)*. In the post-1905 climate both Pavel and Vladimir moved increasingly to the central political stage in Moscow. Still only thirty-five, Pavel had headed the family empire since their father's death six years earlier. He was now a central figure of the *haute-bourgeois* apparatus in Moscow that was the commercial barons' chief instrument against the rural-oriented autocracy. Such was the incestuous house-moving of these circles that he now lived in the Gogol Boulevard house which Kaminskii had converted from Classicism to Russianism for his brother-in-law Sergei Tret'iakov, in 1871-5, the latter having died in 1892. The Moscow Stock Exchange where Pavel Riabushinskii was so prominent had been another of Kaminskii's reconstruction jobs at that time, and stood within yards of the Riabushinskii Brothers' new bank. He became Chairman of the powerful Society of Factory Owners and Industrialists. He was an initiator, in 1905, of the Octobrists Party, later the Progressists, and an increasingly central spokesman for these Moscow interests right through to their final negotiations with Alexander Kerensky as the 1917 Revolution broke. Buryshkin has described their joint activities through this period.¹³⁷ *Utro Rossii* was the fearless mouthpiece for all this. Pavel Riabushinskii was quite prepared to attack the Government vehemently — and to suffer the paper's being banned for it, as happened for a period in 1911.

Shekhtel provided a headquarters building that was equally uncompromising. In their obvious functionality and direct handling of materials, even the editorial offices on the boulevard itself were redolent of the industrial power for which the paper spoke. (The printing shop, even simpler, ran behind.) The proportional

UTRO ROSSII PRINTING HOUSE, 1907



View from the boulevard showing the original appearance of the entrance and editorial offices for Pavel Riabushinskii's outspoken newspaper *Utro Rossii*; and detail of facade.



Period photograph from what is now Dzerzhinskii Square showing the names of component firms on the spandrels. The rounded arch at the lower left leads into the service and goods yard inside the U-shaped plan. The whole building and yard sits on a basement of warehousing. Below is a detail of the top floor.

system based on the square and diagonal was that which Shekhtel had developed from medieval Russian systems. At the same time the verticality of the main piers, the softly arched window heads and the horizontal banding of storey heights maintained a good-mannered relationship to the surrounding townscape of pretentious, late-nineteenth-century Classicism. The elevational materials were a light-brown glazed brick and warm cream stone with the exposed steelwork of spandrels and glazing painted dark brown. Here, even more than previously, the extreme smoothness and streamlined corners speak of anti-autocratic modernity; they also tempt one to imagine Shekhtel chatting to young Dmitri Riabushinskii about aerodynamics.

Shekhtel's most advanced and elegant commercial building followed two years later, in 1909. The underlying concept was one which was becoming increasingly common in Moscow: a trading centre combining office, showrooms and warehousing for several (often changing) companies. The idea originated with the medieval *podvorye*. As to who was behind his corporate client, The Moscow Trading Company, we can only adduce the names on the building's 'signboards'. One contemporary photograph shows several spandrels labelled 'The A. V. Buryshkin Company'. This was the family firm of which Pavel A. Buryshkin, chronicler of the Moscow merchantry, was the second generation. And Pavel Buryshkin, as already mentioned, was a close friend and colleague of Pavel Riabushinskii throughout his decade of political involvement and journalism. Buryshkin later recalled many editorial meetings in the *Utro Rossii* building, and 'an endless quantity' of others on economic, scientific and industrial problems in Riabushinskii's house further round the boulevard.¹³⁸ This commission too, therefore, may have come through the Riabushinskii connection.

Perhaps most directly of all Shekhtel's buildings, the Moscow Trading Company fulfilled the injunction which Apyshkov had quoted four years before from Otto Wagner, and had identified equally with the work of Hoffman, Olbrich and Saarinen, that 'the only proper starting-point for our artistic work is contemporary reality'.¹³⁹ Like modernism world-wide, it 'found its inspiration in the newly arising forms and techniques of construction'. It pursued those historic qualities of 'architectural truth' and 'constructiveness of forms' which result from 'aesthetically perfecting the form that satisfies the functional purpose, so as to underline that function or give the whole a more refined delineation'. Inside and out, Shekhtel had 'discarded everything superfluous' whilst at the same time 'expressing the underlying spirit of the subject matter'. The internal structure was a frame of iron, the material which Apyshkov's mentor Krasovski had seen sixty years before as 'destined to effect a revolution in architectural forms . . . and establish a new style'.¹⁴⁰ As elsewhere Shekhtel mixed internal iron with a reinforced-concrete frame for the exterior, and this surface was now just a transparent screen without elements of 'wall' remaining. It made sophisticated and delicate architecture out of Apyshkov's earlier observation that commerce's main requirement now, on its interface with the outside world, was 'places for signboards . . . and daylight'. 'Refining' and 'delineation' of forms in that exterior frame had transformed static vertical and horizontal members into a live, pulsating surface. The rippling piers were faced in off-white, matt-glazed tile. The spandrels and the top, 'cornice' floor of offices were matt and cream-coloured. The plate glass which filled all three elevations was a slightly reflective aquamarine blue. The slender window frames were bronze. More than any other commercial building in Russia it expressed these men's vision of commerce as a civilized, cultured, life-enhancing activity, and as something that could offer Russia a revolutionary new path forward.

Their world evaporates

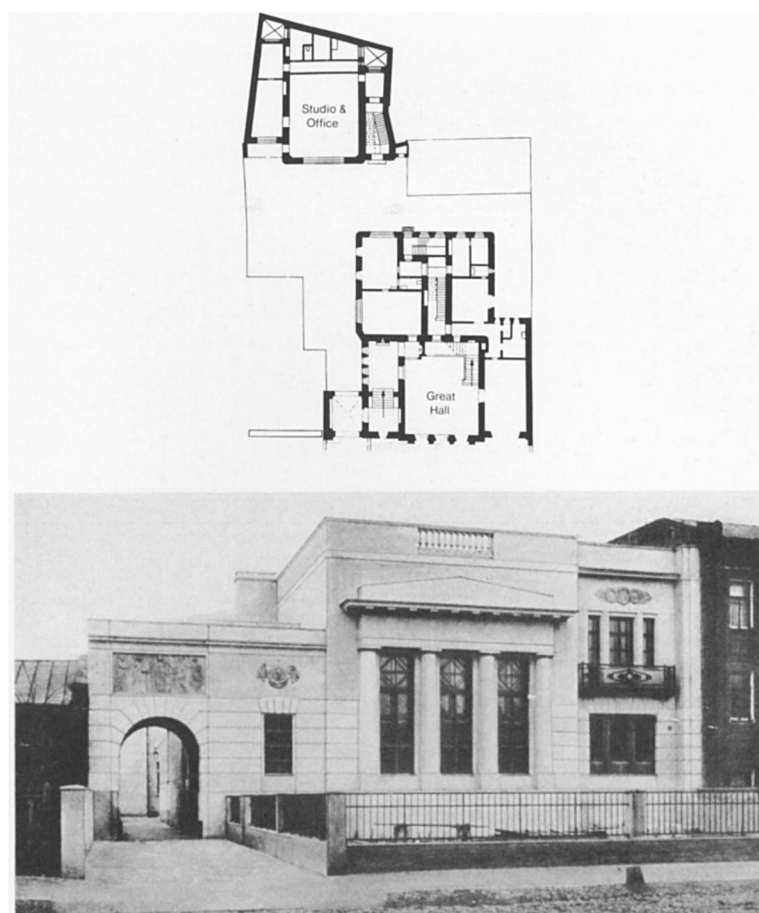
As the events of 1905 receded, so did the accompanying optimism. The predominance of Germanic names amongst Apyshkov's models of 'where Russia must follow' has relevance to the demise of this modernism in Shekhtel's further work. From this point on, historical reference points returned to his architecture. If he did in fact have German origins on his father's side, they made him perhaps more quickly sensitive than others to the anti-German atmosphere which was developing with the approach of 1914. Certainly others followed his lead in producing structurally honest, undecorated commercial buildings in the next two or three years, though none were so elegant.¹⁴¹ But for all the subtle synthesis of Russian themes in Shekhtel's work, the *moderne* as a whole came to have undesirably foreign, if not explicitly German, connotations. (Historically, the two words had been identical in Russia.) This cause of the *moderne*'s demise has been discussed by Kirichenko, and she is certainly right.¹⁴²

The Classicism that formed most of Russia's urban fabric now acquired a newly nationalistic label. For several years after 1910 there flourished in Moscow a very interesting trend in which the free-form, functional plans and rich spatial effects of the *moderne* were clothed in an equally free, generally Doric Classicism. Ever in the vanguard, Shekhtel was already producing one of the very first and best examples of this new synthesis in the same year as the Moscow Trading Company building, in his own second house and studio on Moscow's outer 'garden' ring-road. His building for the public library donated by Chekhov to his native Taganrog, in 1910, was stylistically similar. Meanwhile, large complexes like the newly-published State Bank scheme in Nizhni-Novgorod of that year, or the County Museum of 1914, were emerging in a streamlined and at times somewhat overblown Russianism, eclectically derived from Russia's earliest and simplest stone churches and monasteries.¹⁴³

In Shekhtel's hand this was a lively and friendly architecture, 'democratic' in its informality and functionality. But these buildings were addressed to a public outside his experience. His earlier clients had donated vast public complexes of medical, educational and charitable institutions to Moscow, but this was conspicuously not work for which the Morozovs, for example, used Shekhtel. Shekhtel was the architect of their personal identities, who presented them to themselves and the world through the images of their unique homes. They grasped that it was his talent to project their conception of a bourgeois-industrial Russia, and a corresponding culture, through the medium of architecture. The theatre was never a useful training ground for hospital designers. The architecture schools produced plenty of those.

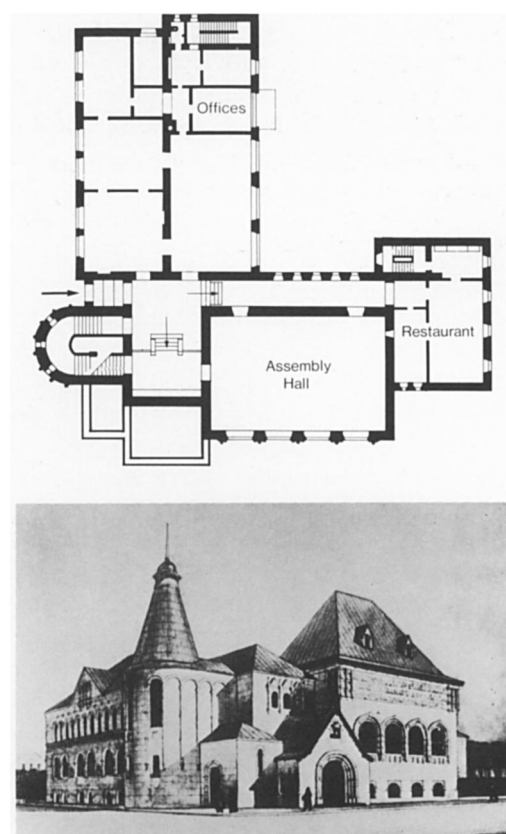
The uncertainty of these later buildings was prescient of the way Shekhtel's work floundered — as indeed did most — in the early years after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The fervid building activity of immediately pre-war years had been a speculative boom in mass apartment housing, but for Shekhtel those were increasingly years of a leading administrative role in the Moscow profession. The change was mirrored at successive Congresses of Russian Architects. During the first three, in 1892, 1895 and 1900, his superb drawings and water-colours featured with those of Kekushev, Fomin and others in the accompanying exhibitions. In 1908 he became President of the Moscow Architectural Society (MAO) and *ex officio* doyen of the Moscow profession. Three years later he attended the fourth Congress in his official capacity and merely chaired two sessions of the section on 'aesthetic questions'.¹⁴⁴ When the last Congress of 1913 came to Moscow he was naturally its Chairman. Behind the formalities, however, he was still the ball of energy whose youthful catch-phrase had once

SHEKHTEL'S OWN HOUSE, 1909



Ground-floor plan and period photograph.

COUNTY MUSEUM, NIZHNI NOVGOROD, 1914



Plan of main (first-floor) level and perspective drawing by Shekhtel.

been 'No problem!'. The later Jubilee history of MAO recorded appreciatively that he had 'allowed neither material difficulties . . . nor organizational complications to stop him' in finally realizing MAO's long-held idea of courses for building foremen; in financing and supervising a new headquarters; in launching a new annual publication of projects and buildings. In the War his wife led families of members in organizing a lazaret for wounded soldiers and other social work.¹⁴⁵

From this position he became chairman of two major committees for the new state apparatus for centralizing and reorganizing building activity after the Revolution.¹⁴⁶ Neither here nor on early competition juries — like that for the Palace of Labour in 1922-3 — could his influence be great when all building was at a standstill and cheapness, not craftsmanship, was the new priority. In 1922 he handed over MAO to the younger Shchusev. He did projects, and continued to teach.

In 1918, the Stroganov School where he taught, and the Moscow College where he had once studied, were reorganized into Free Studios that would later become the pluralist and multifaculty art and design school VKhUTEMAS. When the Stroganov's Architecture Faculty reopened on 15 April 1919 it became the Architecture Department of the First State Free Artistic Studios, and Shekhtel's lecture that day, as President of MAO, is the only document approaching an artistic credo remaining.¹⁴⁷

It is a statement that hovers strangely between two worlds: the world now dead, or lying in ruins all around them, and the new but unproven, both in their different ways, in the continuous work of creative people, trying to find some basis for a synthesis of the arts. Shekhtel talks history, and reminisces. His view of the nature of architecture, and the role of the arts within it, are very briefly stated, but indicate the extent to which there would be continuity between his concerns and those of the next, 'VKhUTEMAS', generation, underneath the change of social content.

The Chekhovian reference in his title must surely have been intentional: 'A Tale of Three Sisters: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture'. *Three Sisters*, written in 1900, was Anton Chekhov's most complex play and also, in Donald Rayfield's words, 'his most direct and emotional treatment of life'. It was specially created for Stanislavsky's Moscow Arts Company in close consultation with him, and gave that theatre 'an ascendancy it still has not lost'.¹⁴⁸ When many had already left Russia, however, Stanislavsky was persevering, if a little bewildered, with 'an audience which we did not know how to approach (*and which*) did not know how to approach us', consisting 'of soldiers, of deputies from all ends of Russia, of children and young people, and last, of working-men and peasants'.¹⁴⁹ The new population of the art and architecture schools was similar.

In this year of growing Civil War, of agitational propaganda, of Vladimir Tatlin's Tower, Shekhtel spoke to these students of a tale that was 'magical . . . eternally captivating', 'in which music, poetry and the other muses equally participate'. With an academic precision hardly suiting these disrupted days, he surveyed 'the close interdependence of these plastic arts' throughout world architecture, and painting's role within medieval Russian architecture. On that precedent he had brought Vrubel and Borisov-Musatov to paint murals in the mansions of the Morozovs and Derozhinskaia. He recalled 'with pleasurable satisfaction' how an earlier generation 'of Stroganov students who had been my pupils . . . collaborated on murals in my pavilions for Russia at the Glasgow International Exhibition in England (*sic!*)'; how 'the beauty of this great wall-painting was acclaimed by the normally stern British'; how 'the whole Section

was erected . . . by a team of 200 Russian workers whom I led by sea to England'.

This romance was tempered by echoes of the sterner ethos he had shared with his Old Believer clients before the War: 'The only stimuli that are totally compelling in our life are work, love and art. In them is all life's meaning. Without them we would not know what the Creator made us for. It is only thanks to them that we find in ourselves the strength to bear all the sorrows and privations of our existence.'¹⁵⁰ The extraordinary fecundity of the burgeoning avant-garde was already showing that this became truer as privations increased. Lubetkin's memoirs have pointed up this relationship with a telling precision.¹⁵¹

In Shekhtel's closing statement on the proper basis of architectural form there was much with which the post-Revolutionary modernists would have agreed, and agreed with the earlier theoretician Apyshkov:

Each architectural object must have as its basis its main task, which is the delimitation by walls of a certain set of spatial accommodation . . . that must answer the building's direct function. This internal content must manifestly shape, and be expressed in, the exterior and internal look of the buildings. True perception of the accommodation's spatial properties depends upon the *form* and *colour* of surfaces delimiting it.¹⁵²

The new modernists would have agreed that these two sensual 'stimulae', form and colour, were architecture's 'main canon and cornerstone'. On form, as on what Shekhtel called the 'optically correcting . . . utilitarian side of polychrome', they were to spend much time researching new, scientific principles. Allowed their own redefinitions, they might even have agreed that 'the purpose of painting and murals, whatever their content, and of sculpture, is to elevate the artistic significance of the building in accordance with its function', whatever that may happen to be, and that these 'three sisters' must 'accord equal importance to the creators of furniture, ceramics, bronze objects, stained glass and all other branches of applied arts'. These Free Studios, like the later VKhUTEMAS, were premised upon that integrated approach.

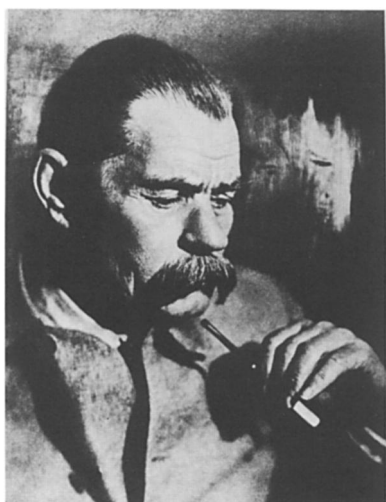
In certain circumstances they would have agreed that 'This relationship of architecture, painting and sculpture as a totality must put the viewer into that *mood* which suits the building's purpose', even that this totality had the task of 'raising the (*muscle-*) tone (*povysit' tonus*) of our life'. What the Constructivists, above all, would never endorse was Shekhtel's statement that it was the central task of these media 'to beautify our existence, to give delight to our eyes'. Already that year their initiators had been writing manifestos declaring 'Death!' to such self-serving views of the artistic task.

Krasovskii, who stood unacknowledged behind both generations, had said, 'It is art's purpose to be a mirror of the contemporaneity that surrounds it' and that contemporaneity had gone through a revolution. Shekhtel's architecture had used diverse technical and stylistic means, but the creation of 'mood', in both user and spectator, had plainly been its constant aspiration, and something for which theatrical work had equipped him ideally.

When Shekhtel died after a long illness, on 26 June 1926, his buildings were being derided as 'the expression of purely personal habits and tastes', not lauded for pioneering the free spatial organization and the balanced use of new techniques and materials which are their conspicuous features today. Eighteen months after Shekhtel's 'Three Sisters' lecture, the thirty-five-year-old Tatlin was issuing a statement in Moscow to explain his tower's role in creating a new synthesis of 'the artistic' with 'the utilitarian'. Before the Revolution, he proclaimed, 'every connection between painting, sculpture and architecture had been lost'. It was Shekhtel's work which he cited (though without

naming him) as the best of the bad: 'Artists, in their approach to materials, degraded them by distortion into the forms of some branch or other of plastic art. In the best event, artists decorated the walls of private houses, i.e. of individual nests. They left behind a succession of "Iaroslavl Stations" and a diversity of forms that now seem ridiculous.'¹⁵³ Tatlin, of course, was not an architect, but the comment is ironic, for it was Shekhtel *par excellence* who had established precedents in free, functional planning and controlled uses of technology for the architects who followed Tatlin into Constructivism.

In 1931, five years after Shekhtel's death, those leading Constructivists the Vesnin brothers, who had been rising young stars of the profession over which Shekhtel presided before the War, were applying these same principles to designing their largest built complex: a vast Palace of Culture for employees of Russia's oldest car factory, the AMO, later ZIL, plant in south-east Moscow. On the eve of the Revolution, in 1916, that factory had been the last new venture of Pavel Riabushinskii, as Head of the Wartime Military and Industrial Committee for Moscow, and his brother Vladimir. For that dynasty it was their former hobby that provided their livelihood now. When Kerensky's Provisional Government collapsed to the Bolsheviks in October 1917, they had fled to Europe, and had founded a new business upon their unique collective expertise in icons.¹⁵⁴ Construction of the extensive ZIL culture-complex lasted from 1931 to 1936. During exactly this period, that champion and pioneer of the new cultural values Maxim Gorki spent his last years living in Shekhtel's masterpiece for their brother Stepan, within a stone's throw of the great Gothic house from which Savva Morozov had funded so much of the revolutionary agitation which eventually placed him there. To any adherent of early modernism in Russian architecture, Gorki must thus be the individual who was most richly rewarded by the Revolution. He must have been the last man to occupy a Shekhtel mansion as his private house.



Maxim Gorki in 1928 (photograph by M. Nappelbaum).

Notes

1. 'The Russian pavilions at the Glasgow Exhibition, *The Builder* (14 September 1901), pp.230-231.
2. 'Glasgow International Exhibition: Part one', *The Studio* (June 1901), pp.44-48.
3. A. McGibbon, 'The Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901', *The Art Journal* (1901), pp.219-222.
4. Alexander M'Gibbon, 'The Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901', *The Art Journal* (1901), pp.129-132; Lewis F. Day, 'Decorative and Industrial Art at the Glasgow Exhibition; Fourth Notice', *The Art Journal* (1901), pp.299-302.
5. 'The artistic side of the Glasgow International Exhibition: Part one', *Architectural Review* vol.9 (1901), pp.242-254.
6. 'The artistic side: Part one', p.248; *ibid.*, 'Part two', vol.10 (1901), pp.43-52.
7. 'The artistic side: Part one', p.248.
8. McGibbon, 'The Glasgow International Exhibition', p.220.
9. 'The artistic side: Part one', p.248.
10. 'The Russian pavilions', p.231.
11. 'The artistic side: Part one', p.249.
12. 'The Russian pavilions', pp.230-1.
13. 'Glasgow International Exhibition: Part one', p.45.
14. For Mackintosh's competition entry see: *Mackintosh Architecture*, ed. J. Cooper (London, 1978), pp.87-88.
15. 'The artistic side: Part one', p.249.
16. Sources on the colour schemes are the above articles in: *The Studio*, p.46; *The Builder*, p.230, and *The Art Journal*, p.221.
17. Netta Peacock, 'The New Movement in Russian Decorative Art', *The Studio* vol.XXII (1901), pp.268-276.
18. E.I. Stolbova, 'Angliiskoe iskusstvo na vystavkakh v Rossii na rubezhe XIX-XX vekov', in *Sovetskoe Iskusstvoznanie, 1981-1* (1982), pp.256-265.
19. Stolbova, 'Angliiskoe iskusstvo', p.261. On the exhibition, which ran through December 1902 — January 1903, see: N. Filianskii, 'Po povodu moskovskoi vystavki "Arkhitktura i khudozhestvennaia promyshlennost novogo stilii"', *Zodchii* no.9 (1903), pp.113-118.
20. E.I. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel* (Moscow, 1973), pp.61-62, quoting material in the state archives TsGALI.
21. Lindsey Hughes, 'Russia's first architectural books: a chapter in Peter the Great's cultural revolution', *Architectural Design* no.5/6 (1983), pp.4-13.
22. See: Catherine Cooke, 'Russian perspectives' (on Viollet-le-Duc), *Architectural Design* no.3/4 (1980), pp.60-63.
23. P.A. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia* (New York, 1954).
24. These are illustrated respectively in: E.A. Borisova, *Russkaia arkhitektura vtoroi poloviny XIX veka* (Moscow, 1979), p.155, and in: E.I. Kirichenko, *Russkaia arkhitektura 1830-1910-x godov* (Moscow, 1978), p.141.
25. The buildings are illustrated in: *Moskva-Parizh 1900-1930* (catalogue, Moscow, 1981), vol.I, p.87. The architects are named in Kirichenko, *Russkaia arkhitektura*, p.331.
26. Day, 'Decorative and Industrial Art', p.302.
27. *Ibid.*
28. I.S. Kitner, discussions on the lecture of K.M. Bykovskii at the 1st Congress of Russian Architects, 1892, in: *Trudy I siezda russkikh zodchikh* (St Petersburg, 1894), pp.3-14.
29. A.K. Krasovski, *Grazhdanskaia arkhitektura* (St Petersburg, 1851), p.5.
30. *Ibid.*, p.29.
31. *Ibid.*, p.31.
32. V. Apyskhov, *Ratsional'noe v noveishei arkhitekture* (St Petersburg, 1905), p.11.
33. *Ibid.*, pp.63, 64.
34. *Ibid.*, pp.59, 55, 63.
35. *Ibid.*, p.65.
36. *Ibid.*, pp.51-52.
37. *Ibid.*, pp.53-54.
38. For Kekushev's buildings of this period see: Catherine Cooke, 'Moscow map guide 1900-1930', *Architectural Design* no.5/6 (1983), pp.81-96.
39. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*; E.I. Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel (1859-1926)', in: *Zodchie Moskvy XV-XIX vv* vol.I (Moscow, 1981), pp.276-287.
40. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*.
41. Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel', p.276.
42. *Ibid.*, p.277.
43. M.P. Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1933), p.246.
44. Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel', p.277.
45. V.R. Leikina-Svirskaiia, *Russkaia intelligentsiia v 1900-1917 godakh* (Moscow, 1981), p.154.
46. M.P. Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova*, p.247.

47. This is illustrated in: Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.8.
48. M.P. Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova*, p.247.
49. Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel', p.277.
50. On Shekhtel's period with Kaminskii see *ibid.*, p.277. On the Tret'iakov family, see: Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, pp.134-138. The following album, which has been widely available in the West, contains fine photographs of Kaminskii work: E. Kirichenko, *Moscow. Architectural Monuments of the 1830s — 1910s* (Moscow, 1977; bilingual), viz.: Plates 22-23, The Tret'iakov Passage of 1870-1; Plate 36, Sergei M. Tret'iakov's house on Gogol Boulevard of 1871-5. It also includes his Stock Exchange reconstruction of 1873-5, and his house for V.D. Konshin.
51. M.P. Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova*, p.247; Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel', p.278; Constantin Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art* (London, 1924), pp.118-119.
52. Donald Rayfield, *Chekhov. The evolution of his art* (London, 1975), p.17.
53. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem A.P. Chekhova v 30-i tomakh*, ed. N.F. Belchikov (Moscow, 1974-82), vol.1, p.571.
54. M.P. Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova*, p.247; Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel', p.278.
55. Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie*, contains in total 42 letters from Chekhov to Shekhtel covering the years 1886-1900; *ibid.*, vol.1, p.571, records the existence in state archives of 71 letters from Shekhtel to Chekhov, covering the years 1886-1902.
56. Letter of 8 or 9 February 1886, in: Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie*, vol.1, p.195. The cover is reproduced in: A. Roskin, *Chekhov* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1939), p.127 and other sources.
57. Letter of 11 or 12 March 1887, in: Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie* vol.2, pp.37-38.
58. Letter of 11 April 1887 in: *ibid.*, vol.2, pp.66-67.
59. Illustrated in Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.9.
60. Letter of 17 March 1887 in: Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie* vol.2, p.41; Kirichenko, 'F. Shekhtel', p.276.
61. Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie* vol.2, commentary to p.86.
62. Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie* vol.12, p.148.
63. M.P. Chekhov, *Vokrug Chekhova*, p.247. This building is now the department store GUM.
64. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, pp.110-111.
65. *Ibid.*, p.111.
66. *Ibid.*, p.111.
67. *Ibid.*, pp.134, 168.
68. *Ibid.*, p.111.
69. G.G. Tarasov's mansion of 1909-12 in the Florentine Renaissance style was by Ivan Zholtovskii; N.A. Vtorov's Neo-classical house (now the US Ambassador's residence) of 1913 was by V.M. Maiat and V.D. Adamovich. For details see: Cooke, 'Moscow map guide', items 23 and 41.
70. For useful accounts in English of the Morozov family history see: Beverly Whitney Kean, *All the Empty Palaces: The Merchant Patrons of Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (London, 1983), pp.101-124, and Valentine T. Bill, *The Forgotten Class: The Russian Bourgeoisie from the Earliest Beginnings to 1900* (New York, 1959), pp.15-36. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, pp.112-125, contains further details.
71. On the Riabushinskiis see: Whitney Kean, *All the Empty Palaces*, pp.94-100 et al.; John Bowl, 'Nikolai Riabushinsky: playboy of the Eastern world', *Apollo* (December 1973), pp.486-493; Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, pp.189-193 et al.
72. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, p.190.
73. Bill, *The Forgotten Class*, p.153.
74. M. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii v 18 tomakh* (Moscow, 1963), vol.18, p.218.
75. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.40.
76. Letter of Chekhov, 7 June 1892, in: Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie* vol.5, p.74.
77. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.138.
78. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii* vol.18, p.221.
79. *Ibid.*, pp.217-218.
80. *Ibid.*, p.220.
81. *Ibid.*, p.230-231.
82. *Ibid.*, p.228.
83. Letter of Shekhtel to Chekhov, 15 March 1893, in Lenin Library Department of Manuscripts, quoted in: Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.131.
84. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii* vol.18, p.219.
85. *Ibid.*, p.223.
86. One of Shekhtel's signed ink-and-wash drawings with the job stamp, and numbered 373, for the balustrade of the entrance lobby steps, is reproduced in colour in the catalogue *Paris-Moscow 1900-1930* (Paris, Centre Pompidou, 1979), p.253.
87. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii*, pp.222-223.
88. Apyshkov, *Ratsional'noe*, p.63.
89. *Ot Aleksandra Briullova do Ivana Fomina: proekty i risunki Russkikh arkhitekturov srediny XIX — nachala XX veka. Katalog vystavki* (Leningrad, 1981; exhibited Moscow, 1982), p.50.
90. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii* vol.18, p.223. This has been replaced at some stage by very heavy panels of carved and polished hardwood.
91. *Ibid.*, p.223.
92. *Ibid.*, p.225.
93. I. Vinogradskaya, *Zhizn i tvorchestvo K.S. Stanislavskogo: Letopis v 4-x tomakh* (Moscow, 1971), vol.1, p.18.
94. A description of this house and some interior views appear in Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, pp.19-37. It is now used by the Soviet Government for official purposes and is therefore absolutely inaccessible.
95. Bill, *The Forgotten Class*, p.27.
96. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.10, quoting material in the State Archives TsGALI.
97. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, pp.118-119.
98. A description of this complex appears in Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, pp.40-41.
99. Letter from Shekhtel to Viktor Vasnetsov of 22 October 1902 in Tret'iakov Gallery archives, quoted in *ibid.*, p.49.
100. For location and details of this see: Cooke, 'Moscow map guide', item 132.
101. Ditto, Cooke, 'Moscow map guide', item 45.
102. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.131.
103. *Ibid.*, p.10, note 2.
104. Letter of Chekhov to Shekhtel of 15 February 1896 in: Belchikov, *Polnoe Sobranie* vol.6, p.122.
105. Letter from Chekhov to Shekhtel of 13 April 1896 in: *ibid.*, pp.140-142.
106. Letter of 13 April 1896, as note 105; reply of Shekhtel to Chekhov, in Lenin Library Department of Manuscripts, quoted in Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.12.
107. The People's Palace project is illustrated in Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, pp.12-13; the Sokolniki Park theatre, in *ibid.*, pp.14-15.
108. Apyshkov, *Ratsional'noe*, p.62.
109. *Ibid.*, p.64.
110. *Ibid.*, p.64.
111. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii* vol.18, p.222.
112. Reminiscences of a contemporary quoted in Bowl, 'Nikolai Riabushinsky', p.487, from V. Lobanov, *Kanuny* (Moscow, 1968), p.179; see also note 71 above.
113. Letter preserved in family archives, Paris, dated 3 December 1913, quoted in Bowl, 'Nikolai Riabushinsky', pp.486-487.
114. Apyshkov, *Ratsional'noe*, p.54.
115. For this family background on the Derozhinskaia house I am indebted to Sergei Romaniuk, Moscow.
116. For a detailed discussion and further illustrations see: Catherine Cooke, 'Fedor Shekhtel: Derozhinskaia's Mansion', *Architectural Design* no.1/2 (1980), pp.82-83.
117. Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art*, p.386.
118. *Ibid.*, p.387.
119. *Ibid.*, p.387.
120. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.131, quotes N.D. Teleshov (later director of the Moscow Arts Theatre Museum), *Zapisi pisatel'ia* (Moscow, 1943), p.44.
121. I. Vinogradskaya, *Zhizn i tvorchestvo K.S. Stanislavskogo: Letopis v 4-x tomakh* (Moscow, 1971), vol.1, p.366.
122. *Ibid.*, p.369.
123. Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art*, p.388, and Vinogradskaya, *Zhizn i tvorchestvo*, pp.384-385.
124. Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art*, p.388, and Whitney Kean, *All the Empty Palaces*, p.105.
125. Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art*, pp.297-298.
126. *Ibid.*, p.319.
127. *Ibid.*, p.388.
128. *Ibid.*, p.388.
129. See note 19 above.
130. Rayfield, *Chekhov*, p.231.
131. Telegram from Chekhov to Shekhtel of 30 October 1902, in: Belchikov, *Polnoe sobranie* vol.11, p.66.
132. Numerous archival documents quoted in Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.49.
133. Apyshkov, *Ratsional'noe*, pp.63-64.
134. *Ibid.*, p.64.
135. *Ibid.*, p.65.
136. Gorki, *Sobranie sochinenii* vol.18, p.277-228.
137. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, Parts III, IV and V; see also Raymond Pearson, *The Russian Moderates and the Crisis of Tsarism 1914-1917* (London, 1977).
138. Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, pp.191, 299.

139. Apyshkov, *Ratsional'noe*, p.38, quoting Otto Wagner, *Moderne Architektur III Auflage*, p.14.
140. Apyshkov, *Ratsional'noe*, pp.63-34.
141. For Moscow examples see: Cooke, 'Moscow map guide', items 82, 91, 92, 94 and 114.
142. Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.120.
143. Ibid., pp.126-127; O. Orel'skaia, 'Shekhtel v Nizhnem Novgorode', *Arkhitektura SSSR* no.1, (1983), pp.46-49.
144. On exhibitions at Congresses I-III, see: T. Kazhdan, 'Arkhitektura i arkhitekturnaia zhizn Rossii', in: *Russkaia khudozhestvennaia kul'tura 1895-1907*, ed. A.D. Alekseev (Moscow, 1969), Book II, pp.275-276. On Shekhtel's participation at the IVth Congress, see: *Trudy IV siezda russkikh zodchikh* (St Petersburg, 1911).
145. Iv. Mashkov, 'Moskovskoe Arkhitekturnoe Obshchestvo 1867-1927gg', in: *Ezhegodnik MAO No.5 — Iubileinyi vypusk* (Moscow, 1928), pp.9-14.
146. Architectural and Technical Council of GKGS (The Chief Committee for State Building); The Artistic Design Commission of NTO VSNKh; see Kirichenko, *Fedor Shekhtel*, p.126.
147. The text has been published in: *Mastera sovetskoi arkitektury ob arkhitekture*, ed. M.G. Barkhin (Moscow, 1975), vol.1, pp.14-22. A small portion appears in French in: Anatole Kopp, *Architecture et mode de vie: textes des années vingt en URSS* (Grenoble, 1979), pp.45-46.
148. Rayfield, *Chekhov*, p.211.
149. Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art*, pp.554, 556.
150. F.O. Shekhtel, 'Skazka o trekh sestrah: zhivopis, skulptura i arkhitektura', in: *Mastera*, ed. Barkhin, vol.1, pp.14, 20.
151. Berthold Lubetkin, 'The origins of modern Russian art', in: P. Coe and M. Reading, *Lubetkin and Tecton* (Bristol, 1981), p.196.
152. Shekhtel, 'Skazka', in: *Mastera*, ed. Barkhin, p.21.
153. Vladimir Tatlin et al., 'The Work Ahead of Us' ('Nasha predstoiashchaia rabota', 31 December 1920), in: T. Andersen, *Vladimir Tatlin* (catalogue, Stockholm, 1968), p.51, and in: *The Tradition of Constructivism*, ed. S. Bann (London and New York, 1974), pp.12-14.
154. On their company, 'Ikon', see: Buryshkin, *Moskva kupecheskaia*, p.192; see also Bowlt, 'Nikolai Riabushinsky'.

Acknowledgements

Photographs on pp.3, 15 (top), 25 (top), 27 and drawings on pp.15, 17, 20 (fabric design), 21, 24, 27 are reproduced from E.I. Kirichenko's Fedor Shekhtel (Moscow, 1973). All of the building plans have been adapted from this book.

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To commemorate the 125th anniversary of Shekhtel's birth, a major exhibition of his work is being staged in Moscow during the autumn of 1984, organized jointly by the Soviet Academy of Arts, the Union of Architects of the USSR, and the Shchusev Museum of Architecture. Precise dates have yet to be announced. (C.C.)