

HONORING THE ALEXANDROV ENSEMBLE

The Beauty of Mankind Will Resound

by Dennis Speed

Jan. 8—Only days after the assassination of Russian Ambassador Karlov in Turkey, and the tragic death—in a plane crash on Dec. 25, 2016—of ninety-two extraordinary Russian citizens, among them sixty-four members of the famed Alexandrov Ensemble of Song and Dance, the United States’ Obama Administration threw thirty-five Russian diplomats out of the country. This was said to be in retaliation for interference in the American Presidential

elections through the alleged “hacking” of Democratic Party computers. (President Vladimir Putin, in “retaliation,” invited the children of American diplomats to the Kremlin to celebrate Christmas.)

The Schiller Institute’s Helga Zepp-LaRouche wrote [a statement of condolence for the Christmas Day tragedy](#), which was delivered to the Russian Consulate in New York City on Dec. 29. The Institute’s chorus also sang the Russian National Anthem there, to underscore the “unity in tragedy” that is desirable between the people of the United States and Russia, at such a moment of extraordinary cultural loss. A recording of their performance, which can be seen [here](#), gleaned over 400,000 views in the first seventy-two hours after it became available, with thousands of comments from Russian speakers expressing their deep appreciation for what the chorus had done. Something more, however, was needed, and the Schiller Institute supplied it.

A “living memorial” was organized quickly, involving the chorus and its supporters, New York City and New Jersey first responders, the families of victims of



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Diane Sare conducting New York City Community Chorus Jan. 7 at “Teardrop Memorial.”

9/11, and private citizens who understand the immediate danger of war. The seventy-five year-old alliance of the United States with Russia in the period of World War Two, also known as the “Great Patriotic War,” demanded a new, “living memorial” of cultural diplomacy that would permanently reverse the evil antics of the 1946-1991 “Cold War,” as well as the attempts to invent a “new Cold War” today. The *Teardrop Memorial* in Bayonne, New Jersey, virtually unknown to most Americans, but in fact essential to Russian-American relations, seemed the natural place to hold the ceremony.

Russia and America in Partnership

Friends and colleagues, we gather today to honor the victims of the devastating crash of the Tupolev-154 that happened two weeks ago. We come together to commemorate 92 passengers including members of world famous Alexandrov Academic Ensemble of Song and Dance; the prominent charity worker and humanitarian worker Dr. Liza Glinka; teams of Russian TV

channels: Zvezda, NTV; as well as the crew of the plane.

Our thoughts and prayers are going to the families of the victims. The singers, the dancers, doctors, journalists, pilots and stewards, lived their lives for a purpose, especially the performers who used to cheer up huge audiences, but today we stay silent in their memory.

Today is the Orthodox Christmas Day, and on Christmas Day in every nation, we share life, love, we exchange support; we praise each other, we treat each other as being one family. And it's very symbolic that today we gather to grieve at the Tear-Drop of grief that is very dear to the American people for their loss of 9/11.

Mr. Pyotr Ilyichov, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, was standing at the base of the "Teardrop of Forgiveness Memorial," when he spoke these words on Jan. 7. The memorial had been donated by the nation of Russia to the United States in the aftermath of the horrific attack of Sept. 11, 2001, and the earlier terrorist action against the World Trade Center in February of 1993. He had traveled to the memorial to participate in an (Orthodox) Christmas Day "living memorial" of music, and words of gratitude, for the lives, not only of the dead, but also of the families and friends of the deceased, who would be gathered in church or at home this Christmas Day.

Lt. Tony Giorgio of the New York Police Department, who moderated the event, knew the Alexandrov Ensemble well. As the founder and head of the New York City Police Band, he had traveled to Quebec City for a music conference and competition at which his band and the Alexandrov Ensemble had both performed. As a surprise for the Americans, and on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of 9/11, the Russian singers and instrumentalists had performed "God Bless America," sung by baritone Grigory Osipov. Osipov was one of those killed in the Dec. 25 crash.

In his condolence message issued hours after the crash, Lt. Giorgio, the Director of the NYPD Ceremonial Unit, said "It was a wonderful group of musicians and great ambassadors from Russia. And what this tragedy means for us is heartfelt."



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Pyotr Ilyichov

Lt. Giorgio's words, covered by *Russia Today*, cemented an initiative that the Schiller Institute's members had been loosely considering in the aftermath of the extraordinary outpouring of support for unity and peace, shown in the thousands of web comments on their earlier performance at the Russian Consulate.

Just as in the original founding of its New York City Community Chorus in 2014, when the Institute had sought to transcend the futile confrontations between police and demonstrators that had haunted New York City in the aftermath of the death of Eric Garner of Staten Island,—so today, the question was whether there might be something further done to send the message, "*Alle Menschen werden Brüder*" ["all men become brothers"], of Schiller's "Ode To Joy," to the people of Russia as a whole, in a respectful, beautiful way, on behalf of metropolitan New York City, and the United States as a whole.

The fact that Lt. Giorgio's experience of the Alexandrov Ensemble's gift of song had occurred on the occasion of 9/11's tenth anniversary, immediately suggested that the appropriate response, on this occasion, would be to stand in front of the very monument, dedicated by President Vladimir Putin in 2006, that the Russian people had given to America ten years earlier.

Terry Strada, Chairwoman of the "9/11 Families United for Justice Against Terror," spoke and personified what true friendship—*Freundschaft*—can mean between Russia and America, as well as among all people everywhere, even despite tragic loss and death.



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Lt. Tony Giorgio



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Terry Strada



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Diane Sare

The name of Strada's husband, Thomas Strada, who died in the Sept. 11 attack, is etched in stone at the base of the monument.

Today, on behalf of everyone standing here, and the American people, I would like to offer my sincere and heartfelt condolences, for the sudden, tragic and senseless death of your beloved Alexandrov Ensemble, your loved ones, and your fellow citizens.

Rich in history and pride, the Alexandrov Ensemble bolstered the spirits of the deprived soldiers defending the Warsaw Pact, and under President Vladimir Putin continued that tradition of patriot purpose. Their performances would provide a moral balance in difficult times, and on Dec. 25, they were traveling to Syria to lift the spirits of the Russian army during their time away from home.

Everyone here knows your pain, how deep your sorrow goes, and the feeling that you may drown in your tears. Grief like this is both physical and heartbreaking, and that the road to healing is long and difficult. Allow yourself to mourn, to cry and to be sad. Remember those you loved, and lost. Remember the beautiful music they made, and how it felt in your hearts when you heard their songs and the sound of their beautiful instruments: They were a gift from God, and they are gone, too soon. . . .

The impact of her brief remarks, the living voice of

those whose husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, friends and acquaintances never returned home Sept. 11, was profoundly felt. One person wrote: "Everyone who has ever deeply loved someone, knows that the person that we love is never really bound or defined by the personal flaws that we all get to know, that we each have. It's the same way with our country. It's something greater than any of us. It's difficult to, at any particular period of time, ever capture that, except in special circumstances, when we have the privilege to summarize the meaning of our whole history in single, short moments. And that is what you did, in what you said."

Their Legacy Will Live On

"The loss of the chorus was particularly great, because as everyone who sings in a chorus knows, the combination of our voices is greater than each of us individually, or each of us added up as parts. Each and every one of us is going to die. But we hope that mankind will be immortal. If we can each think of ourselves as unique voices in a great chorus which stands across generations and across continents, then the universe will resound with the beauty of mankind," said New York Schiller Institute Chorus Director and Founder Diane Sare, whose group performed the Russian and American national anthems and the Christmas carol *Adeste Fideles* ("O Come, All Ye Faithful"). Sare spoke later that day to members of the LaRouche Political Action Committee, and, during that discussion, she cited a statement from Virginia State Senator Richard Black, which read:



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Color guards with Chorus in background, in front of “Teardrop Memorial.”

A fond farewell to Russian heroes who died for the cause of peace on December 25, 2016.

I pray for the families of those Russians who perished last Christmas while flying to spread beauty to Syria, a land torn asunder by evil schemes of foreign powers. How appropriate that the renowned Alexandrov Ensemble is honored at this place by the Schiller Institute Chorus singing both the “Star-Spangled Banner” and the Russian national anthem at a wreath-laying for the victims of the air crash. The American and Russian choirs shared a dedication to restoring civility by appealing to the higher intellect. Their legacy will live on.

The Teardrop 9/11 Memorial was a gift that Russia gave Americans to honor the 3,000 Americans slain by al-Qaeda on 9/11. That monument was inscribed “To the struggle against world terrorism.” How fitting that we honor men and women who gave their lives in that struggle. Their gifts contributed greatly to peace and harmony among men. This event comes at an historic moment in Russian-American relations; an exciting time of joint commitment to civilization and religious freedom, and the restoration of world peace. I am grateful that Russia stepped forward militarily, carrying the burden of con-

fronting world terrorism, while much of the world chose a darker path.

If there is to be a safe and productive future for the human race, it must mean an abolition of the evil of banality in international relations.

The death of a great artist is a tragedy for all mankind, as civilized societies know. When an entity such as the Alexandrov Ensemble is lost, the true character of every nation is shown in whether it recognizes such a loss as its own. In a time when the dogs of world war can still be unleashed, even in the few weeks’ transition to the next Presidency, the elevation of relations among nations above the level of the banal, takes on a strategic significance. Culture and strategy become one. A higher conception of man, shared among nations, can ensure that humanity itself survives even in the worst of times. “I will show you a more excellent way,” the artist says.

The new cultural platform that Lyndon and Helga LaRouche have sought to establish among nations, is the necessary precursor to sane, and human, economic relations among the peoples of the World Land-Bridge—including the United States and Russia. Music and poetry are the cultural “machine tools” that allow the human race to transcend tragedy in favor of the immortality of us all—the true, sublime weapons of the war for a higher civilization.