

**THE AGE OF SOCIALISM**  
**(1865-1900)**

*Volume VII*  
*of*  
**AN ESSAY IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY**  
*From an Orthodox Christian Point of View*

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*When I consent to be a Republican, I do evil, knowing that's what I do... I say Long live  
Revolution! As I would say Long live Destruction! Long live Expiation! Long live  
Punishment! Long live Death!*  
Charles Baudelaire (1866).

*With disdain I will throw my gauntlet  
Full in the face of the world...  
Then will I wander godlike and victorious  
Through the ruins of the world,  
And giving my words an active force,  
I will feel equal to the Creator.*  
Karl Marx.

*If God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish Him.*  
Mikhail Bakunin, God and the State (1882).

*Criminals are merely the product of the present social order, and under communism they  
will cease being criminals... Women will leave marriage and become common property.*  
Wilhelm Weitling.

*This is the final struggle. Let us come together and tomorrow the Internationale will be  
the human race. There are no supreme redeemers, no god, no Caesar, no tribune.  
Workers, let us make our own salvation.*  
Eugène Pottier, L'Internationale.

*How ludicrous I find the socialists, with their nonsensical optimism concerning "the  
good man" who is waiting to appear from behind the scenes if only one would abolish this  
"old order" and set all the "natural drives" free.*  
Nietzsche, The Will to Power.

*The greatest event of recent times – that "God is dead", that the belief in the Christian  
God is no longer tenable – is beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe.*  
Nietzsche, The Joyful Wisdom.

*Oh, we shall all still have to drink of his [Nietzsche's] blood! Not one of us will be spared.*  
Franz Servis (1895).

*The Jews] are at the root of the revolutionary socialist movement and of regicide, they  
own the periodical press, they have in their hands the financial markets; the people as a  
whole fall into financial slavery to them; they even control the principles of  
contemporary science and strive to place it outside of Christianity.*  
K.P. Pobedonostsev to F.M. Dostoyevsky (1879).

*Our constitution is mutual love. Of the Monarch for the people and of the people for the  
Monarch.*  
F.M. Dostoyevsky.

*Political murder is the secret of the successful realization of the revolution... Siberia is not the place for the comrades of Hartman, but for the Christian clergy.*  
Garibaldi to Felix Pia (1880).

*The Jewish people has rejected Christ, the true Mediator and Messiah, and therefore has excluded itself from history. Instead the Germans have become God's chosen people.*  
Constantin Frantz (1870s).

*It is neither blindness nor ignorance that ruins nations and states. Not for long do they ignore where they are heading. But deep inside them is a force at work, favoured by nature and reinforced through habit, that drives them forward irresistibly as long as there is still any energy in them. Divine is he who controls himself. Most humans recognize their ruin, but they carry on regardless...*  
Leopold Ranke.

*Freedom of conscience is a delirium.*  
Pope Pius IX.

*The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of the flesh.*  
The future Pope Pius X (1895).

*It is not civilization at all--which is shamefully preached by some – wherein the sole idea is that the white race must not only dominate the world, but must wipe out the other 'coloured' races... True civilization consists in giving as many people as possible access to the benefits of life... Since all people originate from one man, all are children of one Heavenly Father; all were redeemed by the most pure blood of Christ, in Whom 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free.' All are brothers and must love one another--love one another not only in words, but in deeds as well.*

St. Tikhon, Hieromartyr Patriarch of Moscow (June 10/23, 1900).

*When the missionaries arrived, the Africans had the land and the missionaries had the Bible. They taught us how to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had land and we had the Bible.*  
Jomo Kenyatta.

*Enlightened Europe is attracting us. Yes, the abominations of paganism that were almost completely cast out of the world have come from there to us. Having breathed in that hellish poison, we run around like madmen, forgetting our own selves. But let us remember the year of 1812 – why did the French come to us then? God sent them to wipe out all the evil we had imitated from them. Russia repented then, and God had mercy on her. But now, it seems that we have forgotten that lesson.*

St. Theophan the Recluse, Thoughts for each day of the Year.

*What is this freedom by which so many minds are agitated, which inspires so many insensate actions, so many wild speeches, which leads the people so often to misfortune? In the democratic sense of the word, freedom is the right of political power or to express it, otherwise, the right to participate in the government of the State. This universal*

*aspiration for a share in government has no constant limitations and seeks no definite issue but incessantly extends...Democracy violates its sacred formula of 'freedom indissolubly joined with equality'. It is shown that this apparently equal distribution of "freedom" among all involves the total destruction of equality. Each vote, representing an inconsiderable fragment of power, by itself signifies nothing; an aggregation of votes alone has a relative value.*

K.P. Pobedonstsev, Reflections of a Russian Statesman (1898).

*Socialism is the 'mystery of iniquity' ... the believing man is absolutely unable to speak of any agreement between socialism and Christianity ...*  
Holy New Hieromartyr Hilarion Troitsky.

*Socialism is the last stride in the great rebellion of mankind and at the same time the result of its total exhaustion - the complete spiritual impoverishment of the prodigal son in the long centuries of his wandering far from his father's home and wealth.*  
Semyon Ludwigovich Frank, On This Side and That.

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## INTRODUCTION

This, the seventh volume in my series *An Essay in Universal History*, is called "The Age of Socialism" because it encompasses the peak of the careers of the chief ideologues of socialism, Marx and Engels, and the rise of welfare socialism in Germany and Western Europe to take the place of classical liberalism in all the countries of Western Europe. It takes the story from the unification of Germany through the Paris Commune to the "scramble for Africa" by the great global empires of Britain, Europe and America. Socialism and nationalism developed in parallel, being the two great antipodal - that is, universalist and particularist - tendencies of the age. Both were kept in check for the time being by the multinational empires. But the decline of Austria and Turkey elicited a nationalist ferment in Central Europe and the Balkans.

The biggest theme of the age was the transition from liberalism to socialism, from the rhetoric and propaganda of individual freedoms to the reality of collectivist slavery. In a sense, this transition began in 1793 and continues to the present day, with no sign of coming to an end. For it was not only the different rates of development in different countries that hindered the complete transition. The reality of slavery needed, and needs, the figleaf of (fictitious) freedom if it is to be universally accepted. And that figleaf is the assertion that through the means of collective repressive actions we are in fact, constantly and in various ways, coming to the end of *liberation*.

The stage is set by Sir Richard Evans: "In little over two decades, from 1848 to 1871, Europe had been transformed. Both Italy and Germany, despite the dashing of the nationalists' hopes in 1848-9, had been united, though on the basis of a conservatively designed constitutional monarchy rather than a democratic republic. In Germany's case the liberals had to make do with a parliamentary system in which the powers of the monarchy and the army were far greater than they had wished them to be. Universal male suffrage was also very far from what the moderate liberals wanted; they were more comfortable with the situation in Italy, where a limited property franchise still applied. Gambling on the loyalty and conservatism of the rural masses, bold and imaginative statesmen like Napoleon III, Bismarck and Disraeli had sought to outflank the liberals and deliver mass support to their new conservative ideology. Reaction, rampant almost everywhere in 1850, had failed by the end of the decade, even in Russia, despite its attempts to adapt to the new circumstances of the post-revolutionary era. The Vienna Settlement had been torn up, Metternich's immobile conservatism brushed aside, and a new political order born. It was to last, though with perceptible shifts and changes, almost all the way to 1914. After a short burst of rapid boundary changes and the formation of new geopolitical entities, the major states of Europe - Britain, France, Germany, Austro-Hungary, Russia, the Ottoman Empire - and many of the minor ones, from the Balkans to Scandinavia, remained within more or less stable borders for over four decades after 1870.

"The dramatic changes of the 1850s and 1860s were set in motion by the 1848 Revolution, even if they were not exactly what any of the revolutionaries had

envisaged. The year 1848 put a whole range of political forces on the European agenda, from constitutional monarchy to democratic republicanism. From 1848 onwards, nationalism was a major driving force in European politics. The old world of the secret societies and Jacobin-style revolutionary clubs gave way almost everywhere, though not in Russia, Poland, or the Balkans, to the new world of organized political parties, the political press (used by government as well as by opposition), single-issue pressure groups, and increasingly as time went on, mass communications. Revolutionary activists bifurcated into organized Marxist movements on the one hand, and increasingly violent anarchist plots on the other. The old politics of Metternich's stubborn resistance to the forces of change was superseded by a new, more flexible politics espoused by conservative statesmen who saw that these forces had to be embraced and turned to their own advantage if the society they wished to preserve could be saved. Even the most reactionary regimes of the 1850s recognized the need for economic deregulation, educational improvement and judicial reform, all of which can be counted major results of the 1848 Revolutions. The relations of governments with the public everywhere, even in Russia, were no longer shrouded in secrecy and mystery or dependent on assumed habits of deference, but were based far more on an openly propagandistic appeal to the loyalty of the masses. In many respects it makes sense to see the whole period from 1848 to 1871 as a single period of revolutionary change, rather than focusing individually on each of the short-term upheavals that followed one another with such breathtaking speed during these years..."<sup>1</sup>

Only Russia among the Great Powers continued to wage war against the anti-Christian, pseudo-liberal tendencies of the age – and was rewarded by being reviled and resented by the western Great Powers. The Great Reforms of Tsar Alexander II were an attempt to catch up with the west technologically and materially, to strengthen the country's institutions and military and thereby stem the invasion of western heresies, especially liberalism and democratism. Unfortunately, in general they had the opposite effect, undermining the foundations of Holy Russia and hastening the process of westernization, as was particularly clearly demonstrated by the inspired writings of Dostoyevsky, with their incisive exposure of Catholicism, liberalism and socialism.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us! Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 265-266.

## *I. THE WEST: THE RISE OF GERMANY*

## 1. BISMARCK AND THE TRIUMPH OF PRUSSIA

After the Crimean War western civilization reached the peak of its power, as the political, economic, military and ideological influence of the West European nations and the United States spread all round the world. The only possible rivals to the West were the Ottoman Empire – which, however, was in financial submission to the western banks and was not without reason called “the sick man of Europe” – and the Russian Empire, which had just been defeated in the Crimean War and would take time to recover. Also of increasing importance were the United States, whose economy, now that the Civil War was over, expanded in leaps and bounds, and the Far Eastern power of Japan...

The Crimean War changed much. First of all, the anti-revolutionary Triple Alliance of Monarchical Powers – Russia, Austria and Prussia – collapsed, as Austria refused to back Russia in the Crimean War, in spite of the fact that Austria’s triumph against the revolution in 1848 had been accomplished largely through Russian intervention. Secondly, Britain and France drew closer together as France followed Britain along the path of “liberal imperialism”, a path soon to be entered on also by the United States. Thirdly and probably most importantly, Germany was on the way to unification and becoming the most powerful nation-state in Europe. Adopting a more conservative model of imperialism, it would become a serious rival to the liberal empires of Britain and France and the Orthodox autocratic empire of Russia. The First World War would be a contest between the three models of statehood.

In this period Britain, with her ideology of liberal imperialism, continued to be the world’s most powerful and influential state. Thus its “share of global manufacturing output reached its high point at just short of 23 per cent in 1881, when it also produced 44 per cent of the world’s exported manufactured goods.”<sup>2</sup> But it was rapidly being caught up by Germany, whose reunification and defeat of France in 1870-71, rapid economic development, and major achievements in the sciences and arts, marked it out as the coming European hegemon – but, in view of some of its ruling ideas (Nietzscheanism and proto-Fascism), very likely an evil one.

In spite of the failure of the 1848 revolution, liberalism made great strides in Germany in the following few years. As Evans writes, “Far from being a complete return to the old order, the post-revolutionary settlement had sought to appease many of the liberals’ demands while stopping short of granting either national unification or parliamentary sovereignty. Trial by jury in open court, equality before the law, freedom of business enterprise, abolition of the most objectionable forms of state censorship of literature and the press, the right of assembly and association, and much more, were in place almost everywhere in Germany by the end of the 1860s. And, crucially, many states had instituted representative

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<sup>2</sup> David Cannadice, *Victorious Century. The United Kingdom, 1800-1906*, London: Viking, 2017, p. 388.

assemblies in which elected deputies had freedom of debate and enjoyed at least some rights over legislation and the raising of state revenues.

"It was precisely the last right that the resurgent liberals used in Prussia in 1862 to block the raising of taxes until the army was brought under the control of the legislature, as it had, fatally, not been in 1848. This posed a serious threat to the funding of the Prussian military machine. In order to deal with the crisis, the Prussian King appointed the man who was to become the dominant figure in German politics for the next thirty years - Otto von Bismarck. By this time, the liberals had correctly decided that there was no chance of Germany uniting, as in 1848, in a nation-state that included German-speaking Austria. That would have meant the break-up of the Habsburg monarchy, which included huge swathes of territory, from Hungary to Northern Italy, that lay outside the boundaries of the German Confederation, and included many millions of people who spoke languages other than German. But the liberals also considered that following the unification of Italy in 1859-60, their time had come. If the Italians had managed to create their own nation-state, then surely the Germans would be able to do so as well..."<sup>3</sup>

"It is clear in retrospect," writes Christopher Clark, "that the Italian war set Prussian national policy on a new footing. It was obvious to contemporaries that there were parallels between the Italian and the German predicament. In both cases a strong sense (within the educated elite) of historical and cultural nationhood coexisted with the fact of dynastic and political division (though Italy had only seven separate states to Germany's thirty-nine). In both cases, it was Austria that stood in the way of national consolidation. There were also clear parallels between Piedmont and Prussia. Both states were noted for their confident bureaucracies (since 1848). Each had sought to suppress popular nationalism while at the same time manoeuvring to extend its own influence in the name of the nation over the lesser states within its sphere of interest. Small German enthusiasts of a Prussian-led union to project the Italian events of 1858-61 on to the German political map."<sup>4</sup>

Bismarck wanted to use Prussia as "the German Piedmont". Only his path to German unification would not be through the creation of a single German liberal republic under the aegis of Prussia - i.e. a new version of the 1848 All-German Frankfurt Parliament's proposal to King William Frederick IV, which he rejected out of fear of offending Austria - but the virtual *conquest* of the rest of Germany by Prussia and in spite of Austria.

Bismarck's main supporters in his plan were the Prussian king and the Prussian junker class, who dominated the army. The two were closely linked. Thus Sara Moore writes: "One of the first things Wilhelm I did on becoming King [in 1861] was to invited Bismarck's friend, General von Toon, to prepare a report on the army. Von Roon's father had died during the French occupation following Prussia's disastrous war with France in 1806. He proposed that the King should

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<sup>3</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1917*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 512.

enforce conscription for three years and more than double the size of Germany's standing army.

"Frederick the Great had lauded the discipline of the Prussian army in his political testament, declaring: 'Military discipline... makes blindly obedient, the soldier to his officer, the officer to his colonel, the colonel to his general, and the generals to the commander-in-chief.' The backbones of the Prussian army had always been the Officer Corps, which was recruited from the sons of the Junker landowners.

"In England, officers used to be recruited from the landed gentry and it was regarded as noble to die for one's country. The Junkers performed the same function in Germany. However, whereas in England army officers were always servants of the government, in Prussia soldiers were responsible only to the King.

"According to the Prussian military code, for a civilian to assault an officer was an offence to his uniform, for which it was his duty, without a moment's hesitations, to draw his sword. If a member of the Prussian Officer Corps committed a serious crime like murder, he was not subject to civilian law in peacetime, but was tried by a military court, where he might be 'honourably acquitted', whereas under English law he would have certainly been sentenced to death. In war, therefore, opponent could expect no mercy. Indeed, the Prussian military theorist, von Clausewitz, begged his pupils to avoid a 'benevolent spirit towards a stricken foe and denounced moderation as an absurdity.' The General Staff manual expressly warned the Officer Corps to be on its guard against 'humanitarian notions' and the NCOs were expected to use their fists to discipline the men under their charge. Prussian soldiers therefore were far more terrified of their own officers than they were of the enemy. No soldier would dare disobey the order of an officer to fire upon a crowd, even if it was peaceful. 'Blind obedience' was the diktat in the Prussian army. Countless of Prussia's unfortunate citizens had already become used to universal military service between 1807 and 1813.

"King Wilhelm asked the Landstag for the money to implement von Roon's proposals to expand the size of the standing army and enforce three-years conscription. The Liberal government was annoyed at being asked to raise taxes to increase the army's size at a time when Prussia was not under threat. The issue threatened to become a constitutional crisis because Prussia's civilians were adamantly opposed to the proposals. In the May 1862 elections, the King's conservative supporters were all but wiped out while the Progressive Party received a huge increase in votes. However, the old King remained obdurate. In the end he found the one man who was happy to ignore the wishes of the people, Otto von Bismarck."<sup>5</sup>

Bismarck promptly stirred up anti-parliamentarian feeling in the King: "Your Majesty must not think about Louis XVI - he was weak in spirit. Better recall Charles I - won't he always be one of the most noble monarchs for fearlessly

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<sup>5</sup> Sara, *The Fourth Reich?* Jollies Publishing, 2016, pp. 11-13.

unsheathing the sword in defense of the rights of the monarch? Yes, he lost the battle, but he profoundly strengthened his royal convictions with his own blood! Your task is to create a great army in order to gather all Germans under the wing of your dynasty. You cannot yield to Parliament, even if endangers your life. Your Majesty is facing the necessity to fight for the divine right of the Prussian monarch to decide everything himself.”<sup>6</sup>

“The more he spoke,” writes Radzinsky, “the more animated Wilhelm grew. Bismarck understood him well. He wrote, ‘Wilhelm is the ideal type of Prussian officer who in the line of duty will fearlessly go to certain death with the single word: command.’”<sup>7</sup> But who would command the king to “command” if not the real king – Bismarck!

As for the Prussian junker class, Bismarck won them over by his passionate appeal to Prussian nationalism. ‘There is nothing more German’, Bismarck observed in 1858, ‘than Prussian particularism properly understood.’ Bismarck also believed that Prussia could only survive if it secured ‘safe borders’, either through leading a reformed German Confederation, or through straightforward territorial annexation. In 1859 he described these ‘natural frontiers of Prussia’ as nothing less than the Baltic, the North Sea, the Rhine, the Alps and the Lake of Constance. This was a programme for Prussian dominance which would bring the independence of the Third Germany to an abrupt end. It could only be achieved if Bismarck could secure the acceptance of the other powers to a massive change in the European territorial order, to isolate those who objected; sideline or at least gain parity with Austria; win over Third Germany, or crush those elements who refused to cooperate; co-opt the German national movement; and either persuade or bypass the liberals in the *Landtag*, in order to secure the funds to pay for the necessary military action. A few months before taking office as Prussian chancellor in late September 1862, Bismarck announced privately that ‘My first care will be to reorganize the army, with or without the help of the *Landtag*... As soon as the army shall have been brought into such a condition as to inspire respect, I shall seize the first best pretext to declare war against Austria, dissolve the German Diet, subdue the minor states and give national unity to Germany under Prussian leadership.’ His interlocutor, the future British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards remarked to the Austrian ambassador: ‘Take care of that man; he means what he says.’”<sup>8</sup>

“Highly strung, grotesquely malicious and hypochondriacal, thin-skinned yet tough as a rhinoceros, this instinctive risk-taker, ingenious improviser and cunning conspirator saw a solution to Prussia’s domestic problems in an aggressive foreign policy that would use the kingdom’s superb army to unite Germany, challenge the France of Napoleon III and harness nationalism in the service of the monarchy...”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bismarck, in Edvard Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, London: Free Press, 2005, p. 189.

<sup>7</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 189-190.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Simms, *The Struggle for Supremacy in Europe*, p. 229.

<sup>9</sup> Sebag Sebastian Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London: Vintage, 2016, p. 402.

Bismarck was able to escape accountability to parliament because the state did not have to beg for money from it: it had its own resources from state-owned enterprises.<sup>10</sup> In particular, it had the support of the great industrialist Krupp, who stood to make millions in a war. Both Austria and France, as it turned out, were no match for his Prussian grenadiers. The only power that could have stopped Bismarck was external – Russia.

However, Bismarck, who had once been an envoy to St. Petersburg, was always careful not to antagonize Russia. Moreover, in 1887, towards the end of his career, he signed a secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russian Foreign Minister Nikolai Girs. “Under its terms, Germany and Russia each agreed to observe neutrality should the other be involved in a war with a third country, unless Germany attacked France or Russia attacked Austria-Hungary. This committed Germany to neutrality if Russia sought to assert control over the Black Sea straits. But the real point was to discourage the Russians from seeking a mutual defence treaty with France, which was exactly what happened after Bismarck’s fall from power led to the nonrenewal of the Secret Reinsurance Treaty. ‘Paradoxically,’ as [Henry] Kissinger later put it, ‘it was precisely that ambiguity which preserved the flexibility of the European equilibrium. And its abandonment – in the name of transparency – started a sequence of increasing confrontations, which culminated in World War I...’”<sup>11</sup>

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What about the world’s most advanced industrial state, Britain?

The British had initiated the rise of Prussia by gifting a large part of Rhineland Germany to Prussia in 1814 – Britain’s greatest mistake, according to the future Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.<sup>12</sup> Lord Palmerston went a major step further when, in one of his few foreign policy mistakes, he underestimated Bismarck by supposing that in the war with Denmark he was acting as an agent of Austria, and not as a major independent player in his own right.<sup>13</sup> And to the end of his life he saw Germany more as a buffer against his real fear, Russia, than as a threat in her own right. Thus he said of Russia that she “will in due time become a power almost as great as the old Roman Empire ... Germany ought to be strong in order to resist Russian aggression.” However, the rising star in British politics, Disraeli, had a truer estimate of Bismarck’s abilities, having met him in London before his rise to power. In the new, Bismarckian age, the British would be more cautious in their forays into European politics. Palmerston’s tactics of bluff and bluster would have cut no ice with the wily Bismarck, who must have noticed that the English, for all their imperial power, were not able to affect his power grab on the continent...

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<sup>10</sup> John Plender, *Capitalism. Money, Morals and Markets*, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, p. 89.

<sup>11</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, pp. 696-697.

<sup>12</sup> Moore, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Lord Palmerston joked that “only three people have ever really understood the Schleswig-Holstein business – the Prince Consort, who is dead, a German professor, who has gone mad, and I, who have forgotten all about it.” Although he made a joke of it, Britain had suffered a diplomatic defeat in Schleswig-Holstein.

Nevertheless, Britain was still the world's most powerful and influential great power, and the continued growth in British power, if not so rapid or impressive as that of Germany, was enough to make many Germans envious of Britain, a passion that would become a significant factor in world politics in the early twentieth century... After Waterloo, writes Robert Tombs, "Britain exercised a quasi-protectorate over Western Europe and the Mediterranean, which persisted, unevenly, until the Second World War. Countries think twice about - or do not think at all about - challenging the hegemonic power and tend to adopt policies that it favours. They may request more protection than the protector wants to give. The Portuguese government repeatedly asked for British assistance against internal enemies, and the Swedes asked for patrols in the Baltic in the 1860s. Britain discouraged Russia and Prussia from intervention in France at the time of the 1830 and 1848 revolutions. It helped to bring about Greek independence from Turkey in the 1830s and [with Russia] guaranteed its future independence. It protected newly independent Belgium during the 1830s and 1840s, though with limited success, and restrained French interference. It promoted Italian independence and unification in the 1850s and 1860s. It repeatedly defended the Ottoman Empire from France, Egypt, Austria and Russia. Britain used its influence to restrain Scandinavian quarrels and was ready in 1864 to send a fleet to counter Prussian and Austrian moves into Denmark. Overt influence was most easily exercised where seapower could disrupt economic activity by blockade, prevent or facilitate the transport of troops, or even take direct action by bombardment or amphibious landing. Even the hint of these possibilities might be effective. Muhammed Ali, the ambitious ruler of Egypt in the early nineteenth century, thought that 'with the English for my friends I can do anything, without their friendship I can do nothing.' In Europe and the Mediterranean, by means of diplomatic pressure, investments or loans, and occasionally military force, Britain favoured, and sometimes protected, representative governments, economic development and trade. Western Europe, with misgivings, followed its lead.

"Britain - considered by Gladstone to be 'the course of the moral, social, and political power of the world' - had other kinds of influence on Europe too. We can detect its 'soft power' in the near universalization of English styles of men's clothing, of social customs such as clubs and sports, of English literature and increasingly the English language, which began to rival French. As John Bright declared in 1865, 'England is the mother of parliaments,' for the two-chamber parliament became the standard form. So did constitutional monarchy, the accountability of ministers to parliament, parliamentary control of the national budget, collective Cabinet responsibility, freedom of expression, legal political parties, trial by jury and independence of judges. It was impossible to copy exactly a system that was as idiosyncratic, uncodified and rapidly evolving as that of democracy or egalitarianism - those on the left continued to take inspiration from the French Revolution. But France itself, in its constitutional Charters (1814 and 1830) and, after a painful interval, in its Third Republic (1875) came as close as possible to the arcana of Westminster. Belgium (1832), the Netherlands (1848), Denmark (1848), Italy (1860), Sweden (1867) and Spain (1874) also tried English-

style systems. Absolutist states such as Austria and Russia eventually found a House of Lords a useful device for neutralizing even a timid elected chamber.

“English economic developments too provided the model to be followed with enthusiasm or trepidation. Technology, institutions and legislation were copied – railways, steam power, machinery, stocks and shares, limited-liability companies, factory acts. Manchester and Birmingham were visited by foreign industrialists, who bought English machines, raised English capital, and hired English workers – sometimes with alarming results when they got drunk, demanded wage increases, and caused trouble with the locals. After 1860 the British creed of free trade inspired the first short-lived European common market. But jealousy of English economic dominance, and revulsion at the social and political consequences of industrialization – cities, smoke, nouveau riche vulgarity, working-class assertiveness, social change, visible poverty – were as marked as admiration of the wealth and power it yielded. ‘The English’ pronounced the French novelist Théophile Gautier in 1856, ‘can forge iron, harness steam, twist matter in every way, invent frighteningly powerful machines: [but] despite their stupendous material advances, they are only polished barbarians.’...”<sup>14</sup>

However, it would be the Prussians who, by their behaviour in the next half-century, would prove more worthy of the epithet “polished barbarians”...

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Immediately after his appointment in 1862, Bismarck announced that “the great questions of the day are not decided by speeches and majority resolutions - that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 - but by iron and blood.”<sup>15</sup> Not that Bismarck admitted to being in favour of absolutism. “I am not in favour of an absolutist government,” he told the Reichstag. “I consider parliamentary cooperation – if properly practiced – necessary and useful as much as I consider parliamentary *rule* harmful and impossible.”<sup>16</sup>

Having thus clearly laid out his anti-democratic credentials, he set to work reshaping the map of Europe.

“In a series of swift and ruthless moves,” writes Evans, he “allied with the Austrians to seize the disputed duchies of Schleswig-Holstein from the Kingdom of Denmark, then engineered a war over their administration between Prussia and Austria which ended in complete victory for the Prussian forces. The German Confederation collapsed, to be followed by the creation of a successor institution without the Austrians or their south German allies, named by Bismarck for want of a more imaginative term the North German Confederation. Immediately, the

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<sup>14</sup> Tombs, *The English and Their History*, London, 2014, pp. 545-547.

<sup>15</sup> Again, in the same year he said: “The Prussian monarchy has not yet completed its mission; it is not yet ready to become a purely ornamental decoration of your constitutional Parliament; not yet ready to be manipulated as a piece of lifeless machinery of parliamentary government.” (in Cohen and Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 674) (V.M.)

<sup>16</sup> Bismarck, in Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 94.

majority of the Prussian liberals, sensing that the establishment of a nation-state was just around the corner, forgave Bismarck for his policy (pursued with sublime disdain for parliamentary rights over the previous four years) of collecting taxes and funding the army without parliamentary approval."<sup>17</sup>

The cost in German blood that brought Prussia to hegemonic status in Germany turned out to be great. As Adam Tooze writes, in the summer of 1866 Prussia faced not only Austria, but "a coalition consisting of Saxony, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, Hesse, Hanover and Nassau. Over 100,000 Germans had been killed or wounded in what amounted to a North-South civil war."<sup>18</sup>

In fact, as James Hawes point out, "Hanover defeated a Prussian army in the first major engagement. But the tax-take and hardware from the Rhineland gave Prussia an unbeatable edge. On 3 July 1866 at Koenniggratz [or Sadowa] the Austrians, who still used Waterloo-style muzzle-loaders, were routed at the greatest battle in Europe between 1815 and 1914. Without any real hope, the west of Germany fought on for another three weeks. Frankfurt, the ancient imperial capital, was surrounded by General von Manteuffel, who informed its citizenry that if they didn't provide a vast ransom in bullion within 24 hours, he would give them over to plunder by his East Prussian farm-boys. *This wasn't unification, it was conquest.* Bismarck waited until 1871 to dragoon the remaining kingdoms into his "German Empire" simply because he was, until then, still unsure that Prussia could digest them. Not for nothing did Disraeli call the new Empire 'Prussia-Germany' or simply 'Prussia' to the end of his days."<sup>19</sup>

"With the victory of 1866," writes Clark, "the long history of Prussia's contest with Austria for hegemony over the German states came to an end. A solid block of Prussian territory now stretched between France and Belgium in the west and the flatlands of Russian Lithuania in the east. Prussia encompassed over four-fifths of the population of the new North German Confederation, a federal entity comprising the twenty-three northern states and centred on Berlin. The southern states of Hesse-Darmstadt, Baden, Württemberg and Bavaria escaped annexation, but were made to sign alliances that placed them within Prussia's sphere of influence.

"The North German Confederation may have looked a little like a continuation of the old Deutscher Bund (whose diet had obligingly voted itself out of existence on 28 July in the dining room of the Three Moors Hotel in Augsburg), but in reality the name was little more than a fig leaf for Prussian dominance. Prussia exercised exclusive control over military and foreign affairs; in this sense, the North German Confederation was, as King William himself put it, 'the extended arm of Prussia'. At the same time, however, the new Confederation conferred a certain democratic legitimacy upon the power-political settlement of 1866. In constitutional terms, it

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<sup>17</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 274.

<sup>19</sup> Hawes, "How Germany came in from the Cold", [https://unherd.com/2021/01/how-germany-came-in-from-the-cold/?tl\\_inbound=1&tl\\_groups\[0\]=18743&tl\\_period\\_type=3](https://unherd.com/2021/01/how-germany-came-in-from-the-cold/?tl_inbound=1&tl_groups[0]=18743&tl_period_type=3). Italics mine (V.M.).

was an experimental entity without precedent in Prussian or German history. It had a parliament representing the (male) populations of all member states, whose deputies were elected on the basis of the Reich electoral law drawn up by the revolutionaries in 1849. No attempt was made to impose the Prussian three-class franchise; instead, all men of the age of twenty-five years and over acquired the right to a free, equal and secret ballot. The North German Confederation was thus one of the late fruits of the post-revolutionary synthesis. It blended elements of the old politics of princely cabinets with the new and unpredictable logic of parliamentary representation."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, pp. 545-546.

### 3. POPE PIUS IX, VATICAN I AND THE FALL OF THE PAPAL STATES

As liberalism and nationalism gained in strength throughout Europe, Pius IX reacted by asserting his power in a shriller and more maniacal manner than ever, by increased repression within his kingdom, and by inventing new dogmas that the Catholics were now compelled to believe. The process began in 1854, when, while in exile in Gaeta and with the support of five hundred Italian, Spanish and Portuguese bishops, many of whom he had appointed to newly created dioceses, he proclaimed the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin - that is, her freedom from original sin. His personal secretary, Monsignor Talbot, said at that time: "You see, the most important thing is not the new dogma but the way it is proclaimed." In other words, the important thing was not whether the dogma was true or false, but the fact that the Pope was asserting his power by means of his dogmatic pronouncements.

"If ambition and pride," writes Sir Richard Evans, "were the internal motives of the proclamation, then the external one was a vision seen by Bernadette Soubirous (1844-79) in the Pyrenaean mountain village of Lourdes, who saw the Virgin Mary in a local grotto. 'I am the Immaculate Conception,' the Virgin announced. Sick people began to make their way to the grotto and, later, the chapel she had instructed Bernadette to build on the site, seeking cures. Many of them claimed to have recovered from their illness following their visit. In 1862, after a thorough investigation in which Bernadette, a simple, illiterate and obviously pious girl, stuck to her story, the Church declared her visions genuine."<sup>21</sup>

In 1864 Pius issued *Quanta Cura*, which condemned a whole "Syllabus" of Errors, including modern heresies such as liberalism and socialism, and reasserted the papacy's supremacy over all secular powers. Some of these condemned propositions were: "Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true... In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be the only religion of the state, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship... The Roman pontiff can and should reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization."<sup>22</sup>

Then, in December, 1869 he convened the First Vatican Council. Two and a half months into the Council, the question of papal infallibility was raised. In his constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, the Pope declared his own infallibility on matters of faith and morals when speaking *ex cathedra* thus: "1. If anyone will say that the blessed Apostle Peter was not placed by Christ the Lord as prince of all the apostles and the visible head of the whole of the Church militant, or that he did not receive, directly and without mediation, from our same Lord Jesus Christ only

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<sup>21</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 455.

<sup>22</sup> Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ*, London: Bantam books, 1988, pp. 146, 245, 246.

the pre-eminence of honour, and not the true and genuine pre-eminence of power, let him be **anathema**.

"2. If anyone will say that the blessed Peter in his pre-eminence over the whole Church does not have an unbroken line of successors, or that the Roman high priest is not the successor of the blessed Peter in this pre-eminence, let him be **anathema**.

"3. If anyone will say that the Roman high priest has only the privilege of supervising or directing, and not complete or supreme jurisdiction in the Universal Church not only in matters that relate to faith and morals, but even also in those which relate to discipline and the administration of the Church, which is spread throughout the world; or that he has only the most important parts, but not the whole fullness of this supreme power; or that this power is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and every church, and over each and every pastor and member of the faithful, let him be **anathema**.

"4. Faithfully following the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, we teach and define that the following dogma belongs to the truths of Divine revelation. The Pope of Rome, when he speaks from his see (*ex cathedra*), that is when, while fulfilling his duties as teacher and pastor of all Christians, who defines, by dint of his supreme apostolic power, that a certain teaching on questions of the faith and morals must be accepted by the Church, he enjoys the Divine help promised to him in the person of St. Peter, that infallibility which the Divine Redeemer deigned to bestow on His Church, when it defines teaching on questions of faith and morality. Consequently, these definitions of the Pope of Rome are indisputable in and of themselves, and not because of the agreement of the Church. If anyone were to have the self-opinion, which is not pleasing to God, to condemn this, he must be consigned to **anathema**."

This heretical decree was in direct contradiction with the tradition of the true – that is, the Orthodox Church – and even of some Catholic “saints” such as Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), who wrote: "A pope who is a manifest heretic automatically (per se) ceases to be pope and head, just as he ceases automatically to be a Christian and a member of the Church. Wherefore, he can be judged and punished by the Church. This is the teaching of the ancient Fathers who teach that manifest heretics immediately lose all jurisdiction."<sup>23</sup>

The papacy denied St. Paul's words that it is precisely the Church, and not any individual man, that is "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (I Timothy 3.15).

*De facto*, papal infallibility had been accepted for many centuries. Thus “Saint” Catherine of Siena (canonized in 1461) declared: "Even if the Pope were Satan incarnate, we ought not to raise up our heads against him, but calmly lie down to rest on his bosom. He who rebels against our Father is condemned to death, for that which we do to him we do to Christ: we honor Christ if we honor the Pope; we dishonor Christ if we dishonor the Pope. I know very well that many defend

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<sup>23</sup> Bellarmine, *De Romano Pontifice*, II.30.

themselves by boasting: 'They are so corrupt, and work all manner of evil!' But God has commanded that, even if the priests, the pastors, and Christ-on-earth were incarnate devils, we be obedient and subject to them, not for their sakes, but for the sake of God, and out of obedience to Him."

However, the proclamation of the *de facto* belief as a formal dogma was a complete surprise to all the assembled bishops except those belonging to the Inquisition; and at first only 50 out of the 1,084 eligible to attend and vote were in favour of it. However, Pius now proceeded to apply threats and intimidation. And so "by the time it came to a vote, the Papacy's strong-arm tactics had tipped the balance decisively. In the first vote, on 13 July 1870, 451 declared themselves in favour and eighty-four opposed. Four days later, on 17 July, fifty-five bishops officially stated their opposition but declared that, out of reverence for the Pope, they would abstain from the vote scheduled for the following day. All of them then left Rome, as a good many others had already done. The second and final vote occurred on 18 July. The number of those supporting the Papacy's position increased to 535. Only two voted against, one of them Bishop Edward Fitzgerald of Little Rock, Arkansas. Of the 1,084 bishops eligible to vote on the issue of Papal infallibility, a total of 535 had finally endorsed it - a 'majority' of just over 49 per cent. By virtue of this 'majority', the Pope, on 18 July 1870, was formally declared infallible in his own right and 'not as a result of the consent of the Church'. As one commentator has observed, 'this removed all conciliarist interpretations of the role of the Papacy.'<sup>24</sup>

In this way did the Council finally surrender, declaring, in words that could only truly be applied to Christ: "The Pope is a divine man and a human god... The Pope is the light of faith and reflection of truth"... But if the Pope was infallible, what was the point of the Council? For, as Fr. Sergius Bulgakov wrote, "how could a Council be expected to pass the resolution if it has no power to decide anything on which the Pope alone has the right of final judgement? How could the Council have consented even to debate such an absurdity? It can, of course, be argued that the Vatican Council had to carry out the Pope's behest from obedience, regardless of content. But even as infallible, the Pope cannot do meaningless and self-contradictory things, such as submitting to a Council's decision a motion when the power to decide belongs not to it, but to him."<sup>25</sup>

The Croatian Bishop Strossmayer was an opponent of the new dogma. "In 1871," writes Fr. Alexey Young, "he wrote to a friend that he would rather die than accept this false teaching, adding: 'Better to be exposed to every humiliation than to bend my knee to Baal, to arrogance incarnate.' But apparently the humiliations and threats imposed on him by Rome proved, after ten long years, too much to oppose. He finally submitted to the new teaching in 1881."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Baigent and Leigh, *The Inquisition*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 205.

<sup>25</sup> Bulgakov, *The Vatican Council*, South Canaan, 1959, p. 62; in Fr. Michael Azkoul, *Once Delivered to the Saints*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 2000, p. 204.

<sup>26</sup> Young, *The Rush to Embrace*, Richfield Springs, NY: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1996, pp. 31-32.

The secular authorities reacted with hostility. "In Italy," writes John Cornwell, "processions and outdoor services were banned, communities of religious dispersed, Church property confiscated, priests conscripted into the army. A catalogue of measures, understandably deemed anti-Catholic by the Holy See, streamed from the new capital: divorce legislation, secularization of the schools, the dissolution of numerous holy days.

"In Germany, partly in response to the 'divisive' dogma of infallibility, Bismarck began his *Kulturkampf* ('culture struggle'), a policy of persecution against Catholicism. Religious instruction came under state control and religious orders were forbidden to teach; the Jesuits were banished; seminaries were subjected to state interference; Church property came under the control of lay committees; civil marriage was introduced in Prussia. Bishops and clergy resisting *Kulturkampf* legislation were fined, imprisoned, exiled. In many parts of Europe, it was the same: in Belgium, Catholics were ousted from the teaching profession; in Switzerland, religious orders were banned; in Austria, traditionally a Catholic country, the state took over schools and passed legislation to secularize marriage; in France, there was a new wave of anticlericalism..."<sup>27</sup>

De Rosa writes: "The English-speaking world, too, was far from unanimous in accepting papal infallibility. In 1822, Bishop Barnes, the English Vicar Apostolic, said: 'Bellarmine and other divines, chiefly Italian, have believed the pope infallible when proposing *ex cathedra* an article of faith. But in England and Ireland I do not believe *any* Catholic maintains the infallibility of the pope.' Later still, Cardinal Wiseman, who in 1850 headed the restored hierarchy of England and Wales, said: 'The Catholic church holds a dogma often proclaimed that, in defining matters of faith, *she* (that is, the church, not the pope) is infallible.' He went on: 'All agree that infallibility resides in the unanimous suffrage of the church.' John Henry Newman, a convert and the greatest theologian of the nineteenth century, said two years before Vatican I: 'I hold the pope's infallibility, but as a theological opinion; that is, not as a certainty but as a probability.'

"In the United States, prior to Vatican I, there was in print the Reverend Stephen Keenan's very popular *Controversial Catechism*. It bore the *Imprimatur* of Archbishop Hughes of New York. Here is one extract. 'Question: Must not Catholics believe the pope himself to be infallible? Answer: This is a Protestant invention, it is no article of the Catholic faith; no decision of his can bind on pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body, that is, the bishops of the church.' It was somewhat embarrassing when, in 1870, a 'Protestant invention' became defined Catholic faith. The next edition of the *Catechism* withdrew this question and answer without a word of explanation."<sup>28</sup>

"In the face of such reactions, the Papacy simply became more aggressive. All bishops were ordered to submit in writing to the new dogma; and those who refused were penalized or removed from their posts. So, too, were rebellious teachers and professors of theology. Papal nuncios were instructed to denounce

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<sup>27</sup> Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope*, London: Penguin, 2000, pp. 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> De Rosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

defiant ecclesiastics and scholars as heretics. All books and articles challenging, or even questioning, the dogma of Papal infallibility were automatically placed on the Index. On at least one occasion, attempts were made to suppress a hostile book through bribery. Many records of the Council itself were confiscated, sequestered, censored or destroyed. One opponent of the new dogma, for example, Archbishop Vincenzo Tizzani, Professor of Church History at the Papal University of Rome, wrote a detailed account of the proceedings. Immediately after his death, his manuscript was purchased by the Vatican and has been kept locked away ever since."<sup>29</sup>

Archimandrite Justin (Popovich) wrote: "Through the dogma of infallibility the pope usurped for himself, that is for man, the entire jurisdiction and all the prerogatives which belong only to the Lord God-man. He effectively proclaimed himself as the Church, the papal church, and he has become in her the be-all and end-all, the self-proclaimed ruler of everything. In this way the dogma of the infallibility of the pope has been elevated to the central dogma (*vsedogmat*) of the papacy. And the pope cannot deny this in any way as long as he remains pope of a humanistic papacy. In the history of the human race there have been three principal falls: that of Adam, that of Judas, and that of the pope."<sup>30</sup>

Again, Archimandrite Charalampos Vasilopoulos writes, "Papism substituted the God-man Christ with the man Pope! And whereas Christ was incarnate, the Pope deincarnated him and expelled Him to heaven. He turned the Church into a worldly kingdom. He made it like an earthly state... He turned the Kingdom of God into the kingdom of this world."<sup>31</sup> Indeed, although the Pope calls himself "the vicar of Christ", we should rather say, writes Nikolaos Vasileiades, "that the Pope is Christ's representative on earth and Christ... the Pope's representative in heaven".<sup>32</sup>

European individualism since Gregory VII has been of three distinct types: papist individualism which ascribes maximum rights and knowledge to *one person*, the Pope; liberal individualism, which ascribes them to *every person*; and nationalist individualism, which ascribes them to *one nation* or *every nation*. Papist individualism had tended to recede into the background as first liberal individualism, and then nationalist individualism caught the imagination of the European and American continents. But now, having already anathematized the main propositions of liberalism in his *Syllabus of Errors* of 1864, and having stubbornly resisted the triumph of nationalism in his native Italy<sup>33</sup>, the Papacy reiterated with extra force and fanaticism its own variant of the fundamental European heresy - the original variant, and the maddest of them all. For is it not

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<sup>29</sup> Baugent and Leigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

<sup>30</sup> Popovich, "Reflections on the Infallibility of European Man", in *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*, Belmont, Mass.: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1994, pp. 104-105.

<sup>31</sup> Vasilopoulos, *O Oikoumenismos khoris maska (Ecumenism unmasked)*, Athens, 1988, p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Vasileiades, *Orthodoxia kai Papismos en dialogo (Orthodoxy and Papism in Dialogue)*, Athens, 1981, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> "In 1867, with Garibaldi's small force in premature action only fifteen miles from the Vatican, the pope, still defiant, said: 'Yes, I hear them coming.' Pointing to the Crucifix: 'This will be my artillery'" (De Rosa, *op. cit.*, p. 148).

madness to regard oneself, a mortal and sinner and as in need of redemption as any other man, as the sole depository and arbiter of absolute truth?!

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In 1870, as Philip Bobbitt writes, "Italian unification was not quite complete. French troops remained in Rome, kept there by conservative pressure on Napoleon III to protect the papacy from Garibaldi's revolutionaries. Nevertheless, without French determination to drive Austria from Italy, unification would not have happened at this time. Whether it was wise of Napoleon III to accomplish this is open to question; by weakening Austria, he removed the strongest check on Prussian ambitions to unify Germany, a development that could only threaten France in the long run..."<sup>34</sup>

Divine Providence was clearly using political forces to punish the papacy for its blasphemous new dogma of papal infallibility. For on the very day after the decree on the dogma was signed, July 19, 1870, Napoleon III, the Vatican's protector, declared war on Prussia and withdrew his troops from Rome. Garibaldi's men seized their opportunity. Blowing a hole in the Leonine wall they seized the city on September 20, only three weeks after Napoleon had been defeated by the Prussians at Sedan. Pius IX, writes Christopher Duggan, "was left with the small enclave of the Vatican. A law was passed in May 1871 that guaranteed the safety of the pope, provided him with an annual grant, and gave him the full dignities and privileges of a sovereign; but Pius IX rejected it out of hand. The rift between the liberal state and the Church was now broader and deeper than ever."<sup>35</sup>

With the exception of the tiny territory of the Vatican, the unification of Italy was now complete. W.M. Spellmann writes: "Under the terms of the first constitution (one actually issued in 1848 by Victor Emmanuel's father Charles Albert to his subjects in Piedmont-Sardinia) the monarch ruled 'by the grace of God' as well as 'by the will of the people'. A bicameral assembly was established with members of the upper house chosen by the king and the lower house elected on the basis of a very restricted franchise..."<sup>36</sup>

However, the nationalists were disgusted, writes Adam Zamoyski, that "the process... hailed as the Risorgimento, the national resurgence,... was nothing of the sort: a handful of patriots had been manipulated by a jackal monarchy and its pragmatic ministers. And the last act of 1870 had been the most opportunistic of all."<sup>37</sup>

Thus "it was a different Italy that I had dreamed of all my life," said Garibaldi a couple of years before his death. "I had hoped to evoke the soul of Italy," wrote

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<sup>34</sup> Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>35</sup> Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 143.

<sup>36</sup> Spellmann, *Monarchies*, London: Reaktion Press, 2001, p. 214.

<sup>37</sup> Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, p. 444.

Mazzini from exile, "and instead find merely her inanimate corpse." As was written on his tombstone: *O Italia, Quanta Gloria e Quanta Bassezza*.

And yet they had gained not only the unification of Italy but also the humiliation of the Papacy, of which Machiavelli had said: "The nearer people are to the Church of Rome, which is the head of our religion, the less religious they are... Her ruin and chastisement is near at hand... We Italians owe to the Church of Rome and to her priests our having become irreligious and bad; but we owe her a still greater debt, and one that will be the cause of our ruin, namely that the Church has kept and still keeps our country divided."<sup>38</sup>

To others, however, and not only Papists, the "ruin and chastisement" of the Church of Rome was no cause of rejoicing. Thus the Russian diplomat, Constantine Nikolaevich Leontiev, lamented: The Pope a prisoner! The first man of France [President Carnot] not baptized!"<sup>39</sup> The reason for his alarm was not far to find: for all its vices, and its newest heresies, the papacy was still one of the main forces restraining the liberal-socialist revolution as it descended ever more rapidly down the slippery slope towards atheism. And yet another Russian, the poet and diplomat, Fyodor Tyutchev, prophesied: "His undoing will not be the earthly sword which he possessed for so many years, but the fatal saying that 'Freedom of conscience is a delirium'".

Pius IX died in 1878 in self-imposed exile, having refused to set foot on Italian soil. And in 1881, as he was being carried to his new burial-place, mobs gathered and yelled: "Long Live Italy! Death to the Pope!"...<sup>40</sup>

In spite of the enormous blow dealt to the power and prestige of the papacy, its megalomaniac delusions continued. Thus in 1895 the Patriarch of Venice and future Pope Pius X, wrote: "The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under the veil of the flesh. Does the pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks. Does the pope accord a favour or pronounce an anathema? It is Jesus Christ who accords the favour or pronounces that anathema. So that when the pope speaks we have no business to examine..."<sup>41</sup>

Pagan man-worship was now enthroned at the heart of Catholic Europe, and no amount of Christian symbolism and verbiage could hide that fact. Meanwhile, Protestant Europe was fast descending into an abyss of naturalism and atheism,

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<sup>38</sup> Machiavelli, in Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, p. 528.

<sup>39</sup> Leontiev, "Natsional'naiia politika kak orudie vsemirnoj revoliutsii" (National politics as a weapon of universal revolution), *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 526. Leontiev also wrote: "If I were in Rome, I should not hesitate to kiss not only the hand but also the slipper of Leo XIII... Roman Catholicism suits my unabashed taste for despotism, my tendency to spiritual authority, and attracts my heart and mind for many other reasons" (*op. cit.*, p. 529). "An interesting ecumenical remark for an Orthodox," comments Wil van den Bercken (*Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 213), "but it is not meant that way." That is, he admired the papacy for its *authoritarianism* without sharing its religious errors.

<sup>40</sup> Baigent and Leigh, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>41</sup> Pope Pius X, in *Catholique Nationale*, July 13, 1895, Paris.

as Dostoyevsky had prophesied. In the twentieth century all of Europe, both Catholic and Protestant, would reap the bitter fruits of this apostasy.

### 3. THE BATTLE OF SEDAN AND THE PARIS COMMUNE

In August, 1866, just after his great victory over Austria, Bismarck expressed the view that the union of North and South Germany was “inevitable”. However, the Catholic South German states of Baden, Bavaria and Württemberg were strongly opposed. “Anti-unionist agitation depicted Protestant Prussia as anti-Catholic, authoritarian, repressive, militaristic and a threat to southern economic interests”<sup>42</sup> – which was quite an accurate portrayal.

Moreover, France was worried by Prussia’s sudden rise. Bismarck therefore began to look for opportunities to engineer a war with France so long as the blame for it could be laid on the French...

Napoleon III’s Second French Empire had greatly increased the prosperity of its bourgeois citizens while increasing the poverty of the proletariat. The proletarian slums of central Paris were cleared, making room for a new and beautiful city that the bourgeois could really enjoy and be proud of. Not that the emperor did not want to help the poor: he tried to introduce various reforms, which, however, were ineffective; hence his nickname, “the Well-Intentioned”. As he told Richard Cobden, “It is very difficult in France to make reforms; we make revolutions in France, not reforms”.<sup>43</sup>

In 1852 Alexis de Tocqueville had called the Second Empire “a bastard monarchy, despised by the enlightened classes, hostile to liberty, governed by intriguers, adventurers and valets... It will certainly die but its death will cost us dear.”<sup>44</sup> His prediction was correct in the longer term... And yet in the fateful year of 1870 Napoleon’s popularity and his future seemed assured. In a plebiscite, as Roger Price writes, “7,350,000 voters registered their approval, 1,538,000 voted ‘no’, and a further 1,900,000 abstained. To one senior official it represented ‘a new baptism of the Napoleonic dynasty’. It had escaped from the threat of political isolation. The liberal empire offered greater political liberty but also order and renewed prosperity. It had considerable appeal. The centres of opposition remained the cities, with 59 per cent of the votes in Paris negative and this rising to over 70 per cent in the predominantly workers *arrondissements* of the north-east. In comparison with the 1869 elections, however, opposition appeared to be waning. Republicans were bitterly disappointed. Even Gambetta felt bound to admit that ‘the empire is stronger than ever’. The only viable prospect seemed to be a long campaign to persuade the middle classes and peasants that the republic did not mean revolution”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London: Penguin, 2008, p. 547.

<sup>43</sup> Alistair Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris*, London: Pan Books, 2003, p. 277.

<sup>44</sup> Tocqueville, in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 670.

<sup>45</sup> Price, *A Concise History of France*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 188-189.

“In Germany,” writes Evans, “the Prussian victory [over the Austrians in 1866] marginalized the separatist politicians of the south German states, led by Bavaria, where the National Liberals were now generating an almost unstoppable enthusiasm for a final act of unification through the extension of the North German Confederation to the south. But France stood in the way. Following the Prussian victory, Napoleon III began to search for ways of limiting the threat to France that he saw in the emergence of a new strong power on the right bank of the Rhine. But he was unable to find any new allies to back him up; the Italians were irritated by the continuing French military defence of the Pope’s remaining territories in and around Rome, Britain stood aloof, and Russia still valued the Prussians’ role in Poland. Nevertheless, war fever began to grip the French political elite. As early as February 1869 the Minister of War told the Council of Ministers in Paris that ‘war with Prussia is inevitable and imminent. We are armed as never before.’ Thus the French emperor felt unable to remain inactive when on 2 July 1870 a member of a cadet branch of the Prussian royal family, Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (1835-1905), was offered the throne of Spain, which had become vacant through the enforced abdication of Queen Isabella. France considered Spain part of its own sphere of influence, and thought that Bismarck and Wilhelm were behind the candidacy. The result, French public opinion feared, would be a Prussian threat from the south as well as the east.

“Bismarck won international sympathy by claiming at the time, and later, that Prince Leopold’s candidature had come as a complete surprise to him. It was not until after the Second World War that documents from the Sigmaringen archive came to light showing that Leopold’s father had consulted Wilhelm I as soon as the first tentative approach was made from Spain, and that Bismarck had advised the king to encourage the candidacy. This was not because Bismarck wanted a war; it was for him just another lever of diplomatic pressure. Indeed, when the French ambassador Count Vincent Benedetti (1817-1900) met Wilhelm at his spa retreat in Bad Ems, the king agreed to withdraw his support for Leopold, who retired to his estate and never did become a monarch, although his brother and his son both became rulers of Romania. The matter seemed to be settled. However, the Prussian king was waylaid by the French ambassador during a walk and confronted with fresh demands. Wilhelm ‘sternly’ rejected Benedetti’s ‘importunate’ demand that France should support a candidature like Leopold’s neither in the present nor at any time in the future, and he sent his aide-de-camp to tell Benedetti that he was not willing to receive him again. Wilhelm’s staff sent a telegram to Bismarck reporting the outcome. Bismarck’s published a brief summary of the telegram left out the polite phrases with which Wilhelm had gilded his conversation with Benedetti. But the key lay in the mistranslation of the French term aide-de-camp as ‘adjutant of the day’, which made it seem as if a very lowly non-commissioned officer, not a close personal assistant, had been sent to give Benedetti the brush-off. This apparent insult was enough for Napoleon III, already seeking another foreign success to bolster his fading popularity, to issue a declaration of war.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-261.

And so French national vanity in relation to the “barbaric” Germans<sup>47</sup>, combined with Bismarckian cunning, led to war. Technology was decisive in this war: just as the Prussians’ lightning-fast “needle gun” had given them the edge over the Austrians in 1866, so Krupp’s six-pounder cannons – and their use of the railways to transport large numbers of troops much more speedily and flexibly – gave them victory over French at Sedan in September, 1870.

“Seeing that the game was up,” writes Evans, “Napoleon III sent a message of surrender to Wilhelm, Moltke and Bismarck. Offered a flask of brandy, Bismarck toasted everyone in English, ‘Here’s to the unification of Germany’, and drank the entire flask. In an attempt to gain mild terms, Napoleon III rode out in person from Sedan, and was met by Bismarck, who sat him down on a bench by an inn. The conversation was held in the German the emperor had learned as a child. Bismarck informed Napoleon that the entire French army would be taken into captivity, and the siege of Metz would continue. ‘Then everything is lost,’ the emperor mumbled. ‘Yes, quite right,’ replied Bismarck brutally: ‘everything really is lost’. Some 100,000 French troops were made to lay down their arms and were taken to prison camps. As the news reached Paris, on 3 September 1870, riots broke out. About 60,000 people gathered on the Place de la Concorde, shouting ‘Death to the Bonapartes! Long live the nation!’ On 4 September the Assembly proclaimed the deposition of the dynasty and the creation of the Third Republic. Napoleon III was taken to Kassel, where he was eventually allowed to go into exile in England.”<sup>48</sup>

Napoleon's defeat was caused in part by a sudden withdrawal of support by the Freemasons. The reason for this may have been the fact that Napoleon's troops in Rome had protected the papacy from final destruction... Thus Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: "N[icholas] K[arlovich] Girs, who was at that time Russian consul in Berne (Switzerland), and later minister of foreign affairs (chancellor) of Alexander III, in accordance with the duties of his office observed and carefully studied the activity of the Masonic centre in Berne. To it came encoded dispatches from French Masons with exact dates about the movements, deployment and military plans of the French armies. These were immediately transferred through Masonic channels to the Prussian command. The information came from Masonic officers of the French army. And so France was doomed! No strategy and tactics, no military heroism could save her. It turned out that international Masonry had 'sentenced' France to defeat beforehand, and that the French 'brother-masons' had obediently carried out the sentence on their own country (fatherland!). Here is a vivid example of Masonic cooperation with

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Victor Hugo: "It is in Paris that the beating of Europe's heart is felt. Paris is the city of cities. Paris is the city of men. There has been an Athens, there has been a Rome, and now there is Paris... Is the nineteenth century to witness this frightful phenomenon? A nation fallen from polity, to barbarism, abolishing the city of nations; Germans extinguishing Paris... Can you give this spectacle to the world?" (in Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 287).

<sup>48</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

the defeat of their own government with the aim of overthrowing it and establishing an authority pleasing to the Masons."<sup>49</sup>

Sedan not only reversed the French victory over the Prussians at Valmy in 1792, when the Masons had supported the French against the Prussians. It also destroyed the protector-client relationship between France and the Roman papacy, which had begun when Pope Stephen had crossed the Alps to seek to anoint the Frankish King Pippin in the eighth century, and which had been profoundly shaken by the first Napoleon. Most importantly, however, Sedan laid the foundations for the unification of Germany – and that Franco-German hatred which led to the First World War...

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After the battle of Sedan, writes Mark Almond, "as the victorious Germans closed in on Paris, the Third Republic, proclaimed [by Gambetta] on 4 September, tried to rally the defence of France, looking back to the example of the First Republic eighty years earlier: 'The Republic was victorious over the invasion of 1793. The Republic is declared.' But the dearth of trained soldiers and equipment made resistance to the Germans very difficult, and by 19 September the German army had surrounded and laid siege to Paris.

"The siege was the essential ingredient in the radicalisation of the city's population. The famine and other burdens reduced many of the recently prosperous to penury, even prostitution...

"Some 350,000 men formed a National Guard to defend the city; most of them depended on their soldier's pay for their livelihood because the economy had collapsed during the siege. Attempts to break out of the city failed on 27 October 1870 and 19 January 1871, and provoked demonstrations at the Hôtel de Ville. Already the suspicion was spreading that politicians outside Paris were less devoted to resistance than the people of the capital...

"Despite the efforts of the Parisians to hold out against the besieging army, the French government felt it was futile to continue the war and signed an armistice with Germany on 28 January 1871. This treaty brought an end to the siege but imposed humiliating terms on France, including the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine and a crippling war indemnity of 5 million francs.

"France went to the polls on 8 February to vote for a new government that would (in accordance with the armistice) take responsibility for accepting or rejecting Germany's terms for peace. The results revealed how different Paris was from the rest of France. Paris elected a group of radicals to the Assembly, while monarchists dominated the elections elsewhere. The monarchist majority wanted peace with the Germans, whatever the humiliation.

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<sup>49</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 363-364. Cf. V. F. Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dnei* (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry: from Peter I to our days), Moscow, 1997, pp. 358-359.

"To achieve this peace, the Prime Minister, Thiers, had to disarm the National Guard in Paris. He ordered the Guard to hand over its artillery to the regular army on 18 March 1871. But he had already antagonised the Guard by cutting its pay, which hit the poor much as the abolition of national workshops had done in 1848. The poor had also been hit when the new National Assembly voted to end the wartime moratorium on debts and rents. Thus the people of Montmartre, especially the women, rallied to stop their cannons being hauled away. Bloody clashes occurred between the army and the people. The mayor of Montmartre, Georges Clemenceau, was shocked by the violence of the outburst: 'The mob which filled the courtyard burst into the street in the grip of some kind of frenzy. Amongst them were chasseurs, soldiers of the line, National Guards, women and children. All were shrieking like wild beasts without realizing what they were doing. I observed then that pathological phenomenon which might be called blood lust. A breath of madness seemed to have passed over this mob...'

"Several hours of fighting and rioting followed, at the end of which the government troops appeared to be no nearer to capturing the guns of Montmartre. Thiers decided to withdraw his forces and remove the Government from the capital city to Versailles. The rebels in Paris, meanwhile, voted to revive the Commune (on the model of 1792) in defiance of the government.

"Only four members of the Commune represented the recently founded Marxist Workingman's International. Twenty-five out of the Commune's ninety members worked with their hands, but mainly as skilled artisans. They were outnumbered by professionals, such as journalists, radical doctors and teachers. But two-thirds or more of the Commune's members would have described themselves as the heirs of the Jacobins of 1793. Karl Marx himself did not at first recognise the Communards as the proletarian revolutionaries of his future Communist society, but his sympathy with their struggle against the French bourgeoisie encouraged the romanticization of the Communard as a premature Communist revolutionary...

"Nationalism and popular local government rather than social revolution were the rallying cries of the Commune, but the flight from Paris of Thiers' government and most of the wealthy members of society created a new social situation. In the absence of many of the bourgeois elite, Paris fell into the hands of members of the lower orders, who had little experience of administration. Marx noted that the Communards lacked effective leadership. 'They should at once have marched on Versailles,' he wrote, before Thiers had time to complete amassing his army. But the Communards' revolutionary hostility to rank meant that their forces lacked an effective commander-in-chief who might have seized the moment. Spontaneity without strategy was bound to fail.

"From March 1871, two rival authorities existed in France, the national government at Versailles and the Commune in Paris, each with its own armed force and each jockeying for political power. Half-hearted negotiations between the two authorities did take place, but when these broke down Thiers decided to

attempt once more to retake the capital. He brought up an army of provincial Frenchmen, suspicious and resentful of what they saw as arrogant Parisians trying to dictate politics to France as so often before. Naturally the Germans looked favourably on any blood-letting among the French that would weaken them further.

"On 2 April, government troops seized Courbevoie, a suburb of Paris, and began a new siege of Paris. For several weeks Government troops bombarded the fortresses protecting the capital, taking them one by one, and by 21 May the army was able to force its way into Paris through an undefended point to the south-west of the city. Over the next seven days, known as the 'bloody week', the army methodically re-conquered the capital from west to east. Each *quartier* defended itself, giving the army the opportunity to pick off district after district. In the course of the struggle, the Communards set fire to ancient buildings like the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville. They also shot their hostages, including the Archbishop of Paris, Georges Darboy. Given the anti-clerical tradition of revolution in France he might have seemed an ideal reactionary scapegoat, but Darboy himself was disliked by French conservatives: he had voted against Papal Infallibility at the Vatican Council two years earlier and was something of a liberal. The Communards ensured that Paris would not have another liberal archbishop for almost a century...

"As many as 20,000 Communards - including women and children - were killed as the army fought its way forward through the streets of Paris, while another 40,000 insurgents were taken prisoner. About half of these were released soon enough, but 10,000 were transported to the colonies, including the remote New Caledonia in the South Pacific."<sup>50</sup>

"The lead in the revolt," writes E.P. Thompson, "with its echoes of 1793 and 1848, was taken by the few thousand followers of the veteran revolutionary, Auguste Blanqui, idol of the Paris underworld of conspirators... But it was neither a mainly communist and Marxist movement, nor even closely connected with the recently formed First International. It was a peculiarly French and Parisian revolt, the apotheosis of the long French revolutionary tradition and an outburst of local pride and distress, fiercely patriotic and anti-German."<sup>51</sup>

"These startling events, which brought an oriental barbarism into the most civilized and cosmopolitan capital of Europe, had decisive consequences for nascent socialism. Marx wrote his pamphlet on *The Civil War in France*, which hailed the Commune as the dawn of a new era of direct proletarian revolutionary action and a triumph for his own followers and for the International. Frightened property-owning classes everywhere in Europe took him at his word, and saw in the Commune the beginning of a fresh revolutionary menace. Even a confusion of words contributed to this widespread misinterpretation of the Commune. *Communards* were assumed to be *communists*. *Capitulards* (as the rebels called Thiers and his ministers who 'capitulated' and made peace with Germany) were

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<sup>50</sup> Almond, *Revolution*, London: De Agostini, 1996, pp. 112-113, 114-115.

<sup>51</sup> Thompson, *Europe since Napoleon*, London: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 395.

confused with *capitalists*. The Marxist analysis of the event as a landmark in the class war was made to fit only by a distortion of both facts and words. It can be regarded more accurately as the last dying flicker of an old tradition, the tradition of the barricades of 1789 and 1848, rather than as the beginning of a new. Never again was Paris to impose her will upon the rest of France, as she had done before 1871. The aftermath of the Commune and of its repression was the exile or imprisonment of all the more revolutionary elements in France; and the new parliamentary republic was erected during their elimination from the scene. It was only after 1879, when the republican parties gained full control of the Republic, that amnesties were granted and more active socialist movements could again operate freely in France."<sup>52</sup>

"All Europe," writes Jacques Barzun, "including many liberals and socialists disavowed the Commune, which was the name chosen by the insurgents to show their organic bond as citizens of the municipality. But Karl Marx in London, seeing the chance for a political stroke, and perhaps also the value of that name, issued a pamphlet that represented the insurgents as a foretaste of the class war to come - the proletariat aroused and about to establish Communism. This was a piece of big-lie propaganda. The *Communards* were neither proletariat nor *Communists*. The 'municipal republics' they wanted to set up in the rest of France were the opposite of the central dictatorship of Marx's program. But Marx had rightly judged that the event had given worldwide notoriety to workingmen in arms. The image could be a vivid myth for the Idea of the next revolution."<sup>53</sup>

In view of the strong influence exerted by Freemasonry on the Franco-Prussian war, it may be asked whether it exerted a similar influence on the struggle between the Third Republic and the Paris Commune that followed it... The evidence is ambiguous. According to Jasper Ridley, "several of the leaders of the Paris Commune were Freemasons. Benoit Halon, who was a member of Marx's International Working Men's Association (later known as the First International); Felix Pyat; the songwriter Jean Baptiste Clément, who wrote the song 'Le Temps des Cerises' (Cherry Time) about the Commune; Zéphian Camélinat, who survived to become a member of the Communist Party in 1920; and another songwriter, Eugène Pottier, who wrote, among other poems and songs, the words of *L'Internationale*. But there were Freemasons on the other side. Louis Blanc condemned the Paris Commune, and remained in the National Assembly at Versailles; and from Italy Mazzini strongly condemned the Commune, though Garibaldi supported it.

"On 29 April 1871 some Paris Freemasons set out from Paris to go to Versailles to discuss with [the non-masonic] Thiers ways of ending the civil war between the government and the Commune. They carried their Masonic banners as they

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<sup>52</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-396.

<sup>53</sup> Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, New York, 2000. Stephen Kotkin writes: "Marx had both praised and denigrated [the Commune]. The Commune, which lasted all of seventy-two days, had inspired the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat (in the 1891 preface to a reissue of the *Civil War in France*, Engels had written. 'Do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.')

(*Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 232).

walked through the Porte Maillot. On this section of the battlefield the government army was commanded by General Montaudon, who was a Freemason. He ordered a ceasefire to allow the Freemasons from Paris to pass through his lines. They went on to Versailles, where their Masonic brother, Jules Simon, took them to see Thiers; but Thiers insisted that Paris must submit unconditionally to the government at Versailles."<sup>54</sup>

The events of 1870 are a vivid example of the power of Freemasonry, both in the overthrow of Napoleon III and in the inspiration of the Commune.

However, the Commune itself was divided between radicals and moderates, as the original French revolution had been in 1789-93. This is a phenomenon that we find in most revolutions: while the Masons may be in favour of the idea of revolution as such, when it comes to the actual bloody reality, in which they are likely to lose property if not their own lives, many of them hang back...

It is at this time that we find the leading Masons of the world trying to create a unifying centre. Thus on January 22, 1870 Mazzini wrote to the famous American Mason Albert Pike: "We have to found a Super-Circle which must remain in complete secrecy and to which we will summon the Masons of the higher degrees at our own choice. Regarding our brothers, we have to bind these people by oath in the strictest secrecy. By means of this highest circle, we shall control all the movements of the Freemasons: it will become an international centre which will be the more powerful the fewer people know who rules it." For Mazzini, in fact, the unification of Italy had never been his main aim, "but only the means to attaining world power".

In reply, on September 20, 1870 Pike signed an agreement with Mazzini, according to which the Supreme Masonic cult, uniting all the Masons of the world, between thirty and forty million throughout the world, would be established in Rome.<sup>55</sup> For Rome now, thanks to the overthrow of Napoleon and the triumph of Garibaldi, was in the hands of the revolution...

The career of Napoleon III, and his sudden, totally unexpected fall in 1870, is a vivid demonstration not only of the fragility of political power in general, but also of that specific form of power known as Bonapartism, which is brought to power by the revolution and supposedly accepts its ideals, but then attempts to ride the tiger of the revolution in a despotic manner. The end of Bonapartism is always the same. Having suffered defeat (usually of a military kind), the despot finds that the popularity he courted so assiduously deserts him in a moment. For when asked to choose between an unanointed despot they themselves have put in power and the survival of the nation, the people always choose the nation. This happened to the first Napoleon in 1814, and it happened to the third Napoleon in 1870, to whom they shouted: "Death to the Bonapartes! Long live the nation!"

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<sup>54</sup> Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 214.

<sup>55</sup> Yu.K. Begunov, A.D. Stepanov, K.Yu. Dushenov, *Taina Bezzakonia* (The Mystery of Iniquity), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 387-388.

The aftermath of Sedan revealed not only the “oriental barbarism” of the Communards but also that of the new German army. Private property was plundered, and civilians murdered in their thousands. “Chateaudun, a town of 7,000 was burned to the ground. Near Toul, the Prussian 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment, pursuing *franc-tireurs*, burned the village of Fontenay-sur-Moselle, but, finding no ‘citizen soldiers’, bayoneted all the inhabitants and threw them into the flames...”<sup>56</sup>

A new barbarism had entered European politics.

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<sup>56</sup> Tampke, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

#### 4. SOCIALISM AND CATHOLICISM

An important byproduct of the Franco-Prussian War was that "the Russians seized the opportunity to announce that their battleships would sail on the Black Sea, 'for reasons of security and the desire to preserve and strengthen peace'. Since this was supported by Bismarck,... the other powers went along with it too,"<sup>57</sup> and Russia's restoration to her dominion in the Black Sea area - reinforced by her victory over Shamil's Islamist fighters in the North Caucasus - was made official at the Treaty of London in 1867.

Still more important in the longer term, however, was the fact that even if the Paris Commune cannot be called communist in the strict sense, its defeat represented a defeat for the revolutionary movement at the same time as another of her bitterest enemies, the Roman Papacy, was humbled by the Risorgimento.

Following the insight of some French socialist thinkers, such as Saint-Simon, Dostoyevsky saw a link between the two seemingly antithetical antichristian systems of the reactionary Papacy and revolutionary Socialism.

This idea had been brewing in his mind for some years. "Present-day French Socialism," he wrote, "is nothing but the truest and most direct continuation of the Catholic idea, its fullest, most final consequence which has been evolved through centuries. French Socialism is nothing else than the compulsory union of mankind - an idea which dates back to ancient Rome and which was fully expressed in Catholicism."<sup>58</sup>

Papism, according to Dostoyevsky, was the beginning of western atheism. As Prince Myshkin says in *The Idiot* (1868): "Roman Catholicism believes that the Church cannot exist on earth without universal temporal power, and cries: *Non possumus!* In my opinion, Roman Catholicism isn't even a religion, but most decidedly a continuation of the Holy Roman Empire, and everything in it is subordinated to that idea, beginning with faith. The Pope seized the earth, an earthly throne and took up the sword; and since then everything has gone on in the same way, except that they've added lies, fraud, deceit, fanaticism, superstition wickedness. They have trifled with the most sacred, truthful, innocent, ardent feelings of the people, have bartered it all for money, for base temporal power. And isn't this the teaching of Antichrist? Isn't it clear from Roman Catholicism itself! Atheism originated first of all with them: how could they believe in themselves? It gained ground because of abhorrence of them; it is the child of their lies and their spiritual impotence! Atheism! In our country it is only the upper classes who do not believe, as Mr. Radomsky so splendidly put it the other day, for they have lost their roots. But in Europe vast numbers of the common people are beginning to lose their faith - at first from darkness and lies, and now from fanaticism, hatred of the Church and Christianity!"<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Norman Lowe, *Mastering Twentieth Century Russian History*, Houndmill: Palgrave, 2002, p. 71.

<sup>58</sup> Dostoyevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Moscow, 1914, vol. I, p. 150.

<sup>59</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, Penguin Magarshack translation, p. 585.

And since Socialism is "above all an atheistic question, the question of the modern integration of atheism [it], too, is the child of Catholicism and the intrinsic Catholic nature! It, too, like its brother atheism, was begotten of despair, in opposition to Catholicism as a moral force, in order to replace the lost moral power of religion, to quench the spiritual thirst of parched humanity, and save it not by Christ, but also by violence! This, too, is freedom by violence. This, too, is union through the sword and blood. 'Don't dare to believe in God! Don't dare to have property! Don't dare to have a personality of your own! *Fraternité ou la mort!* Two million heads!'"<sup>60</sup>

So akin is Socialism to Papism that Papism "will tell the people that Christ also preached everything that the Socialists are preaching to them. Again it will pervert and sell them Christ as it has sold Him so many times in the past."<sup>61</sup>

Peter Verkhovensky in *The Devils* (1871) even envisages the possibility of the Pope becoming the leader of the Socialists: "Do you know, I was thinking of delivering the world up to the Pope. Let him go barefoot and show himself to the mob, saying, 'See what they have brought me to!' and they will all follow him, even the army. The Pope on top, we all round him, and below us - the Shigalev order. All we need is that the Internationale should come to an agreement with the Pope; this will come about. The old boy will agree at once. He can't do anything else. Mark my words."<sup>62</sup>

"The Western Church," wrote Dostoyevsky, "has distorted the image of Christ, having been transformed from a Church into a Roman state and incarnated it again in the form of the papacy. Yes, in the West there is in truth no longer Christianity and the Church, although there are still many Christians - yes, and they will never disappear. Catholicism is truly no longer Christianity, and is passing into idol-worship, while Protestantism with giant steps is passing into atheism and a slippery, shifting, inconstant (and not age-old) teaching on morality. The Empire accepted Christianity, and the Church - the Roman law and state. A small part of the Church departed into the desert and began to continue its former work: Christian communities appeared again, then monasteries. But then the remaining, huge part of the Church divided, as we know, into two halves. In the western half the state finally overcame the Church completely. The Church was annihilated and was reincarnated finally into a state. There appeared the papacy - a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire in a new incarnation."<sup>208</sup>

Dostoyevsky saw in Germany's victory over France in 1871 an attempt to crush Socialism, and thereby Papism: "By depriving France of her political existence, Prince Bismarck hopes to deliver a blow at socialism. Socialism, as a heritage of Catholicism, and France are most hateful to a genuine German. It is excusable that

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<sup>60</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, p. 586.

<sup>61</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, 1877.

<sup>62</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, August, 1880; *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Moscow, 1984, vol. 26, pp. 151, 169. Cf. Thomas Hobbes: "The papacy is nothing other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof" (*Leviathan*).

Germany's representatives believe that it is so easy to master socialism by merely destroying Catholicism - as its source and beginning.

"However, this is what is most probably going to happen should France fall politically: Catholicism will lose its sword, and for the first time will appeal to the people whom it has been despising for so many centuries, ingratiating itself with worldly kings and emperors. Now, however, it will appeal to the people, since there is nowhere else to go; specifically, it will appeal to the leaders of the most worldly and rebellious element of the people - the socialists. Catholicism will tell the people that Christ also preached everything the socialists are preaching to them. Once more it will pervert and sell them Christ as it has Him so many times in the past for earthly possessions, defending the rights of the Inquisition which, in the name of loving Christ, tortured men for freedom of conscience - in the name of Christ to Whom only that disciple was dear who came to Him of his free accord and not the one who had been bought or frightened.

"Catholicism sold Christ when it blessed the Jesuits and sanctioned the righteousness of 'every means for Christ's cause'. However, since time immemorial, it has converted Christ's cause into a mere concern for its earthly possessions and its future political domination over the whole world. When Catholic mankind turned away from the monstrous image in which, at length, Christ had been revealed to them, - after many protests, reformations, etc., at the beginning of this century - endeavours arose to organize life without God, without Christ. Devoid of the instinct of a bee or an ant, unmistakably and with utmost precision constructing their hive and ant-hill, men sought to create something on the order of an unmistakable ant-hill. They rejected the unique formula of mankind's salvation, derived from God and announced through revelation to man: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and substituted for it practical inferences, such as '*Chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous*' ('Each one for himself and God for all'), or scientific axioms, such as 'the struggle for existence'.

"Bereft of the instinct which guides animals and enables them to organize their life faultlessly, men haughtily sought to rely upon science, forgetting that for such a task as the creation of society, science is still, so to speak, in swaddles. Dreams ensued. The future tower of Babylon became the ideal but also the dread of humanity. But after these dreams there soon appeared other simple doctrines, intelligible to everybody, for instance: 'to rob the rich, to stain the world with blood, after which *somehow everything will again be settled of its own accord*.'

"Finally, even these teachers were outstripped: there appeared the doctrine of anarchy, after which - if it could be put into effect - there would again ensue a period of cannibalism, and people would be compelled to start all over again as they started some ten thousand years ago. Catholicism fully understands all this, and it will manage to seduce the leaders of the underground war. It will say to them: 'You have no centre, no order in the conduct of the work; you are a force scattered all over the world, and now, after the downfall of France [Dostoyevsky is referring to the fall of the Commune in 1871] - also an oppressed force. I shall be your rallying center, and I shall attract to you all those who still believe in me.'

"One way or another, the alliance will be formed. Catholicism does not wish to die, whereas social revolution and the new social period in Europe are indubitable: the two forces, unquestionably, will have to come to an understanding, to unite... Precisely then [Catholicism] may hope to catch once more its fish in troubled waters, foreseeing the moment when, finally, mankind, exhausted by chaos and lawlessness, will fall into its arms. Then, once more, it will become in reality the sole and absolute 'earthly ruler and universal authority', sharing its power with no one. Thereby it will attain its ultimate goal."<sup>63</sup>

Dostoyevsky said of socialism that "it is not only the question of the workers, or of the so-called fourth estate, but primarily the question of atheism, the question of the contemporary incarnation of atheism: the question of the Babylonian tower, which is being built without God, not for attaining the heavens from the earth, but to bring the heavens down to earth."<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless, from his early socialist days until his later life as a conservative Orthodox Christian, Dostoyevsky remained profoundly concerned about "the question of the workers", about social justice and poverty. While rejecting atheist socialism, and all revolutionary violence, he believed in a "Russian socialism", which he identified with "a great universal church on earth", universal brotherhood and the free unity of mankind in Christ. Without Christ and the ideal of personal holiness, socialism descended into a sordid love of money.

He believed in a kind of Christian socialism consisting in the fulfilment of Christ's commandments and in the Christian spirit. Both regime change and redistribution of wealth can and perhaps should be carried out, but in God's time, in His way - and by Him. For it is He Who "has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away" (Luke 1.52-53). "Present-day socialism," however, "in Europe and here in Russia, removes Christ everywhere and cares first of all about bread. It summons science and asserts that the reason for all human calamities is one - poverty, the struggle for existence." These socialists, "in my observation, in their expectation of a future arrangement of society without personal property, love money terribly in the meantime and value it extremely, in accordance with the idea they attach to it... "Christ knew that by bread alone, one cannot bring man to life. If there will be no spiritual life, the ideal of Beauty, then man will languish and die, he will go mad and kill himself or descend into pagan fantasies. And as Christ in Himself and in His Word bore the ideal of Beauty, He then decided it better to imbue in souls the ideal of Beauty; having this at heart, all men will become brothers to one another and then, of course, working for one another, they will be wealthy."<sup>65</sup>

Dostoyevsky was as scandalized as anyone by the vast gap between the rich and the poor: "I could never understand the notion," he writes, "that only one-

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<sup>63</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, November, 1877, pp. 910-912.

<sup>64</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, I, 5.

<sup>65</sup> Dostoyevsky, letter to V.A. Alekseev, June 7, 1876, No. 550.

tenth of people should attain higher development, and the remaining nine-tenths should serve only as a means and material to that goal while themselves remaining in darkness. I don't want to think and live in any way but with the faith that our ninety million Russians (or however many will be born) will all someday be educated, humanized and happy."<sup>66</sup>

However, Dostoyevsky did not believe that socialism could bring real equality, and still less fraternity. Rather, the socialist revolution would sacrifice the lives of millions for the sake of the hypothetical happiness of a few: "Brotherhood will be formed from the proletariat later, and you - you are one hundred million souls condemned to extermination and nothing more. You are finished for the sake of humanity's happiness."<sup>67</sup>

Socialist redistribution in a peaceful and just way will never take place: "Never shall they be able to share out amongst each other," says the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*, "and even the bread acquired by them will turn to stone in their hands..."

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<sup>66</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, January, 1876.

<sup>67</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, February, 1877.

## 5. AMERICA'S RECONSTRUCTION

It is difficult to resist the thought that Abraham Lincoln's assassination was retribution for the evil deed of the Civil War, the extremely bloody overthrow of the patriarchal society of the South and the replacement of the old slavery system by the new-style slavery of being at the bottom of the wage-labour industrial system, with the blacks as the continuing victims of the racism of the unreformed whites...<sup>68</sup>

Be that as it may, there was now a golden opportunity for the man who succeeded Lincoln as president, Andrew Johnson, to compensate for the blood shed in the war by introducing true emancipation. After all, the South was truly beaten, and submissive; it was necessary that the hundreds of thousands who had died for emancipation should not have died in vain; and, above all, the needs of the Black Americans were great. But, "as is always the case," writes Lieven, "military victory needed to be reinforced by a political settlement, and in the American case this meant accepting a wide degree of autonomy for the South within the Union, thereby abandoning the Southern blacks. White racism helped to make this settlement acceptable to the great majority of Northerners."<sup>69</sup>

Another important factor was that President Johnson, a southerner and a Democrat, was simply not up to the job; true emancipation had to await his namesake Lyndon Johnson's great programme of civil right legislation a century later. The Thirteenth Amendment banning slavery was already part of the Constitution. But the Fourteenth Amendment, which made Black Americans full US citizens with equal protection under the law, was vetoed by Johnson. Moreover, so long as they explicitly accepted the Thirteenth Amendment, nothing more was required of Southern Senators and Congressmen by Johnson. "In practice," writes Hugh Brogan, "this meant that the future of the Southern blacks could not be settled until after the white South had regained most of its old rights and privileges."

But this meant in turn that "the South might have been defeated in war, but her resources for racial oppression were by no means exhausted.

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<sup>68</sup> According to one source I have not been able to verify, on the day following the assassination, April 15, Nicholas Motovilov wrote to the Tsar informing him that he had received the following revelation from St. Seraphim of Sarov on April 1 about the death of Abraham Lincoln: "The Lord and the Mother of God not only do not like the terrible oppression, destruction and unrighteous humiliation that is being wrought everywhere with us in Russia by the Decembrists and raging abolitionists: the goodness of God is also thoroughly displeased by the offences caused by Lincoln and the North Americans to the slave-owners of the Southern States, and so Batiushka Father Seraphim has ordered that the image of the Mother of God the Joy of all who Sorrow should be sent to the President of the Southern - that is, precisely the slave-owning States. And he has ordered that the inscription be attached to it: TO THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF LINCOLN." (Sergius and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow: Rodnik, 1994, vol. I, p. 343)

<sup>69</sup> Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, pp. 22-23.

"This response, which gradually crystallized during the late summer and autumn of 1865, had two principal expressions.

"One was violent. Very soon the freedmen and their friends found themselves attacked and threatened; but the climax did not come for a year or two, although the Klu Klux Klan was actually founded at Pulaski, Tennessee, on Christmas Eve, 1865. Even so, the struggle between Congress and President over the future of the South from the start took place against a background of brutal conflict...

'The South's second weapon was not lawlessness, but the law. No sooner were the Johnsonian legislatures elected than they began to pass the so-called 'Black Codes': statutes which, far from conferring on the freedmen the right to vote, denied them all but the most rudimentary civil rights and liberties. Provisions varied somewhat from state to state, but on the whole it is true to say that the codes, while at last recognizing the legality of black marriages (though not to white persons), while conferring on blacks the right to sue and be sued in the courts, even to testify against whites, and the right to hold property, in every other respect tried to maintain the slavery laws. For instance, freedmen were required to hire themselves out by the year, and were denied the right either to strike or leave their employment. Slavery was thus to become an annually renewed institution. Any black found unemployed or travelling without any employer's sanction would be arrested, fined for vagrancy and turned over to whatever white employer desired his services... Schooling was one of the most passionately cherished ambitions of the ex-slaves, yet no provisions were made for black education. The Louisiana code went into considerable detail about the free labourer's life, quite in the spirit of slavery times: 'Bad work shall not be allowed. Failing to obey reasonable orders, neglect of duty, and leaving home without permission will be deemed disobedience; impudence, swearing, or indecent language and fighting with one another, shall be deemed disobedience. For any disobedience a fine of one dollar shall be imposed.' The Mississippi code imposed swinging fines on anyone wicked enough to entice a labourer away from his contracted employer with promises of better pay or conditions. All codes forbade freedmen the use of weapons of any kind. So much for the Northern crusade for human equality. As a leading Northern liberal, Carl Schurz, remarked, the codes embodied the idea that although individual whites no longer have property in individual blacks, 'the blacks at large belong to the whites at large.'"<sup>70</sup>

Thus the slaves were freed,<sup>71</sup> to enjoy unemployment, continued poverty and the continued oppression of the whites. What they really needed was land and training – but were denied both. And so "The slaves were freed," writes David Reynolds, "but they did not become equal citizens. The twelve-year Northern occupation of the South from 1865 to 1877, known as Reconstruction, was too short and not radical enough to reconstruct Southern ways; in fact, the South defiantly romanticized the pre-war order as part of its separate identity. From the perspective of civil rights, Reconstruction was therefore a tragic missed

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<sup>70</sup> Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 2019, pp. 351-453.

<sup>71</sup> The state of Mississippi did not formally revoke slavery until 1995, and its decision was not entered into the Federal register until 2012 (<https://lenta.ru/news/2013/02/19/mississippi/>).

opportunity - not rectified until the so-called Second Reconstruction of the 1960s, which depended on an assertion of federal power inconceivable to the still essentially states' rights mentality of the 1860s. In any case, most Northerners of the late nineteenth century were just as Negrophobe as their Southern counterparts; they had little inclination to force on the South racial policies they rejected for themselves. So, instead of slave and free, the great divide in American society became the one between white and black...

"Freedom is heady stuff but it does not fill stomachs. Frederick Douglass, the Northern Black leader, noted that many a freed slave, after a lifetime of dependence, lacked the means or training to set up on his own. Now 'he must make his own way in the world, or as the slang phrase has it, "Root, pig, or die"; yet he had none of the conditions of self-preservation or self-protection. He was free from the individual master but the slave of society. He had neither money, property, nor friends. He was free from the old plantation' - but was turned loose 'naked, hungry and destitute to the open sky'. And there were 4 million freed slaves across the South in 1865."<sup>72</sup>

What the blacks really needed was land and training - and they were denied both. And as the white supremacists regained political control, while sabotaging all efforts to improve conditions for the blacks, the Northerners began to lose enthusiasm for reform.<sup>73</sup>

"In a sense," writes J.M. Roberts, "there had been no colour problem while slavery existed. Servile status was the barrier separating the overwhelming majority of blacks (there had always been a few free among them) from whites, and it was upheld by legal sanction. Emancipation swept away the framework of legal inferiority and replaced this with a framework, or myth, of democratic equality when very few Americans were ready to give this social reality. Millions of blacks in the South were suddenly free. They were also for the most part uneducated, largely untrained except for field labour, and virtually without leadership of their own race. For a little while in the Southern states they leant for support on the occupying armies of the Union; when this prop was removed blacks disappeared from legislatures and public offices of the Southern states to which they had briefly aspired. In some areas they disappeared from the polling-booths, too. Legal disabilities were replaced by a social and physical coercion which was sometimes harsher than the old regime of slavery. The slave at least had the value to his master of being an investment of capital; he was protected like other property and was usually ensured a minimum of security and maintenance. Competition in a free labour market at a moment when the economy

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<sup>72</sup> Reynolds, *America, Empire of Liberty: A New History*, London: Penguin, pp. 218, 219-220.

<sup>73</sup> Thus "the lawmakers of Illinois - the president's home state - called the Proclamation [of Emancipation in 1863] 'a gigantic usurpation at once converting the war professedly commenced by the Administration for the vindication of the authority of the Constitution into the crusade for the sudden, unconditional and violent liberation of 3 million negro slaves, a result which would not only be a total subversion of the Federal Union but a revolution in the social organization of the Southern States the present and far-reaching consequences of which to both races cannot be contemplated without the most dismal foreboding of horror and dismay.'" (in Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 199)

of large areas of the South was in ruins, with impoverished whites struggling for subsistence, was disastrous for the black. By the end of the century he had been driven by a poor white population bitterly resentful of defeat and emancipation into social subordination and economic deprivation."<sup>74</sup>

"Of course," writes the famous Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, "slave societies, including that of the South, were doomed. None of them survived the period from 1848 to 1890 - not even Cuba and Brazil. They were already isolated both physically, by the abolition of the African slave-trade, which was pretty effective by the 1850s, and, as it were, morally, by the overwhelming consensus of bourgeois liberalism which regarded them as contrary to history's march, morally undesirable and economically inefficient. It is difficult to envisage the survival of the South as a slave society into the twentieth century, any more than the survival of serfdom in Eastern Europe, even if (like some schools of historians) we consider both economically viable as systems of production. But what brought the South to the point of crisis in the 1850s was a more specific problem: the difficulty of coexisting with a dynamic northern capitalism and a flood of migration into the West.

"In purely economic terms, the North was not much worried about the South, an agrarian region hardly involved in industrialisation. Time, population, resources and production were on its side. The main stumbling-blocks were political. The South, a virtual semi-colony of the British to whom it supplied the bulk of their raw cotton, found free trade advantageous, whereas the Northern industry had long been firmly and militantly committed to protective tariffs, which it was unable to impose sufficiently for its desires because of the political leverage of the Southern states (who represented, it must be recalled, almost half the total number of states in 1850). Northern industry was certainly more worried about a nation half-free trading and half-protectionist than about one half-slave and half-free. What was equally to the point, the South did its best to offset the advantages of the North by cutting it off from its hinterland, attempting to establish a trading and communications area facing south and based on the Mississippi river system rather than facing east to the Atlantic, and so far as possible pre-empting the expansion to the West. This was natural enough since its poor whites had long explored and opened the West.

"But the very economic superiority of the North meant that the South had to insist with increasing stubbornness on its political force - to stake its claims in the most formal terms (e.g. by insisting on the official acceptance of slavery in new western territories), to stress the autonomy of states ('states' rights') against the national government, to exercise its veto over national policies, to discourage northern economic developments, etc. In effect it had to be an obstacle to the North while pursuing its expansionist policy in the West. Its only assets were political. For (given that it could not or would not beat the North at its own game of capitalist development) the currents of history ran dead against it. Every improvement in transport strengthened the links of the West with the Atlantic. Basically the railroad system ran from east to west with hardly any long lines from

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<sup>74</sup> Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1992, pp. 621-622.

north to south. Moreover, the men who peopled the West, whether they came from North or South, were not slave-owners but poor, white and free, attracted by free soil or gold or adventure. The formal extension of slavery to new territories and states was therefore crucial to the South, and the increasingly embittered conflicts of the two sides during the 1850s turned mainly on this question. At the same time slavery was irrelevant to the West, and indeed western expansion might actually weaken the slave system. It provided no such reinforcement as that which Southern leaders hoped for when envisaging the annexation of Cuba and the creation of a Southern-Caribbean plantation empire. In brief, the North was in a position to unify the continent and the South was not. Aggressive in posture, its real recourse was to abandon the struggle and secede from the Union, and this is what it did when the election of Abraham Lincoln from Illinois in 1860 demonstrated that it had lost the 'Middle West'.

"For four years civil war raged. In terms of casualties and destruction it was by far the greatest war in which any 'developed' country was involved in our period, though relatively it pales beside the more or less contemporary Paraguayan War in South America, and absolutely beside the Taiping Wars in China. The Northern states, though notably inferior in military performance, eventually won because of their vast preponderance of manpower, productive capacity and technology. After all, they contained over 70 per cent of the total population of the United States, over 80 per cent of the men of military age, and over 90 per cent of its industrial production. Their triumph was also that of American capitalism and of the modern United States. But, though slavery was abolished, it was not the triumph of the Negro, slave or free. After a few years of 'Reconstruction' (i.e. forced democratisation) the South reverted to the control of conservative white Southerners, i.e. racists. Northern occupying troops were finally withdrawn in 1877. In one sense it achieved its object: the Northern Republicans (who retained the presidency for most of the time from 1860 to 1932) could not break into the solidly Democratic South, which therefore retained substantial autonomy. The South, in turn, through its block vote, could exercise some national influence, since its support was essential for the success of the other great party, the Democrats. In fact, it remained agrarian, poor, backward and resentful; the whites resented the never-forgotten defeat, the blacks the disfranchisement and ruthless subordination re-imposed by the whites."<sup>75</sup>

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The victory of the North and the emancipation of the slaves did not mean liberation for the American Indians. "In December 1868," writes Bernard Simms, "President Johnson told Congress that 'Comprehensive national policy would seem to sanction the acquisition and incorporation into our federal union of the several adjacent continental and insular communities.' All this was bad news for the Indians who inhabited the great space between the core area of the Union and its outliers on the Pacific Ocean. Over the next thirty years, they were

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<sup>75</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital (1848-1875)*, London: Abacus, 1975, pp. 170-173.

progressively expropriated, marginalized and in many cases simply killed, as the Union moved westwards in a cascade of new states..."<sup>76</sup>

'Once the war was over," writes Andrew Marr, "the destruction of native culture accelerated, particularly once gold had been discovered in the Black Hills of Dakota. The 1870s saw relentless attacks on the Plains Indians and their attempts to fight back, which culminated in Crazy Horse's superb defeat of that Civil War hero General George Custer at the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. Yet even the Sioux, the boldest and most aggressive of the tribes - it could almost be said, the Zulu of America - had no chance against the much larger, better armed and disciplined soldiers sent against them. And these were merely the advance party of a teeming migration of farmers, hunters, cattle-rancher, bartenders and shopkeepers. Had the Confederacy survived intact, there is no doubt that the Native American peoples would still have succumbed to the guns and sheer numbers of the incomers, but it would not perhaps have happened quite so quickly."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 237.

<sup>77</sup> Marr, *A History of the World*, London: Pan, 2012, p. 426.

## 6. BISMARCK AND THE SECOND REICH

Prussia's military victory over France to have long-term consequences. On the one hand, it served to calm the passion of wounded pride elicited by Napoleon I's victories over Prussia. On the other, the victory also had the opposite effect, stoking up national pride in the new, united nation-state and a new belief in its rights in relation to its neighbours. It was, writes Orlando Figes, "a turning point in European history. Politically, it reinforced the growing nationalist currents that worked against the cultural cosmopolitanism developing across the Continent – eventually leading in the longer term to the disintegration of this European culture in the First World War."<sup>78</sup>

"The so-called 'German Unification'," writes James Hawes, "– more accurately the *Reichsgründungstag* ('Day of the Founding of the Empire') – saw the birth of a radically strange new state which, August Hayek argued, was the seed-bed of both Bolshevism and National Socialism. It represented the final, formal step in the complete takeover, by force, of wealthy, ancient, largely Catholic Germany by a far poorer and smaller Lutheran outlier whose sole but decisive advantage was that it was entirely organised for war."<sup>79</sup> However, this "poorer and smaller outlier", Prussia, had been on the rise ever since the Congress of Vienna in 1815, when (as the future West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer complained) Prussia was given a large chunk of the Rhineland by British diplomats, which then served as the bridgehead for the conquest of Catholic Germany by Bismarck in the years 1862-66.

The new German empire of the Second Reich (the first was the medieval Holy Roman Empire) was born on January 18, 1871 in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, taking the place of the now-defunct North German Confederation. The choice of Versailles was significant, for the Germans wanted to emphasize that the sufferings that the Germans had received from the Sun King (and Napoleon) were now at an end... Twenty-three German princes offered the title of emperor to the most powerful amongst them, King Wilhelm I of Prussia, who, besides his German dominions, now controlled a large chunk of north-eastern France.

Richard Evans writes: "Built by Louis XIV, the 'Sun King', at the height of his power nearly two hundred years before, the palace was now turned into a humiliating symbol of French impotence and defeat. This was a key moment in modern German and indeed European history. To liberals, it seemed the fulfilment of their dreams. But there was a heavy price to pay. Several features of Bismarck's creation had ominous consequences for the future. First of all, the decision to call the new state 'the German Reich' inevitably conjured up memories of its thousand-year predecessor, the dominant power in Europe for so many centuries. Some, indeed, referred to Bismarck's creation as the 'Second Reich'. The use of the word implied, too, that where the First Reich had failed, in the face of French aggression, the Second had succeeded. Among the many aspects of his

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<sup>78</sup> Figes, *The Europeans*, London: Penguin, 2020, p. 326.

<sup>79</sup> Hawes, "How Germany Came in from the Cold", [https://unherd.com/2021/01/how-germany-came-in-from-the-cold/?tl\\_inbound=1&tl\\_groups\[0\]=18743&tl\\_period\\_type=3](https://unherd.com/2021/01/how-germany-came-in-from-the-cold/?tl_inbound=1&tl_groups[0]=18743&tl_period_type=3).

creation that survived the fall of Bismarck's German Reich in 1918, the continued use of the term 'German Empire', *Deutsches Reich*, by the Weimar Republic and all its institutions was far from being the least significant. The word 'Reich' conjured up an image among educated Germans that resonated far beyond the institutional structures Bismarck created: the successor to the Roman Empire; the vision of God's Empire here on earth; the universality of its claim to suzerainty; in a more prosaic but no less powerful sense, the concept of a German state that would include all German speakers in Central Europe - 'one People, one Reich, one Leader', as the Nazi slogan was to put it. There always remained those in Germany who thought Bismarck's creation only a partial realization of the idea of a true German Reich. Initially, their voices were drowned by the euphoria of victory. But with time, their number was to grow.

"The constitution which Bismarck devised for the new German Reich in 1871 in many ways fell short of the ideals invoked by the liberals in 1848. Alone of all modern German constitutions, it lacked any declaration of principle about human rights and civic freedoms. Formally speaking, the new Reich was a loose confederation of independent states, much like its predecessor had been. Its titular head was the Emperor or Kaiser, the title taken over from the old head of the Holy Roman Reich and ultimately deriving from the Latin name 'Caesar'. He had wide-ranging powers including the declaration of war and peace. The Reich's institutions were stronger than those of the old, with a nationally elected parliament, the Reichstag - the name, deriving from the Holy Roman Reich, was another survival across the revolutionary divide of 1918 - and a number of central administrative institutions, most notably the Foreign Office, to which more were added as time went on. But the constitution did not accord to the national parliament the power to elect or dismiss governments and their ministers, and key aspects of political decision-making, above all on matters of war and peace, and on the administration of the army, were reserved to the monarch and his immediate entourage. Government ministers, including the head of the civilian administration, the Reich Chancellor - an office created by Bismarck and held by him for some twenty years - were civil servants, not party politicians, and they were beholden to the Kaiser, and not to the people or to their parliamentary representatives. With time, the influence of the Reichstag grew, though not by very much. With only mild exaggeration, the great revolutionary thinker Karl Marx described the Bismarckian Reich, in a convoluted phrase that captured many of its internal contradictions, as a 'bureaucratically constructed military despotism, dressed up with parliamentary forms, mixed in with an element of feudalism yet at the same time already influenced by the bourgeoisie'.<sup>80</sup>

Therefore Germany was neither a democracy, nor a constitutional monarchy; in spite of liberal elements, it remained a monarchy closer in structure to Russia and Austro-Hungary. *De jure* it was a confederation of sovereign principalities (*Fürstenbund*) with their own parliamentary legislatures and constitutions who continued to exchange ambassadors. But *de facto* it was an empire ruled by a Prussian kaiser and chancellor, whose army also remained in Prussian hands.

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<sup>80</sup> Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, London: Penguin, 2004, pp. 6-8.

If it was hard to define the nature of the new German state, it is not hard to define its essential character. It was *Prussian*... Now, as Sir Llewellyn Woodward writes, "the existence of Prussia as a kingdom was due to the maintenance by her rulers of an army almost beyond their resources. The background of Prussian history was one of force, tenacity and ruse; the traditions which came out of it produced the militarist, oligarchic domination of Prussian Junkerdom. Nationalism could hardly be a tolerant, still less a debonair growth in the Prussian geographical environment. To the west were Germans - more 'Germanised' indeed than the partially Wendish Prussians; to the east a limitless plain, an ocean if you like, of Slavs; any conquest had to be made and held by stark, narrowing energy...

"Prussian ideals... created a bleak sense of duty and self-sacrifice, an unshakeable loyalty, the care and precision of a people who had to build out of sparseness. The trouble, fundamentally, was that these ideals were out of date. They belonged to a colonizing, not to an industrial age, an age of scarcity, not of increasing plenty, an age of fear, not an age of widening international co-operation. Hence the danger to the rest of Europe when these ideals were imposed with such thoroughness on the German people accustomed to obedience and the acceptance of authority from above. A modern state, becoming rapidly industrialized, was given the temper and institutions, the moral and even the aesthetic values of a conquering, feudal aristocracy of a pre-industrial age. The result was a misfit, a personality at war with itself..."<sup>81</sup>

"Prussia-Germany," writes Hawes, "was able to deploy all Germany's industry and manhood eastwards, in pursuit of what had always really mattered to it. By late 1887, the future Chancellor von Bulow was already describing a plan which sounds like Ludendorff's vision in 1917-18 and Hitler's in 1941-2: the Prussian-German armies would "devastate Russia's black earth region", destroy its ports and industries and set up a vassal-state in the Ukraine. This was nothing to do with *German* thinking and everything to do with *Prussian* thinking: 1871-1945 was the great aberration in German history."<sup>82</sup>

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Prussia-Germany after 1871 was also a *militaristic* state...

According to Dominic Lieven, "Bismarck was determined to restabilize Europe after his wars of 1864-71 and to reassure Germany's neighbours that Europe's new potential hegemon was a satiated power with no further territorial ambitions. As one perceptive German observer later commented, this reassurance was necessary. The same historical arguments used to justify the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871, for example, could also have justified taking much of Switzerland. In geopolitical terms, the Netherlands were not much more than the

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<sup>81</sup> Woodward, *Prelude to Modern Europe, 1815-1914*, London: Methuen, 1972, pp. 114-115.

<sup>82</sup> Hawes, "How Germany Came in from the Cold", [https://unherd.com/2021/01/how-germany-came-in-from-the-cold/?tl\\_inbound=1&tl\\_groups\[0\]=18743&tl\\_period\\_type=3](https://unherd.com/2021/01/how-germany-came-in-from-the-cold/?tl_inbound=1&tl_groups[0]=18743&tl_period_type=3).

estuary of Germany's most vital artery, the river Rhine. German security in the east might have been served by pushing back the Russian frontier, and German nationalists might have welcomed the annexation of Russia's Baltic Provinces, whose elites were German and Protestant. Only Bismarck had dissuaded William I and his general from demanding the annexation of the Sudetenland as tribute from Austria for the victory of 1866. As a result of Bismarck's moderation, commented the writer Paul Rohrbach in 1903, no European government now believed that Germany hankered after its territory or had ambitions to expand within Europe..."<sup>83</sup>

Germany's problem in 1806, after the Battle of Jena, had been *defeat* in war, and the *vengefulness* that came from it. But after 1870 the temptation was *victory* and the *hubris* that came from it. And just as war had humbled the old enemy and united the nation (almost) in 1870, why, thought some, should it not continue to cure the nation's ills?

Now for Napoleon I war was essential to maintaining the glory of France. But on the German side of the Rhine, nationalist philosophers developed a still more pernicious concept of the necessity of war. The roots of war-worship were to be found in Germany's not-so-distant past. Gradually, from the time of Clausewitz, the idea became entrenched that war is a cleansing process sweeping away the decadence that comes from too much peace. And then there was Hegel's idea that "the German spirit is the spirit of the new world. Its aim is the realization of absolute Truth as the unlimited self-determination of freedom." Clearly war could not be taboo to the advocates of "unlimited self-determination".

As Barbara Ehrenreich writes, "In the opinion of Hegel and the later theorists of nationalism, nations need war – that is, the sacrifice of their citizens – even when they are not being menaced by other nations. The reason is simple. The nation, as a kind of 'organism', exists only through the emotional unity of its citizens, and nothing cements that unity more decisively than war. As Hegel explained, peace saps the strength of nations by allowing the citizens to drift back into their individual concerns: 'In times of peace civil life expands more and more, all the different spheres settle down, and in the long run men sink into corruption, their particularities become more and more fixed and ossified. But health depends upon the unity of the body and if the parts harden, death occurs.' Meaning, of course, the death of the nation, which depends for its life on the willingness of its citizens to face their own deaths. War thus becomes a kind of tonic for nations, reviving that passion for collective defense that alone brings the nation to life in the minds of its citizens. Heinrich von Treitschke, the late-nineteenth-century German nationalist, put it excitedly: 'One must say in the most decisive manner: "War is the only remedy for ailing nations!" The moment the State calls, "Myself and my existence are at stake!" social self-seeking must fall back and every party hate [partisan hatred?] be silent. The individual must forget his own ego and feel himself a member of the whole... In that very point lies the loftiness of war, that the small man disappears entirely before the great thought of the State.'

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<sup>83</sup> Lieven, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

“Considered as a living being or ‘organism’, the nation is clearly both awesome like a deity, and at the same time far less admirable, in the sense of being constrained by any kind of morality, than the individuals it comprises. Ordinary citizens must refrain from violence, from theft and other crimes, but the nation, acting in an arena of other nations, is governed by no higher law... Citizens who have a dispute to settle must seek the judgement of the courts; nations are more likely to duke it out on the field of battle. Citizens who brawl on the streets are punished; nations that go to war are feared and often respected. If the nation as organism has a personality, it is that of the mounted warrior of old: impetuous, belligerent, touchy about all matters of ‘honor’, and in a state of readiness, at all times, for war...”<sup>84</sup>

Thus the militarist spirit of the Second Reich was a continuation and intensification of 18th-century Prussian militarism exacerbated by the Romanticism and nation-worship of the German Counter-Enlightenment.

“The Prussian state that Bismarck served,” writes Jonathan Steinberg, “depended on its army and the compact between the crown and its nobility. When Frederick Wilhelm, the Great Elector, decided in 1653 to have ‘his own forces’ rather than to rely on mercenaries, he began a process which turned Prussia into a military monarchy, ‘not a state with an army, but an army with a state in which it happens to be stationed.’ Frederick the Great fashioned that army into an essential element in the social structure. The landed gentry and aristocracy all ‘served’: they went first to the Kadettenanstalten, the military schools, and then to a regiment. As Frederick explained in his *Testament* of 1752: ‘The Prussian nobility has sacrificed its life and goods for the service of the state; its loyalty and merit have earned it the protection of all its rulers... it is one goal of the policy of this state to preserve the nobility.’ Bismarck’s king, Wilhelm I (r. 1861-88) followed the model of Frederick the Great. He worked hard, avoided display and saw himself first and foremost as a soldier...”<sup>85</sup>

If the seeds of Prussian militarism went back to Frederick the Great or even the Great Elector, the full tree only became visible after 1871.

“The war of 1866,” writes Evans, “destroyed the Kingdom of Hanover, incorporating it into Prussia, and expelled Austria and Bohemia from Germany after centuries in which they had played a major part in shaping its destinies, while the war of 1870-71 took away Alsace-Lorraine from France and placed it under the direct suzerainty of the German Empire. It is with some justification that Bismarck has been described as a ‘white revolutionary’. Military force and military action created the Reich; and in so doing they swept aside legitimate institutions, redrew state boundaries and overthrew long-established traditions, with a radicalism and a ruthlessness that cast a long shadow over the subsequent development of Germany. They also thereby legitimized the use of force for political ends to a degree well beyond what was common in most other countries except when they contemplated imperial conquests in other parts of the world.

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<sup>84</sup> Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-203.

<sup>85</sup> Steinberg, “How Did Bismarck Do It?” *History Today*, February, 2011, p. 23.

Militarism in state and society was to play an important part in undermining German democracy in the 1920s and in the coming of the Third Reich.

"Bismarck saw to it that the army was virtually a state within a state, with its own immediate access to the Kaiser and its own system of self-government. The Reichstag only had the right to approve its budget every seven years, and the Minister of War was responsible to the army rather than to the legislature. Officers enjoyed many social and other privileges and expected the deference of civilians when they met on the street. Not surprisingly, it was the ambition of many a bourgeois professional to be admitted as an officer in the army reserves; while, for the masses, compulsory military service produced familiarity with military codes of conduct and military ideals and values. In times of emergency, the army was entitled to establish martial law and suspend civil liberties, a move considered so frequently during the Wilhelmine period that some historians have with pardonable exaggeration described the politicians and legislators of the time as living under the permanent threat of a *coup d'état* from above.

"The army impacted on society in a variety of ways, most intensively of all in Prussia, then after 1871 more indirectly, through the Prussian example, in other German states as well. Its prestige, gained in the stunning victories of the wars of unification, was enormous. Non-commissioned officers, that is, those men, who stayed on after their term of compulsory military service was over and served in the army for a number of years, had an automatic right to a job in state employment when they finally left the army. This meant that the vast majority of policemen, postmen, railwaymen and other lower servants of the state were ex-soldiers, who had been socialized in the army and behaved in the military fashion to which they had become accustomed. The rule-book of an institution like the police force concentrated on enforcing military models of behaviour, insisted that the public be kept at arm's length and ensured that, in street marches and mass demonstrations, the crowd would be more likely to be treated like an enemy than an assembly of citizens. Military concepts of honour were pervasive enough to ensure the continued vitality of duelling among civilian men, even amongst the middle classes, though it was also common in Russia and France as well.

"Over time, the identification of the officer corps with the Prussian aristocracy weakened, and aristocratic military codes were augmented by new forms of popular militarism, including in the early 1900s the Navy League and the veterans' clubs. By the time of the First World War, most of the key positions in the officer corps were held by professionals, and the aristocracy was dominant mainly in traditional areas of social prestige and snobbery such as the cavalry and the guards, much as it was in other countries. But the professionalization of the officer corps, hastened by the advent of new military technology from the machine gun and barbed wire to the aeroplane and the tank, did not make it any more democratic. On the contrary, military arrogance was strengthened by the colonial experience, when German armed forces ruthlessly put down rebellion of indigenous peoples such as the Hereros in German South-West Africa (now Namibia). In 1904-07, in an act of deliberate genocide, the German army massacred thousands of Herero men, women and children and drove many more

of them into the desert, where they starved. From a population of some 80,000 before the war, the Hereros declined to a mere 15,000 by 1911 as a result of these actions. In an occupied part of the German Empire such as Alsace-Lorraine, annexed from France in 1871, the army frequently behaved like conquerors facing a hostile and refractory population. Some of the most flagrant examples of such behaviour had given rise in 1913 to a heated debate in the Reichstag, in which the deputies passed a vote of no-confidence in the government. This did not of course force the government to resign, but it illustrated none the less the growing polarization of opinion over the role of the army in German society."<sup>86</sup>

Nevertheless, Bismarck was no lover of war for its own sake. In his treatise *On War* (1832) the Prussian general Karl von Clausewitz had famously declared that "war is the continuation of politics by other means". But Bismarck was less belligerent, defining politics as "the art of the possible": "For heaven's sake no sentimental alliances in which the consciousness of having performed a good deed furnishes the sole reward for our sacrifice... The only healthy basis of policy for a great power... is egotism and not romanticism... Gratitude and confidence will not bring a single man into the field on our side; only fear will do that, if we use it cautiously and skillfully... Policy is the art of the possible, the science of the relative."<sup>87</sup>

He certainly used war à la Clausewitz to further his political ends, inciting it first with Austria, and then with France. But he also knew when to stop and what boundaries he should not cross. Bismarck looked neither for Hitlerian *Lebensraum* in the East nor for influence in the Balkans - influence there, he famously declared, was "not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier". That meant that he tried hard not to come into conflict with Russia, signing a reinsurance treaty with her. Nor did he join in the general European scramble for colonies overseas.

Moreover, even if he did dream about pan-German unification, he renounced the idea of a "greater Germany" that included Austria. This was no disadvantage in terms of power. For Prussia without Austria was so much more powerful than all the other German princes put together that the new state, in spite of the resentment of its junior members at the preponderance of Prussia, was never in danger of disintegration in the way that Austria-Hungary continued to be. For with her complex mixture of nationalities, Germanic, Hungarian, Slav and Latin, Austria was weak; and it was not in her ally Germany's interests that she should be dissolved into her constituent nationalities, thereby creating conflicts and involving the great powers on different sides of the conflicts. Therefore Bismarck did not encourage Austria's forays into the Balkans, which might have involved Russia on the side of the Slavs and Germany on the side of Austria - which is precisely what happened in 1914...

For all these reasons, it was not likely, while Bismarck was at the helm of the German state, that she would engage in rash military enterprises, but only such as were manageable, with clear political objectives and an exit strategy.

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<sup>86</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-12.

<sup>87</sup> Bismarck, in Kissinger, *World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 76.

Thus Bismarck had brought German unification from its first steps in the War of Liberation of 1813, the Customs Union of 1834 and the revolution of 1848, to its full realization after 1870. For in 1871, writes Yanis Varoufakis, “the centralizing process that Metternich had so feared gave rise to the German empire, complete with a central bank (the Reichsbank), a single currency (the Reichsmark) linked to the gold standard and a common parliament (the Bundesrat) dominated by the Iron Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. Prussia had only seventeen votes out of fifty-eight in the Bundesrat but by that stage enjoyed full control with the assistance of the votes of the representatives of the smaller states that since 1833 had fallen within the Prussian zone of influence.”<sup>88</sup>

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Let us explore a little more deeply the secret of Bismarck’s success – and the reason why this very success contained the seed of future catastrophe...

This subject was examined in some depth by the American statesman Henry Kissinger (who was himself accused of Bismarckian Machiavellianism).

As Kissinger’s biographer, Niall Ferguson write: “Too democratic for conservatives, too authoritarian for liberals, too power-oriented for legitimists,’ writes Kissinger of Bismarck’s Europe, ‘the new order was tailored to a genius who proposed to restrain the contending forces, both domestic and foreign, by manipulating their antagonisms.’ Or: ‘It was not that Bismarck lied – that is, much too self-conscious an act – but that he was finely attuned to the subtlest currents of any environment and produced measures finely adjusted to the need to prevail. The key to Bismarck’s success was that he was always sincere.’ Bismarck’s conception of German reunification under Prussian leadership ‘was not the first time that revolutionaries succeeded because their opponents could not believe in the reality of their objectives’. Was Bismarck an opportunist? But of course! ‘Anyone wishing to effect events must be opportunist to some extent. The real distinction is between those who adapt their purposes to reality and those who seek to mold reality in the light of their purposes.’ Bismarck denied that ‘any state had the right to sacrifice its opportunities to its principles.’ But ‘the blind spot of revolutionaries is the belief that the world for which they are striving for which they are striving will combine all the benefits of the new conception with the good points of the overthrown structure.’

“Each of these lines is arresting. But they are incidental to, or rather decorative of, the main argument. There are three central themes. The first is that Bismarck was not only a genius but also a demon (the archaic word *demoniac* is applied to him repeatedly as an epithet). This explains why Kissinger spends so much time on Bismarck’s spiritual journey from deism and pantheism to Pietism under the influence of the Thaddens and Puttkammers – a subplot that at first appears to have no obvious relevance to the argument. As Kissinger makes clear, Bismarck’s religious awakening was a façade behind which he evolved into a geopolitical

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<sup>88</sup> Varoufakis, *And the Weak Must Suffer What They Must?* London: Vintage, 2015, p. 215.

Dawinian: 'The Metternich system had been inspired by the eighteenth-century notion of the universe as a great clockwork: Its parts were intricately intermeshed, and a disturbance of one upset the equilibrium of the others. Bismarck represented a new age. Equilibrium was seen not in harmony and mechanical balance, but in a statistical balance of forces in flux. Its appropriate philosophy was Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest. Bismarck marked the change from the rationalist to the empiricist conception of politics... Bismarck declared the relativity of all beliefs, he translated them into forces to be evaluated in terms of the power they could generate.'

"The 'white revolutionary' - a phrase first applied to Bismarck by the Jewish banker Ludwig Bamberger in 1867 - was therefore only outwardly a conservative.

"The second theme is that Bismarck's new European order hinged on his ability to 'manipulate the commitments of the other powers so that Prussia would always be closer to any of the contending parties than they were to each other' ... This was possible because Bismarck was no longer constrained by an Metternichian notions of legitimacy. He could ally with or attack whomsoever he chose. But it 'required cool nerves because it sought its objectives by the calm acceptance of great risks, of isolation, and of a sudden settlement at Prussia's expense'.

"The third theme is that Bismarck's achievement, though magnificent, was unsustainable because it could not be institutionalized. 'Institutions are designed for an average standard of performance,' wrote Kissinger. 'They are rarely able to accommodate genius or demonic power. A society that must produce a great man in each generation to maintain its domestic or international position will doom itself.' By contrast, '[s]tatesmen who build lastingly transform the personal act of creation into institutions that can be maintained by an average standard of performance'. It was Bismarck's failure to achieve this that Kissinger saw as his tragedy. 'His very success committed Germany to a permanent tour de force... [and] left a heritage of unassimilated greatness... A system which requires a great man in each generation sets itself an almost insurmountable challenge, if only because a great man tends to stunt the appearance of great personalities.' In particular, Bismarck's successes were not capable of 'a proper analysis of... the requirement of national interest'. 'Because of his magnificent grasp of the nuances of power relationship, Bismarck saw in his philosophy a doctrine of self-limitations. Because these nuances were not apparent to his successors and imitators, the application of Bismarck's lessons led to an armaments race and a world war.'

"True, by annexing Alsace-Lorraine, Bismarck had deprived himself and his successors of an option he had enjoyed as minister-president of Prussia: the option to ally, however temporarily, with France. After 1871, there were only three powers with whom Germany could hope to ally itself, and one of them, Great Britain, was already inclining toward 'splendid isolation'. Yet a leader of caliber might still have averted disaster. The problem was that his *epigone* saw only the ruthlessness of Realpolitik and not the element of self-limitation. In seeking to combat the 'nightmare of coalitions' by saber rattling, colony grabbing, and navy

building, they ended up cementing the alliance between France and Russia. 'Thus Germany tended to bring on what it feared most.' It was in this sense that 'Germany's greatest modern figure... [had] sown the seeds of its twentieth-century tragedies.'"<sup>89</sup>

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Disraeli rightly pointed out that Prussia's victory in the Franco-German war amounted to "a German revolution", as great a political event as the French revolution of the last century: "Not a single principle in the management of our foreign affairs, accepted by all statesmen for guidance up to six months ago, any longer exists. There is not a diplomatic tradition which has not been swept away... The balance of power has been entirely destroyed, and the country which suffers most, and feels the effects of this great change most, is England..."<sup>90</sup>

Henry Kissinger comments on Disraeli's words: "The Westphalian and the Vienna European orders had been based on a divided Central Europe whose competing pressures - between the plethora of German states in the Westphalian settlement, and Austria and Prussia in the Vienna outcome - would balance each other out. What emerged after the unification of Germany was a dominant country, strong enough to defeat each neighbor individually and perhaps all the continental countries together. The bond of legitimacy had disappeared. Everything now depended on calculations of power."<sup>91</sup>

"After 1871," writes Bobbitt, "a new society of nation-states gradually emerged. Its mood was one of easily inflamed nationalism and ethnic truculence. This reflected the public mood, excited by the press on a scale impossible before the spread of free compulsory public education and vastly increased literacy. Three new ideas vied in the public mind for attention and allegiance: Darwinism, which had been easily admitted into a social credo of competitiveness and national survivalism; Marxism, with its hostility to the capitalist relationships of the industrial age; and bourgeois parliamentarianism, which promoted the rule of law in a national and an international society that was becoming increasingly credulous about the role that law could play. It was thus an age of faith in law even if the bases for legal consensus were at the time being quickly eroded, an age of anxiety in class relationships, an age of ethnomania within states. The contrast with the world it replaced could not have been greater. One can scarcely imagine a leader of a state-nation speaking as Bismarck did in explaining the new spirit of the age: 'Who rules in France or Sardinia is as matter of indifference to me once the government is recognised and only a question of fact, not of right. [F]or me France will remain France, whether it is governed by Napoleon or St. Louis. I know that you will reply that a properly conceived Prussian policy requires chastity in foreign affairs even from the point of view of utility. I am prepared to discuss the point of utility with you; but if you posit antinomies between right and revolution; Christianity and infidelity; God and the devil; I can argue no longer and can

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<sup>89</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, pp. 696-698.

<sup>90</sup> Disraeli, in Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 265; Stürmer, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>91</sup> Kissinger, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

merely say, 'I am not of your opinion and you judge in me what is not yours to judge.'

"This is the authentic voice of the nation-state. Regimes may come and go, but the nation endures. International law conformed itself to this new society; how a government came to power was of no relevance so long as the fact of its control over a nation could be established. Self-determination - the right of nations to have states of their own - became the only principle recognized in international law that detracted from the axiomatic legality of the government that was in control.

"It was obvious at the time that the nation-state bore certain strategic risks that were inherent in the kind of political society on which such a state depends. In his last public statement, in 1890, Moltke issued an ominous and melancholy warning. With such states, the old warrior said, which depended upon and at the same time inflamed popular passions, future wars could last 'seven and perhaps thirty years'."<sup>92</sup>

Bobbitt claims that Germany after 1871 was not only the first *nation-state*, as opposed to the Napoleonic *state-nation*, but also a *proto-fascist* state. Certainly, he dealt with internal opposition ruthlessly. We have seen his *Kulturkampf* against the Catholics. Then, in the later 1870s, incited by the nationalist historian Heinrich von Treitschke, "Bismarck introduced anti-socialist laws that were passed by both the conservatives and the liberals. Mass arrests and widespread imprisonment followed. The socialist party was outlawed, meetings banded, and newspapers suppressed, and capital punishment was reintroduced in Prussia and other German states..."<sup>93</sup>

Certainly, socialism had made significant inroads into Germany by this time. \*Thus, as Jurgen Tampke writes, "Marx deputised two of his strongest supporters in Germany, Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel, to set up the SDAP as a rival organisation [to Lassalle's General German Workers' Association] in 1869. It was soon obvious, however, that the existence of two separate parties was counter-productive, and this led to their unification [at Gotha in 1875] into the German Socialist Workers Party (*Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschland*, SAP), renamed in 1890 the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SDP), the title it still carries today. The Gotha conference reaffirmed the previous [moderate] demands, but added the Marxist principles of class abolition, the overthrow of the capitalist system, and international workers' solidarity.

"By the mid-1870s, Marx had become the leading theoretician of the Socialist International labour movements...

"The Gotha program had made a nominal commitment to Marxist principles, but the policies pursued by the SDP were reformist and not bent on confrontation. However, when the full weight of Imperial Germany's ruling establishment

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<sup>92</sup> Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>93</sup> Tampke, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

descended upon the Social Democratic labour movement after the introduction of Bismarck's anti-socialist laws, the new Erfurt program, introduced in 1891, made a far stronger commitment to Marxist ideals. In line with Marx's demand for a 'dialectic unity of theory and practice', the party's chief theoretician at the time, Karl Kautsky, drew up a theoretical and a practical part. Emphasis was firmly on theory, which committed the SDP to work towards a proletarian revolution. The practical part reiterated pragmatic, everyday politics to improve the living and working conditions of the workforce..."<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, socialism was not the dominant political ideology in Germany. Bismarck's victories over Austria and France "allowed him to place at the apex of the German state a radically conservative, militarist class whose only claim to pan-German legitimacy was that it alone was able to realize the ambitions of national unity. German nationalism - a program that held that a state was legitimated by its service to a pre-eminent ethnic nation - was the prototype for fascism, as its expression in the Constitution of 1871 confirms.

"Bismarck did not so much unify as conquer the other German states and then proceed to transform their politics by delivering German unity under a popular doctrine of militarism and ethnic nationalism. This put fascism on the table as a competitor to the parliamentary systems..."<sup>95</sup>

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Germany more than any other country used the recent major changes in military strategy, science and technology to increase her power beyond the military sphere. German inventiveness in fields such as cars and agricultural fertilizers was astonishing, making it the most advanced industrial power.

Hardly less important was the German ability to mobilize the whole of society towards the nation's ends. Indeed, according to Bobbitt, "the Prussian solution to the requirement of vast numbers of soldiers to exploit the opportunities of decisive battle was to militarize the entire society. After the 1873 depression, the German state nationalized the railroads, introduced compulsory social insurance, and increased its intervention in the economy - in order to maximise the welfare of the nation. Throughout the nineteenth century Britain refused to adopt a mass conscript army; it was Prussia that militarized as it industrialized. The railways, telegraph, and standardization of mechanical tools that industrialization made possible allowed for dizzying increases in the speed and mobility of military dispositions. The use of the telegraph, in concert with the railroad, allowed generals to mass widely dispersed forces quickly and to coordinate their operations over a vast theatre... An entire society could be mobilized for war, replenishing the front when necessary as the conflict progressed. But this was only possible if that entire society could be made a party to the war..."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, pp. 20, 22.

<sup>95</sup> Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>96</sup> Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 203-204.

The new Reich soon had more than military prowess to boast of. Michael Stürmer writes: "Within the lifetime of one generation Germany was able to become the foremost industrial and trading power in Europe. Bismarck's revolution from above unleashed vast energies through the nation state, not entirely unlike events in France eighty years before. Industrial performance was second to none and was accomplished by the birth of the welfare state and democratic institutions and aspirations; of a socialist subculture and an ambitious liberal bourgeoisie unsure of itself but driven by nervous energy and creative unrest. At the turn of the century the language of the sciences was, in many parts of the world, German. A vast number of Nobel prizes went to German scholars, many of them Jews. German big business and banks were probably organised more efficiently than most competitors except for the United States. German universities became the model for many establishments of higher education from Turkey to North America. If the French Impressionists dominated the art world in the nineteenth century, after the turn of the century German art movements became equally important. In literature it was probably the Germany of Gerhard Hauptmann, Thomas Mann or Theodor Mommsen, all of them Nobel-prize winners, that most sensitively expressed the drama and contradictions of industrial society. A letter which appeared in *The Times* in August, 1914 under the heading 'Scholars' Protest Against War' summed up a widely held view: 'We regard Germany as a nation leading the way in the arts and sciences, and we have all learnt and are learning from German scholars.'<sup>97</sup>

Nevertheless, while German scholarship dominated the world of learning in both the sciences and the humanities, - not excluding theology with its atheistic "Higher Criticism" - not everybody was impressed. Thus St. Theophan the Recluse wrote: "Inquisitiveness is the tickling of the mind. Truth is not dear to inquisitiveness, but news is, especially sensational news. That is why it is not satisfied with the truth itself, but seeks something extraordinary in it. When it has contrived something extraordinary, it stops there and attracts other people to it. In our days, it is the German mind that does this. The Germans are obsessed with contriving things. They have covered the whole realm of the truth of God with their contrivances as with a fog. Take dogma, ethics, history, the word of God - all are so overloaded with contrivances that you cannot get to the truth of God. Meanwhile, these things interest them and those with the same mind-set. The truth of God is simple; can a proud mind study it? Such a mind would rather think up its own things: sensational things, although empty and as weak as a spider's web. To see that this is so, look at the current theories of the creation of the world [i.e. Darwinism]: they are like a somnambulistic or drunkern delirium. And yet how good they seem to those who invented them! How much energy and time are wasted on this - and all in vain! The deed was accomplished simply: 'He spake and they came to be, He commanded and they were created' (Psalm 148.5). No one can think up anything better than this solution."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Stürmer, *The German Empire 1871-1919*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000, pp. 3-4.

<sup>98</sup> St. Theophan, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2010, pp. 227-228.

Within Germany, too, after the first flush of pride in the victory over France in 1870, there was a widespread feeling that something was rotten in the house of Germany with, in Golo Mann's words, its "hard-boiled *Realpolitik* and oppressive piety, ostentatious theatrical poses, self-righteous nationalism combined with internal discord, and finally materialism, overwhelmed by the successes of the natural sciences, but yet prepared suddenly to change into cheap mysticism".<sup>99</sup>

The liberals were unhappy that Germany was not a fully parliamentary state, but was still largely controlled by the king, the army and the Prussian aristocracy. Antisemites like Paul de Lagarde, on the other hand, were unhappy that Germany was becoming too liberal, and that the new unified German state was the "little" one, excluding Austria - whose inclusion, he believed, justified a great war. The Catholics were unhappy with Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* legislation, in which, as we have seen, "schools were to be taken out of Church control, civil marriages allowed and priests forbidden from engaging in anything that could be termed political opposition." Resistance to this legislation caused many bishops and thousands of priests to be thrown into prison.

The *Kulturkampf* legislation may reflect a deep cultural schism in Germany that was not really overcome in 1871, between the Prussian and Protestant North-East and the mainly Catholic South-West. Thus James Hawes writes: "In effect, the whole imperial German financial system was a gigantic machine for taking wealth from liberal, Catholic south-west Germany and handing it to the East Elbian Junker elite of the old, pre-1815 Prussia. The taxes paid by western German industrialists and the loaves of overpriced bread bought by western German industrial workers subsidized the agricultural estates and army jobs of the East Elbian Junkers, who despised the lot of them."<sup>100</sup>

The reasons Bismarck gave for his *Kulturkampf* are revealing: "It is at bottom... the contest which, under the name of the conflict between the German kings and the popes, filled the history of the Middle Ages until the dissolution of the German empire... It is really a question of protecting the state... of fixing the boundary between priesthood and kingship, and this line of demarcation must be so placed that the state can maintain its existence. For in the kingdom of this world the state must have precedence and command..."<sup>101</sup>

Thus Bismarck was a Caesaropapist whose aim was the triumph of the State - the resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire - over all other forces within the country. The church could be tolerated, but only so long as it knew its place and was obedient. And to that end a little persecution of the church was expedient, to teach it its place. No liberalism here; Germany had laid the ghost of 1848; she was now on the road to 1933 - and 1945...

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<sup>99</sup> Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, p. 233.

<sup>100</sup> Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2017, p. 129.

<sup>101</sup> Bismarck, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 667.

Only in 1879 did Bismarck call off his persecution of the Catholics. For the only result was an increase in resentment against the Prussians, and the strengthening of the Catholic Centre Party, the second after the SPD.

But by this time the Protestants had been radicalized “into a new ersatz religion of alien-free *German-ness (Deutschtum)*” with not only Protestant but also “strong anti-Semitic overtones...”<sup>102</sup>

However, German culture was by no means exclusively of the nationalist, militaristic, Prussian type. “On the eve of the First World War,” writes Christopher Clark, “Prussian conservatism was almost exclusively an East-Elbian phenomenon. Of 147 conservative deputies in the Prussian Landtag of 1913, 124 were from the old provinces of Prussia; only one conservative deputy was returned from the Prussian Rhineland. In this sense, the three-class system accentuated the divide between east and west, widening the emotional distance between the politically progressive industrial, commercialized, urban and substantially Catholic west and the ‘Asiatic steppe’ of Prussian East-Elbia. And this socio-geographical separateness in turn hindered the emergence of the kind of bourgeois-noble composite elite that set the tone in the south German states, ensuring that the politics of the Junker milieu acquired a flavor of intransigence and extremism that set it apart.

“Outside the conservative heartlands, however, and especially in the western provinces and the major cities, there flourished a robust and predominantly middle-class political culture. In many large towns, liberal oligarchies, sustained by limited urban franchises, oversaw progressive programmes of infrastructural rationalization and social provision. Especially in the years after 1890, the dramatic expansion in the variety and mass consumption of newspapers across the Prussian cities released formidable critical energies, confronting successive administrations with an image problem they found impossible to resolve. This was, as one senior political figure observed in 1893, ‘an era of limitless publicity, where countless threads run here and there and no bell can be rung without everyone forming a judgement about its tone.’

“The 1890s were a turning point for the socialists too, whose most important strongholds lay in the industrial zone around Berlin and the growing conurbations of the Ruhr area. In the elections of 1890, the socialists emerged from a period of draconian repression as the largest-polling German party. A socialist sub-culture evolved, with specialist clubs and venues catering to an emergent constituency of industrial workers, labourers, tradesmen and low-wage employees. By the turn of the century, Prussia was the stamping ground of Europe’s largest and best-organized socialist movement, a fitting tribute to its two Prussian grandfathers, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels...”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Hawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 114, 117.

<sup>103</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 562-563.

It was the socialists who were most fiercely critical of the Bismarckian concept of Prussianism and Germanism. While Bismarck's victories in 1866-71 had enthused even his former opponents, the liberals, the socialists remained obdurately undazzled. Thus the German socialist leader Wilhelm Liebknecht remarked: "The oppressors of yesterday are the saviours of today; right has become wrong and wrong right. Blood appears, indeed, to be a special elixir, for the angel of darkness has become the angel of light before whom the people lie in the dust and adore."<sup>104</sup>

Again, Engels had welcomed Bismarck's success in reducing German "particularism". But "the main disadvantage," he said, "and it is a very big one, is the inevitable swamping of Germany by the Prussian spirit"... St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, a Hessian princess before her marriage into the Russian royal family, said the same thing.

The great tragedy, both for Germany and for the whole of Europe, was that the wild frontier spirit of Prussianism prevailed over the more generous spirit of Old German culture...

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<sup>104</sup> Liebknecht, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 674.

## 7. THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

If the great empires could not extinguish the fires of nationalism, they could at least check their spread and contain them. Thus the empires of Russia, Ottoman Turkey and Austria-Hungary all acted as restrainers of nationalism within their borders. In none of these empires did the restraining power seem to be weaker, and the forces of nationalism stronger, than in the Austro-Hungarian Empire towards the end of the century.

This was clearest in relation to the Italians... The Italians had taken advantage of Prussia's war with Austria to try and continue its unification process at the expense of Austria. But despite a strong numerical advantage they were defeated at the Battle of Custoza in 1866. However, after their defeat at the hands of the Prussians at Königgrätz in 1866, writes Evans, "the Austrians realized that they could not continue to fight the Italians, despite the victory of Custoza, and capitulated, leaving the peace settlement to cede the rest of northern Italy to the Italian state - an outcome which led to the jibe of a Russian diplomat at a peace conference later in the century, that since the Italians were demanding more territory, he supposed they must have lost another battle. The Habsburg monarchy was thrown into a deep crisis. The deposed Emperor Ferdinand is said to have remarked: 'I don't know why they appointed Franz Joseph; I could have been just as good at losing battles.' There was immediate trouble from the Hungarians. The Diet elected in 1865 had a majority of moderate liberal nationalities, led by Ferenc Deák. Assured by Count Gyula Andrassy, recently returned from exile under an amnesty, Deák seized the opportunity provided by the monarchy's expulsion from the now-defunct German Confederation and the consequent change in the balance of forces within the Habsburg domains. Concerned that moves towards complete independence would encourage other nationalities, notably the Slavs, to follow suit, the Hungarians began to negotiate with Franz Joseph for the restructuring of the empire as a Dual Monarchy, divided into an Austrian and a Hungarian half, each with its own government, legislature, laws and administration.

"The deal reserved control over the armed forces and foreign policy and their finances to the central authority in Vienna, and put it into the hands of common ministers, though each half of the Monarchy had to be consulted on major actions such as the conclusion of international treaties. The respective Austrian and Hungarian legislatures were to negotiate via 'delegations', with the final power resting in the Monarch. Franz Joseph was crowned King of Hungary on 8 June 1867 and signed the law, known as the *Ausgleich* or Compromise, on 28 July. The Czech nationalists led by František Palacký objected and boycotted the Austrian legislature, under whose purview they fell, for eight years. The Croats were appeased by the concession of the use of Serbo-Croat as an official language and generous provisions for the retention of tax revenues. Other nationalities - Slovaks, Serbs, Romanians, Italians, Saxons - were covered by a Nationalities Law passed in 1865 with significant concessions on the use of their languages in schools. The monarchy, now in control of a central administration named *kaiserlich* and *königlich*, 'Imperial and Royal', for the two halves of the Dual Monarchy,

retained most of its key powers. The fact that these arrangements lasted for another half a century demonstrates that they were a reasonably effective solution to the problems that had been dogging the Habsburgs since 1848."<sup>105</sup>

The idea of a division of Central and most of Eastern Europe between Austria and Hungary was not a new one. "When, on 29 August 1526, the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent smashed the Hungarians at Mohacs and shortly afterwards sacked their capital in Buda, rule over the devastated country was disputed by the Sultan's vassal John Zapolya and Charles V's brother Ferdinand. In 1538 the two had come to an agreement, according to which each might reign in peace over his own territory, but on the death of Zapolya – who was at that time a bachelor of fifty-three – all Hungary should go to the Habsburgs...."<sup>106</sup>

The sixteenth-century agreement had been motivated by a common external enemy – Ottoman Turkey. In the nineteenth century the motivation came from within – the disintegrative effects of nationalism – together with the fact that the Hungarian dynasty of the Arpads had died out. Thus Dominic Lieven writes: "Franz Joseph divided his empire in two for most purposes. He handed over to the Magyar elite almost complete control over the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Hungary, more than half of whose population was not ethnic Hungarians. In return the emperor secured the – albeit equivocal – support of the Magyar elite for his empire, a considerable Hungarian contribution to sustain the imperial armed forces, and recognition that foreign and defence policy would remain the almost exclusive concern of the monarch and those officials to whom he chose to turn for advice. The 1867 Compromise was the decisive event in late Habsburg history. It determined much of the empire's domestic policy and some of its foreign policy down to the Monarchy's demise in 1918. Cold and, in the long run, dubious calculations of power drove the emperor to adopt the Compromise. As he wrote to his daughter, 'I do not conceal from myself that the Slav peoples of the monarchy may look on the new policies with distrust, but the government will never be able to satisfy every national group. This is why we much rely on those which are the strongest – that is, the Germans and the Hungarians.' Relying on 'the strongest' would bring domestic political stability, at least in the short run. Above all, it would allow the emperor the time and resources to renew his challenge to the Prussians, which would make it possible to reverse Austria's humiliating defeat at Königgrätz in 1866 and to ensure that the independent South German States did not fall under Prussian rule. Only with Prussia's defeat of France in 1870-71 and her absorption of the remaining German states did Austria's hopes of revenge disappear."<sup>107</sup>

10 million of the empire's 18 million inhabitants were German. In the Hungarian half, the Magyars accounted for less than half of the population. "in the kingdom of Hungary," writes Charles Emmerson, "the Hungarians pursued an aggressive policy of Magyarisation of everyone else – Romanians and Slovaks in particular – insisting on the exclusivity of Magyar culture. Other nationalities

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<sup>105</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>106</sup> John Julius Norwich, *Four Princes*, London: John Murray, 2017, p. 173.

<sup>107</sup> Lieven, *Empire*, London: John Murry, 2000, pp. 160-161.

protested; Franz Joseph failed to register their anger. Despite official autonomy within the Hungarian Kingdom, the Croats were suppressed by a Hungarian-appointed ruler. Some looked towards their fellow south Slavs, the Serbs – within and outside the empire – for support. Others sought a reconstruction of the empire along tripartite lines, with Austrian, Hungarian and South Slav entities. The position of the Serbs in the empire was worst of all: divided between 100,000 in Dalmatia under Austrian administration, half a million in Hungary, a further 650,000 in a supposedly autonomous Croatia-Slavonia and 850,000 in the newly acquire province of Bosnia. All the while the relationship between Vienna and Budapest remained difficult – at one point plans were prepared for the army to be used to re-establish Habsburg order in Hungary if the situation were to deteriorate.”<sup>108</sup>

“This dualist compromise,” writes Clark, “had many enemies at the time and has had many enemies since. In the eyes of hardline Magyar nationalists, it was a sell-out that denied the Hungarians the full national independence that was their due. Some claimed that Austria was still exploiting the Kingdom of Hungary as an agrarian colony. Vienna’s refusal to relinquish control over the armed forces and create a separate and equal Hungarian army was especially contentious – a constitutional crisis over this question paralysed the empire’s political life in 1905. On the other hand, Austrian Germans argued that the Hungarians were freeloading on the more advanced economy of the Austrian lands, and ought to pay a higher share of the empire’s running costs. Conflict was programmed into the system, because the Compromise required that the two imperial ‘halves’ renegotiate every ten years the customs union by which revenues and taxation were shared out between them. The demands of the Hungarians became bolder with every review of the union. And there was little in the Compromise to recommend it to the political elites of the other national minorities, who had in effect been placed under the tutelage of the two ‘master races’. The first post-Compromise Hungarian prime minister, Gyula Andrassy, captured this aspect of the settlement when he commented to his Austrian counterpart: ‘You look after your Slavs and we’ll look after ours.’ The last decades before the outbreak of war were increasingly dominated by the struggle for rights among the empire’s eleven official nationalities – Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Romanians, Ruthenians, Poles and Italians.”<sup>109</sup>

So unusual was the multi-national conglomerate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that Lenin sent Stalin, as his future Commissar of Nationalities, to Vienna to study it. The result of his three-year study stay was his article “Marxism and the National Question”, which provided him with ideas for his own multi-national conglomerate of 1922 – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. At the same time, another man also interested in the national question, Adolf Hitler, was living in the same city but drawing somewhat different conclusions from his observations. Hitler and Stalin would settle their differences in the most savage war in history, the last stage of which would final destroy Imperial Austria.

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<sup>108</sup> Emmerson, 1913. *The World before the Great War*, London: Vintage, 2013, p. 93.

<sup>109</sup> Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 66.

And yet until then this ramshackle, corrupt and unnatural conglomerate of conflicting nationalities, which Victor Adler called "despotism ameliorated by incompetence", survived in relative peace for a long time, symbolized and held together by the long reign of the Emperor Franz Joseph. The balance between the empire's nationalities was so fine that the Habsburg dynasty was forced to concede a very considerable degree of freedom to each of them. Nevertheless, the minorities were still discontented. "In practice, the three 'master races' - the Germans, the Magyars, and the Galician Poles - were encouraged to lord it over the others. The administrative structures were so tailored that the German minority in Bohemia could hold down the Czechs, the Magyars in Hungary could hold down the Slovaks, Romanians, and Croats, and the Poles in Galicia could hold down the Ruthenians (Ukrainians). So pressures mounted as each of the excluded nationalities fell prey to the charms of nationalism."<sup>110</sup>

The most important pressure was exerted by the Czechs on the Germans. The Czechs were enjoying a national revival, but the Germans were doing badly in both halves of the empire. In Hungary, they were few (1.95 million in 1880) and oppressed. Lieven writes that "the German community in Hungary, abandoned to its fate by the imperial government, was one of the major victims of Magyarization, even if in some cases its assimilation of Hungarian language and culture was voluntary. By 1900-14 even the absolute number of Germans in Hungary was in decline owing to assimilation and emigration. Meanwhile, in the non-Hungarian half of the Monarchy (usually referred to by the shorthand name Cisleithenia) the Germans were also under pressure. They were still much the richest group in the region. On the eve of the First World War they comprised 35.8 per cent of Cisleithenia's population and paid 63 per cent of its direct taxes. But they were losing, or had lost, control over many towns and even whole crownlands which they had traditionally dominated. Prague was a good case in point. Traditionally a German town in language, appearance and culture, it was increasingly swamped by Czech immigrants in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1910 there was not a single German left on the city council. Not surprisingly, the German community's politics, especially in mixed nationality crownlands, was often an unlovely combination of traditional cultural arrogance with hysteria about the threat to its identity and status offered by Slav numbers, migration and increasing self-confidence.

The Austrians' perception of their own identity was conditioned by their perception of the Germans to the north, who had solved the question of their national unification only by violently excluding the Austrian Germans from their state. The situation of these Austrian Germans was now weaker than ever; for on the one hand, they could not stake out an independent state for themselves on the grounds of race since the State of Germany already existed, but on the other hand the other nations of the empire were demanding independence for themselves. As the Viennese dramatist Franz Grillparzer said to the Germans: "You believe that you have given birth to an empire, but you have only destroyed a people!"

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<sup>110</sup> Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 829.

The Austrian Germans therefore had to be less nationalist and more cosmopolitan than any of the constituent nations of the empire. This made for the creation of a brilliant culture enriched by the contributions of many races (not least of one race, the Jews, who were not even one of the eleven official races). Symbolized by the dreamy decadence of Johann Strauss' *Blue Danube* waltz, Vienna in the half-century leading up to the First World War typified the spiritual state of Europe: the traditionalism of the Emperor and the aristocracy contrasted with the daring innovations of the artists (such as Gustav Klimt), musicians (Gustav Mahler and Arnold Schoenberg) and scientists (Sigmund Freud). A culture obsessed with sex, death and art would produce great art, many tragic suicides (such as that of Franz Joseph's son Prince Rudolf, who died in a suicide pact with his mistress in Mayerling) and the first attempt, by Sigmund Freud, to reinterpret the whole inner life of man in terms of Eros and Thanatos, and the artistic impulse to make sense of these in symbols and dreams...

Moreover, the empire prospered materially. For, as Simon Winder writes, "Both halves boomed, being immeasurably richer by the beginning of the twentieth century. Austria had been neutered and infantilized by its defeat by Prussia – when the new united Germany emerged in 1871 it became Franz Joseph's central aim in life *never* to be alienated from Berlin again. It became axiomatic that Imperial security could only be guaranteed by holding Bismarck in a clingy embrace. Hungary was even further neutered and infantilized politically by being in Vienna's shadow and using the security guarantee provided by their association to underfinance its own armed forces. This Berlin-Vienna-Budapest axis now settled in, and of course with no sense at all of what a bitter future generations would owe to it..."<sup>111</sup>

After Bismarck's victories over Austria and the small German states in 1866-71, Austria ceased to be truly powerful and seemed always on the edge of falling apart. But it remained intact and important if only because there was no alternative to it after Bismarck renounced the idea of annexing it. For, neutered by Bismarck though the Austrians may have been, they were necessary for the peace of Europe. This was recognized by Bismarck himself, who, as Michael Biddis writes, "had been reluctant to encourage Magyar or Slav nationalism by any additional encroachment on Habsburg sovereignty. 'Whatever,' he asked, 'can fill the place in Europe that has hitherto been filled by the Austrian state from Tyrol to Bukovina? Any rearrangement in this area could only be of a permanently revolutionary nature.' Yet Bismarck's refusal to risk international destabilization by further expansion of Germany within Europe was increasingly challenged. In essence, the critics were willing to applaud his version of unification, but not as a finalization of territorial fulfillment; rather as a milestone on a longer path to greater destinies. Those to whom the nation-state meant some form of *Grossdeutschland* could only be unsatisfied by the 'little Germany' or 'great Prussia' of 1870-1."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Winder, *Danubia*, London: Picador, 2013, p. 370.

<sup>112</sup> Biddiss, "Nationalism and the Moulding of Modern Europe", *History*, 79, N 257, October, 1984, p. 420.

"Not at all surprisingly, [therefore,] many Austrian Germans were enthusiastic about the new German Reich. In 1871, noting this fact, Count Andrassy warned Francis Joseph that it would be fatal to pursue internal policies in Cisleithenia which further antagonized the Austrian Germans. If this were done, 'the Austro-Germans would then turn to the forces of German democracy, which would tear the national banner out of the hands of Prince Bismarck and carry it forward until the whole German race was united.' Andrassy's comments were not those of a neutral observer. The Magyar elite, of which he was a leading representative, saw German domination of Cisleithenia as essential to keeping the Monarchy's Slavs in their place. In particular, plans for 'trialism', in other words for giving the Crown of St. Wenceslas (i.e. Bohemia and Moravia) the same sort of autonomy as the Crown of St. Stephen, were anathema to the Hungarians since they would dilute their influence in Vienna (one out of three territories rather than one out of two) and would set very dangerous precedents for the Hungarian Kingdom's Slav minority. Nevertheless, in the end Andrassy's prediction, a logical one in a nationalist and increasingly democratic era, was to come true in Hitlerian form."<sup>113</sup>

For their part, the Prussians under Bismarck were keen to prop up Austria-Hungary against the looming threat of Russia and the Balkan Slavs in the East. So Bismarck, writes James Hawes, "made a U-turn that astonished the world: he called off the *Kulturkampf*, broke with the liberals, abandoned Free Trade and, in October 1879, signed an anti-Russian defensive alliance with his oldest enemy, arch-Catholic Austria.

"The *Dual Alliance* of 1879," writes Hawes, "was a terrible deal for Germany. There was nothing in the diplomatic air that might make Russia attack Germany, whereas the frictions between Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans were very real. Now, if the Habsburgs could just goad Russia into drawing first, they'd have the whole might of a united Germany to back them in their adventures beyond the Danube.

"In 1815 and 1850, Vienna had wanted to have its cake and eat it, by remaining a vast, only part-German dynastic empire, yet determining all-German policy. In 1879 it got exactly that. For the side that had been whipped by Prussia in 1866, it was an amazing comeback. No sane German statesman would ever have agreed to it.

"Bismarck wasn't insane. But he wasn't really *German*, either. He was Prussian. And to safeguard Prussian rule over Germany, he forged the military union with Austria in the full knowledge that *some damn stupid thing in the Balkans* – the words were his own – could condemn all Germany to war with Russia..."<sup>114</sup>

"In 1870," writes Dominic Lieven, "the emperor Franz Joseph, the Austrian ruler, still hoped to join France in defeating Prussia and reasserting Habsburg pre-eminence in Germany. [But] in the aftermath of France's defeat in 1870-71, Prusso-German dominance of central Europe was an accepted fact, and Vienna

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<sup>113</sup> Lieven, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>114</sup> Hawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

increasingly saw the need for German support against its Russian rival in the Balkans.

“Whatever Franz Joseph’s personal inclination, the Austro-German alliance initially agreed in 1879 was never simply a matter of shared strategic interests. For many Germans on both sides of the border, it became a substitute for the dreams of a greater Germany (*Gross-Deutschland*), which Bismarck’s policy had reined in and which the empire of the Hohenzollerns could not satisfy. Catholic Germans were especially likely to welcome the alliance for this reason. The Austrian-Germans were the most powerful community in the Habsburg Empire, and for them the alliance with Berlin was increasingly seen as a bulwark against the Slav threat not just from without but also from within the monarchy. In a world shot through with ideas about ethnicity and race, the alliance with Berlin also simply seemed ‘natural’ in Austrian-German eyes. Hungarian elites too saw the alliance as a crucial guarantee against Slav domination of their region. Governments in Vienna and Berlin by no means always saw eye to eye. Germany was, for example, Austria’s chief economic competitor in the Balkans. The Habsburg authorities also made many efforts to conciliate their Slav subjects in a manner that annoyed Austrian-Germans and did so without too much concern for Berlin’s opinions. Internal and foreign affairs remained separate on an everyday level. But even having aside common geopolitical interests, it was by now barely imaginable for Austria to remove itself from Berlin’s embrace or join any anti-German international alliance. Equally unlikely was German toleration of the Austrian empire’s breakup or even of the radical weakening of the German-Austrian position within the monarchy. Potentially, the Germanic bloc in central Europe was less powerful than the Anglo-American one, but before 1914 in military and diplomatic terms it was far more closely united.

“Austrian perspectives were inevitably less global than in Berlin, let alone London, but Austrian diplomats in the United States were all too aware of enormous America’s potential power and its implications. At the turn of the twentieth century, Austria’s representatives in Washington commented that as all eyes turned to global competition and the future of Asia, Austria-Hungary more and more seemed a second- or even third-class power. In the sixteenth century, the Habsburg monarch Charles V had threatened to dominate all Europe. Klemens von Metternich, the Austrian foreign minister, had stood at the centre of the coalition that had defeated Napoleon and created a new European order at the Congress of Vienna. In comparison both to the Habsburgs’ glorious past and to the great issues linked to mankind’s future that were now on the agenda, the Balkan questions that had obsessed Austrian leaders in the 1880s were petty. The Anglo-Saxon powers had essentially fenced off Europeans in a continental enclosure from which they could safely look out wistfully at goings on in the great world. While Europeans lived on scraps in their continental zoo, the British and the Americans felt free to graze all across the globe’s rich pastures. This was an insult to dignity as well as to more concrete European interests because Anglo-American power and arrogance meant that ‘outside the European continent anyone who isn’t an Anglo-Saxon is a barely tolerated second-class human being.’ Americans knew that they could outcompete Europe in industry and agriculture.

They were conscious of their country's enormous potential resources, as well as of the superior wealth and education of ordinary Americans when compared with the average European. All this went far toward explaining their offhand and dismissive attitude toward foreigners.

"At least German leaders' hopes for the future could be sustained by their country's growing economic domination of Europe and by the vibrant self-confidence of German nationalism. In Vienna by contrast, it was difficult not to feel that history was against one. Austria had been the leading power in both Germany and Italy in the mid-nineteenth century. First France and then Germany had defeated it. Still worse, the defeats were not just a question of power and geopolitics. It was also generally believed that in the 1850s and 1860s Austria had been defeated not just by rival powers but also by the nationalist idea, which was then embodied in the new German and Italian nation-states. The nation seemed to represent the future, while the era of polyglot empires seemed part of the past. In 1900, all European empires were potentially threatened by the spread of nationalist ideas. These empires were sustained, however, by the strength of metropolitan nationalism. Austria was the exception. Germans made up less than one-quarter of the Habsburg Empire's population. Moreover, subjects of the Habsburg emperor who were German nationalists in many cases actually looked forward to the empire's demise and the unification of all German territories and peoples under the rule of Berlin..."<sup>115</sup>

Austria-Hungary was held together in its last phase before the Great War, not by metropolitan nationalism, which did not really exist in peacetime, but by a very pleasant and sophisticated metropolitan culture, symbolized by Viennese coffee, apple strudel and the incomparable music of its great composers and performers from Haydn and Mozart and Beethoven and Schubert to Liszt and Bruckner, Johann Strauss, Franz Lehar and Richard Strauss. But secular culture, even at its most beguiling, is a weak defence against the world, the flesh and the devil. When even its composers, such as Gustav Mahler, began to show signs of extreme *angst* in their music, and when the heir to the throne, Archduke Rudolf, imitating *Tristan and Isolde*, committed suicide together with his mistress<sup>116</sup>, it was evident that the bell was tolling for the empire...

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<sup>115</sup> Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, pp. 34-37.

<sup>116</sup> See John Suchet, *The Last Waltz*, London: Elliott & Thompson, 2015, chapter 16.

## 8. AUSTRO-GERMAN ANTI-SEMITISM

As we have seen, in the course of the nineteenth century most European countries emancipated the Jews; and this fact, combined with the evident power of such Jewish financiers as the Rothschilds, such Jewish politicians as Disraeli, and such Jewish revolutionaries as Marx, began to elicit hostility and feed into the age-old distrust and hatred of Jewry that we know as *anti-semitism*.

On the continent, the country where Jews settled most easily, was Germany. Many Jews sincerely considered themselves proud to be Germans as well as Jews. However, the ethnic Germans did not feel the same way...

According to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, anti-Semitism came "in the 70s from conservative and clerical circles, who demanded that German Jews be restricted in their rights and further immigration be forbidden. From the end of the 70s this movement 'also took hold of the intellectual circles of society'. It was expressed and brought to its most generalized formulations by the prominent Prussian historian Henrich von Trietschke: 'The present agitation has correctly caught the mood of society, which considers the Jews to be our national misfortune', 'the Jews can never be fused with the West European peoples' and express their hatred for Germanism. After him came Eugen Dühring (who is well known for his quarrel with Marx and Engels): 'The Jewish question is simply a racial question, and the Jews are not only foreign to us, they are innately and unalterably a corrupt race'. Then came the philosopher Eduard Hartmann. - In the political sphere this movement led in 1882 to the First International Anti-Jewish Congress (in Dresden), which accepted a 'Manifesto to the governments and peoples of the Christian states, who are perishing from Jewry', and demanding the expulsion of the Jews from Germany. - But by the 90s the anti-Jewish parties had weakened and suffered a series of political defeats."<sup>117</sup>

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The rise of modern German anti-semitism really dates to the foundation of the Second Reich in 1871, when the Germans were beginning to see themselves as the master race and the English, the Slavs and the Jews as their main rivals.

"The great proclaimer of this," writes Hawes, "was the official Prussian State historian, Heinrich von Treitschke, guru of the National Liberals, whose prestige was vast and whose *drum-like shriek*, as one American observer called it, frequently enthralled the Reichstag. Treitschke's 1879 article *Our Prospects (Unsere Aussichten)* is the founding document of modern political anti-semitism. From now on hating the Jews wasn't just about hating the Jews: it was a fully-fledged ideology, unlike any other form of racism.

"To Treitschke, the Jews are *our misfortune*. They had a deep, mysterious relationship with the *Englanders* (about whom he had long raged). Like the

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<sup>117</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste* (Two hundred years together), Moscow, 2002, pp. 315-316.

English, they were personally degenerate and cowardly, with the mentality of shopkeepers rather than heroes, yet somehow – in contradiction of all true Progress! – they ran the world. Ruthless, globalizing, culture-less, finance-driven Modernity was the Anglo-Jewish master-plan. More healthy but simpler nations, like the Germans, were putty in their hands. Every anti-semite since Treitschke has signed up to this conspiracy theory: Kaiser Wilhelm II talked of *Judaengland* just as modern anti-semites do of *Jew York*.

“Treitschke added an extra Prussian spin for his readers: *From the inexhaustible womb of Poland, he claimed, came an annual swarm of ambitious young Jewish trouser-peddlers whose children and grandchildren will rule the press and stock-exchanges of Germany.* He thus neatly managed to link fear of allegedly Jewish/Anglo-Saxon modernity with the ancient Prussian colonial fear and loathing of Poland. The Jews were painted as internationalist, money-bagged internal Englanders and penniless, fast-breeding Polish immigrants, rolled into one.”<sup>118</sup>

In 1881, writes Fritz Fischer, “the Union of German Students came into being as a part of the anti-Semitic movement, of which it soon became the most important mouthpiece. Founded with the purpose of providing the students’ association with an overall organization and firing academic youth with the new German nationalism, and exerting considerable influence on the older rival student organisations, corps and fraternities, it soon became a big factor in inclining the students’ mentality towards the new dynamic-military, conservative and *volkisch* nationalism. The deliberalisation of the Prussian bureaucracy and the nationalist spirit of the German Lutheran church are traceable to the same source...”<sup>119</sup>

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The term "Antisemitism", writes Evans, was coined at this time by the Austrian Moravian, later Prussian Jewish Orientalist Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907). However, “It was the German journalist Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904) who popularized the concept in his book *The Way to Victory of Jewdom over Germandom* (1879). Although he renounced these beliefs at the end of his life, Marr reflected a wider current in right-wing German politics, already begun by the Prussian court preacher Adolf Stöcker (1835-1909), who demanded legal restrictions on the number of practising Jews in the professions as well as reductions of their supposed influence in the world of business. Stöcker’s main concern was founding the Christian Social Party in Germany in 1878 was, however, to wean the workers away from socialism, and in this he met with only very limited success...”<sup>120</sup>

Daniel Pipes writes: "*Antisemitism*, a term coined in 1879 with the founding in Berlin of the *Antisemitenliga* (Antisemitic League), is a form of anti-Jewish hatred that differs in several ways from what came before: (1) it changes the emphasis

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<sup>118</sup> Hawes, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>119</sup> Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, New York; W.W. Norton, 1967, p. 7.

<sup>120</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

from religion to race, (2) it transforms dislike into fear, (3) it turns a bias into an all-encompassing ideology, even way of life, and (4) it replaces the episodic persecution of Jews with a permanent one. Antisemitism moved Jew hatred from the realm of emotions to that of political activism, from defensive to offensive, and from life's sidelines to its core. It also changed the depiction of Jews from heretics into malevolently powerful figures.<sup>121</sup>

It should be emphasized, however, that whatever *personal* anti-Semitism individual Germans might nourish, *state* legislation was only mildly discriminatory against the Jews in this period. There was a discriminatory programme of Germanization, which was initiated from Berlin in 1872-73; but this was directed more against the Poles in the east of the country than against the Jews. This Germanization programme, as Clark writes, was “an exercise in futility”. Its real significance “lies less in its negligible impact on the ethnic boundaries of East Elbia than in what it tells us about the changing political climate in Prussia. The traditional view of the Prussian monarchy had been that the Poles were – like the German-speaking Brandenburgers and Pomeranians and the Lithuanians of East Prussia – Christian subjects of the Prussian Crown. But from the 1870s onwards, Prussian administrators departed from this standpoint. In doing so, they followed the promptings of organizations outside the state, whose arguments and propaganda were saturated with the rhetoric of German ultra-nationalism...

“The Prussian Jews felt the impact of these developments. There was, of course, no question in the Jewish case of forcing the pace of cultural assimilation (a goal the great majority of Prussian Jews had already enthusiastically embraced) or of repressing ambitions for secession or political independence. What mattered most to the Jewish communities of nineteenth-century Germany was the removal of their ancient legal liabilities. This had already been achieved on the eve of political unification: the Confederal Law (valid throughout the North German Confederation) of 3 July 1869 explicitly stated that all curtailments of civil and citizenship rights that derived from differences of creed were henceforth abolished. It seemed that the long journey to legal emancipation that had begun with the Hardenburg edict [on Jewish emancipation] of March 1812 was at last complete.”<sup>122</sup>

However, there continued to be discrimination against Jewish applicants to public office. When challenged by left-liberal deputies, Prussian ministers pointed to the fact that they had to take account of “public opinion” – that is, anti-semitism – in “the lower orders”.

“This readiness to accommodate ‘public opinion’ also left its mark in other areas. In the early 1880s, for example, the Prussian ministry of the interior intervened in support of anti-Semite student associations, undercutting the predominantly liberal university administrations that were trying to suppress them. At around the same time, the Prussian administration also began to tighten

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<sup>121</sup> Pipes, *Conspiracy*, New York: The Free Press, 1997, p. 27.

<sup>122</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, pp. 582-583.

its policy on the naturalization of foreign Jews: this was the background to the extraordinary expulsion of over 30,000 non-naturalized Poles and Jews in 1885.

“Under pressure from anti-Semitic agitation and petitions, the Prussian government even began during the 1890s to prevent Jewish citizens from adopting Christian family names. Anti-Semites objected to Jewish name-changing on the racist grounds that it created confusion about who was Jewish and who was not. The Prussian state authorities (especially the conservative minister of the interior Botho von Eulenburg) adopted the anti-Semitic viewpoint, departing from established policy to discriminate specifically against Jewish applicants. The same logic was at work in the ‘Jew Count’ (*Judenzählung*) ordered by the Prussian ministry of war in October 1916 with a view to establishing how many Jews were in active service on the front line. National anti-Semitic organizations such as the *Reichshammerbund* (founded in 1912) had long been propagating the claim that the German Jews were war profiteers who were not pulling their weight in the defence of the Fatherland. From the outbreak of the war and particularly from the end of 1915, they bombarded the Prussian ministry of war with anonymous denunciations and complaints...”<sup>123</sup>

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The Jews were powerful in Germany in spite of the fact that they were highly assimilated and even identified their interests with Germany's. Thus Paul Johnson writes: “This Jewish identification with the German was taking place against the background, in the last generation before Armageddon, of a cultural and scientific revolution which was hurtling in quite a different direction, and in which Jews were seen to be at the controls. The military and naval arms race which increasingly divided and electrified Europe was paralleled by an intellectual arms race, which divided society as a whole. The modern movement, affecting every department of artistic and intellectual life, was gathering power and momentum. It was becoming an irresistible force. Tradition and conservatism, though by no means forming an immovable object, offered strong resistance, which became progressively more angry and violent as the full demands of modernism were displayed on both sides of the decade before 1914. The Jews, like everyone else, were on both sides of the battle. Pious Jews, whether Orthodox or Hasidic, formed perhaps the most conservative, indeed reactionary, element in Europe, in deploring artistic and scientific change. But in the gentile world nobody took the slightest notice of them, or even knew they existed, except perhaps as a piece of traditional human furniture. They saw the Jews, and Jewishness, as everywhere and always identified with modernism in its most extreme form.

“What could not be denied was that the emancipation of the European Jews and their emergence from the ghetto into the intellectual and artistic mainstream greatly accelerated changes which were coming anyway. The Jews were natural iconoclasts. Like the prophets, they set about smiting and overturning all the idols of the conventional modes with skill and ferocious glee. They invaded spheres

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<sup>123</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, pp. 585-86.

traditionally alien or banned to Jew and quickly became the chief *foci* of dynamism..."<sup>124</sup>

In 1899, "Houston Stewart Chamberlain – an Englishman by birth and the son of a British admiral, but a German by choice and eventually by nationality – published his two-volume work *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahr-hunerts (Foundations of the Nineteenth Century)*, which thanks to its eloquence and its appearance of learning became the Bible of the whole *völkisch*-racist movement. Here all human history was presented as a bitter struggle between spirituality, embodied in the German 'race', and materialism, embodied in the Jewish 'race' – the only two pure races, for all the others were but a 'chaos of peoples'. In Chamberlain's view the Jewish 'race' had been relentlessly striving, down the ages, to secure absolute dominion over all other nations. If once this 'race' were decisively defeated, the Germanic 'race' would be free to realize its own divinely appointed destiny – which was to create a new, radiant world, transfused with a noble spirituality and mysteriously combining modern technology and science with the rural, hierarchical culture of earlier times.

"This *völkisch*-racist view of the world was not by any means shared by all Germans. The nobility and the great industrialists disdained it; and so, at the other end of the social scale, did the industrial working class organized in the Social-Democratic movement. The reason was that these strata of German society were relatively secure in their self-esteem..."

"... [After 1871] the writers, scholars and thinkers, once the spearhead of the bourgeoisie, found themselves pushed down the social scale. Excluded not only from political influence but from all contact with politics, accustomed to dealing with abstractions but not with real people in real situations, wounded in their self-esteem and seething with resentment, many of these people consoled themselves with constructing vast philosophies of history.

"The *völkisch*-racist view of the world was one of these philosophies..."<sup>125</sup>

"The appeal of the *völkisch*-racist outlook was perhaps even stronger among the German element in the Habsburg empire than it was in the Hohenzollern empire. On this periphery of the German-speaking world, where ever since the war of 1866 the German element had felt isolated and threatened by the preponderant Slavic element, the aggressive affirmation of German superiority has particular attractions. Moreover, the Jews were far more conspicuous in Austria than in Germany..."<sup>126</sup>

"In Austria," writes Evans, "anti-Semitism was instrumentalized for political purposes by Karl Lueger (1844-1910). As well as being a successful Mayor of Vienna, Lueger was also an unscrupulous political agitator who carried favour with the Viennese lower middle class and the rural peasantry by publicly blaming

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<sup>124</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

<sup>125</sup> Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, London: Serif, 1996, pp. 190, 193.

<sup>126</sup> Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

the Jews for their economic problems. It was Lueger, for example, who coined the term '*Judapest*' to refer to the Hungarian capital, where there was a high proportion of Jews among the professional classes (the word *Fest* also meant 'plague' in German). Lueger's anti-Semitic rhetoric did much to make such ideas respectable in Vienna. How sincere his views were is debatable; when a follower upbraided him in a Vienna café for sitting at a table with some Jews, Lueger famously replied: 'I decide who's a Jew.' None of this seemed to put voters off: in 1902 he increased his majority on the council. Lueger was outdone as an anti-Semite by another Austrian, Georg Ritter von Schönerer (1842-1921), son of a railway magnate. In the early 1880s, Schönerer formed a German nationalist association to campaign for the incorporation of Austria into the German Empire, along with Bohemia. Later he renamed his party 'Pan-German', and said in the national Parliament that he 'longed for the day when a German army would march into Austria and destroy it'. It was Schönerer who invented the greeting *Heil!* in imitation of the supposed Germanic heroes of medieval times. His acolytes also used the title *Führer* when addressing him. In 1888 with some followers he trashed the offices of a newspaper that had prematurely reported the death of the German Emperor. As a result of these antics Franz Joseph stripped him of his noble title (which he had in any case only been granted in 1880). In 1898, undeterred, Schönerer led the movement *Los von Rom* ('Free from Rome') to convert Austrians to Lutheranism, which annoyed the Church and the emperor still further. Never more than a fringe politician, Schönerer lost his seat in the Reichsrat in 1907. The anti-Semitism of both Schönerer and Lueger was to bear fruit in the later ideology of Adolph Hitler (1889-1945), who lived in Vienna as a young man during these years.

"Politicians such as these built on anti-Semitic theories that propounded the idea that the Jewish spirit, indelibly stamped on the Jewish racial character, was imbued with an unalterable purpose – to undermine social institutions such as the family, subvert the economy, and shatter the patriotic foundations of the nation in the interests of a 'cosmopolitan' spirit..."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power*, pp. 479-480.

## 9. WAGNERIAN MUSIC WARS

Perhaps the best-known German anti-semite was the composer Richard Wagner, whose baleful views were founded on the contrast he drew between “good” Greek art and “bad” Jewish art. Like Nietzsche, Wagner took Greek art as his ideal. Thus in 1849 he wrote: “It is our task to make out of Greek art the completely human art; to remove from it the conditions under which it was precisely a *Greek* and not a completely *human* art; to widen the *garb of religion*, in which alone it was communal Greek art, after the removal of which, as a selfish individual art species, it could not longer fulfill the need of the community, but only that of luxury – however beautiful! – to widen this garb of the specifically *Greek religion* to the bond of the religion of the future – that of *universality* – in order to form for ourselves a true conception of the artwork of the future.”<sup>128</sup> Paradoxically, however, while extolling universality in art, Wagner believed it had to be rooted in the soil of a national culture. Hence his violent aversion to *Judaism in Music* – the title of his notorious article of 1850.

In this article Wagner seems to have been motivated by pure spite or jealousy against his former generous patron, the German-Jewish composer of Grand Opera, Giacomo Meyerbeer, who, ironically, very much wanted to be seen as a German composer. “Published under a pseudonym (‘to prevent the question being dragged down by the Jews to a purely personal level’, as he explained to Liszt), Wagner’s attack was at its heart a personal attack on Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Wagner argued that the Jews lacked national character. They were ‘disagreeably foreign to whatever European nation they belong’. From this premise he launched an attack on Mendelssohn, who had died only three years previously, claiming that his music was pastiche without true feeling or nationality. The culmination of the article was a veiled attack on Meyerbeer, who, though unnamed, was clearly the target. Associating the Jews with the rule of money and commercialism in the arts, Wagner explained the popular success of this ‘famous opera composer’ by his ‘Jewish willingness to cater to the lower tastes for monetary gain’. Two years later, in his *Opera and Drama*, published under his own name, Wagner made the object of his attack clear. Describing Meyerbeer as ‘a Jew banker to whom it occurred to write some music,’ he argued that [the opera] *Le Prophete* was a shallow, incoherent work striving for effects to gratify the audience (‘effects without causes’, as he famously described the sunrise at the end of the third act)...”<sup>129</sup>

“Jews, says Wagner, have no ‘national’ culture, so the art they produce is superficial – it has no grounding in racial ‘soil’ and is therefore far as removed from holy Greek art as can be imagined. Jews could be acceptable, not simply by being ‘assimilated’ into a vibrant national culture (as many of them were attempting to do in the Germany of the latter half of the nineteenth century) but by being purged, ‘redeemed’ of their ‘Jewishness’.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Wagner, “The Artwork of the Future”, in Stephen Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>129</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Europeans*, London: Penguin, 2020, p. 140.

<sup>130</sup> Stephen Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

Wagner's hostility to Meyerbeer was founded not only on his Jewishness but also on the fact that Meyerbeer, a German, had been successful in France, and acted as a kind of cultural bridge between France and Germany. Wagner, on the other hand, suffered fiascos with *Tannhauser* and *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg* in Paris, and after his return to Germany in 1862 (he had been banned for his part in the 1848 revolution), and especially after his securing secure employment for the first time under King Ludwig II of Bavaria in 1864 (the king enabled *Tristan und Isolde* to receive its premiere in 1865), he became an ardent German nationalist, writing "What is German?" in 1865 and "German Art and German Politics" in 1867. In *Die Meistersinger* "Sach's appeal to the people to the people at the end warned against the dangers of foreign influence in Germany: 'Beware! Evil tricks threaten us; under a false, foreign rule, soon no prince would understand his people; and foreign mists with foreign vanities they would plant in our German land; what is German and true none would know, if it did not live in the honour of German Masters.' Within a year of its Munich premiere, *Die Meistersinger* was performed at Dresden, Dessau, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Hanover and Weimar, with Viennas, Konigsberg, Berlin and Leipzig following in 1870. The opera would become a focal point of the German nationalist movement in the Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany.

"Wagner saw his music dramas as the start of a new German art. 'I am the most German of all of them. I am the German spirit,' he noted in his diary in September 1865. To grasp their nationality the Germans had to see themselves, their national drama, on the stage. Wagner filled his operas with German myths, folk legends (some genuine, some appropriated), landscapes and historical figures. Through his propagandists he marketed his music as a purely 'German' art - spiritually higher than the commercial forms of operatic art in France and Italy. There was an irony in this campaign: the Wagner movement deployed all the methods of the modern 'culture industry' - artistic manifestos, self-promotion and publicity, the cult of the pioneering artist as prophet and celebrity - to promote 'the music of the future' as a brand."<sup>131</sup>

Meanwhile, Wagner's views on Jewry became steadily more radical. As Paul Johnson writes, he "advocated the *Untergang* (downfall) of the Jews. 'I regard the Jewish race as the born enemy of pure humanity and everything that is noble in it; it is certain that we Germans will go under before them, and perhaps I am the last German who knows how to stand up as an art-loving man against the Judaism that is already getting control of everything.' He wrote this in *Religion and Art* (1881),... Wagner was particularly influential in intensifying anti-Semitism, especially among the middle and upper classes, not only because of his personal standing but because he repeatedly advanced the argument - with innumerable examples - that the Jews were progressively 'taking over' the citadel of German culture, especially its music. Even their so-called 'geniuses', he insisted - men like Giacomo Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn or Heine himself - were not truly creative, and meanwhile a host of Jewish middlemen were taking over the critical press, publishing, theatres and operas, art galleries and agencies. It was Wagner's writings which provoked the furious outpourings of Eugen Dühring, who

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<sup>131</sup> Figs, *The Europeans*, pp. 318-319.

throughout the 1880s published a succession of widely read racial attacks on the Jew: the 'Jewish question', he declared, should be 'solved' by 'killing and extirpation'.<sup>132</sup>

Wagner's later music-dramas provided the kind of "Jew-purged" art that he demanded; they propagated, in Sir Richard Evans' words, "heroic figures from Nordic legend [that] were to serve as model leaders for the German future" – that is, models of Aryan purity with no admixture of Semitism. But even as early as *Judaism in Music* he was arguing "that the 'Jewish spirit' was inimical to musical profundity. His remedy was for the complete assimilation of Jews into German culture [ironically, this was already happening without and in spite of him], and the replacement of Jewish religion, indeed all religion, by secular aesthetic impulses of the sort he poured into his own music-dramas. But towards the end of his life his views took on an increasingly racist tone under the influence of his second wife, Cosima, daughter of the composer Franz Liszt. By the end of the 1870s she was recording in her diaries that Wagner, whose outlook on civilization was distinctly pessimistic by this time, had read Wilhelm Marr's anti-semitic tract of 1873 and broadly agreed with it. As a consequence of this shift in his position, Wagner no longer desired the assimilation of the Jews into German society, but their expulsion from it. In 1881, discussing Lessing's classic play *Nathan the Wise* and a disastrous fire in the Vienna Ring Theatre, in which more than four hundred people, many of them Jewish, had died, Cosima noted that her husband said 'In a vehement quip that all Jews should burn in a performance of *Nathan*'.

"After Wagner's death [in 1883], his widow [Cosima] turned Bayreuth into a kind of shrine, at which a band of dedicated followers would cultivate the dead Master's sacred memory. The views of the circle she gathered round her at Bayreuth were rabidly anti-Semitic. The Wagner circle did its best to interpret the composer's operas as pitting Nordic heroes against Jewish villains, although his music was of course capable of being interpreted in many other ways as well..."<sup>133</sup>

Cosima said that the Jews were taking over German culture, science and industry. "But", commented the Zionist Chaim Weizmann, "the essential point which most non-Jews overlook and which forms the very crux of the Jewish tragedy, is that those Jews who are giving their energies and their brains to the Germans are doing it in their capacities as Germans and are enriching Germany and not Jewry, which they are abandoning... They just hide their Judaism in order to be allowed to place their brains and abilities at the disposal of the Germans. They are to no little extent responsible for German greatness. The tragedy of it all is that whereas we do not recognize them as Jews, Madame Wagner does not recognize them as Germans, and so we stand there as the most exploited and misunderstood of people."<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1995, p. 394.

<sup>133</sup> Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, London: Penguin, 2004, pp. 32-33.

<sup>134</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

## 10. WAGNER'S RELIGION OF DEATH

Wagner's music acquired a deeper hue from a *cult of death*. This was a common trait among Romantics and nationalists; for "the Romantic *Sehnsucht*, as Adam Zamoyski writes, "was an infinite and permanently dissatisfied longing for nirvana, for the ultimate experience, for that which could only find resolution in death – than which there could be no greater liberation."<sup>135</sup>

Thus the lovers in *Tristan und Isolde* find fulfillment *only in death*. And the music mirrors that: "Musicians everywhere were astounded at what Wagner had opened up with his harmonic audacity: the famous chord in the fourth bar of the Prelude which resolves itself into a dissonance – the famous *Tristan* chord – leads on to a series of unresolved cadences which do not find resolution until the very end of the opera. This is the apotheosis of suspension, both in the musical and in the Schopenhauerian sense. And music would never be the same again..."<sup>136</sup>

However, Denis de Rougemont puts forward the interesting hypothesis that the roots of this cult of death go deeper into the past: it was a revival, in a romantic, nineteenth-century mode, of the ancient religion of *Manichaeism* or *Catharism*. Its main tenet consisted in the assertion that matter and the created universe is evil, and that salvation is to be found only in a complete renunciation of all desire for the created – in a word, in death. This religion was thoroughly integrated into his music, especially *Tristan und Isolde* and the last scene of *Gotterdammerung*. And we are tempted to say that it found its political expression in the career of that lover of death – and of Wagner – Adolf Hitler...

That Wagner considered the "true religion" to be a form of Manichaeism is revealed in the following: "*Religion*, of its very essence, is radically divergent from the State. The religions that have come into the world have been high and pure in direct ratio as they seceded from the State, and in themselves entirely upheaved it. We find State and Religion in complete alliance only where each still stands upon its lowest step of evolution and significance. The primitive Nature-religion subserves no ends but those which Patriotism provides for in the adult State: hence with the full development of patriotic spirit the ancient Nature-religion has always lost its meaning for the State. So long as it flourishes, however, so long do men subsume by their gods their highest practical interest of State; the tribal god is the representative of the tribesman's solidarity; the remaining Nature-gods become *Penates*, protectors of the home, the town, the fields and flocks. Only in the wholly adult State, where these religions have paled before the full-fledged patriotic duty, and are sinking into inessential forms and ceremonies; only where 'Fate' has shown itself to be Political Necessity – could true Religion step into the world. Its basis is a feeling of the unblestness of human being, of the State's profound inadequacy to still the purely-human need. Its inmost kernel is denial of the world – i.e. recognition of the world as a fleeting and dreamlike state

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<sup>135</sup> Adam Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 302.

<sup>136</sup> Callow, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

reposing merely on illusion – and struggle for Redemption from it, prepared for by renunciation, attained by Faith.”<sup>137</sup>

In 1854 Wagner read Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation* for the first time. “Unlike most German philosophers of the nineteenth century,” writes Stephen Johnson, Schopenhauer “was as fine a writer as he was a thinker, and this would have been part of the attraction. It was, however, Schopenhauer’s vision that turned Wagner’s thinking upside down – yet with it went a peculiar sense of recognition. There was so much in this book that reflected what Wagner already felt, even he had not articulated it consciously. This may seem strange, since Schopenhauer is often presented as philosophy’s great pessimist, and Wagner’s revolutionary theory and talk of the future had been determinedly, if not always convincingly, optimistic. On one crucial point, though Schopenhauer, the Young Germans and Wagner all agreed: the world as it stood was a terrible place. Injustice prevailed; mindless cruelty and pointless suffering were rife. The Young Germans had believed that the world could, indeed would, be changed. Surely the great philosopher Hegel had shown for all time that history itself was an unstoppable process of change for the better? Schopenhauer laughed that idea to scorn. If there were an underlying process it was the ‘Will’: the blind, naked craving for life that lay at the heart of nature – in today’s less metaphysically inclined age it might be called ‘the selfish gene’. For Schopenhauer there was no satisfying this craving: its attempts to fulfill itself only created more suffering – for others and, ultimately, for itself. The only way out of suffering was the path undertaken by saints of all the world’s religions: renunciation, reflecting the Will back on itself, saying ‘no’... Here was another possible answer to Wagner’s old yearning for personal redemption and political revolution: forget Utopia, and turn instead toward Nirvana.

“There was another highly relevant message for Wagner in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. In his Zurich essays, particularly *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, Wagner had put forward his idea of an ideal synthesis of the arts, all mutually subservient: the word he used in that essay was *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the ‘total/unified work of art’ – though it is worth noting that this is his only recorded use of that now-famous term.

“For Schopenhauer, music was supreme. Through music one could achieve an almost mystical awareness of that blind craving urge within us all and stand outside it in contemplation. Music was in itself a means towards redemption. During his childhood in Danzig (now Gdansk), Schopenhauer had heard how a cellist returning home one night was cornered by a pack of slavering bloodhounds that had escaped from a nearby warehouse. In a kind of inspired desperation the cellist had played to them. The dogs quietened down and began to listen, and the cellist was saved. Schopenhauer was enthralled by the story – and so was Wagner. He saw that his dramatic ideals would have to change. Music would not be subservient to the other arts. It had a special role to play. ‘I must confess to having

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<sup>137</sup> Wagner, “On State and Religion”, in *Art and Politics*, p. 24.

arrived at a clear understanding of my own works of art through the help of another."<sup>138</sup>

However, the philosopher had a direct and powerful influence on the composer especially in *Tristan and Isolde*, which was completed in 1859. "This would be a tale of two lovers, their desire for one another expressed in music in which sensuous beauty would combine with aching sadness. It would be desire stripped of comforting illusions, a longing that in the end could only find fulfillment in death. Musically this would be expressed by the poignant yearning motif that opens the *Tristan* Prelude. The motif is founded on a single unresolved dissonance: a dissonance that finds its true tonal resolution only in the final bars of the opera – namely after the death of both lovers. And yet Wagner's paradoxical nature declares itself even here. Evidently he had not yet renounced hope of erotic fulfillment through his relationship with Mathilde Wesendonck: the two were spending more and more time in each other's company, despite the immediate proximity of both Otto [Mathilde's husband] and Minna [Wagner's wife]. Some years later, in a letter to Mathilde of December 1858, Wagner said that he had to correct 'friend Schopenhauer'. There was another way 'leading to the perfect appeasement of the Will': a simpler and more direct way than Schopenhauerian renunciation, by which he meant the love that 'has its roots in sex'. But only a year after this he was writing to another woman friend: 'Lovingly I turn my eyes toward the land of Nirvana. Yet Nirvana always becomes Tristan again.' Wagner could be accused of simply wanting to have his cake and eat it: to cling to the comforting idea of renunciation while retaining the possibility that he might fulfill his desires after all.

"The greatness of *Tristan und Isolde* lies partly in the way that Wagner explores this painful paradox to the full in his music, even if he could never satisfactorily resolve it in words."<sup>139</sup>

De Rougemont develops this thesis in an illuminating way. First, he traces the origin of the religion of the love of death to the emergence of the heresy of *Catharism* (otherwise known as Albigensianism or Bogomilism) in Southern France in the early twelfth century. The Catharist heretics deliberately cultivated a kind of refined eroticism, but not for overtly sexual or political ends – on the contrary, both sexual intercourse and war were considered to be evil, insofar as the whole created world was considered to be the work of the evil demiurge, - but in order to escape this world entirely and unite with the Light beyond the grave.

This love of passionate Love (Eros - which could, however, just as well be called Thanatos). received expression in the poetry of the Troubadours and a "myth" expressed in such early romances as *Tristan* and *Lancelot*, in which, under the guise of an adulterous passion for an unattainable married lady, with whom union was

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<sup>138</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-78.

<sup>139</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79. We do not know whether Wagner and Mathilde consummated their passion. But we do know that he and his second wife Cosima had a daughter whom they called Isolde (Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

not possible, and not even desired in this life, but only after death, the Catharist's striving for union with the uncreated Light was represented.

The "sacred" symbolic poetry of the troubadours, writes de Rougemont, soon degenerated, in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, into profane love poetry and tragic dramas (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Phèdre*) and the first romantic novels, which instead of symbolizing an essentially religious and other-worldly ideal in the form of courtly love, represented unmistakably *profane* love under the guise of an irresistible, "divine" passion and with no taboo on sexual consummation. This was, of course, a complete reversal of the original intent of the myth. According to David Starkey, "Romantic Love - with its unrequited passions, its vows, its proposals on bended knee, its exchanges of rings and tokens, its protestations of eternal devotion and its living happily ever after - is an invention of the French Middle Ages. Its key text, all 21,000 lines of it, is the *Roman de la Rose*, from which the word *romantic* itself derives..."<sup>140</sup> By the eighteenth century in France, even the "divinity" of this passion had been discarded, and in figures such as Don Juan or the Marquis de Sade only its supposed irresistibility and undoubted incompatibility with conventional Christian morality remained.

However, towards the end of the eighteenth century two events served to resurrect the original myth: the rise of German romanticism and the French revolution. German romanticism once again represented eros as a divine passion that could not be fulfilled in this life, but only in and through death.<sup>141</sup>

The most important representative of this thinking was Richard Wagner, who combined it with romanticism, nationalism and a kind of pseudo-Christianity in a peculiarly toxic and powerful mixture.

As George L. Mosse writes, "the soul was all-important to him, but he came increasingly to view this soul in terms of Christian love. Lohengrin, Parsifal, and the Flying Dutchman were heroes who had striven for self-realization, a goal only attained through integration with a higher purpose, through Christian love. Indeed, he took as his motto that 'all understanding is possible only through love'. Wagner, however, shared that pessimism about life so prevalent at the end of the century. True integration through love with a higher purpose could only be achieved in eternity. In this life there was only frustration; death was necessary for self-realization. With the earlier Romantics such a death as that of the young Werther was a tragedy, but with Wagner death became a logical necessity for self-fulfillment. It was the only way to escape human frailties. Thus the Dutchman was doomed from the start. Tannhauser, an embodiment of human frailty, atoned

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<sup>140</sup> Starkey, *Crown & Country*, London: Harper, 2016, pp. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>141</sup> As Constantine the Serbian poet says in Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, p. 385): "The French make love for the sake of life; and so, like living, it often falls to something less than itself, to a little trivial round. The Germans make love for the sake of death; as they like to put off their civilian clothes and put on uniform, because there is more chance of being killed, so they like to step out of the safe casual relations of society and let loose the destructive forces of sex. So it was with *Werther* and *Elective Affinities*, and so it was in the years after the [First World] war, when they were so promiscuous that sex meant nothing at all..." (my italics (V.M.).

through Elizabeth's and his own death, while Brunhilde movingly sings of Siegfried's 'shining love, laughing death'. The very fact that the human frailties condemned were the very ones Nietzsche found necessary for life – lust and joy – illuminates the contrast between Dionysian man and Wagner's hero.

“Renunciation of human desires was Wagner's theme. Parsifal possessed titanic powers for resisting temptation, and Lohengrin, in the end, had to renounce earthly happiness.. Not only must man fight his inner desires to attain self-realization but the temptation of outward riches and power as well. For Wagner, as for the Romantics in general, materialistic man had lost his 'soul'. Power itself was derided – 'they hurry to their end who boast of such great strength'. Siegfried, symbolic of the man of power in the capitalistic epoch, lusted after power and riches, that is, the ring and the gold. But he was doomed, for he who possessed the ring and the gold was forever deprived of love. Brunhilde, realizing the nature of Siegfried's dilemma, saw clearly that only in eternity would he become a true hero once more. Death was the answer. Love and power cannot be married, for love means renunciation of power and riches, as well as of human desires...

“Romanticism in Wagner had lost its earthly element... It had adopted the Christian element within early romanticism and exalted it as an overriding principle. Where the early Romantics saw a constant conflict between human emotions and the environment, Wagner envisioned a solution to the frustrations of this world. Sentiment had become sentimentalized into chivalrous love; a comforting conclusion to the storms and stresses of the world had been gained. Wagner's Christianity, however, was combined with a romantic vision of the past. It was harnessed to the old Germanic legends of the Nibelungenlied. The heroes who knew the true Christian love were the epic figures of Germanic myth. In his essay *What is German* (1865-78) Wagner wrote that to be German was to understand Christianity as a religion of the soul and not of dogma. The characters of the Nibelungen saga could show modern Germans the real meaning of Christianity.

“Nationalism, the vision of the past, and Christian sacrifice through love were intermingled in these musical dramas. No wonder Wagner's son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, believed that the prophet of a German, as opposed to an Oriental, Christianity had arrived. The emphasis on the hero meant stressing the leadership principle within Wagner's dramatic framework. Though this hero differed from both Werther and the superman, he had one thing in common with the preoccupation with vice at the end of the century. He derived his strength from his unnatural birth; he was selected in opposition to both human and Divine law. For example, Brunhilde was the child of a union of God and earth, while Siegfried sprang from an incestuous relationship. But this unlawful strength was not used to overcome convention but to reaffirm Christian love and sacrifice. Wagner's romanticism had, after all, become conventional. His chivalric love, his Germanic religion of the soul, was far from the revolutionary Wagner who had mounted the barricades of Dresden in 1848. This kind of romanticism did not

intend a transformation of values. Vice stood at the beginning of the hero's career but not at the end of it...

"Wagner's romanticism was one the middle classes could understand. It was not disturbingly revolutionary but soothingly moral. It catered to nationalism and to the longing for group identification. Above all, it put forward a leadership idea: the hero as the redeemer of his people..."<sup>142</sup>

As we have seen Wagner's death-loving romanticism reached its climax in *Tristan und Isolde*. According to De Rougemont, "*Tristan* is far more profoundly and indisputably Manichaeian than the *Divine Comedy* is Thomist..."

"The drama opens with a monumental evocation of the powers that rule the world of day – the hate and pride, and the barbarous and sometimes even criminal violence, of feudal honour. Isolde wishes to avenge the affront she has suffered. The potion she gives to Tristan is intended to bring about his death, but a death disallowed by Love, a death in accordance with the laws of day and of revenge – brutal, accidental, and devoid of mystical significance. The highest Minne, however, causes Brengain to make a mistake that can preserve Love. For the death-potion she substitutes the drink of initiation. Hence the one embrace which conjoins Tristan and Isolde as soon as they have drunk is the solitary kiss of the Catharist sacrament, the *consolamentum* of the Pure! From that moment the laws of day, hate, honour, and revenge, lose all power over their hearts. The initiated pair enter the nocturnal world of ecstatic release. And day, coming back with the royal procession and its discordant flourish of trumpets, is unable to recapture them. At the end of the ordeal which it compels them to undergo – this is their passion ["passion" derives from *passio*, meaning "suffering"] – they have already foreseen the *other* death, the death that will alone fulfil their love.

"The second act is the passion song of souls imprisoned in material forms. When every obstacle has been overcome, and the lovers are alone together in the dark, carnal desire still stands between them. They are together, and yet they are two. The 'und' of *Tristan und Isolde* is there to indicate their duality as creatures. Here music alone can convey the certitude and substance of their twin nostalgia for one-ness; music alone can harmonize the plaint of the two voices, and make of it a single plaint in which there is already being sounded the reality of an ineffable other world of expectation. This is why the leitmotif of the love duet is already that of death.

"Once again day returns. The treacherous Melot wounds Tristan. But by now passion has triumphed. It wrests away the apparent victory of day. The wound through which life flows out is passion's pledge of a supreme recovery – that recovery of which the dying Isolde sings once she has cast herself upon Tristan's corpse in an ecstasy of the 'highest bliss of being'.

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<sup>142</sup> Mosse, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.

“Initiation, passion, fatal fulfilment – the three mystic moments to which Wagner, with a genius for simplification, saw that he could reduce the three acts of the drama, express the profound significance of the myth, a significance kept out of sight even in the medieval legends by a host of epic and picturesque detail. Nevertheless, the art form adopted by Wagner renews the possibility of ‘misunderstanding’. The story of Tristan *had* now to be in the form of an opera... Even as the transgression of the rules of chaste love by the legendary lovers turned the poetic lay of the troubadours into the novel – so the powers of day, when brought forward in the first act, introduce struggle and duration, the elements of drama. But a play does not allow everything to be stated, for the religion of passion is ‘in essence lyrical’. Hence *music* alone is equal to conveying the transcendental interaction, the wildly contradictory and contrapuntal character of the passion of Darkness, which is the summons to uncreated Light.”<sup>143</sup>

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It will be immediately apparent that the Wagnerian love of death is related to the *nationalist-revolutionary* love of death. And in the French revolution, according to de Rougemont, there took place a transference of this myth into the realm of *war*, with *the Nation* taking the place of the woman with whom one can be united only in death.

“At the end of the eighteenth century, there occurred the magnification of all that the Tristan myth, and later its literary substitutes, had been intended *to contain*. The middle-class nineteenth century witnessed the spread into the profane mind of a ‘death instinct’ that had long been repressed in the unconscious, or else directed at its source into the channels of an aristocratic art. And when the framework of society burst – under a pressure exerted from quite another quarter – the content of the myth poured out over everyday life. We were unable to understand this diluted elevation of love. We supposed it to be a new springtime of instinct, a revival of dionysiac forces which a so-called Christianity had persecuted...”<sup>144</sup>

“From a strictly military standpoint, what novelty was contributed by the Revolution? ‘An outburst of passion never before equalled’, is the answer given by Foch. According to him, the heresy of the old school had been to seek to make war into an *exact science* when it is really *a terrible and passionate drama*. Everybody knows, of course, that an explosion of sentimentality preceded and accompanied the Revolution, an event passionate far more than – in the strict sense of the word – political. With the murder of the king – a deed which in a primitive society would have had a sacred and ritualistic significance – the violence that had long been pinned down by the classical formality of warfare became once again something at once horrifying and alluring. It was the cult and blood-spilling mystery that gave rise to a new form of community – the Nation. *And a Nation requires that passion shall be transferred to the level of the people as a whole*. Actually, it is easier to feel that this happened than than to give an account of it. Every passion,

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<sup>143</sup> De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1956, pp. 137, 236-237.

<sup>144</sup> De Rougemont, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-249.

it may be objected, presupposes the existence of *two* beings, and it is therefore difficult to see, if passion was taken over by a Nation, to whom the Nation then addressed itself. Let us remember, however, that the passion of love is at bottom narcissism, the lover's self-magnification, far more than it is a relation with the beloved. Tristan wanted the branding of love more than he wanted the possession of Iseult. For he believed that the intense and devouring flame of passion would make him divine; and, as Wagner grasped, the equal of the world.

*Eyes with joy are blinded...  
I myself am the world.*

Passion requires that the *self* shall become greater than all things, as solitary and powerful as God. Without knowing it, passion also requires that beyond its apotheosis death shall indeed be the end of all things.

“And nationalist ardour too is a self-elevation, a narcissistic love on the part of the collective Self... And what does the national passion require? The elevation of collective might can only lead to the following dilemma: either the triumph of imperialism – of the ambition to become the equal of the whole world – or the people next door strongly object, and there ensues war. Now it is to be noticed that a nation undergoing the early surges of its passion seldom recoils from war, even if that war must be hopeless. A nation thus unconsciously expresses a readiness to court the risk of death, and even to meet death, rather than surrender its passion. ‘Liberty or death’, the Jacobins yelled, at a time when the forces of the enemy seemed to be twenty times as strong as their own, and when therefore ‘liberty’ and ‘death’ were words very near to having one and the same meaning.

“Thus Nation and War are connected as Love and Death are connected. And from this point onwards nationalism has been the predominant factor in war. ‘Whoever writes upon strategy and tactics should confine himself to expounding a *national* strategy and tactics, for these alone can be of use to the nation for whom he writes.’ Thus General von der Goltz, a follower of Clausewitz. And Clausewitz constantly asserted that the Prussian theology of war must be based on the experience gained in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic campaigns. The Battle of Valmy was a victory of passion over ‘exact science’. It was to the cry of ‘Long live the Nation!’ that the sans-culottes repulsed an allied army still bent on consolidating operations on ‘classic’ lines. It will be recalled that Goethe, after witnessing the battle, said: ‘On this field and on this day a new era begins in the history of the world.’ To this famous pronouncement Foch adds: ‘Truly enough a new era had begun, the era of national wars that are fought *under no restraints whatever*, because a nation throws all its resources into the struggle, because the aim of these wars is not to safeguard some dynastic claim, but to defeat or propagate philosophical ideas and intangible advantages, because these wars are staked upon feelings and passions, elemental forces never enlisted before.’”<sup>145</sup>

Of course, the readiness to die in battle for one's nation did not begin only with the French Revolution. But the sheer *ferocity* of French revolutionary nationalism

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<sup>145</sup> De Rougemont, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-272.

needs explanation. Whether de Rougemont's explanation - in terms of a revival of the passion propelling the Catharist heresy that had lain latent in western civilization since its suppression in the thirteenth century - is convincing cannot be determined here. What we *can* say, however, is that insofar as this passion is directed as much against fellow-countrymen as against citizens of other nations, it cannot be said to be purely nationalistic. It would be more accurate to say that aggressive nationalism is a *phase* or *aspect* of the revolutionary passion as such, that aspect which it presents in relation to other nations.

Thus the revolution first presents itself to the people of its own nation in an *internationalist* form - the slogans of the "freedom, equality and brotherhood" of *all* people, the principles of *universal* human rights, etc. Then, having captured the collective of the nation by destroying or neutralizing those members of it that refuse to be possessed by its revolutionary spirit, it proceeds to the *nationalist* phase of its expression. The revolution is now the work of *la grande nation*; and all nations that do not want to submit to this Nation must be conquered or destroyed. For, as Metropolitan Anastasy writes: "The nation, this collective organism, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows in this case in the same progression, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls."<sup>146</sup>

The word "possessed" indicates the true nature of this passion - a *demonic* force that possesses men, which *uses* human passions but is different from them. De Rougement is right to emphasize the *boundlessness* of the passion, its *egoism* and its orientation, ultimately, to self-annihilation and *death*. But this *mystical, religious* nature of the passion, combined with its *blasphemy*, reveals its non-human, *satanic* origin - and the inadequacy of purely psychological explanations such as Berlin's "collective humiliation".

It follows that nationalist passion, as opposed to healthy patriotism, cannot be assuaged by political or military success, as hunger is assuaged by food or thirst by drink. For satanic egoism and self-deification know no bounds, and only grow with success. Nationalism can only be tamed by the instilling of the true faith into the national organism. Then national consciousness, instead of being distorted and inflamed in the passion of nationalism, will be transformed into the pure flame of *patriotism*, which loves the nation, not for its own sake, but as being the bearer of a higher principle, the principle of true religion...

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<sup>146</sup> Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky), *Besedy s sobstvennym serdtsem (Conversations with my own heart)*, Jordanville, 1998, p. 33.

## 11. WAGNER, TOLSTOY AND CHRISTIANITY

Christianity in the nineteenth century was undergoing a profound crisis throughout Europe, and just as Mazzini tried to create a substitute for it with his worship of the nation, so Wagner tried to create a substitute for it with his art. His deification of art is expressed through the character of the provincial German composer "R", Wagner's alter-ego, in his story "Death in Paris": "I believe in God, Mozart and Beethoven, likewise in their disciples and apostles; I believe in the Holy Ghost and in the truth of the one and indivisible Art; I believe this Art to be an emanation of God that dwells in the hearts of all enlightened men; I believe that whoever has steeped himself in its holy joy must dedicate himself to it forever and can never deny it; I believe that all men are blessed through Art and that it is therefore permissible to die of hunger for its sake; I believe that in death I shall attain the highest bliss – that in my life on earth I was a dissonant chord, which death will resolve in glorious purity..."<sup>147</sup> .

Again, in his 1880 essay, "Religion and Art", he wrote: "While the priest stakes everything on the religious allegories being accepted as matters of fact, the artist has no concern at all with such a thing, since he freely and openly gives out his work as his own invention." And again: "One could say that at the point when religion becomes artificial it is for art to salvage the essence of religion by construing the mythical symbols, which religion wants us to believe to be literal truth in terms of their figurative value, so as to let us see their profound hidden truth through idealist representation. Whereas the priest is concerned only that the religious allegories should be regarded as factual truths, this is of no concern to the artist, since he presents his work frankly and openly as his invention."

As Douglas Murray writes, Wagner followed Schopenhauer and Feuerbach in supposing that religion was simply the expression of our innermost desires. "The role of art, he believed, was to 'save the spirit of religion'. And what he was attempting to speak to, in his music and essays was the source of that other-worldly, subconscious voice that speaks to us, asks questions and seeks answers. From *Tannhauser* right through to *Parsifal*, Wagner's ambition... was to create a kind of religion which could stand up on its own and sustain itself..."<sup>148</sup>

As such, of course, it was a *false* religion: the Resurrection of Christ is not a myth, a symbol of subconscious psychic processes, but a literal, historical fact. Even *Parsifal* with its Holy Grail and emphasis on love and compassion, is an imitation of Christianity rather than the real thing. For, as Simon Callow writes: "The opera draws on Christian imagery and myths, but it is not a Christian piece. It is, at its absolute core, a Schopenhauerian piece: it rejects the world as nothing but a tragic illusion. It offers no comfort, only the unearthly radiance that comes from acknowledgement of the unavoidable pain of existence."<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Wagner, in Simon Callow, *Being Wagner*, London: William Collins, 2018, p. 44.

<sup>148</sup> Murray, "Is the West's Loss of Faith Terminal?", *Standpoint*, May, 2015, p. 30.

<sup>149</sup> Callow, *Being Wagner*, p. 187.

Sir Roger Scruton is more generous to *Parsifal*, seeing value not only in the greatness of the music (admitted by everyone), but also in the drama and its characters. But his conclusion is essentially the same: "*Parsifal* presents the symbols and rites of the Christian religion as objects of emotion in themselves, detached from the theology that underpins them... Ulrike Kienzle rewrites the Christian symbolism in terms of the Schopenhauerian philosophy that dominated Wagner's thinking in his later years...

"The protagonists of *Parsifal* are heirs to religious doctrines, and are amply supplied with the miracles that will reinforce their belief in them. It does not follow that Wagner is committed to the *truth* of those doctrines. The drama would be pointless if it did not take the beliefs of its characters seriously, or put those beliefs to the kind of *moral*, rather than intellectual, test that is the real substance of a drama. At the same time, Wagner does not stand at a distance from the worldview of his characters. He does not look on the Christian faith with faith with irony, or dismiss it as a posture that we can no longer share [as Nietzsche does]. On the contrary, he looks in it for signs of what is deep in all of us, and for what might be revealed and hallowed through its artistic expression. In a celebrated essay on 'Religion and Art', published in 1880 during preparations for the first performance of *Parsifal* in Bayreuth, Wagner wrote that 'it is reserved to art to salvage the kernel of religion, inasmuch as the mythical images which religion would wish to be believed as true are apprehended in art for their symbolic value, and through ideal representation of those symbols art reveals the concealed deep truth within them.'

"It is abundantly clear from Wagner's life and writings that he was not a Christian believer, and in his early correspondence with Liszt he vigorously resists his future father-in-law's attempts to bring him into the fold of the Catholic Church. His stance throughout life was that expressed to Cosima: 'I do not believe in God, but I believe in godliness.' Quite what is meant by 'godliness (*Gottlichkeit*), when there is no God to provide it, is one of the many questions posed by the drama. 'Godliness', in Wagner's thinking, is the 'unconcealed deep truth' within the religious symbols of *Parsifal*. Through godliness we both rescue each other from degradation and also re-consecrate our lives. In *Parsifal* this godliness wears Christian costumes, up to a point. The hallowed objects, rites and persons of the Christian faith are part of what is happening, 'real presences' in the psyche of the protagonists like the gods in Greek tragedy. The Eucharistic ceremony is represented on the stage; but in a sense it is also performed there, since nothing is lacking other than the priesthood of the one who plays the part of Amfortas. The Redeemer who dies on the cross, the penitent Magdalene, the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, the vow of celibacy, the Grail and lance as interpreted by medieval iconography, the mystery of Good Friday, not to speak of the doctrines of sin, repentance and atonement implied in the whole sublime and sacred story of Christ's life - all these are represented in the drama..."<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Scruton, *Wagner's Parsifal*, London: Penguin, 2020, pp. 8, 9-10.

It is intriguing to compare Wagner's attitude to art and religion to that of another contemporary great artist, Lev Tolstoy, who "had written a long ago as 1855 that he wanted to create a faith based on 'the religion of Christ but purged of dogmas and mysticism, promoting not a future bliss but giving bliss on earth.' This was a commonplace idea, the everyday coin of countless jejune religious reformers through the centuries. Tolstoy was never much of a theologian. He wrote two long tracts, *Examination of Dogmatic Theology* and *Union and Translation of the Four Gospels*, which do nothing to raise one's opinion of him as a systematic thinker. A lot of his religious writing makes little sense except in terms of a vague pantheism. Thus: 'To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life. Live seeking God and then you will not live without God' (1878-79)."<sup>151</sup>

As for art, Tolstoy's ideas were similarly iconoclastic. Most shockingly, he rejected Shakespeare and especially the figure of King Lear (because it reminded him too much of himself, perhaps). Moreover, Tolstoy devoted a whole chapter of his *What is Art?* to a rejection of Wagner's music. Rosamund Barrett writes: "Tolstoy had more or less built an entire artistic and religious edifice on the foundation of one aspect of Christianity (the Sermon on the Mount), and although he can be forgiven for not reading Wagner's ponderous aesthetic writings, here was a classic case of him willfully refusing to consider all the dimensions of a structure in his path that did not conform to his specifications in the rush to tear it down. Although Wagner and Tolstoy were in certain important respects poles apart (the composer's bombast and love of luxury spring to mind), there are also some intriguing parallels between them. Under the influence of Schopenhauer both formulated a religious vision based on a highly idiosyncratic theology of redemptive love which had little in common with traditional Christianity. Redemption can be attained only by renouncing *eros* and practicing compassion or *agape*, the word for love used in the New Testament: such are the lessons of Wagner's last work *Parsifal* and all of Tolstoy's late works from *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* onwards. Only love can redeem mankind and bring about a state where human beings can be at peace with themselves and with each other. Thomas Mann was quite correct when he wrote in 1933 that the pattern of Tolstoy's artistic career was identical to that of Wagner, for in both cases, everything in their later oeuvre was prefigured in their earlier works. For all its enthralling narrative, for example, *War and Peace* is ultimately about sin (separation from God, and the absence of human relatedness) and redemption (the restoration of love), as can be seen by following Natasha Rostova's spiritual journey. Similarly, almost all Wagner's great operas are about redemption...

"Mann's comparison of the consistency of Wagner's artistic evolution with that of Tolstoy is instructive, for both Wagner and Tolstoy came to distinguish the simple religion of love and compassion for the poor and oppressed that Jesus Christ had founded from the deforming edifice of the Christian Church (it is striking that they both made a serious study of Renan's *Life of Jesus* in 1878). They both wished to revive the spiritual essence of Christianity by removing its superstitious elements and the Old Testament notion of a vengeful God in order to create a purer and more practical religion. And the pacifism and vegetarianism

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<sup>151</sup> Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, London: Harper Perennial, 1988, 2007, p. 124.

both espoused in their final years went hand in hand with their views on the regeneration of society and a corresponding desire to simplify their aesthetic style. Before he died in 1883, Wagner came to see vegetarians and anti-vivisectionists as the harbingers of cultural renewal, and, ever the Romantic idealist, he hoped that through the medium of religious art (specifically music, *his* kind of music) a culture of compassion would replace the contemporary 'civilisation' of power and aggression. Tolstoy came to the same conclusions, but naturally the religious art he had in mind was primarily the verbal kind. Both Wagner and Tolstoy were anxious for the rest of the world to gain insight into Jesus' radical idea that responding to violence with more violence can only lead to the further desecration of nature..."<sup>152</sup>

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Wagner and Tolstoy were artists of the first rank who tried to reinterpret the Christianity that neither believed in any longer in order to preserve that kernel of "godliness" in it that they both cherished. As such, while both must be counted, not only as heretics, but as outright unbelievers, they represent an important stage in western civilization, when Christianity had ceased to be believed in by the elites, but was still respected, even to some degree revered (although Tolstoy, in his late novel *Resurrection*, was showing signs of the godless disrespect, even mockery, that would lead to his excommunication). The next stage, represented by such figures as Nietzsche and a whole host of socialists and Masons, would be far more hostile and nihilistic and would sweep away those monuments and remnants of Christian civilization that both Wagner and Tolstoy treasured. For the "mystery of iniquity", once unleashed by God's permission, must develop to the furthest bounds of its unfathomable nature in order to reveal to all him who is its origin and source - who is "the father of lies" and "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8.44)...

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<sup>152</sup> Bartlett, *Tolstoy. A Russian Life*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, pp. 373-374.

## 12. NIETZSCHE AND THE ANTICHRIST

Together with Darwin and Marx and Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) provided the intellectual foundations for the philosophy of nihilism that wrought such havoc in Germany in the twentieth century.

“The son of a Lutheran pastor,” writes Tom Holland, “his background had been one of pious provincialism. Precocious and brilliant, he had obtained a professorship when he was only twenty-four; but then, only a decade later, had resigned it to become a shabbily genteel vagrant. Finally, seeming to confirm the sense of a squandered career, he had suffered a terrible mental breakdown. For the last eleven years of his life, he had been confined to a succession of clinics...

“Nietzsche was not the first to have become a byword for atheism, of course. No one, though – not Spinoza, not Darwin, not Marx – had ever before dared to gaze quite so unblinkingly at what the murder of its god might mean for a civilization. ‘When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one’s feet.’ Nietzsche’s loathing for those who imagined otherwise was intense. Philosophers he scorned as secret priests. Socialists, communists, democrats: all were equally deluded. ‘Naïveté: as if morality could survive when the *God* who sanctions it is missing!’ Enthusiasts for the Enlightenment, self-proclaimed rationalists who imagined that men and women possessed inherent rights, Nietzsche regarded with contempt. It was not from reason that their doctrines of human dignity derived, but rather from the very faith that they believed themselves – in their conceit – to have banished. Proclamations of rights were nothing but flotsam and jetsam left behind by the retreating tide of Christianity: bleached and stranded relics. God was dead – but in the great cave that once had been Christendom his shadow still fell, an immense and frightful shadow. For centuries, perhaps, it would linger. Christianity had reigned for two millennia. It could not easily be banished. Its myths would long endure. They were certainly no less mythical for casting themselves as secular. Such phantoms as the dignity of man, the dignity of ‘labour’: these were Christian through and through.

“Nietzsche did not mean this as a compliment. It was not just as frauds that he despised those who clung to a Christian morality, even as their knives were dripping with the blood of God; he loathed them as well for believing in it. Concern for the lowly and the suffering far from serving the cause of justice, was a form of poison. Nietzsche, more radically than many a theologian, had penetrated to the heart of everything that was most shocking about the Christian faith. ‘To devise something that would even approach the seductive intoxicating, anaesthetizing and corrupting power of that symbol of the ‘holy cross’, that horrific paradox of the ‘crucified God’, that mystery of an inconceivably ultimate, most extreme cruelty and self-crucifixion undertaken *for the salvation of mankind?* Like Paul, Nietzsche knew it to be a scandal. Unlike Paul, he found it repellent. The spectacle of Christ being tortured to death had been bait for the powerful. It had persuaded them – the strong and the healthy, the beautiful and the brave, the powerful and the self-assured – that it was their natural inferiors, the hungry and the humble, who deserved to inherit the earth. ‘Helping and caring for others,

being of use to others, constantly excites a sense of power.' Charity, in Christendom, had become a means to dominate. Yet Christianity, by being the side of everything ill-constituted, and weak, and feeble, had made all of humanity sick. Its ideals of compassion and equality before God were bred not of love, but of hatred, a hatred of the deepest and most sublime order, one that had transformed the very character of morality, a hatred the like of which had never before been seen on earth. This was the revolution that Paul – 'that hate-obsessed false-coiner' had set in motion. The weak had conquered the strong, the slaves had vanquished their masters..."<sup>153</sup>

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Let us examine the context in which Nietzsche created this, the first, not simply atheist, but anti-theist philosophy.

Nietzsche came to maturity at the time of the creation of the Second German Reich in 1871. But he did not like the new Germany. He spoke of "the bad and dangerous consequences" of the German victory in 1871, and feared "the defeat – yes, the extirpation of the German spirit in favour of the 'German Reich'"<sup>154</sup> and its new spirit of Prussianism. Disillusioned with this new, but very vulgar spirit, and not sharing its nationalism and anti-semitism<sup>155</sup>, Nietzsche continued to look for a hero-figure that he could worship. The early Middle Ages had venerated *the saint* – disgustingly meek and pious for the already anti-Christian Nietzsche. And the High Middle Ages had venerated the more militarized, but still Christian image, of *the crusader or the knight*. The Renaissance harked back to the pre-Christian role-models of the Greeks and Romans, and their Apollonian and Dionysian gods, whom Nietzsche studied and admired in his academic work. Their modern, more secular equivalents were *the conquistador, the cavalier, the artistic or scientific genius*. In his own time, finally, Nietzsche thought that he had found his ring of gold: the composer Richard Wagner, whose work, mirrored in his life, broke all artistic and moral conventions, celebrating the pagan gods and their feats in music of unquestionable genius. Nietzsche had found his hero...

But Wagner disappointed him in the end – and the disillusion crushed Nietzsche. For Wagner had become a Christian (of sorts). "Receiving the poem *Parsifal*," from which he wrote the opera *Parsifal*, "was allegedly the last straw."<sup>156</sup> In *Parsifal*, Wagner abandoned the seemingly pure, noble paganism of *The Ring* for a strange pseudo-Christian concoction containing the Holy Grail and the spear that pierced the side of Christ, and the Christian themes of repentance, redemption and transfiguration. So Nietzsche's hero, his superman and Antichrist, was still

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<sup>153</sup> Holland, *Dominion*, London: Abacus, 2019, pp. 447, 448-449.

<sup>154</sup> Nietzsche, *David Strauss* (1873), in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, New York: Random House, 2000, p. 136, footnote. In the same year, in the second of his *Untimely Meditations*, he wrote that the German victory "is capable of converting our victory into a complete defeat: the defeat, even the death, of German culture for the benefit of the German Empire".

<sup>155</sup> He said that anti-Semites "endeavour to stir up all the bovine elements of the nation by a misuse of that cheapest of propaganda tricks, a moral attitude" (*The Genealogy of Morals*) (1887).

<sup>156</sup> Michael Tanner, "Nietzsche", in *German Philosophers*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 366.

poisoned by the sickly sweetness of the slave ideology! It was disgusting! The Galilaean had conquered yet again! And the bitter realization destroyed Nietzsche.

Another important reason for the break was Wagner's cosying up to the rich and famous "cultural philistines" of Germany. As the actor Simon Callow writes, Nietzsche had tickets for the famous first performance of *The Ring* at Bayreuth in 1875, which was attended by the political and artistic elite of Europe (and the Emperor of Brazil). But he "never crossed the threshold of the Festival Theatre. Repelled by the audience, he fled. 'The mistake was to go to Bayreuth with an ideal, so the result was bitter disappointment,' he wrote in his diary. 'All Europe's lazy rich vagabonds were there, together with that miserable pack of patrons and patronesses, all bored to death and totally uninterested in music. Wagner's ideal? 'The rabble didn't want to know.' There had been rumblings of rebellion from Nietzsche in the face of the evident lack of respect extended to him by the Wagners. His mutiny began in somewhat veiled form in 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth', one of a series of essays called *Untimely Meditations*. The essay is described as a *Festschrift*, but its tone of celebration is undercut by a series of observations about Wagner which are at the very least equivocal and in some cases overtly hostile. The tone is essentially passive-aggressive, and can scarcely have been designed to please its subject. 'In fact, Wagner is not a composer at all,' writes Nietzsche, advancing a perception that he would elaborate over and over again in book after book, 'but an instinctive theatrical, who, dissatisfied with the easy pickings that lay readily to hand, has forced his way into the other arts.' His characterization of Wagner the man pulled no punches, either: 'deep down,' he writes, 'there surges through Wagner a mighty will with a boundless, ruthless striving for power, working its way along paths, through caves and ravines, ever upwards towards the light, with the brutality of a horned Minotaur.' Wagner wrote to Nietzsche to congratulate him on the book; one can only assume that he had not yet read it. Not long after its appearance, Wagner wrote to Nietzsche's doctor to tell him that he believed Nietzsche to be seriously unstable mentally and that this was doubtless due to excessive masturbation. Nietzsche was forgivably enraged both by the suggestion and by Wagner's having written to his doctor. The personal relationship between the two men was virtually at an end, but the image of Wagner as the mythic man-bull, at the centre of a terrifying labyrinth, preyed on Nietzsche's increasingly disturbed mind; by extension, he identified Cosima as Ariadne, guardian of the labyrinth. But Ariadne was also the lover of Dionysus, the destructive-creative, male-female god of fertility, of ritual madness, of wine and of theatre - Wagner is yet another form. And so down the labyrinth of his own mind he chased these people who had so comprehensively penetrated his inner life. Wagner is never far from the surface of Nietzsche's books, and often he is their explicit subject, *The Case of Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* among them. This was vexing to Wagner, but scarcely impinged on his 'mighty will'; as Bryan Magee has pointed out, it is perfectly possible to write about Wagner without mentioning Nietzsche, but impossible to write of Nietzsche without mentioning Wagner."<sup>157</sup>

How can we explain the enormous and baleful influence that Wagner had on Nietzsche? First, Wagner represented an unquestioned genius in the cultural

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<sup>157</sup> Callow, *Being Wagner*, London: William Collins, 2018, pp. 177-178.

wasteland of the Second Reich, the power of whose music seems to have released unconscious forces in the writer. Secondly, Wagnerian opera, he opined in his first work, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, through its ability to arouse *Rausch* (intoxication) in the audience, linked it with Greek tragedy, whose spirit of pagan ecstatic communal worship evidently appealed to Nietzsche. Could Wagner reproduce the glories of Classical Greece in nineteenth century Germany? Nietzsche evidently believed and hoped so – until the terrible disillusion represented by *Parisfal* and Bayreuth jamboree.

Nietzsche was a philosophical but not a political revolutionary like Marx or Bakunin, and had no specifically political programme. As Golo Mann writes: “Prophesying war and glorifying power as he did, he should have been a supporter of the new Germany; this he was not at all. He loved the old Germany, the Germany of Goethe, not of Bismarck. He thought that the German nation was becoming politically conscious at the expense of its old virtues. ‘The price of coming to power is even greater; power makes people stupid... the Germans – once they were called the nation of thinkers – do they think at all today?’<sup>158</sup> The Germans are bored by intellect, politics swallow up all their interest in really intellectual matters. *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*, I fear, was the end of German philosophy... “Are there any German philosophers, are there any German poets, are there any good German books?” – I am asked abroad. I blush, but with the bravado which is mine even in desperate circumstances I reply: “Yes, *Bismarck*.” Elsewhere he says: ‘This is the age of the masses, they kowtow to everything “mass”. This happens also *in politicis*. A statesman who raises them a new tower of Babel, some monstrosity of an empire and of power is ‘great’ to them. What does it matter that those of us who are more careful and reticent for the time being cling to the old belief that it is only a great idea which lends greatness to an action or a cause. Assuming a statesman were to put his nation in a position where it becomes involved in a grand political game for which it is by nature neither fitted nor prepared, so that it must sacrifice its old and more tested qualities for a new and questionable mediocrity; assuming that a statesman condemned his nation to become politically minded generally, though this nation has so far had better things to do and in its heart of hearts cannot rid itself of a cautious distaste for the restlessness, emptiness and noisy petulance of politically minded peoples; assuming that such a statesman whips up the dormant passions and lusts of his people, blames it for its former timidity and wish not to get involved, accuses it of hankering after foreign things and of a secret desire for the infinite, that he makes light of its dearest fancies, warps its conscience and makes it narrow-minded and nationalistic in its tastes – how can a statesman who did all these things, and whom his nation would have to do penance for all eternity, if it has a future at all, how can such a statesman be called *great*?’”<sup>159</sup>

So Nietzsche would probably have rejected Hitler as he rejected Bismarck and Kaiser William II. And – another point of difference with Wagner – he rejected antisemitism: “How much mendacity and squalor are needed to raise race

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<sup>158</sup> What Nietzsche prized above all in German culture was “an elevation and divinatory subtlety of the *historical sense*” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings*, p. 312). (V.M.)

<sup>159</sup> Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, pp. 239-240.

questions in today's hotch-potch Europe." "Maxim: no social intercourse with anybody involved in the lie of racialism."<sup>160</sup> So much for the idea that Nietzsche was a proto-fascist...

And yet it is not difficult to see why the founders of Nazism seized upon Nietzsche's philosophy as confirming their own... For Hitler's anti-christianity was closely akin to Nietzsche's.

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Nietzsche admired both Hegel and Schopenhauer, and despised the English philosophers for their non-possession of an historical sense. As he wrote: "They are no philosophical race, these Englishmen: Bacon signifies an attack on the philosophical spirit; Hobbes, Hume, and Locke a debasement and lowering of the value of the concept of 'philosophy' for more than a century. It was against Hume that Kant arose, and rose; it was Locke of whom Schelling said, understandably, 'je méprise Locke'; in their fight against the English-mechanistic doltification of the world, Hegel and Schopenhauer were of one mind (with Goethe) - these two hostile brother geniuses in philosophy who strove apart toward opposite poles of the German spirit and in the process wronged each other as only brothers can wrong each other."<sup>161</sup>

Nietzsche's political philosophy owed much to Hegel's critique of Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy. In his early years, Hegel had regarded democracy as the best political system, but for reasons that were subtly and importantly different from those of the Anglo-Saxon theorists. These differences, according to the Harvard political scientist Francis Fukuyama, can be seen more clearly in the context of a comparison of the psychological bases of the two models.

The Anglo-Saxon model is based on Plato's distinction between three basic elements of human nature: reason, desire and *thymos* (anger or "spirit"). Reason is the handmaid of desire and *thymos*; it is that element which distinguishes us from the animals and enables the irrational forces of desire and *thymos* to be satisfied in the real world. Desire includes the basic needs for food, sleep, shelter and sex. *Thymos* is usually translated as "anger" or "courage"; but Fukuyama defines it as that desire which "desires the desire of other men, that is, to be wanted by others or to be *recognized*".<sup>162</sup>

Most liberal theorists in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, such as Hobbes and Locke, focused on desire as the fundamental force in human nature because on its satisfaction depends the survival of the human race itself. They saw *thymos*, or the need for recognition, as an ambiguous force which should rather be suppressed than expressed; for it is *thymos* that leads to tyrannies, wars and all those conflicts which endanger "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". The American Constitution with its system of checks and balances was designed above all to

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<sup>160</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>161</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part VIII, 252; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 379.

<sup>162</sup> Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992, p. 146.

prevent the emergence of tyranny, which is the clearest expression of what we may call "megalothymia".

Now the early Hegel valued democracy, not simply because it attained the satisfaction of desire better than any other system, but also, *and primarily*, because it gave expression to *thymos* in the form of *isothymia* - that is, it allowed each citizen to express his *thymos* to an equal degree. For whereas in pre-democratic societies the satisfaction of *thymos* in one person led to the frustration of *thymos* for many more, thereby dividing the whole of society into one or a few masters and a great many slaves, as a result of the democratic revolutions of 1789 the slaves overthrew their masters and achieved equal recognition in each other's eyes. Thus *through the winning of universal human rights everyone, in effect, became a master*.

Hegel's philosophy was an explicit challenge to the Christian view of freedom and slavery, which regarded the latter as a secondary evil that could be turned into a great good if used for spiritual ends. "For he that is called in the Lord," said St. Paul, "being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant" (I Corinthians 7.22). So "live as free men," said St. Peter, "yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God" (I Peter 2.16). But since this doctrine offended Hegel's pride, his *thymos*, he rejected it as unworthy of the dignity of man. And he rejected Anglo-Saxon liberalism for similar reasons, insofar as he saw liberalism's placing self-preservation as the main aim of life and society as effete and degrading. In fact, towards the end of his life he transferred his political allegiance from democracy to Prussian despotism...

Nietzsche took Hegel's concept of *thymos* and gave it a broader meaning, encompassing all human desire. Combining it with the desiring faculty, he called it *the will to power*, recalling Schopenhauer's very similar concept: "A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength - life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results."<sup>163</sup> This will to power encompassed "pride, joy, health, sexual love, enmity and war." By subordinating everything to the full expression of this will to power Nietzsche completed a revolution in German philosophy. For Kant had emphasized the "disinterestedness" of the moral and aesthetic ideal, its basis in *knowledge* and *independence from desire*. Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Idea* then restored desire (will) to its rightful place in philosophy, and in fact gave precedence to it over knowledge. But his *moral* ideal was still the ascetic one of abstention from desire and its illusory pleasures.

Nietzsche, who admired Schopenhauer but could not accept his attempt to renounce will through asceticism, completed the revolution in German idealism by rejecting asceticism and the whole system of values involved in it.

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Nietzsche famously rejected the foundations of Christian morality - the existence of God and the age of the life to come. "I deny morality," he wrote, "as I

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<sup>163</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part I, 13; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 211.

deny alchemy, that is, I deny that premiss: but I do not deny that there have been alchemists who believed in these premises and acted in accordance with them. – I also deny immorality: not that countless people *feel* themselves to be immoral, but that there is any *true* reason so to feel. It goes without saying that I do not deny – unless I am a fool – that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged – but I think that the one should be encouraged and the other avoided *for other reasons than hitherto*. We have to *learn to think differently* – in order at last perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*.”<sup>164</sup>

The first step towards this new sensibility was to distinguish between *the morality of the master* and *the morality of the slave*. The morality of the master is the morality of the *superman*, whose superiority consists in the greater uninhibitedness of his will to power, which impresses itself upon others and forces them to acknowledge it, making them thereby his *slaves*. He is the aristocrat *par excellence*, who embraces life in its fullness, and fears neither suffering nor death. Historically speaking, he belongs to the master races that have conquered others – the Romans, the Vikings, the Aryans. “One cannot fail to see at the bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid *blond beast* prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory...”<sup>165</sup>

The morality of the slave is a kind of defence mechanism against the morality of the master. Based on *ressentiment*, that is, vengefulness against his master, the morality of the slave justifies his subservience and allows him to live with it by repressing his will to power or by sublimating it into other channels – Christian good works, for example, or a philosophy of human rights that protects the slave against his master and his fellow-slave. Thus “in every ascetic morality man adores part of himself as God [the inversion or sublimation of the will to power] and to that end needs to diabolicize the rest [the will to power itself].”<sup>166</sup>

And so “‘love of the neighbor’ is always something secondary, partly conventional and arbitrary-illusory in relation to *fear of the neighbor*. After the structure of society is fixed on the whole and seems secure against external dangers, it is this fear of the neighbor that again creates new perspectives of moral valuation. Certain strong and dangerous drives, like an enterprising spirit, foolhardiness, vengefulness, craftiness, rapacity, and the lust to rule, which had so far not merely been honoured insofar as they were socially useful – under different names, to be sure, from those chosen here – but had to be trained and cultivated to make them great (because one constantly needed them in view of the dangers to the whole community, against the enemies of the community), are now experienced as doubly dangerous, since the channels to divert them are lacking, and, step by step, they are branded as immoral and abandoned to slander.

“Now the opposite drives and inclinations receive moral honors; step by step, the herd instinct draws its conclusions. How much or how little is dangerous to

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<sup>164</sup> Nietzsche, “Daybreak”, in Tanner, “Nietzsche”, p. 374.

<sup>165</sup> Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, 11; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 476-477.

<sup>166</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, All-too Human*, 141; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 152.

the community, dangerous to equality, in an opinion, in a state or affect, in a will, in a talent – that now constitutes the moral perspective: here, too, fear is again the mother of morals.”<sup>167</sup>

Historically, the leader in this *revanche* of the slave against his master was the priest, who “*alters the direction of resentment*”. The first priestly people were the Jews<sup>168</sup>, followed by the Christians, who added to the morality of the slave a whole metaphysics of salvation. “All that has been done on earth against ‘the noble’, ‘the powerful’, ‘the masters’, ‘the rulers’, fades into nothing compared with what the *Jews* have done against them; the Jews, that priestly people, who in opposing their enemies and conquerors were ultimately satisfied with nothing less than a radical revaluation of their enemies’ values, that is to say, an act of the *most spiritual revenge*. For this alone was appropriate to a priestly people, the people embodying the most deeply repressed priestly vengefulness. It was the Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency, dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good=noble=powerful=beautiful=happy=God-beloved) and to hang on to this inversion with their teeth, the teeth of the most abysmal hatred (the hatred of impotence), saying ‘the wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good; the suffering, deprived, sick, ugly alone are pious, alone are blessed by God, blessedness is for them alone – and you, the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless to all eternity; and you shall be in all eternity the unblessed, accursed and damned!’ ... One knows *who* inherited this Jewish revaluation... In connection with the tremendous and most fundamental of all declarations of war, I recall the proposition I arrived at on a previous occasion (*Beyond Good and Evil*, section 195) – that with the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in morality*: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we no longer see because it – has been victorious...

“[As for] this Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate gospel of love, this ‘Redeemer’ who brought blessedness and victory to the poor, the sick, and the sinners – was he not this seduction in its most uncanny and irresistible form, a seduction and bypath to precisely those *Jewish* values and new ideals? Did Israel not attain the ultimate goal of its sublime vengefulness precisely through the bypath of this ‘Redeemer’, this ostensible opponent and disintegrator of Israel? Was it not part of the secret black art of truly *grand* politics of revenge, of a farseeing, subterranean, slowly advancing, and premeditated revenge, that Israel must itself deny the real instrument of its revenge before all the world as a mortal enemy and nail it to the cross, so that ‘all the world’, namely all the opponents of Israel, could unhesitatingly swallow just this bait? And could spiritual subtlety imagine any *more dangerous* bait than this? Anything to equal the enticing, intoxicating, overwhelming, and undermining power of that symbol of the ‘holy cross’, that ghastly paradox of a ‘God on the cross’, that mystery of an unimaginable ultimate cruelty and self-crucifixion of God *for the salvation of man*?

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<sup>167</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part V, 201; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 303.

<sup>168</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Third Essay, 15; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 563.

“What is certain, at least is that *sub hoc signo* [under this sign (of the Cross)] Israel, with its vengefulness and revaluation of all values, has hitherto triumphed again and again over all other ideals, over all *nobler* ideals...”<sup>169</sup>

For this reason, Nietzsche was scornful of the Christian position of his contemporary Dostoyevsky, with whom he is often compared: he is much closer to some of Dostoyevsky’s more manic characters than the writer himself. He “held Dostoyevsky in contempt for his ‘morbid moral tortures’, his rejection of ‘proper pride’. He accused him of ‘sinning to enjoy the luxury of confession’, which Nietzsche considered a ‘degrading prostration’. Dostoyevsky was, in Nietzsche’s words, one of the victims of the ‘conscience-vivisection and self-crucifixion of two thousand years’ of Christianity.”<sup>170</sup>

The most common form of slave-morality in modern times has been democracy-socialism with its anti-aristocratic, herd-animal ethos: “The *democratic* movement is the heir of the Christian movement.”<sup>171</sup>

“I add immediately,” writes Nietzsche, “that in all the higher and more mixed [i.e. *racially* mixed] cultures there also appear attempts at mediation between these two moralities, and yet more often the interpretation and mutual misunderstanding of both, and at times they occur directly alongside each other – even in the same human being, within a *single* soul. The moral discrimination of values has originated either among a ruling group whose consciousness of its difference from the ruled group was accompanied by delight – or among the ruled, the slave and dependents of every degree.

“In the first case, when the ruling group determines what is ‘good’, the exalted, proud states of the soul are experienced as conferring distinction and determining the order of rank. The noble human being separates from himself those in whom the opposite of such exalted, proud states finds expression: he despises them. It should be noted immediately that in this first type of morality the opposition of ‘good’ and ‘*bad*’ means approximately the same as ‘noble’ and ‘contemptible’. (The opposition of ‘good’ and ‘*evil*’ has a different origin.) One feels contempt for the cowardly, the anxious, the petty, those intent on narrow utility; also for the suspicious with their unfree glances, those who humble themselves, the doglike people who allow themselves to be maltreated, the begging flatterers, above all the liars: it is part of the fundamental faith of all aristocrats that the common people lie. ‘We truthful ones’ – thus the nobility of ancient Greece referred to itself.

“It is obvious that moral designations were everywhere first applied to *human beings* and only later, derivatively, to actions. Therefore it is a gross mistake when historians of morality start from such questions as: why was the compassionate act praised? The noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, ‘what is harmful to me is harmful in itself’; it knows

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<sup>169</sup> Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, 7, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 469-470, 471.

<sup>170</sup> Andrew R. MacAndrew, Afterword to Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, New York: Signet, 1961, p. 233.

<sup>171</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part V, 202; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 306.

itself to be that which first accords honor to things; it is *value-creating*. Everything it knows as part of itself it honors: such a morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow: the noble human being, too, helps the unfortunate, but not, or almost not, from pity, but prompted more by an urge begotten by excess of power. The noble human being honors himself as one who is powerful, also as one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who delights in being severe and hard with himself and respects all severity and hardness. 'A hard heart Wotan put in my breast,' says an old Scandinavian saga: a fitting poetic expression, seeing that it comes from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man is actually proud of the fact that he is *not* made for pity, and the hero of the saga therefore adds as a warning: 'If the heart is not hard in youth it will never harden.' Noble and courageous human beings who think that way are furthest removed from that morality which finds the distinction of morality precisely in pity, or in acting for others, or in *désintéressement*; faith in oneself, pride in oneself, a fundamental hostility and irony against 'selflessness' belong just as definitely to noble morality as does a slight disdain and caution regarding compassionate feelings and a 'warm heart.'<sup>172</sup>

However, "the slave's eye is not favourable to the virtues of the powerful: he is sceptical and suspicious, *subtly* suspicious, of all the 'good' that is honoured there - he would like to persuade himself that even their happiness is not genuine. Conversely, those qualities are brought out and flooded with light which serve to ease existence for those who suffer: here pity, the complaisant and obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility, and friendliness are honoured - for here these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means for enduring the pressure of existence. Slave morality is essentially a morality of utility...

"One last fundamental difference: the longing for *freedom*, the instinct for happiness and the subtleties of the feeling of freedom belong as necessarily to slave morality and morals as artful and enthusiastic reverence and devotion are the regular symptoms of an aristocratic way of thinking and evaluating."<sup>173</sup>

However, this pagan aristocratic type which is clearly Nietzsche's ideal has been gradually worn down into the plebeian democratic and socialist type, partly (since strength or weakness of the will to power is transmitted genetically as well as culturally) by intermarriage between the master and slave races - "the slowly arising democratic order of things (and its cause, the intermarriage of masters and slaves)"<sup>174</sup> - and partly by the overcoming of the masters by the slaves.<sup>175</sup> This

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<sup>172</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part IX, 60, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 394-395, 397.

<sup>173</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part IX, 261; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 397-398.

<sup>174</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part IX, 261; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 399.

<sup>175</sup> "The suppressed race has gradually recovered the upper hand again, in coloring, in shortness of skull, perhaps even in the intellectual and social instincts: who can say whether modern democracy, even more modern anarchism and especially that inclination for "commune", for the most primitive form of society, which is now shared by all the socialists of Europe, does not signify in the main a tremendous counterattack - and that the conqueror and master race, the Aryan, is

mixing of masters and slaves, those of strong will with those of weak will, has resulted in a *sickness of the will* which “is spread unevenly over Europe: it appears strongest and most manifold where culture has been at home longest [France]; it disappears to the extent to which the ‘barbarian’ still – or again – claims its rights under the loose garments of Western culture.”<sup>176</sup>

Intriguingly, Nietzsche found the greatest strength of will in *Russia*, whose triumph would stimulate Europe’s regeneration and political unification: “The strength of will, and to will something for a long time,... is strongest and most amazing by far in that enormous empire in between, where Europe, as it were, flows back into Asia, in Russia. There the strength to will has long been accumulated and stored up, there the will – uncertain whether as a will to negate or a will to affirm – is waiting menacingly to be discharged, to borrow a pet phrase of our physicists today. It may well take more than Indian wars and complications in Asia to rid Europe of its greatest danger: internal upheavals would be needed, too, the shattering of the empire into small units, and above all the introduction of the parliamentary nonsense, including the obligation for everybody to read his newspaper with his breakfast.

“I do not say this because I want it to happen: the opposite would be rather more after my heart – I mean such an increase in the menace of Russia that Europe would have to resolve to become menacing, too, namely, *to acquire one will* by means of a new caste that would rule Europe, a long, terrible will of its own that would be able to cast its goals millennia hence – so the long-drawn-out comedy of its many splinter states as well as its dynastic and democratic splinter wills would come to an end. The time for petty politics is over: the very next century will bring the fight for the dominion of the earth – the *compulsion* to large-scale politics.”<sup>177</sup>

This is a remarkable prophecy of twentieth-century history, when “the menace of Russia” in the form of communism elicited another and equal menace in the form of Nazism, which tried to unify the “dynastic and democratic splinter groups” of old Europe under a new, truly Nietzschean superman, Adolf Hitler...

Nietzsche, according to J.R. Nyquist, “caught a glimpse of the future. In the preface of *Will to Power*, he writes, ‘What I relate is the history of the next two centuries.’ He then admits to having lost his way ‘in every labyrinth of the future’. And what did he find in these labyrinths? ‘The end of Christianity – at the hands of its own morality’. This means that ‘we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits; all power structures of the old society will have been exploded... [and] there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth.’ Nietzsche’s vision was of a universal revolution, with a new humanity growing out of ‘terrible and violent beginnings’, ‘faced with the choice of perishing or prevailing’. He foresaw

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not succumbing physiologically, too?” (*The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 466-467).

<sup>176</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part VI, 208; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 320.

<sup>177</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part VI, 208; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 321.

the appearance of 'the *barbarians* of the twentieth century' who shall 'come into view and consolidate themselves only after a tremendous socialist crisis'. He described the appearance on earth of the 'last man', the commercial man, who would fall under the power of 'the Masters of the Earth'.<sup>178</sup> And who would be the Masters of the Earth? Nietzsche hinted that they would be Englishmen, Americans and Russians...

An important aspect of Nietzsche's thought was his elevation of the psychological method of argumentation to the front rank in philosophy... Now we may be inclined to dismiss Nietzsche's psychological approach to philosophy (especially in relation to Christianity). Nevertheless, we must admit that he anticipated many of the psychoanalytical ideas, such as repression, sublimation and the unconscious, that became part of the furniture of the mind of twentieth-century man. And insofar as the Nietzschean method of psychological reductionism became the stock-in-trade of the twentieth century's attempts to reduce God and religion to unconscious impulses and fantasies, we may accept that he was right in calling psychology the coming "queen of the sciences"<sup>179</sup>, taking the place of the former queen, theology, in the same way that the Antichrist takes the place of Christ...

A second important aspect of his thought is his extreme individualism and disgust with mass culture. The morality of the master was the value-system of the proud individual, and that of the slave – of the masses. In essence, therefore, "*Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality*".<sup>180</sup>

The general loss of faith in God, and the universality of the herd-morality, has undermined traditional authority, generating an overwhelming need for the heroic individual, the Führer-master, who stands out against the crowd and dominates it, like Napoleon. "The strange narrowness of human evolution, its hesitations, its delays, its frequent retrogressions and rotations, are due to the fact that the herd instinct of obedience has been inherited best and at the expense of the art of commanding. If we think of this instinct taken up to its ultimate extravagance there would be no commanders or independent men at all, or, if they existed, they would suffer from a bad conscience and in order to be able to command would have to practice a deceit upon themselves: the deceit, that is, that they too were only obeying. This state of affairs actually exists in Europe today. I call it the moral hypocrisy of the commanders. They know of no way of defending themselves against their bad conscience than to pose as executors of more ancient or higher commands (commands of ancestors, of the constitution, of justice, of the law or even of God), or even to borrow herd maxims from the herd's way of

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<sup>178</sup> Nyquist, *Origins of the Fourth World War*, Chula Vista, Ca.: Black Forest Press, 1999, p. 34.

<sup>179</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part I, 237, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 222.

<sup>180</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part V, 202, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 305. Cf. Part VI, 212, pp. 328-329: "Today..., when only the herd animal receives and dispenses honors in Europe, when 'equality of rights' could all too easily be changed into equality in violating rights [a prophetic word!] – I mean into a common war on all that is rare, strange, privileged, the higher man, the higher soul, the higher duty, the higher responsibility, and the abundance of creative power and masterfulness – today the concept of greatness entails being noble, wanting to be by oneself, being able to be different, standing alone and having to live independently."

thinking and appear as 'the first servant of the people' for example, or as 'instruments of the common good'. On the other hand, the herd-man in Europe today makes himself out to be the only permissible kind of man and glorifies the qualities through which he is tame, peaceable and useful to the herd as the real human virtues: namely public spirit, benevolence, consideration, industriousness, moderation, modesty, forbearance, pity. In those cases, however, in which leaders and bell-wethers are thought to be indispensable, there is attempt after attempt to substitute for them an adding-together of clever herd-men: this, for example, is the origin of all parliamentary constitutions. All this notwithstanding, what a blessing, what a release from a burden becoming intolerable, the appearance of an unconditional commander is for this herd-animal European, the effect produced by the appearance of Napoleon is the latest great witness – the history of the effect of Napoleon is almost the history of the higher happiness this entire century has attained in its most valuable men and moments..."<sup>181</sup>

"From the sociological point of view," writes Davies, "Nietzsche's views may be seen as an intellectual's revulsion against the rise of mass literacy, and of mass culture in general. They were espoused by an international coterie of artists and writers, which wished to strengthen the barriers between so-called 'high culture' and 'low culture', and hence to preserve the role of the self-appointed aristocracy of ideas. In this, they formed a suitable partner for modernism in the arts, one of whose chief attractions lay in the fact that it was unintelligible to the person in the street. 'Mass culture generated Nietzsche in opposition to itself,' writes a recent critic, 'as its antagonist. The immense popularity of his ideas among early twentieth-century intellectuals suggests the panic that the threat of the masses aroused.'

"In retrospect, it is the virulence with which Nietzsche and his admirers poured contempt on 'the masses' that appears most shocking. 'Many, too many, are born,' spake Nietzsche's Zarathustra, 'and they hand on their branches much too long.' In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche called for 'a declaration of war by higher men on the masses... The great majority of men have no right to existence.'"<sup>182</sup>

And if this attitude to the majority is considered *cruel*, so be it: "Almost everything we call 'higher culture' is based on the spiritualization of *cruelty*, on its becoming more profound: this is my proposition. That 'savage animal' has not really been 'mortified'; it lives and flourishes, it has merely become – divine. What constitutes the painful voluptuousness of tragedy is cruelty; what seems agreeable in so-called tragic pity, and at bottom in everything sublime, up to the highest and most delicate shudders of metaphysics, receives its sweetness solely from the admixture of cruelty. What the Roman in the arena, the Christian in the ecstasies

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<sup>181</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part V, 199, in Tanner, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-383.

<sup>182</sup> In a private letter written in 1908, D.H. Lawrence, who had just discovered Nietzsche in Croydon Public Library, actually imagined a gas chamber for the painless disposal of superfluous people: 'If I had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace with a military band playing softly, and a cinematograph working brightly; then I'd go out in the back streets and main streets and bring them in, all the sick, the halt, the maimed; I would lead them gently, and they would smile a weary thanks; and the band would softly bubble out the Hallelujah Chorus.'"

of the cross, the Spaniard at an auto-da-fé or bullfight, the Japanese of today when he flocks to tragedies, the laborer in a Parisian suburb who feels a nostalgia for bloody revolutions, the Wagnerienne who 'submits to' *Tristan and Isolde*, her will suspended - what all of them enjoy and seek to drink with mysterious ardour are the spicy potions of the great Circe, 'cruelty'."<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part VII, 229, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, pp. 348-349.

### 13. NIETZSCHE AND THE RELATIVISATION OF TRUTH

The most radical aspect of Nietzsche's thought is his relativistic attitude to truth. Not to say: nihilistic, for he wrote: "There are no truths, only interpretations." "That there is no truth; that there is no absolute state of affairs – no 'thing-in-itself'. This alone is Nihilism, and of the most extreme kind."<sup>184</sup>

This nihilism was a consequence of the proud individualistic philosophy we have discussed. For if the master creates his own morality, he must necessarily create his own truth, which is not necessarily truth for anybody else. And certainly not for the slaves, who derive their morality from the herd or their priestly hierarchy. That is why the philosophers of the future, according to Nietzsche, "will certainly not be dogmatists. It must offend their pride, also their taste, if their truth is supposed to be a truth for everyman – which has so far been the secret wish and hidden meaning of all dogmatic aspirations. 'My judgement is *my* judgement': no one else is easily entitled to it – that is what such a philosopher of the future may perhaps say of himself.

"One must shed the bad taste of wanting to agree with many. 'Good' is no longer good when one's neighbour mouths it. And how should there be a 'common good'! The term contradicts itself: whatever can be common always has little value. In the end it must be as it is and always has been: great things remain for the great, abysses for the profound, nuances and shudders for the refined, and, in brief, all that is rare for rare."<sup>185</sup>

"The falseness of an opinion is not for us necessarily an objection to it; in this respect our new language may sound strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating... To recognize untruth as a condition of life – that certainly means resisting accustomed value feelings in a dangerous way, and a philosophy that risks this would by that token alone place itself beyond good and evil."<sup>186</sup>

It follows that knowledge can never be completely objective, being the servant of the essentially irrational criterion of *vitality*. There are no certainties, only probabilities. "In place of fundamental truths I put fundamental possibilities – provisionally assumed *guides* by which one lives and thinks."<sup>187</sup>

"There is, according to Nietzsche, no absolute truth. 'There are no truths, only interpretations.' The concept of absolute truth is an invention of philosophers who are dissatisfied with the world of Becoming and seek an abiding world of Being.

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<sup>184</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, cited in Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Nihilism*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1994, p. 12.

<sup>185</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Part II, 43, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 243.

<sup>186</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, I, 4; in Tennant, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

<sup>187</sup> Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*; cited in Rose, *op. cit.*

'Truth is that sort of error without which a particular type of living being could not live. The value for *life* is ultimately decisive.'"<sup>188</sup>

For Nietzsche, "the greatest event of recent times – that 'God is dead', that belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief – already begins to cast its first shadows over Europe... At last the horizon lies free before us, even granted that it is not bright; at least the sea, our sea, lies open before us. Perhaps there has never been so open a sea."<sup>189</sup>

Fr. Seraphim Rose described nihilism as the fundamental philosophy, not only of Nietzsche, but of the modern world as a whole. Its history, according to Rose, has three main historical stages: *liberalism*, *realism* and *vitalism*, which are completed by a final *nihilism of destruction*. *Liberalism* is an attitude rather than a belief, an attitude of indifference to questions of absolute truth, or a *desire* to believe that the answers to such questions, if they exist, are less important than living a pleasant, "civilized" life in this world. *Realism* is the belief that absolute truth does not exist, and that truth is to be found in science alone without any deeper metaphysical basis. *Vitalism* is the belief that it is not truth, whether scientific or metaphysical, that matters, but *vitality, life, creativity, dynamism*. The Nihilism of Destruction is not simply atheist, but *antitheist*; it is not content with denying absolute truth, or finding a substitute for it in a vaguely restless dynamism, but seeks to *destroy* that truth and everything associated with it.

"Vitalism," writes Rose, "in the forms of Symbolism, occultism, artistic Expressionism, and various evolutionary and 'mystical' philosophies [including some forms of nationalism], is the most significant intellectual undercurrent throughout the half century after about 1875; and the Nihilism of Destruction, though its intellectual roots lie deep in the preceding century, brings to a grand conclusion, in the public order as well as in many private spheres, the whole century and a quarter of Nihilist development with the concentrated era of destruction of 1914-45."<sup>190</sup>

For Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, a large part of the blame for the catastrophe of 1914-45 lay on Nietzsche. For it was a struggle between the All-Man, Christ, and the Superman of Nietzsche, between the doctrine that Right is Might and the opposite one that might is right. For German Christianity with its all-devouring scientism and scepticism had already surrendered to Nietzscheanism: "I wonder... that Professor Harnack, one of the chief representatives of German Christianity, omitted to see how every hollow that he and his colleagues made in traditional Christianity in Germany was at once filled with the all-conquering Nietzscheanism. And I wonder... whether he is now aware that in the nineteen hundred and fourteenth year of our Lord, when he and other destroyers of the

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<sup>188</sup> Fr. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, part II; Schopenhauer to Nietzsche, New York: Image Books, 1965, p. 183.

<sup>189</sup> Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom* (1882).

<sup>190</sup> Rose, *Nihilism*, p. 22.

Bible, who proclaimed Christ a dreamy maniac [and] clothed Christianity in rags, Nietzscheanism grew up [as] the real religion of the German race."<sup>191</sup>

Rose continues: "Father John of Kronstadt, that holy man of God, has likened the soul of man to an eye, diseased through sin and thus incapable of seeing the spiritual sun. The same likeness can serve to trace the progress of the disease of Nihilism, which is no more than an elaborate mask of sin. The spiritual eye in fallen human nature is not sound, as every Orthodox Christian knows; we see in this life only dimly and require faith and the Grace of God to effect a healing that will enable us, in the future life, to see clearly once more. The first stage of Nihilism, which is Liberalism, is born of the errors of taking out diseased eye for a sound one, of mistaking its impaired vision for a view of the true world, and thus of discharging the physician of the soul, the Church, whose ministrations are not needed by a 'healthy' man. In the second stage, Realism, the disease, no longer attended by the necessary physician, begins to grow; vision is narrowed; distant objects, already obscure enough in the 'natural' state of impaired vision, become invisible; only the nearest objects are seen distinctly, and the patient becomes convinced no others exist. In the third stage, Vitalism, infection leads to inflammation; even the nearest objects become dim and distorted and there are hallucinations. In the fourth stage, the Nihilism of Destruction, blindness ensues and the disease spreads to the rest of the body, effecting agony, convulsions, and death..."<sup>192</sup>

Nietzsche despises Liberalism, and has already gone beyond Realism. He is in essence a particularly clear prophet of Vitalism, the "positive" content of nihilism. But we also see in him the totally negative, destructive nihilism that found practical contemporary expression in the anarchist revolutionary activity of Bakunin and the Paris Communards. Nietzsche argues that if God exists, and his commandments are accepted, then it is necessary to *reject the world* - or at any rate attach only a conditional value to it. "'The concept of God', he says in *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'was up to now the greatest objection against existence.' And in *The Antichrist* we read that 'with God war is declared on life, Nature and the will to live! God is the formula for every calumny against this world and for every lie concerning a beyond!'"<sup>193</sup>

But Nietzsche wants to embrace the world - in itself, for itself, and with absolutely no reference to any exterior cause, purpose or criterion of its existence, in its "ugliness" as well as its "beauty", its "evil" as well as its "good". That is why, in answer to the question: "What does Nihilism mean?" he replies: "That the highest values are losing their value. There is no goal. There is no answer to the question: 'why?'"<sup>194</sup> For the question "why?" has no answer within the bounds of this world. It points to Him Who exists independently of the world and gives it meaning, whereas in fact there is *no thing, nihil*, beyond this world.

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<sup>191</sup> Velimirovich, "The Religious Spirit of the Slavs", in *Sabrana Dela* (Collected Works), volume 3, Khimelstir, 1986, pp. 221-222.

<sup>192</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>193</sup> Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>194</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*; in Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 68.

Fortunately, in Nietzsche's view, for the majority of his contemporaries "God is dead" – that is, they have lost their faith in God. "We have killed him (God), you and I! We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it move now? Whither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we now stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker?"<sup>195</sup>

Since men have lost faith in God, they have become, to use Fr. Seraphim Rose's term, *passive nihilists*. This is "the Nihilism of the Liberal, the humanist, the agnostic who, agreeing that 'there is no truth', no longer ask the ultimate questions."<sup>196</sup> But passive nihilism, though useful in Nietzsche's eyes, also disgusts him because of its *lack of vitality*. He is looking for a "stronger age" than "this decaying, self-doubting present" – an age of *active* Nihilism. And this *active* Nihilism is expressed first of all in *destruction*: "He who wishes to be creative must first destroy and smash accepted values."<sup>197</sup> "Nihilism is... not only the belief that everything deserves to perish; but one actually puts one's shoulder to the plough; *one destroys*."<sup>198</sup>

But human nature abhors a vacuum; while creating darkness, it longs for the light. And neither passive nor active Nihilism is the final goal for Nietzsche. Nihilism only clears the ground, as it were, for "anti-nihilism", a "transvaluation of values", "a *counter-movement*" that in some remote future will supersede this perfect Nihilism; but which nevertheless regards it as a *necessary step*, both logically and psychologically, towards its own advent, and which positively cannot come, except *on top of and out of it*."<sup>199</sup> For, as Rose writes, "the corollary of the Nihilist annihilation of the Old Order is the conception of a 'new age' – 'new' in an absolute, and not in a relative, sense. The age about to begin is not to be merely the latest, or even the greatest, of a series of ages, but the inauguration of a whole new time; it is set up against all that has hitherto been. 'It may be,' said Nietzsche in a letter of 1884, 'that I am *the first* to light upon an idea which will divide the history of mankind into two': as the consequence of this idea, 'all who are born after us belong to a higher history than any history hitherto'."<sup>200</sup>

The master of this new age will be a man who nurtures in himself to the greatest possible extent the proud, sensual, cruel *will to power*. He will be an egoist in the sense that he believes "other men have to be subordinate, and sacrifice themselves" to him.<sup>201</sup> This is the true man, the *superman*. "Dead are all the gods,"

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<sup>195</sup> Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>196</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>197</sup> Nietzsche, in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>198</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*; in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>199</sup> Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*; in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>200</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>201</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 265.

says Nietzsche's Zarathustra: "now do we desire the superman to live."<sup>202</sup> The superman must live because he is the *fittest* to live in an almost Darwinian sense (although, as we have seen, Nietzsche did not believe in Darwinism). Contrary, therefore, to Tertullian's belief that the human soul is by nature Christian, according to Nietzsche it can only be *antichristian*. For "I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct for revenge for which no expedient is sufficiently poisonous, secret, subterranean, petty - I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind..."<sup>203</sup> The appearance of the Antichrist requires, as Nietzsche writes, "a *different* kind of spirit from that likely to appear in this present age: spirits strengthened by war and victory, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and even pain have become needs; it would require habituation to the keen air of the heights, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense; it would require even a kind of sublime wickedness, an ultimate, supremely self-confident mischievousness in knowledge that goes with great health; it would require, in brief and alas, precisely this *great health!*"

"Is this possible even today? - But some day, in a stronger age than this decaying, self-doubting present, he must yet come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit whose compelling strength will not let him rest in any aloofness or any beyond, whose isolation is misunderstood by the people as if it were flight *from* reality - while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration *into* reality, so that, when he one day emerges again into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it. This man of the future, who will redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this Antichrist and anti-nihilist; this victor over God and nothingness - *he must come one day...*"<sup>204</sup>

Thus Nietzsche was in a real sense a prophet of the Antichrist - not only of the final Antichrist of Christian prophecy, but also of those forerunners of the Antichrist that were to bedevil the twentieth century simply by denying Christ.

And his own final descent into madness witnessed to the terrible folly of his ideas. For as he himself said, "All superior men who were irresistibly drawn to throw off the yoke of any kind of morality and to frame new laws had, if they were not actually mad, no alternative but to make themselves or pretend to be mad..."<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*; in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>203</sup> Nietzsche, quoted in David Robertson, *The Dawkins Letters*, Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2007, p. 81.

<sup>204</sup> Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, Second Essay, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 532.

<sup>205</sup> Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 14.

## II. THE EAST: REVOLUTION AND REACTION

## 14. THE JEWS UNDER ALEXANDER II

The first of Alexander's great reforms, and the one having perhaps the most profound long-term consequences for the empire as a whole and for the tsar in particular, related to the Jews. In 1856, in the coronation manifesto, the Jews were placed on the same basis as the rest of the population in relation to military service. In the same manifesto, all their (very large) debts incurred in non-payment of taxes over the previous years were forgiven.

"More expansively than this," writes Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "Alexander II expressed his intention to resolve the Jewish question - and in the most general sense favourably. For the whole way in which the question was posed was radically changed. If under Nicholas I the government had set itself the task, first, of reforming the inner way of life of the Jews, gradually clearing it up through productive labour and education, in this way leading to the removal of administrative restrictions; then under Alexander II, by contrast, the government began by removing external restrictions and impediments, without searching deeply into possible inner causes of Jewish isolation and sickness, and hoping that then all remaining problems would be solved of themselves; it began 'with the intention of merging this people with the native inhabitants of the country', as the sovereign command of 1856 put it."<sup>206</sup>

"From the mid-1850s," writes Frazee, "the government began to dismantle the restrictions of the Pale of Settlement - although only for selected, valuable members of the Jewish community: first-guild merchants (1859), certain categories of artisans (1865), and finally all Jews with a university degree (1879)."<sup>207</sup> Jews were now to be found in all parts of the empire, and the share of trade and industry owned by them rapidly increased - as did their overall numbers, to almost 4 million by 1880. The Jews also benefited from other reforms, such as the abolition of the poll-tax on urban dwellers in 1863.

However, the emancipation of the serfs hit the Jews hard in three ways. First, the social gap between the free Jews and peasant serfs was abolished - the peasants were now as free as the Jews. Secondly, the liberated peasants were now freed from the strict prohibition of buying and selling goods through an appointed middle-man - who in the western provinces was almost always a Jew. Thirdly, the government's establishment of agricultural credit at very reasonable rates, together with the development of consumer and credit associations, squeezed out the Jew's role as provider of credit (at extortionate rates).<sup>208</sup> Alexander I's plan to draw the Jews into agriculture was abandoned by Alexander II. In 1866 he rescinded the special decrees on transforming the Jews into farmers in the South-Western region of "New Russia". Since they had proved incapable of working the land independently, the Jews were given the opportunity to become craftsmen and merchants. They were allowed to buy out the land plots they had been given, and then to resell them at great profit.

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<sup>206</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti Let Vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, volume 1, p. 136.

<sup>207</sup> Frazee, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

<sup>208</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-148.

However, this measure created some further problems. For the Russian peasants who were neighbours of the Jewish colonists were angry that, while they did not have enough land, the Jews had been given more than enough - and were then able to lease the land out to the Russians at a high price. It was this fact that led in part to the sacking of several Jewish settlements during the disturbances of 1881-1882.<sup>209</sup>

Alexander's reforms with regard to Jewish military recruitment also did not reap the results hoped for. The Jews very often did not respond to the call-up. Thus in the period 1876-1883 31.6% of Jews called up did not respond - the figure throughout the Empire was 0.19%.

When the government offered privileges in military service to those with education, the Jews suddenly converted to the idea of accepting Russian education. By 1887 13.5% of all university students in the country were Jews, and the figures were much higher in cities such as Kharkov and Odessa.<sup>210</sup> According to the theory, this should have been a good thing - it was the government's aim to assimilate the Jews into Russian culture through education. However, Russian education in this period was rapidly becoming radicalized. And so the institutions that, as it was hoped, would make the Jews into model Russian citizens and patriots in fact turned them into - revolutionaries...

Although the Russian revolution was caused in the first place, of course, by the Russians, it is impossible to ignore the disproportionately massive contribution made by the Jews...

In spite of Alexander II's reforms Russia remained (with Romania) one of only two countries in Europe that refused to give full rights to the Jews - for reasons, as we have seen, that were fully comprehensible. If poor peasants were to be protected from merciless exploitation by the Jews, - indeed, if the poorer Jews themselves were to be protected from the dictatorial control of the *kahal*, - then some restrictions had to be placed on the latter. The basis for these restrictions in Russia was not racial, but religious: only Talmudic Jews, those who accepted the blood-curdling hatred of the Talmud, suffered restrictions. Other categories of Jews - for example, the Karaites, who rejected the Talmud - were free of all restrictions. Even for the Talmudists, the restrictions were very loosely applied, and did not prevent many Jews from getting a good education in Russian universities and enriching themselves.

However, the simple fact that the Russian State did not submit completely to the contemporary fashion for giving the Jews everything they asked for meant that it was enemy number one for the Jewish leadership. Moreover, as Mikhail Nazarov writes, there were other powerful reasons for the Jews to hate Russia: "Already Suvorov's campaign in Europe against the armies of revolutionary France in 1799 ('God save the kings!' said Paul I to the commander as he left), the victory of Russia over the 'usurper' Napoleon and the creation of the monarchist Sacred Union in 1815, the crushing of the bourgeois-democratic rebellion in Poland in 1831, the interference into the European bourgeois revolution of 1848-1849, when the Russian army gave help to the Austrian monarchy in Hungary - had demonstrated before the eyes of the powers behind the

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<sup>209</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 155.

<sup>210</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

scenes that Russia was the withholding power of the old Christian world-order in Europe (in the sense of the Apostle Paul's words, cf. II Thessalonians 2.7)..."<sup>211</sup>

However, the power and independence of the Russian State meant that the methods of gradual Jewish infiltration and control of the financial levers of power that had proved so successful in Western Europe would be insufficient to overthrow Russia - there were no Rothschilds, and certainly no Disraelis in Russia! Revolution from above was impossible; so it had to be revolution from below. But this revolution did not have to be carried out by Jews or with the aim of establishing a Jewish kingdom. It could be carried out by Gentiles in the name of Gentile ideals, such as "Freedom, Equality and Fraternity". The important thing was that it should succeed in destroying the Russian State. It would then be up to the secret Jewish leaders living abroad to turn the destruction to their advantage, to the building of a Jewish kingdom...

Paradoxically, Alexander's attempt to solve the Jewish problem only seemed to make things worse... "It is precisely under Alexander II," writes Solzhenitsyn, "when the restrictions on Jewish life in Russia were so weakened, that Jewish names begin to be encountered amidst the revolutionaries... In the student disturbances of 1861 we encounter Mikhoels, Utin and Gen."<sup>212</sup>

Again, David Vital writes: "A breakdown based on official records of the calling, social status, and origin of 1,054 revolutionaries arrested, tried, condemned, and sent into punitive exile or placed under police surveillance in the course of the round-up of dissidents in 1873-7 showed that 68 - 6.5 per cent - were Jews. Of 79 condemned to exile 12 were Jews: 15.2 per cent. These were not immensely large figures, but they do illustrate the fact that the Jewish contingent was already strikingly in excess of the Jewish proportion of the total population of the empire."<sup>213</sup>

In the 1860s, writes Anita Shapira, "secularization created an entire stratum of Jews who moved, to varying degrees, away from Jewish tradition: some upheld tradition in the home, but conducted themselves as non-Jews outside it. ('Be a man abroad, and a Jew in your tent,' wrote Yehuda Leib Gordon, a poet of the Enlightenment period.) Others, apart from minimal observance of the Jewish festivals, did not view themselves as Jews, and many converted to Christianity..."<sup>214</sup>

Particularly important was the influence of Russian literature (which the younger generation read avidly, while their elders often discouraged even learning the language.)

In fact, the exposure of the younger generation of Jews to *goy* literature was the cause of a profound change within Jewry itself. Many young fanatics who had immersed themselves in the study of the Talmud now abandoned Talmudism, and even the external appearance of Talmudic Jewry, and immersed themselves instead in

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<sup>211</sup> Nazarov, "Krovavaia mest' slavianskim varvaram" (Bloody revenge on the Slavic barbarians), address to the international scientific conference, 'The Jewish-Bolshevik coup of 1917 as the precondition of the red terror and forced starvations', <http://www.livejournal.com/users/rocornews/174447.html>).

<sup>212</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

<sup>213</sup> Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 403.

<sup>214</sup> Shapir, *Israel. A History*, London: Weidenfel & Nicolson, 2015, p. 6.

Turgenev, Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Pisarev and Nekrasov. They became socialists and joined the populist movement [*narodnichestvo*], distancing themselves more and more from their own people. Meanwhile, most Jews remained fenced off by Talmudic edicts from Russian culture and even the Russian language. Even among the russified Jewish intelligentsia voices were heard warning against complete assimilation. Thus in 1868 Perets Smolenskin warned that, in adapting to the general culture, the Jews should preserve their national spiritual character. And the Petersburg newspapers *Rassvet* [Dawn] and *Russkij Evrej* [Russian Jew] "strengthened the attraction of Jewish youth towards the study of the Jewish past and present life. At the end of the 70s and beginning of the 80s there arose a watershed between the cosmopolitan and nationalist tendencies in Russian Jewry. 'In essence the leaders of *Rassvet* no longer believed in the truth of assimilation... *Rassvet*, without realising it, went along the path of ... the excitation of national self-consciousness... it had a vividly expressed national bias... the illusions of russification... were dispelled...'"<sup>215</sup>

In 1869 the baptized Jew Jacob Brafmann published *Kniga Kagala* (*The Book of the Kahal*), in which, on the basis of a detailed translation of the acts of the Minsk kahal at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, he exposed and interpreted the kahal system, demonstrating the complete rightlessness of the majority of the members of the Jewish community. In 1976 the *New Jewish Encyclopaedia* confirmed that the material used by Brafmann "is genuine and the translation of it quite accurate". And in 1994 the *Russian Jewish Encyclopaedia* declared that "the documents published by Brafmann are a valuable source for the study of the history of the Jews in Russia at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century".

"Brafmann asserted that 'State laws cannot annihilate that harmful power hidden in Jewish self-government... According to his words, this organization is not limited to local kahals... but encompasses, he says, the Jewish people throughout the world... and in consequence of this the Christian peoples cannot be delivered from Jewish exploitation until everything that aids the isolation of the Jews is destroyed'. Brafmann supported 'the view of the Talmud as not so much a codex of a religious-national character, but rather "a civil-political codex", which went "against the flow of the political and moral development of Christian countries"', creating 'a Talmudic republic'. He insisted that 'the Jews constitute a State within the State', that the Jews 'consider themselves not bound by State laws', the Jewish community has 'as one of its basic aims "the darkening of the mind of Christians" to turn them only into fictional owners of the property that belongs to them'. More broadly, he 'accused the Society for the Spreading of Enlightenment among the Jews and the Universal Jewish Union (the *Alliance Israélite*) of being a part of "a world-wide Jewish conspiracy"...

"The State Council, 'softening the blunt phraseology of the *Book of the Kahal*', declared that while the external distinguishing of the Jews from the rest of the population could be achieved by administrative measures, this 'will in no way guarantee the annihilation of the self-enclosed and almost anti-Christian feelings of the Jewish communities', but 'the isolation of the Jews which is so harmful for the State' can be 'annihilated, on the one hand, by a weakening, as far as possible, of the social

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<sup>215</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

links of the Jews among themselves and of the Jewish elders' abuse of their power, and on the other hand, which is still more important, by the spread of enlightenment among the Jews'.<sup>216</sup>

The phrase "the annihilation of the self-enclosed and almost anti-Christian feelings of the Jewish communities" cut to the root of the matter. As even the famous English Jew Sir Isaiah Berlin admits, the Jews regarded the Russian peasants as "a species of lower beings".<sup>217</sup> Again, David Baron, a Jew born in Russia in 1855, who was converted later to Christianity, writes: "I need scarcely tell you that my heart was full of hatred and prejudice against Him, Whom, until that time, I only knew by the name of Touleh (crucified), and Who, I believed, only taught his followers to serve idols and persecute the Jews. In this prejudice I was trained up from my earliest days, for when I was only four years old my mother taught me to repeat, whenever I passed a Christian Church, the following words in Hebrew: 'Thou shalt utterly detest it, thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing' (Deuteronomy 7.26). I was therefore the most bitter against any Jew who professed to believe in Christ: I could to some extent understand that a Gentile should believe in Him, for, I thought, it was his religion, and he does not know any better, but a Jew, and a Talmudic Jew, too, to believe in Him Whom our nation pronounced an imposter! Impossible! He must have been bribed to do so, I thought."<sup>218</sup>

"I.S. Aksakov, a constant opponent of complete emancipation for the Jews, already at the end of the 50s had tried to restrain the government 'from too bold steps' along this path. When a law was passed giving state service to Jews with degrees, he objected (1862), saying that the Jews were 'a handful of people who completely reject the Christian teaching, the Christian ideal and moral code (and consequently all the bases of the social existence of the country), and confess a teaching that is contrary and hostile to it'. He was not in favour of equality for the Jews in political rights, although he was completely in favour of their having equality in purely civil rights, so that the Jewish people "should be provided with complete freedom of existence, self-government, development, education and trade... even... that they should be allowed to live throughout Russia'. In 1867 he wrote that economically 'one should not talk about the emancipation of the Jews, but about the emancipation of the Russians from the Jews'. He noted the deaf indifference of the liberal press to the peasants' condition and needs. And now Aksakov explained the way of pogroms in 1881 as the display of popular anger against 'the oppression of the Russian local population by Jewry', which is why during the pogroms there was 'no burglary', only the destruction of property and 'some kind of simple-minded conviction of the rightness of their actions'; and he repeated that the question should be put 'not about the equality in rights of the Jews with the Christians, but about the equality of the Christians with the Jews, and about the removal of the rightlessness of the Russian population before the Jews'...

"The writer D. Mordovtsev, who was sympathetic to the Jews, in his 'Letter of a Christian on the Jewish question', which was published in the Jewish newspaper

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<sup>216</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>217</sup> Berlin, "The Origins of Israel", in *The Power of Ideas*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2000, p. 148.

<sup>218</sup> Baron, *Led of God from Darkness into Light*, London: Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony.

*Rassvet [Dawn]*, pessimistically called on the Jews 'to emigrate to Palestine and America, seeing this as the only solution of the Jewish question in Russia.'<sup>219</sup>

In 1879 Constantine Pobedonostev wrote to Dostoyevsky: "They are at the root of the revolutionary socialist movement and of regicide, they own the periodical press, they have in their hands the financial markets; the people as a whole fall into financial slavery to them; they even control the principles of contemporary science and strive to place it outside of Christianity."<sup>220</sup>

And Dostoyevsky himself wrote: "Jewry is thriving precisely there where the people are still ignorant, or not free, or economically backward. It is there that Jewry has a *champ libre!* And instead of raising, by its influence, the level of education, instead of increasing knowledge, generating economic fitness in the native population, - instead of this, the Jew, wherever he has settled, has still more humiliated and debauched the people; there humaneness was still more debased and the educational level fell still lower; there inescapable, inhuman misery, and with it despair, spread still more disgustingly. Ask the native populations in our border regions: What is propelling the Jew - has been propelling him for centuries? You will receive a unanimous answer: mercilessness. 'He has been prompted so many centuries only by pitilessness for us, only the thirst for our sweat and blood.'

"And, in truth, the whole activity of the Jews in these border regions of ours consisted of rendering the native population as much as possible inescapably dependent on them, taking advantage of the local laws. They always managed to be on friendly terms with those upon whom the people were dependent, and, certainly, it is not for them to complain, at least in this respect, about their restricted rights compared with the native population. They have received from us enough of these rights over the native population. What, in the course of decades and centuries, has become of the Russian people where the Jews settled is attested by the history of our border regions. What, then? - Point to any other tribe from among Russian aliens which could rival the Jew by his dreadful influence in this connection! You will find no such tribe. In this respect the Jew preserves all his originality as compared with other Russian aliens, and, of course, the reason therefore is that status *in statu* of his, the spirit of which specifically breathes with pitilessness for everything that is not Jew, with disrespect for any people and tribe, for every human creature that is not a Jew. And what kind of justification is it that in Western Europe the nations did not permit themselves to be overwhelmed, and that thus the Russian people themselves are at fault? Because the Russian people in the border regions of Russia proved weaker than the European nations (and exclusively as a result of their cruel political circumstances), for this sole reason should they be completely crushed by exploitation, instead of being helped?

"And if reference is made to Europe, to France, for example, - there too, hardly has their status *in statu* been harmless. Of course, there, Christianity and its idea have been lowered and are sinking not because of the Jew's fault, but through their own fault; nevertheless, it is impossible not to note also in Europe the great triumph of Jewry which has replaced many former ideas with its own.

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<sup>219</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 197, 198.

<sup>220</sup> Pobedonostev, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 627.

"Oh, it goes without saying that man always, at all times, has been worshipping materialism and has been inclined to perceive and understand liberty only in the sense of making his life secure through money hoarded by the exertion of every effort and accumulated by all possible means. However, at no time in the past have these tendencies been raised so cynically and so obviously to the level of a sublime principle as in our Nineteenth Century. 'Everybody for himself and only for himself, and every intercourse with man solely for one's self' - such is the ethical tenet of the majority of present-day people, even not bad people, but, on the contrary, laboring people who neither murder nor steal. And mercilessness for the lower classes, the decline of brotherhood, exploitation of the poor by the rich, - oh, of course, all this existed also before and always; however, it had not been raised to the level of supreme truth and of science - it had been condemned by Christianity, whereas at present, on the contrary, it is being regarded as virtue.

"Thus, it is not for nothing that over there the Jews are reigning everywhere over stock-exchanges; it is not for nothing that they control capital, that they are the masters of credit, and it is not for nothing - I repeat - that they are also the masters of international politics, and what is going to happen in the future is known to the Jews themselves: their reign, their complete reign, is approaching! We are approaching the complete triumph of ideas before which sentiments of humanity, thirst for truth, Christian and national feelings, and even those of national dignity, must bow. On the contrary, we are approaching materialism, a blind, carnivorous craving for personal material welfare, a craving for personal accumulation of money by any means - that is all that has been proclaimed as the supreme aim, as the reasonable thing, as liberty, in lieu of the Christian idea of salvation only through the closest moral and brotherly fellowship of men.

"People will laugh and say that this is not all brought about by the Jews. Of course, not only by them, but if the Jews have completely triumphed and thriven in Europe precisely at the time when these new principles have triumphed there to the point of having been raised to the level of a moral principle, it is impossible not to infer that the Jews, too, have contributed their influence to this condition. The summit of the Jews is assuming stronger and firmer power over mankind seeking to convey to it its image and substance. Jews keep vociferating that among them, too, there are good people. Oh, God! Is this the point? - Besides, we are speaking not about good or bad people. And aren't there good people among those? Wasn't the late James Rothschild of Paris a good man? - We are speaking about the whole and its idea; we are speaking about Judaism and the Jewish idea which is clasping the whole world instead of Christianity which 'did not succeed'."<sup>221\*</sup>

Of course, the views of Dostoyevsky, Aksakov and other Russian "antisemites" are profoundly unfashionable today. Most critiques of Russian anti-Semitism simply ignore the facts about the Jews in Russia cited above. However, a more intelligent and interesting critique has been presented by Sir Geoffrey Hosking, who takes up the hint given here by Dostoyevsky that the Jewish idea took the place of Christianity, "which 'did not succeed'".

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<sup>221</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, March, 1877, II, 3; translated by Boris Brasol, Haslemere: Ianmead, 1984, pp. 648-651.

According to Hosking, "Anti-Semitism was a kind of frustrated Slavophilism, conceived in awareness of the ways in which Russians had failed to fulfil their potential nationhood. In the interests of great-power status, the Russians had spurned their myth of the chosen people and the empire of truth and justice. The Jews, by contrast, continued to believe that they were a chosen people and to hold to their messianic prophecies. Where Slavophiles dreamed of a peasant commune based on Orthodox principles, the Jews seemed still to have successful communities ruled over by their religious leaders. They had succeeded where the Russians had failed: in making a messianic religion the essence of their national identity."<sup>222</sup>

We may concede a degree of psychological truth in this analysis: the Russians *were* failing "to fulfil their potential nationhood", if that nationhood was perceived as being the mission of the Third Rome, that is, of being the bearer of "light from the East", the universal truth of Orthodox Christianity, to the benighted nations of Europe and Asia. Far from converting the Europeans to Orthodoxy, the Russians were being converted in large numbers to various westernizing ideologies. Nor, in spite of flourishing missions in Alaska and (a little later) Japan, were they much more successful in Asia, where the very earthly motivations of great-power politics, little different from those of their great rivals, the British, prevailed.

Now a sense of failure can be treated in two ways: in the Orthodox way, by repentance and the confession of sin, and in the fallen way, by exaggerated self-assertion and the blaming of others. Slavophilism at its best, as we find it in Khomiakov and Kireyevsky, or, somewhat later, in Dostoyevsky and Tiutchev, implicitly contained a message of repentance: that Russia was falling away from her vocation as God's people, and she should return to the traditions of the pre-Petrine, Muscovite period, when she had been more faithful to her heavenly calling. But in some of its later varieties, as we shall see in more detail later, Slavophilism degenerated into mere nationalist self-assertion. Russia, it was maintained, was great not only, or even primarily, because she was the bearer of the one truth to all nations (messianism), but also in a purely secular, material sense, or as embodying the last and greatest in the historical series of world civilizations (Danilevsky).

The Jews were unique among Russia's national rivals in being no threat to her (yet) in purely political terms, but a direct threat in terms of messianic mission. For the Jews, like the Russians, claimed to be the nation *that knows the truth*, the bearer of God's saving message to the world. But the Jewish God was definitely not the Russians' God - not Jesus Christ. And Judaism was aimed at protecting the Jews against the influence of this Russian God, Who happened to be a Jew by race, but Whom the Jews had crucified and continued to anathematize. So in religious terms - and Russia's national "myth", to use Hosking's word, was nothing if not religious - there could be no compromise, no living together in amity between these two most religious of peoples. It was a matter of *kto kogo?*, to use Lenin's phrase: who would rule whom? - and the constant strife between Jews and Russians in the Western Borderlands was therefore both wholly predictable and essentially unavoidable. Moreover, as Hosking rightly points out, the relative success of the Jews in

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<sup>222</sup> Hosking, *Russia: People & Empire*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, pp. 391-392.

maintaining their religious identity was an implicit rebuke to the Russians, who were losing theirs. In fact, it was hardly a coincidence that the appearance of the Jews in large numbers in the Russian lands towards the end of the eighteenth century had coincided almost exactly with the nadir of Russian religious consciousness in the reign of Catherine II. It was as if God had introduced the Jews into Russia to remind the Russians: "Just as the Jews fell away from Me when they chose national self-assertion instead of Me, so you can fall away if you pursue great-power wealth and status at the expense of faithfulness to My commandments. And just as they fell from being My People to being My fiercest enemies, so it can happen to you."

## 15. METROPOLITAN PHILARET AND CHURCH REFORM

“By the late eighteenth century,” writes Hosking, “the Orthodox clergy had become virtually a closed caste, even though there were no formal restrictions on entry to or withdrawal from it. Very few nobles entered the clergy, since doing so meant a sharp loss of social status, and in any case they had the wrong type of education. Ordinary peasants and townsfolk (*meshchane*) did not usually have the means for years of study in a seminary. As a result, most priests were the sons of priests, and most priests’ daughters became the wives of priests. To be the son of a clergyman and not to become a clergyman oneself meant being demoted into the lower ‘tax-paying’ orders and possibly having to serve as a private in the army. To avoid this fate, many priests were desperately anxious to find parishes for their sons and sons-in-law, a task which became progressively more difficult as their numbers grew, without any increase in the number of parishes or in diocesan finances. Add to this that no pension was provided for retired clergymen...”

“Under this kind of pressure the church as an organization was turning into an employment agency and social security office for its numerous semi-indigent families and their dependents. This subsidiary but nevertheless vital function thwarted several attempts, in the 1820s, 1840s, and 1860s, to reform the church’s structure by cutting down the number of priests, and the number of clergy whom parishioners had to support, in order to improve the funding for those remaining. Clergy resisted redundancy or even transfer, which could be a disaster for them and their families, and bishops usually refrained from compulsion...”

“The church, then, was poverty-stricken, embattled, and overshadowed by the state...”<sup>223</sup>

Some people thought that the Church should not wait for the state to solve her problems, but should address those problems herself. Appeals were even made, writes Fr. Alexis Nikolin, “for the summoning of a Local Council of the Russian Church. However, conditions for that had not yet ripened. The Russian Church, in the opinion of the holy hierarch Philaret (Drozdov), was not yet ready for it at that time. His words are well-known: ‘The misfortune of our time is that the quantity of sins and carelessnesses that have piled up in the course of more than one century almost exceed the strength and means of correction.’ The holy hierarch Philaret considered that a change in the situation could take place as a result of a Church initiative, but not from State supervision...”<sup>224</sup>

Why should Philaret, the churchman *par excellence*, turn down the opportunity to increase the Church’s independence in relation to the State? Partly because he was disturbed by criticism directed against the Church in the period of the Great Reforms. For they “entailed a relaxation of the oppressive censorship of the Nikolaevan era, primarily to stimulate public involvement in the reform process and to complement and correct the activities of officialdom. But *glasnost’* – as it was then termed – also entailed an unprecedented discussion of the Church and its problems. Philaret, understandably, found this critical comment in the press deeply disturbing, partly

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<sup>223</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 301.

<sup>224</sup> Nikolin, *Tserkov’ i Gosudarstvo* (Church and State), Moscow, 1997, p. 124.

because it revealed the transparent animus of the educated and privileged toward the Church, but also because the government – ostensibly duty bound to defend the Church – allowed such publications to circulate. Even a conservative newspaper like *Moskovskie Vedomosti* elicited sharp complaints from Philaret, but far worse was to appear in the moderate and liberal press. The flow of antireligious publications made Philaret increasingly suspicious: ‘Is there not a conspiracy striving to bring everything honourable into contempt and to undermine the convictions of faith and morality so that it will be easier to turn everything into democratic chaos?’<sup>225</sup>

Philaret’s archconservatism was especially manifested in his reaction to the proposals for Church reform put forward by the minister of the interior, P.A. Valuev.

“In the summer of 1861,... Valuev wrote the emperor that he would like to prepare a memorandum on the matter, but because this sphere lay outside his jurisdiction, first asked permission to undertake the task. The issue had long been of concern to Valuev; while still a provincial governor, he had criticized the Church for its weaknesses and its tendency to resort to state coercion to shield believers from other confessions. Permission granted, Valuev then prepared a comprehensive memorandum that essentially became the blueprint for ecclesiastical reform in the 1860s.

“Entitled ‘On the Present Condition of the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Clergy’, his report argued that earlier proposals for Church reform in the Western provinces were doomed to failure, for the fundamental problems were structural, not regional. In Valuev’s opinion, the Orthodox Church had fallen into such an abject condition that it could not combat apostasy without relying on the coercive apparatus of the state – a practice that was ineffective for the Church and troublesome for the state officials charged with prosecuting religious dissenters. Like many in the government, Valuev wanted the Church to provide support for the state, but now found the relationship one-sided: although the Church relies upon state power, ‘the government cannot enjoy reciprocal assistance from ecclesiastical authorities, because their influence is too insignificant.’ In Valuev’s opinion, not only the Church as an institution, but its servitors (above all, the rank-and-file parish clergy) were in dire straits: ‘One cannot help feeling profound sorrow when seeing the conditions which the Orthodox clergy, the closest representatives and the pastors of the Church, occupy among other classes of the population. Everywhere one notices a lack of feeling of respect and trust toward [the clergy], and a feeling of profound, bitter denigration is apparent among them.’ Much of the problem, he contended, derived from the deep animus between the black and white clergy. In Valuev’s view, all this resulted from the social isolation of the bishops: ‘The diocesan bishops for the most part lead the life of involuntary recluses, avoiding the secular world around them, neither understanding nor knowing its needs.’ Valuev further asserted that the bishops ‘are primarily concerned not with the flock entrusted to them, but with the lower pastors subordinated to them,’ and that they reign over the latter ‘like the most brutal despots’. He stressed that this despotism is all the more onerous, since it unleashes ‘the avarice of the diocesan chancelleries and consistories’, who subject the parish clergy to merciless abuse: ‘The priests are obliged to pay them tribute. If the tribute is deemed insufficient, they are punished by endless, ruinous relocations from one parish to another. Not a single priest is secure against such relations by the most zealous performance of his duties, the most impeccable life.’

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<sup>225</sup> Frazee, in Tsurikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-158.

While not denying that the bishops were 'in general worthy of every respect in terms of their personal qualities,' Valuev complained that the prelates often fell under the sway of their chancelleries. The result is 'a certain hardening of feelings' and inaccessibility compounded by 'advanced age and illness', which left them unfit for 'intensified independent work'. These problems, warned Valuev, caused parish clergy not only to despise their superiors but to exhibit an attraction to radical, even Protestant ideas: 'The white clergy hates the black clergy, and with the assistance of this hatred there is already beginning to spread not only democratic, but even socialist strivings, but also a certain inclination toward Protestantism, which with time could lead to a convulsion within the bosom of the Church. The white clergy is poor, helpless, and lacking with respect to its own means of existence and the fate of their families. For the most part it stands at a low level of education and lives under conditions that efface the traces of that inadequate education which they acquired in the ecclesiastical seminaries and academies; it does not constitute and organized *soslovie* (estate) in the state, but a caste of Levites; it sees no hope for an improvement in its material existence, because it understands that, given its very large numbers, it cannot count on significant generosity on the part of the government. That explains why part of the parish priests live at the expense of the schism, which they pander to, and the other resorts to extortion from parishioners, or languishes in need that often extinguishes its mental and moral powers.

"Not surprisingly, he concluded, the Church had proven incapable of combating the steady inroads by the schism, sects, and other confessions.

"To address these problems, Valuev proposed systematic, fundamental reform. One was to dismantle the hereditary clerical estate (*dukhovnoe soslovie*), at a minimum by permitting the clergy's sons - who normally remained within the hereditary clerical estate - to choose their own career path, but perhaps by excluding them from inclusion in the estate altogether. Valuev also urged a 'radical transformation' of the seminary curriculum in order to provide an education that would facilitate mobility into secular careers. No less important was the problem of material support for the clergy: a combination of gratuities (a source of humiliation and endless conflict) and agriculture (a distraction from the clergy's spiritual duties). Since the state was in position to provide salaries, Valuev could only suggest a traditional remedy (set reasonable fees to preclude haggling over rites), surplus state land (where available), and the merger of parishes (to form larger, more economically viable units). More attractive to the clergy, no doubt, was Valuev's proposal 'to give the parish clergy an honorable, active, and independent participation in public education', a measure that would simultaneously provide them with additional income and help draw them 'closer to the other educated classes'. No less important, in Valuev's view, was the need to involve the bishops in worldly matters: 'This improvement [in relations between prelates and priests], in turn, is hardly possible so long as the prelates of our church will remain alien to all everyday relations, all the civil needs of their flock. It is desirable to draw them [the bishops] closer to the latter; for this rapprochement, it is almost necessary to give them the opportunity, even if in some cases, to participate in the civil affairs of their fatherland, to show them the path along which they can acquire the right to this participation. The summoning of several members of the Holy Synod to the State Council, with the right to participate in discussions of all the matters

brought before it (except criminal cases), would open this opportunity and indicate this path to the upper members of our clergy.'

"Fully aware of the sensitive nature of these proposals, Valuev proposed that he first hold private discussions with the venerable metropolitan of Moscow, Philaret, and seek to gain his approval – a critical step in securing the Church's approval and cooperation... His principal concern was to secure Philaret's support for a joint Church-state committee, an intrusion into the ecclesiastical domain likely to raise the hackles of this determined *tserkovnik*. In part, Valuev hoped that the emperor's special solicitude toward Philaret would carry the day; he later reported to Alexander that 'the attention and trust shown by Your Majesty to the opinion of His Grace Philaret was obviously pleasant and flattering for him.'

"Valuev did in fact win Philaret's general assent, but met with resistance on several issues. First, although Valuev tactfully avoided 'using the phrases "closed estate" (*zamknutoe soslovie*) and "break up the estate" (*razomknut' soslovie*), Philaret understood perfectly what the minister had in mind. He denied that the clergy constituted a caste and cited his own vicar – born into the nobility – to demonstrate the point. Second, Philaret showed little enthusiasm for allotting the clergy additional land, but appeared to withdraw his objection in view of the state's inability to provide salaries. Third, Philaret categorically opposed permitting a joint Church-state committee to reform ecclesiastical schools, a matter falling exclusively within the Church's competence. Finally, Philaret rejected the idea of including Synod members in the State Council. He feared that the latter might treat the prelates with condescension and attempt to raise issues about Church finances (an allusion to the issue of the Church budget, an issue still unresolved at this point). In cases where the State Council needed the Synod's view, declared Philaret, it could simply invite them to special sessions – as had been done in the past...

"Although the government did not further consult Philaret, it did pare back the original vision. Thus Valuev jettisoned his scheme for Synodal membership in the State Council, but still tried to give the new committee a broad range of authority, even over spheres that Philaret had explicitly precluded. Thus, a Valuev draft proposal of January 1862 still gave the committee the power to deal not only with the 'clerical question', but also with the reform of ecclesiastical schools. More important still, Valuev wanted the committee determine 'the degree and means for the participation of parishioners in the economic governance of the affairs of the parish church'. That was a highly sensitive issue, given the laity's strong aversion to the diversion of local resources to finance general Church needs. In the teeth of clerical opposition, however, Valuev eventually trimmed back the original charge to the matters condoned by Metropolitan Philaret.

"Thus, while Philaret acceded to the inclusion of several ranking state officials in the mixed commission (eventually re-titled 'Special Commission on the Needs of the Clergy', he had greatly reduced the broad mandate that Valuev originally sought. He defended the Church's authority (in the issue of ecclesiastical schools) and defeated the scheme to include Synodal members in the State Council. While Philaret could

hardly deny the need for reform, he was adamant about preserving the Church's institutional integrity and privileges."<sup>226</sup>

Philaret did achieve one major victory, however. His project of translating the Bible into Russian, which had been successfully resisted, as we have seen, under Alexander I, was finally approved under Alexander II, even if it was not realized in Philaret's lifetime.

In the last years of his life, Philaret's influence waned and the secular principles he feared began increasingly to penetrate Church life.

Thus "from 1865," writes Nikolin, "the over-procurator of the Holy Synod became Count Demetrius A. Tolstoy, who combined this post with the post of minister of popular enlightenment, as if renewing the experiment of the 'double ministry' of Prince Golitsyn. However, in contrast to the supra-confessional mysticism of the latter, Count Tolstoy demonstrated an idiosyncratic supra-confessional indifferentism. A man of conservative views and well-versed in matters of common and internal politics, Count Tolstoy showed himself to be a radical and an innovator in ecclesiastical matters, but an innovator who was far from an understanding of Church life. He worked out a series of liberal reforms in various spheres of the ecclesiastical order. Thus, immediately after the publication of the *Juridical Statutes*, the over-procurator raised the question of the suitability of reforming the Church courts on the same principles on which the civil courts had been reformed. This and other projects of Count Tolstoy suggested the reconstruction of Church life in accordance with the rules of secular consciousness, and not on the basis of the canonical self-consciousness of the Church."<sup>227</sup>

Again, "despite earlier promises of including the parish clergy into the new system of elementary public education, the central government ultimately abdicated a primary role and left the responsibility with the community, *zemstvo*, or Ministry of Education – not the Church. As Philaret acidly complained to a close confidante: 'But then came the new minister of education. And they say that it is already decided that rural schools will be secular, and that millions of rubles have been allotted for them. A single act of grace was given to us: the priests are not forbidden to keep their schools, without any assistance for them.' As a result, the parish schools that clergy had so fervently opened in the 1850s came upon hard times, their number sharply dropping, until the government renewed its support – and financing – in the 1880s."<sup>228</sup>

By two acts – the first dated May 22, 1867, and the second, May 26, 1869, when Metropolitan Philaret was already dead – Tsar Alexander II laid a beginning to the liberation of the clergy from their dependent class status, breaking down the closed character of the clerical estate, and the inheritance of church posts, as Valuev had proposed. The 1869 decree, writes Nikolin, "destroyed the isolation of the clergy. By this decree all children of the clerical estate were classified in secular callings. Moreover, the children of clergy were put on the same level as the children of nobility, and the children of church servers on the same level as honoured citizens, while the

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<sup>226</sup> Frazee, in Tskurikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-178.

<sup>227</sup> Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>228</sup> Frazee, in Tsurikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

children of the lower clergy were ascribed to town or village society while retaining their previous exemption from taxes and military service.

“Help to the monasteries after the emancipation of the peasants consisted of giving them each year 168,200 rubles for the payment of hired labourers. By 1890 this sum had grown to 425,000 rubles.”<sup>229</sup>

In general, however, as Frazee writes, “the reforms failed to improve the material conditions of the clergy, for neither the state nor the people proved willing to change the form or amount of material support. The parish statute of 1869 which proposed to amalgamate parishes into larger and more viable economic units, likewise proved a dismal failure: while it did reduce the number of clerical positions and hence increase the ratio of parishioners to priests, it failed to generate greater income, as parishioners pronounced traditional sums sacred or even reduced them. The seminary reform of 1867 may have improved the curriculum, but it also shifted much of the financial burden of seminaries to the parish clergy. At the same time, the reform gave the clergy’s sons new opportunities to *leave* the clerical estate, and they did so in vast numbers (comprising 35 per cent of university students in 1875, for example). As this mass ‘flight of the seminarians’ gained momentum, the Church suddenly encountered an acute shortage of candidates and had to ordain men of inferior education. By the 1880s observers could already discern an absolute decline in the educational level of the clergy, a process that would continue unaltered until the end of the *ancient régime*...”<sup>230</sup>

The objections of Metropolitan Philaret to Church reform were not to be scorned; he was, after all, a holy man of enormous intelligence who knew the Church much better than the secular officials and ministers. But the main problem remained the overarching one of the Church’s inability to order her internal life in accordance with her own laws. For, as Sergei Firsov writes, the question of the caste-like nature of the clergy “was directly linked with the necessity of completely reforming the Synodal system, reviewing the basic principles of Church-State relations that had built up in the empire over the last 150-200 years. Not one monarch was able to decide on such a review in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But without his Majesty’s initiative no reform was possible in Russia.”<sup>231</sup>

And this truly weakened her in a way that was to prove to be disastrous in the long term; for only a Church able to act in the spirit of the Holy Gospel and in accordance with the Sacred Canons without succumbing to the often harmful interference of the State could hope to halt the processes of apostasy that were now deeply ingrained in society.

For, as St. Ignaty Brianchaninov wrote: “We are helpless to arrest this apostasy. Impotent hands will have no power against it and nothing more will be required than the attempt to withhold it. The spirit of the age will reveal the apostasy. Study it, if you

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<sup>229</sup> Nikolin, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>230</sup> Frazee, “Reform and Counter Reform 1855-1890”, in Frazee (ed.), *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 1009, p. 220.

<sup>231</sup> Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov’ Nakanune Peremen* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes), Moscow, 2002, p. 36.

wish to avoid it, if you wish to escape this age and the temptation of its spirits. One can suppose, too, that the institution of the Church which has been tottering for so long will fall terribly and suddenly. Indeed, no-one is able to stop or prevent it. *The present means to sustain the institutional Church are borrowed from the elements of the world, things inimical to the Church, and the consequence will be only to accelerate its fall.* Nevertheless, the Lord protects the elect and their limited number will be filled."<sup>232</sup>

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In his exceptionally long hierarchical career, in which he had served three tsars, Metropolitan Philaret played an important role in both the Church and State. His death was as Grace-filled as his life had been. Two months before, writes Helena Kontzevich, "his long-dead father appeared to him and said, 'Beware the 19<sup>th</sup>', and he began to prepare for his death. On November 19, 1867 he served the Divine Liturgy with exceptional feeling and tears. At two in the afternoon he was found dead in his cell. His righteous death, as also his life, was concealed from men.

"Literally the whole of Moscow participated in the burial of the great hierarch, hundreds of thousands of people accompanying him to his final resting place in the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergei."<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Sokolov, L.A. *Episkop Ignatij Brianchaninov* (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov), Kiev, 1915, vol. 2, p. 250. Italics mine (V.M.).

<sup>233</sup> Kontzevich, "Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow", St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, pp. 195, 196.

## **16. RUSSIA TURNS EAST (1)**

In spite of her defeat in the Crimean War, Russia continued to extend her influence into Asia. Her missions to Siberia and Central Asia, China, Japan and Alaska were to bring forth rich fruit; later, Persia also would feel her beneficial influence. And she fulfilled her mission as the Third Rome in her protection of the ancient Orthodox kingdom of Georgia.

**1. The North Caucasus.** Georgia depended for her very survival on the support of Russia against the Muslim peoples – the Persians and the Turks – to the south. Correspondingly, Russia's constant aim in the Caucasus region was to establish a firm and reliable bridge to Georgia across the Caucasus mountains. To this end, as Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, "it was necessary to overcome the opposition of Persia and Turkey and the warlike mountain peoples of the Northern Caucasus and the Caspian and Black Sea coasts whom they often stirred up.

"It is fashionable to talk about the cruelties committed by the Russian armies in this 'Caucasian war'. But it is not fashionable to talk about the bestial acts of the Muslim mountaineers in relation to the Russians, and also in relation to those of their own people who had accepted Orthodoxy (for example, the Ossetians and Georgians). And these acts exceeded all human imagination. War is war! The mutual hardening of the sides was, alas, inevitable here. And so there were also excesses of violence and cruelty on the side of the Russians... Gradually, at a dear price, Russia managed to break the opposition of the mountaineers and thereby guarantee a constant safe 'bridge' of communication with Orthodox Georgia."<sup>234</sup>

Russia first made contact with the Caucasian mountaineers when she achieved her great victory over the Tatar Mohammedans at the taking of Kazan. In 1552 two Cherkassian princes asked Ivan IV, the conqueror of Kazan, to receive them as subjects to help them in their struggle against the Turkish sultan and his vassal, the Crimean Khan. In 1557 two Kabardinian princes, Temryuk and Tizryut, asked for the same in their struggle against Shamkhal of Tarki. Soon there were Cossacks on the banks of Terek, and in 1586 the Russian Tsar and King Alexander of Georgia formed an alliance against Shamkhal, as a result of which Tarki was stormed in 1594.

But Sultan-Muta, son of Shamkhal, and the whole of Dagestan rebelled against the Russians. Tarki was destroyed in 1604 and the Russian armies were destroyed. It was not until over a century later, in 1722, that Peter I resumed the Russian advance and conquered the Caspian coast. This brought the Russians in conflict with the Shah of Persia, who in 1741 tried to conquer the area, but was defeated.

"To some extent," writes Dominic Lieven, "the Russians were pulled into the Trans-Caucasus – in other words, across the mountains – by appeals for support from the Georgians, a fellow Orthodox people. Georgia was too weak to defend itself against increasing pressure from both the Ottomans and the Persians. Georgia had good

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<sup>234</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, pp. 324, 325.

reason to seek the protection of empire and to escape the anarchy, economic devastation and loss of population that had resulted from existing in an insecure borderland. In the mid-thirteenth century there were five million Georgians, by 1770 there were barely 500,000. In the last decades of the eighteenth century Petersburg wavered as to whether it was worthwhile to take on the burden of defending and ruling Georgia. In the end what mattered most were strategic and geopolitical considerations. Given both traditional hostility to the Ottoman Empire and growing rivalry with Napoleonic France and Britain in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, it was decided to annex Georgia as Russia's base and centre of power beyond the Caucasus. Once established in the region, however, the Russians to some extent had to obey the laws of local geopolitics. This entailed, for example, conquering the land and sea communications between the Trans-Caucasus and Russia. Subduing the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus proved a hugely expensive and time-consuming struggle, not concluded until the 1860s."<sup>235</sup>

In 1785-87 Sheikh Mansur led Chechnya and Dagestan in rebellion against the Russians. He was defeated. However, in 1812 rebellion flared up again.

Then, "in 1826," writes Lebedev, "for the sake of her interests in Georgia and without a declaration of war, Persia invaded Transcaucasia. General Ermolov, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies in the Caucasus, was not able with his forces to deal with the invasion. There came to his help the armies led by General Paskevich. In a series of battles Paskevich defeated the Persians, took Erivan (Yerevan), invaded Persia and headed for its capital - Teheran. The Persian Shah sought peace, which was concluded in 1828 in Turkmanchai, in accordance with which the lands of present-day Armenia and Azerbaidjan passed permanently to Russia. An end was placed to Persia's pretensions. Nicholas I bestowed the title of Count of Erivan on Paskevich. It was more difficult to bring into submission the mountain tribes of the Northern Caucasus, with whom the Russian Cossack settlements on the Terek and Kuban had long had dealings. The Chechens, the Cherkessy and other warlike peoples not only warred against the Cossacks, they also lived next to them and entered into peaceful relations with the Russians, encountering in these cases a completely friendly response from the Russians. But in 1825 there began the 'Miurizm' movement, which was introduced from Turkey. The 'Miuridy' (novices) were obliged to wage a holy war against the 'infidel' Russians under the leadership of 'holy elders' - imams and sheiks - with the aim of creating an extensive 'caliphate' from Stambul to the Kuban. The imams Kazimullah and later Shamil became popular leaders."<sup>236</sup>

From the middle of the 1840s Shamil became both the political and the religious leader of the state of Imamate, "the ruler of the right-believing"; all executive, judicial and legislative power was in his hands. Declaring all the tribal leaders who submitted to the Russians to be traitors and apostates, he united all the North Caucasus mountaineers for the first time.<sup>237</sup> As the French consul in Tiflis wrote: "We have to distinguish two personalities united in Shamil..."

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<sup>235</sup> Lieven, *Empire*, London: John Murray, 2000, pp. 212-213.

<sup>236</sup> Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

<sup>237</sup> S.M. Kaziev (ed.), *Shamil*, Moscow: Ekho Kavkaza, 1997, p. 31.

“On the one hand, the political leader, dictator, to whom limitless power was presented by events with a democratic system based on the principle of absolute equality. But at the same time he is a religious leader, to whom the calling of the great imam, the supreme head of the right believers, a sacred character is attached. Having this dual calling, he is the only judge in the question of offering the sacrifices demanded by the war. His power is firmly organized.”<sup>238</sup>

However, God was with the Russian armies. Thus on December 24, 1853 Archbishop Isidore, the exarch of Georgia, wrote to Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow: "The captured Turks told us openly that when the battle near Alexandropol' became fierce, and the whole Russian detachment became involved, the Turks saw a radiant woman coming down from heaven holding a banner in her hands and accompanied by two warriors. The light from her was so bright that it was like the shining of the sun, and no eye could stand it. This appearance produced horror in the ranks of the fighters and was the reason why, on seeing that God was on the side of Rus', all the Turks turned to flight and lost the battle. The Russians did not see this appearance. By the Providence of God our foreign enemies witnessed to it."<sup>239</sup>

In 1859 Shamil was captured and surrendered (in exchange for a comfortable and honourable exile in Kaluga with all his wives), and by 1864 the war had come to an end. It had claimed the lives of nearly 100,000 Russians killed since 1801.

At this point, writes Lieven, most of the population of the western region of the Caucasus "were 'encouraged' to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire amidst great suffering and loss of life. The Chechens and Dagestanis of the eastern region, who had resisted the Russians with equal determination, were allowed to remain in their homeland. The reason for this was that the western region, bordering on a Black Sea on which Russia [after the Crimean War] was not permitted to have a navy, was acutely vulnerable to Ottoman or British attack. In the aftermath of the Crimean War, St. Petersburg's perception was that Russia was dangerously weak, and Palmerston's England on the offensive worldwide. Palmerston himself commented that 'these half-civilized governments such as those of China, Portugal, Spanish America require a Dressing every eight or ten years to keep them in order', and no one who knew his views on Russia could doubt his sense that she too deserved to belong to this category of states. The Russians were not therefore prepared to leave on this coastline a Sunni population whom they quite rightly believed to be potential allies of the Ottomans in any future war. A British historian of the 'Great Game' (i.e. Anglo-Russian nineteenth-century rivalry in Central Asia) comments that 'the forcible exile of six hundred thousand Circassians from the Black Sea Coast deprived the Turks and the British of their most valuable potential allies within the Russian Empire.'"<sup>240</sup>

**2. Crimea.** Special mention should be made of Crimea, which, though geographically part of Europe, was culturally and religiously part of Asia. In spite of

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<sup>238</sup> Kaziev, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>239</sup> Snychev, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

<sup>240</sup> Lieven, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214. The historian referred to is David Gillard.

the region's close links, first with Byzantium, and then with the Rus' of St. Vladimir (who was baptized there), it became predominantly Muslim in the later Middle Ages.

For, as Shaun Walker writes, "descendants of the Mongols mingled with various indigenous people of the peninsula, and eventually became known as Crimean Tatars. The Tatar khans ruled from Bakhchisarai, their alluring capital in the heart of Crimea's hilly interior.

The Crimean Tatars were a force to be reckoned with - fearsome warriors in fur-rimmed spiked helmets, masters of their rugged horses and with a reputation for brutality in their raids for slaves and cattle. In 1571, a Crimean Tatar force invaded Russia, burning Moscow and taking tens of thousands of prisoners before retreating back to Crimea. They would not trouble the Russian capital again, but even as Russia expanded inexorably, the Tatars remained firmly ensconced in the Kirim ('the Fortress', which comes the Russian *Krym* and the English Crimea), ruled by their khan, who was not a hereditary monarch but elected via the nobility. The khanate secured backing from Constantinople, and functioned as a protectorate of the Ottomans, Russia's main rival by the eighteenth century.

"In 1782 Grigory Potemkin, Catherine the Great's erstwhile lover and the man in charge of her new provinces in what is now called Ukraine, passionately urged the empress to annex the peninsula. The status quo was dangerous because the Ottomans 'could reach our heart' through Crimea, Potemkin warned Catherine. It was worth acting decisively to seize the peninsula while the Ottomans were weak, preoccupied with riots and plague, and the British and French were still distracted by the war in America, Potemkin told the empress. It was a similar pre-emptive logic to reasoning used in 2014: that Russia had to move decisively to prevent a hypothetical future NATO member Ukraine from kicking the Russian fleet out of Sevastopol and turning the Black Sea into a NATO sea.

"Catherine was not immediately convinced. What about the international repercussions, she wondered. Potemkin told her it was naïve to think about such vagaries, given that nobody else did. 'There is no power in Europe that has not participated in the carving up of Asia, Africa, America,' he told Catherine, much as Putin would later use Western misdeeds to justify his own flagrant violations of international law.

"The first Russian takeover of Crimea used the carrot as much as the stick. In 1771, Shahin Girey, a Tatar noble who would go on to become the last of the Tatar khans, travelled to St. Petersburg. Catherine invited him to watch dancing girls in a closed, exclusive circle, wooing him with access and jewels. It was the tsarist equivalent of the white telephone and Putin's financial offers to the Crimean Tatar Dzhemilev more than two centuries later. The next year Shahin Girey returned to the Russian capital, and left with 20,000 rubles, a gold sword, and a good disposition towards the Russians. A few years later he was elected khan, and in 1783 gave up power under Russian pressure without a fight. He was kept under an honourable house arrest in St. Petersburg, while the Tatar nobility were bought off with promises that their customs and Islamic faith would suffer no repression. Among later generations, the final khan

became a byword for cowardice and collaboration. ‘Nobody wants to be the second Shahin Girey,’ Dzhemilev told me, explaining why he turned down Putin’s offer of cash.

“Relations between the Tatars and their new Russian overlords were initially cordial, but arriving Russian landowners seized much Tatar land, and by the turn of the century, there were stories of Russian soldiers amusing themselves by taking potshots with their muskets at mullahs during the midday call to prayer. The Russians also provoked ire among the locals for using headstones from Tatar cemeteries as building materials. The relationship deteriorated to the extent that during the Crimean War in the mid-nineteenth century, the Tatars provided the allies (Britain, France, and the Ottomans) with logistical and intelligence support. They paid for it in a series of reprisals in the aftermath, and by 1867, around 192,000 Tatars had fled the peninsula for Turkey, out of a total population of 300,000. They left 784 deserted villages and 457 abandoned mosques. Russian peasants flooded the region, and the aristocracy built palaces along its coastline, of which the splendid Livadia outside Yalta was one of many. Crimea’s demographic makeup was changed forever, and it was really only from this point onwards that Crimea could in any way be considered ‘historically Russian’ [as Putin claims].”<sup>241</sup>

**3. Central Asia.** So Russia was in control of the whole land area around the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea. But the Treaty of Paris prevented her from supporting a fleet there. That would be remedied in the following age...

Unlike the Caucasus and Crimea, Central Asia and the Far East did not represent areas of vital geopolitical importance to Russia; and so Russian conquests there must be evaluated in a different way.

At the peace talks in Paris after the Crimean War, a military attaché, Count Nicholas Ignatiev, “was so enraged by the treatment of Russia, and by the restrictions of Russian control over its own littoral on the Black Sea in particular, that he made arrangements with Prince Gorchakov, former classmate and confidant of Alexander Pushkin, to lead a mission into Central Asia. The aim was unequivocal: ‘the investigation [of this region] and the promotion of friendly ties will raise Russia’s influence – and lower that of Great Britain.’

“Ignat’ev lobbied intensively for expeditions to be sent to Persia and Afghanistan, and for envoys to visit the khanates of Khiva and Bukhara. This aim, he said bluntly, was to find a route to India via either of the two great rivers that flow towards the Aral Sea – the Syr Darya or the Amu Darya. It would be ideal, he argued, if Russia could build an alliance with the peoples bordering India and also work up their hostility to Britain: this was the way to set Russia on the front foot – and not just in Asia.

“The mission led by Ignat’ev and others paid dividends. In the fifteen years that followed the end of the Crimean War, Russia brought hundreds of thousands of square miles under its control without having to resort to force. Well-led expeditions, coupled

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<sup>241</sup> Walker, *The Long Hangover. Putin’s New Russia and the Ghosts of the Past*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 153-155.

shrewdly applied diplomatic pressure on China, allowed 'immense strides' to be made in the Far East 'in the short space of ten years', as one seasoned observer noted in a report for the Foreign Office in London in 1861."<sup>242</sup>

For in 1859, following the victory of Britain over China in the Second Opium War, and as a British and French force of 18,000 men was approaching Peking to enforce the terms that had been agreed, Ignatiev managed to secure the weakened Emperor's formal ceding of Manchuria to Russia. (In 1858 the Chinese had recognized the Russian seizure of the Amur province as a *fait accompli*.) Then, when the foreign troops had left Peking after securing the agreement they wanted, Ignatiev signed the Treaty of Peking with the Chinese. Peter Hopkirk writes: "It had been a Machiavellian performance of the highest order by the young Ignatiev, then still in his late twenties, and a remarkable diplomatic triumph for the Russians. First, they had formally added a vast tract of territory, the size of France and Germany together, to their already huge northern Asiatic empire. Second, they had got the Chinese to agree to their opening consulates at Kashgar, in Eastern Turkestan, and at Urga, the capital of Mongolia, then both under Peking's rule. They had thereby stolen a march on their rivals, the British, who had obtained no such facility, for the establishment of consulates meant that Russian merchants and goods would have exclusive access to these important new markets. It was with considerable satisfaction, therefore, that Ignatiev left Peking on November 22 and rode hard for St. Petersburg. 'Not since 1815,' one British historian has written, 'had Russia concluded such an advantageous treaty, and probably never before had such a feat been carried off by so young a Russian diplomat. The successes of 1860 went far to obliterate the bitter memories of the Crimean defeat, the more especially as they had been achieved in good measure by hoodwinking the English.'"<sup>243</sup>

Machiavellianism? Hoodwinking? From the Russian Tsars? Such an idea would have been considered outrageously unjust in relation to Alexander I or Nicolas I, both of whom conducted their foreign policy on the basis of high principle: Alexander (from 1815, at any rate) - on the basis of the Sacred Union of Christian powers against the revolution, and Nicholas on the basis of the interests of the Orthodox Christian commonwealth as a whole.

But in the new reign a group of senior army officers and diplomats, determined to take revenge for their country's defeat in the Crimean War, took advantage of the inexperience of the young tsar to push through a foreign policy that was often Machiavellian, sometimes outrightly deceitful and imperialist in the western sense - that is, designed, not for any higher spiritual purpose, such as the spreading of the Orthodox Christian Faith among the pagans, but simply in order to increase the political and economic power of Russia and steal a march on the scheming British. The virus of western imperialism was beginning to infect Russia...

However, true missionary work continued whatever the motivations of soldiers and diplomats. Thus as Jeremias Norman writes, in China "the mission finally began

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<sup>242</sup> Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 292-293.

<sup>243</sup> Hopkirk, *The Great Game*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 300.

to bear real fruit under Archimandrite Gury (Karpov)<sup>244</sup>, who was responsible for translating the Gospels into Chinese. After the treaty of Tientsin, in 1858, China was opened to foreign missionary work. It was after this that the mission launched genuine missionary work among the local population and ceased to minister exclusively to the Albazintsy. The mission was also freed from its diplomatic tasks and allowed to devote itself entirely to the work of evangelization. Nonetheless, in 1860 there were no more than 200 Orthodox Christians in China, and these were almost entirely restricted to Beijing and its environs."<sup>245</sup>

From 1864 the Russians gradually acquired huge territories in Central Asia by a series of sudden coups and advances, each time declaring that they had no intention of acquiring more territory. The first such disavowal came in December, 1864, when just after the Russians had seized the oasis towns of Chimkent and Turkestan from the Khan of Khokand, the Russian Foreign Minister Prince Gorchakov issued a memorandum to the European Powers: "'The position of Russia in Central Asia,' declared this celebrated document, 'is that of all civilized States which are brought into contact with half-savage nomad populations possessing no fixed social organization. In such cases it always happens that the more civilized State is forced, in the interests of the security of its frontiers and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whose turbulent and unsettled character make them undesirable neighbours.' In their turn these newly pacified regions had to be protected from the depredations of the lawless tribes beyond them, and so on. The Russian government therefore had to choose between bringing civilization to those suffering under barbarian rule and abandoning its frontiers to anarchy and bloodshed. 'Such has been the fate,' Gorchakov wrote, 'of every country which has found itself in a similar position.' Britain and the other colonial powers had been 'irresistibly forced, less by ambition than by imperious necessity, into this onward march'. The greatest difficulty, he concluded, lay in deciding where to stop. Nonetheless, having consolidated its frontier with Khokand, Russia was intending to advance no further.

"'We find ourselves,' he assured the other powers, 'in the presence of a more solid, less unsettled and better organized State, fixing for us with geographical precision that point at which we must halt.' Whether he himself really believed this, or whether he was merely playing for time on behalf of a government already bent on subjugating the khanates, is a question which still exercises scholars. Certainly N.A. Khalfin, the Soviet historian of this era, believes that it was a deliberate smokescreen aimed at deceiving the British. Needless to say, the Russian advance did not stop there as Gorchakov had promised. Within a few months they were driving south once more. The great Russian push into Central Asia was about to begin."<sup>246</sup>

In 1868 the Russians defeated the emir of Bukhara and annexed Samarkand. "We've got to teach these Asiatics a lesson," said Tsar Alexander in true colonialist

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<sup>244</sup> Fr. Gury worked for twenty years in the Chinese mission, translating the Gospels, Service Books, Lives of the Saints as well as other religious works into Chinese. Later he became Archbishop of Tauris. In 1929 his body was found to be incorrupt ([http://orthodox.cn/saints/20080421gurykarpov\\_en.htm](http://orthodox.cn/saints/20080421gurykarpov_en.htm)). (V.M.)

<sup>245</sup> Norman, "The Orthodox Mission to the Chinese", *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XVIII (2001), no. 1, p. 31.

<sup>246</sup> Hopkirk, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-305.

fashion. He decided to offer the British a free hand in Afghanistan if he was allowed to conquer Khiva. Khiva duly fell, followed by Tashkent. The British were alarmed, but decided on a policy of "masterful inactivity" in this "great game" of colonial conquest between the two Great Powers; for neither power could protest too much without displaying obvious hypocrisy. And so by 1881, the Russians had consolidated their border along the northern frontier of Afghanistan, while that country stood as the neutral buffer between Russia and British India.

"In 1874," writes Figes, "the Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg hosted an extraordinary exhibition by the artist Vasily Vereshchagin, whose enormous battle scenes of the Turkestan campaign had recently returned with high acclaim from a European tour. Huge crowds came to see the exhibition (30,000 copies of the catalogue were sold in the first week) and the building of the Ministry became so cramped that several fights broke out as people jostled for a better view. Vereshchagin's pictures were the public's first real view of the Imperial war which the Russians had been fighting for the past ten years against the Muslim tribes as the Tsar's troops conquered Turkestan. The Russian public took great pride in the army's capture of the khanates of Kokand, Bukhara and Khiva, followed by its conquest of Tashkent and the arid steppe of Central Asia right up to the borders with Afghanistan and British India. After its defeat in the Crimean War, the campaign showed the world that Russia was a power to be reckoned with. But Vereshchagin's almost photographic battle images revealed a savagery which had not been seen by civilians before. It was not clear who was more 'savage' in his pictures of the war: the Russian troops or their Asiatic opponents. There was 'something fascinating, something truly horrifying, in the wild energy of these canvases', concluded one reviewer in the press. 'We see a violence that could not be French or even from the Balkans: it is half-barbarian and semi-Asiatic - it is a Russian violence.'

"It had not originally been the painter's aim to draw this parallel. Vereshchagin started out as an official war artist, and it was not part of his remit to criticize the conduct of the Russian military... But his experience of the war in Turkestan had given rise to doubts about the 'civilizing mission' of the Russian Empire in the East. On one occasion, after the Russian troops had massacred the people of a Turkmen village, Vereshchagin dug their graves himself. None of his compatriots would touch the dead. Vereshchagin came to see the war as a senseless massacre... The message of Vereshchagin's epic canvases was clearly understood. He portrayed the Asian tribesmen, not as savages, but as simply human beings who were driven to defend their native land. 'What the public saw,' Stasov later wrote, 'was both sides of the war - the military conquest and the human suffering. His paintings were the first to sound a loud protest against the barbarians of the Imperial war.'

"There was a huge storm of controversy. Liberals praised the artists for his stance against all war. Conservatives denounced him as a 'traitor to Russia', and mounted a campaign to strip him of his Order of St. George. General Kaufman became so enraged when he saw the artist's pictures that he began to shout and swear at Vereshchagin and physically attacked him in the presence of his fellow officers. The General Staff condemned his paintings as a 'slander against the Imperial army', and called for them to be destroyed; but the Tsar, ironically, was on the liberals' side...

"In Russia's educated circles the military conquest of the Central Asian steppe produced two opposing reactions. The first was the sort of imperialist attitude which Vereshchagin's paintings had done so much to offend. It was based on a sense of racial superiority to the Asiatic tribes, and at the same time a fear of those same tribes, a fear of being swamped by the 'yellow peril' which reached fever pitch in the war against Japan. The second reaction was no less imperialist but it justified the empire's eastern mission on the questionable grounds that Russia's cultural homeland was on the Eurasian steppe. By marching into Asia, the Russians were returning to their ancient home. This rationale was first advanced in 1840 by the orientalist Grigoriev. 'Who is closer to Asia than we are?' Grigoriev had asked. 'Which of the European races retained more of the Asian element than the Slavic races did, the last of the great European peoples to leave their ancient homeland in Asia?' It was 'Providence that had called upon the Russians to reclaim the Asian steppe'; and because of 'our close relations with the Asiatic world', this was to be a peaceful process of 'reunion with our primeval brothers', rather than the subjugation of a foreign race. During the campaign in Central Asia the same thesis was advanced. The Slavs were returning to their 'prehistoric home', argued Colonel Veniukov, a geographer in Kaufman's army, for 'our ancestors had lived by the Indus and the Oxus before they were displaced by the Mongol hordes'. Veniukov maintained that Central Asia should be settled by the Russians. The Russian settlers should be encouraged to intermarry with the Muslim tribes to regenerate the 'Turanian' race that had once lived on the Eurasian steppe. In this way the empire would expand on the 'Russian principle' of 'peaceful evolution and assimilation' rather than by conquest and by racial segregation, as in the empires of the European states.

"The idea that Russia had a cultural and historic claim in Asia became a founding myth of the empire. During the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in the 1890s, Prince Ukhtomsky, the press baron and adviser to the young Tsar Nicholas II, advocated the expansion of the empire across the whole of the Asian continent, reasoning that Russia was a sort of 'older brother' to the Chinese and the Indians. 'We have always belonged to Asia,' Ukhtomsky told the Tsar. 'We have lived its life and felt its interests. We have nothing to conquer.'

"Inspired by the conquest of Central Asia, Dostoyevsky, too, advanced the notion that Russia's destiny was not in Europe, as had so long been supposed, but rather in the East. In 1881 he told the readers of his *Diary of a Writer*: 'Russia is not only in Europe but in Asia as well... We must cast aside our servile fear that Europe will call us Asiatic barbarians and say that we are more Asian than European... This mistaken view of ourselves as exclusively Europeans and not Asians (and we have never ceased to be the latter)... has cost us very dearly over these two centuries, and we have paid for it by the loss of our spiritual independence... It is hard for us to turn away from our window on Europe; but it is a matter of our destiny... When we turn to Asia, with our new view of her, something of the same sort may happen to us as happened to Europe when America was discovered. For, in truth, Asia for us is that same America which we still have not discovered. With our push towards Asia we will have a renewed upsurge of spirit and strength... In our Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, while in Asia we shall be the masters. In Europe we were Tatars, while in Asia we can be

Europeans. Our mission, our civilizing mission in Asia will encourage our spirit and draw us on; the movement needs only to be started."<sup>247</sup>

**4. Siberia.** In Siberia, great progress was made evangelizing the region of the High Altai. "The High Altai regions in the mid-19th century were still 'pagan' and we may describe their religion as 'Shamanism'. In the past there had been waves of various cultural influences: from the Chinese and hence of Buddhism and Taoism and also from the Turkic peoples to the south spread Islamic ideas and perhaps even Manichaeism and Nestorianism. Nevertheless these influences were weak and the main religion was Shamanism. The Russian Orthodox mission to the area was founded by Fr. Makary in 1828. He settled in Biisk as permanent priest in residence in 1830. The missionaries, especially those who were sympathetic to the Altai native people (which was mostly the case) made a fundamental contribution to the work of establishing a written Altai language which became a classic of its type. Later, following the model, the grammars of many other Turkic languages were to be defined. Archimandrite Makary introduced a version of the Bible in the Altai language in the late 1830s. It is amazing to think that this work was begun in 1837 at Easter, not somewhere in highly educated Orthodox centres in the West but far on the frontiers in pagan Altai, in a small place called Ulala.

"Fr. Makary was certainly an exceptional figure. He was a well-educated theologian who commanded several languages, including Greek and Hebrew. He translated the Bible into modern Russian. In his early years he studied the philosophy of the German philosopher Herder and was also familiar with the botanical work of Linneus and Denandel and the works of the astronomer Herschel and in general took a great interest in the natural science. For some time he was professor at the Theological Academy. From contemporary descriptions he seems to have been a man of great holiness who gave incorruptible service and love to the native peoples. In his approach to missionary work he advocated a definite program: it was not only to baptize the 'natives' and turn them into true children of the Heavenly Kingdom but also to lead them to a settled way of life, to literacy and to encourage them towards a more developed and more profitable form of agricultural practice. His program demanded of the missionaries a thorough knowledge of the Altai language, some basic ideas of science and medicine and an understanding of agrarian economics. He prepared for the mission practically useful objects such as seeds for market gardening and fruit growing, agricultural tools and so on. He produced the first translation into Altai of prayers and texts for church services. For the first time in the history of the missionary movement he took seriously the organization of missionary activities for women. He appointed female assistants. The first among these were the Russia Praskovia Landysheva and the Frenchwoman, Sofia Belmont. Among their duties were the education of the newly converted Altai women in the skills of childcare, sewing, bread making, elementary medical care and the fundamentals of midwifery. He even established an icon-painting studio where some gifted students learned about the fine arts to the extent that in time they established the Altai school of painting which spread over the whole region."<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, pp. 411-413, 414-415.

<sup>248</sup> Mikhail Vasilievich Chevalkov, "A Testament of Memory", *Orthodox Life*, July-August, 2009, pp. 12-13.

Successful missionary work was also conducted among the Buryats; during the five-year governing of the Irkutsk mission by Archimandrite Meletius (Yakimov, later Bishop of Ryazan), more than 11,000 pagans were brought into the Orthodox faith. The same Meletius conducted a successful mission among the Yakuts, following on the good work of his predecessor in the Yakutsk diocese, Bishop Dionysius. "Thus by the end of 1889, there were seventy-seven churches and one hundred and eighteen chapels in the diocese; and in 1895 there were nine stone churches and two hundred and fourteen churches made of wood, including chapels and houses of prayer."<sup>249</sup>

**5. Alaska.** Russia certainly had a civilizing mission in Asia: to bring Orthodoxy to its peoples - but more among the pagans than among the Muslims, and even more in Russian America - Alaska - than in Asia proper.

The opening up of Alaska began in December, 1724, when Peter the Great sent the Danish navigator Vitus Bering to explore the borders of America. "Sail on vessels to the north," he wrote to him, and, based on current expectations, because no one knows where it ends, see if it appears that his land is part of America... You are to seek where Asia and America split." Vitus discovered what is now known as the Bering Strait.<sup>250</sup>

"In 1741," writes F.A. Golder, "Vitus Bering's expedition to the Gulf of Alaska opened up the region to an army of Russian traders and trappers, lured there by the plentiful supply of seal and sea otter pelts. By the end of the eighteenth century, Alaska had become a Russian territory, with outposts stretching across the Aleutian Isles to Sitka. Many of the Russians lived on equal terms with the native peoples dwelling in their traditional sod houses and adopting the local customs. Some of the wealthier traders would even adopt young natives and send them back to Russia to be educated.

"This, unfortunately, was not the rule everywhere. The fierce competition for the lucrative fur trade led to the sometimes brutal exploitation of the Alaskan natives. Specifically on Kodiak Island, Gregory Shelikov's and Ivan Golikov's trading company was infamous for its abuse of the native people. The Kodiak men were enslaved in the hunting of sea otters, while the women were routinely abducted; hunger and physical abuse became common.

"Into this grim situation St. Herman and the nine other missionaries sailed in 1794 [at the command of the Holy Synod]. Despite the terrible conditions they endured - lack of food, insufficient clothing and shelter, and persecution by the Russian traders - the missionaries eagerly began their preaching of the Gospel. One would expect few of the natives to embrace the religion of a people they were resisting. Amazingly, the opposite occurred: almost every member of the Alutiiq tribe became Orthodox."<sup>251</sup>

By 1815 Alaska already had its first saint - St. Peter the Aleut, who was martyred by Roman Catholics in San Francisco.

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<sup>249</sup> *Biographies of Russian Ascetics of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Moscow, 1906, pp. 56-61.

<sup>250</sup> Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 140.

<sup>251</sup> Golder, *Father Herman, Alaska's Saint*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2004, pp. 7-8.

The most famous member of the Alaskan mission was the Valaam monk St. Herman of Alaska, who stood up for the native population against the degradations of the Russian traders. He lived as a hermit on Spruce Island and died in 1837, being canonized in 1970.

"From 1823," writes Lebedev, "there begins a second special Church mission, whose most prominent representative turned out to be the young priest Fr. John Popov-Veniaminov, later Metropolitan Innocent of Moscow and Kolomna. This great and wonderful man was born in 1797 in the village of a poor village reader near Irkutsk. He finished his studies at the Irkutsk seminary, where he displayed great interest both in theological and in secular sciences. In 1823, with the whole of his family, wife and children, he arrived at the island of Unalaska and began his apostolic ministry among the Aleuts, Kadyaks, Eskimos and Indians of the west coast of Alaska and Northern California (the city of Novo-Arkhangelsk on the island of Sitka). Teaching the local inhabitants various arts and household crafts, he with their help built a church, introduced schools, work-houses and hospitals, and baptized *thousands* of natives without ever resorting to violence or any pressure, but acting only through love and the word of truth. Fr. John mastered six local languages, and studied and described the everyday life, manners and anthropology of the tribes, the local geography and climates, becoming a true father of the 'wild' peoples, or, as St. Herman of Alaska used to say about himself, their 'nanny'! For the Aleuts he composed an alphabet and translated the Gospel of Matthew and some necessary prayers and other books into their language. His works on the ethnography of the peoples of Alaska, California and the adjacent islands are still used in science to this day and are considered models. Even then, during his lifetime, they were highly valued by the academies of science of Russia and Europe! Father John Popov-Veniaminov continued the best traditions of the Russian missionaries of Siberia, the Altai and the Far East. In those times that was not simple, it demanded courage, asceticism. The point is that the interests of the apostolate of the Church in those places often contradicted the interests of the Russian-American Company (RAC), which traded in furs and sea animals. 'Industrial' people and RAC officials sometimes displayed cruelty, and sometimes were inclined mercilessly to exploit the natives, although one has to say that these were *excesses*, but not the rule! As a rule, even our 'industrials' behaved in a friendly and fraternal manner to the native population of America. Shelikhov considered marriages between Russian and Indians as very desirable. There were mixed marriages. The children from these marriages (Creoles) often turned out to be very capable people, while some of them attained high rank in state service in Russia. Catherine II and Paul I prescribed only friendly relations towards the natives under threat of punishment. A special decree of Emperor Alexander I ordered the RAC 'first of all to venerate humanity' in all the peoples of America, and in no case to resort to cruelty and violence. Russia often sent notes of protest to the USA, whose merchants sold firearms to the Indians. The USA replied that they were 'free', and that they could not ban this trade in death... But in the 19th century among our workers in RAC there were people who were completely foreign to Orthodox, who simply did not understand it (for example, the RAC's 'chronicler', Khlebnikov). And sometimes it was difficult for our missionaries to defined whom they had to enlighten first of all - the Aleuts and Indians, or our own people, the Russians!... In such circumstances only an all-encompassing (spiritual and secular) education of the apostles of America, like Fr. John Popov, could force some of the

officials of RAC to venerate the Church and her missionary work. In 1840, on the recommendation of Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), who had become friends with Fr. John, Tsar Nicholas I appointed the priest Popov-Veniaminov, who had been widowed by this time and had accepted monasticism, as the first bishop of the newly formed Kamchatka, Kurile islands and Aleut diocese. When the Tsar gave this name to the diocese, people remarked to him: 'But Your Majesty! There is not a single church on the Kurile islands!' 'Build them!' snapped the Emperor. That is how the new hierarch of the Russian Church Innocent (Veniaminov) appeared..."<sup>252</sup>

St. Innocent's labours, together with those of Archimandrite Makary in the Altai and Archbishop Nicholas in Japan, give the lie to the idea that Russian Orthodoxy in this period was "ossified" or "paralyzed". In fact, the labours of these men, supported by the Tsars, proved both the vitality of Russian Orthodoxy and the continuing vitality of the Church-State "symphony".

In the Tsar's encouragement of the American mission "was reflected, as in a drop of water, the essence of the politics of the Third Rome - the widening of *the boundaries of the Church*. In her expansion to Alaska and Northern California, to the possessions of Japan and China, and to the sands of Central Asia, Russia derived not only commercial and military-strategic advantages (although these, too, were not of little importance), but brought to the new lands the light of her Orthodox Faith and spirituality. Besides, as has already been pointed out, she related to the peoples of these new lands with great respect. In contrast to the expansion of the Roman Catholic church, the Russian Orthodox Church and state did not convert one people to Christianity *by forcible means!* Amidst the *pagan* tribes of Siberia, the North, the Far East and America, the Russian spiritual missions were very active in preaching the Word of God, building churches and monasteries, hospitals, homes for invalids and the elderly, providing medical help and what would now be called 'social security', often quarrelling because of these good works with the local secular bosses. As regards the *Mohammedan* peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, here there was almost no missionary work. After the unsuccessful attempts to create spiritual missions for the Tatars and Kalmyks in the 18th century, Russia renounced special ecclesiastical missions in Mohammedan areas distinguished for their strong predilection for Islam. Orthodoxy was not imposed on the Mohammedan people; they were left to live freely in accordance with their own customs, but Orthodox churches naturally arose on their lands for the Russians who had settled there, so that all those desiring it among those peoples received *the opportunity to learn Orthodoxy!*"<sup>253</sup>

However, in 1867, following the collapse of the fur trade in the North-West Pacific region, the Tsar sold Alaska and the Aleutian islands to the United States for \$7.2 million<sup>254</sup> - that is, at about two cents per acre.<sup>255</sup> Could the need to pay for the armies in Central Asia have motivated this unexpected decision? Or the cost of defending 10,000 Russians and 40,000 Indians against the expected influx of American explorers and settlers?

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<sup>252</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 302-303.

<sup>253</sup> Lebedev, *op. cit.*

<sup>254</sup> The full text of the agreement: [http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/1867\(03\)18.alaska.php](http://hai-nyzhnyk.in.ua/doc2/1867(03)18.alaska.php).

<sup>255</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 641.

A third possibility was the threat from Britain, which had fought Russia in the Crimean War, when the United States was Russia's only ally: "The deal was born not of the Russian Empire's rivalry with the United States, but through both countries' competition with Britain, whose Empire made it the most powerful nation of the age, one with a truly global presence.

"Russia and Britain had already face off in the Crimean War, which had begun in October 1853... Though as the name suggests, the conflict was concentrated on Russia's south-west flank, it also spread to the Pacific, when a fleet of Russian cruisers based in Siberian ports threatened Britain's trading links with California. A combined British and French squadron was assembled at Honolulu and on July 29<sup>th</sup> 1854 it set sail in pursuit of the Russian ships. Having taken the weakly defended port of Sitka in Alaska, they then headed south for Petropavlovsk, which ended in catastrophe for the allies.

"Even so, Russia remained fearful of British ambitions in the Pacific. Vancouver island, just off the mainland of western Canada, was already a British Crown Colony and the population of neighbouring British Columbia was increasing rapidly, as gold prospectors rushed west. Plans were advanced to incorporate the territory formally into the Empire. This meant that Britain's possessions in North America would now share a land border with Russia.

"Alaska was difficult to defend, given the awesome supply lines, and so Tsar Alexander II decided to sell up. In 1859 he approached both Britain and the US as potential buyers. The former showed little interest, while the latter was too distracted by the impending Civil War to give it enough thought. When the war came to an end in 1865, interest was rekindled and the tsar instructed his ambassador in the US, Edward Stoeckl, to begin formal negotiations with Secretary of State, William Seward. Not only did the potential deal offer a considerable expansion of US territory – at more than 600,000 square miles it is twice the size of Texas – and a strategic location between Russia and British North America, but it was also a useful distraction from the fraught issue of post-Civil War Reconstruction.

"After an all-night negotiating session, the treaty was signed at 4 am on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1867. The agreed price was \$7.2 million, equivalent to around \$20 million today, which works out at about two cents an acre.

"Captain Alexei Peschkurov handed over the territory to his opposite number with the words:

*"By authority from his Majesty, the Emperor of Russia, I transfer to the United States the territory of Alaska.*

"Just a few Russian fur traders and Orthodox priests remained behind and it was not until the Klondike gold rush of 1896 that Alaska attracted new settlers in numbers..."<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> "The US Buys Alaska from Russia", *History Today*, March, 2017, p. 8.

However, the Orthodox Aleut and Tlingit Indians also remained behind – it was, after all, their native land. And it is said that they wept as the Russian flag was taken down for the last time... “Although the treaty guaranteed the rights of natives to remain Orthodox Christians, these articles were largely ignored by U.S. officials and Protestant missionaries. At the end of the nineteenth century many Alaskans could speak Russian, English and a native language, but were still considered uncivilized by the authorities. A systematic persecution of the native and Orthodox culture was initiated. Russian and native languages were forbidden to be used in schools. Soon a policy of assimilation was implemented, and the traditional life of the Alaskans began to wane...”<sup>257</sup>

From a financial point of view, the deal was probably a mistake - there were gold deposits and oil under the Alaskan soil.<sup>258</sup> But from a spiritual point of view, too, it was a dubious deal. As we have seen, Alaska, in contrast to Central Asia, had proved to be fertile territory for Russian missionaries, and the Indians were therefore not merely colonial subjects but brothers in Christ. What could justify the abandonment of thousands of brothers in Christ to a heretical government (even if the church buildings remained in the hands of the Orthodox, and permission was granted to the Russian Spiritual Mission to continue its work in Alaska)? Was not the Third Rome obliged to protect the interests of her converts in the New World?

As it turned out, Divine Providence protected the Orthodox Indians where the Russian tsar did not: in 1917 Russia herself came under the yoke of the atheists, so from that point of view it may have been just as well that the Orthodox Alaskans found themselves within the borders of another State.

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<sup>257</sup> Golder, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-12. Fr. Geoffrey Korz writes: "Until about 1900, the Alaskan native languages had a thriving literature and press under the auspices of the Orthodox Church, until American rule enforced an 'English-only' policy" ("The Alaska Code: Rare Alaskan Orthodox Manuscripts brought back to life," <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles6/KorzAlaskaText.php>).

<sup>258</sup> M.V. Krivosheev and Yu.V. Krivosheev, *Istoria Rossijskoj Imperii 1861-1894 (A History of the Russian Empire)*, St. Petersburg 2000, pp. 130-137.

## 17. RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARIES

The 1860s and 70s were a depressing time; the moral disease of westernism, encouraged by the westernizing reforms of Tsar Alexander II, made deep inroads into the body of Holy Russia. As the future New-Martyr Anna Zertsalova wrote: "It was a sad time then in the capital. The holy churches, the unconquerable strongholds of Orthodoxy, stood in it as before, as did the unshakeable walls; the holy icons were adorned with shining covers of precious stones, the God-pleasers rested in the churches in their incorrupt relics. But the people were perishing from their vices and errors. The spirit of little faith and debauchery entered everywhere like the most savage plague into unstable heads. Tolstoy and other false teachers crept into inexperienced young hearts with their destructive propaganda, undermining in them the bases of faith and piety. The Lord was forgotten, forgotten were the rules of morality and honour; forgotten were the authorities and order; passions and vices broke out into liberty."<sup>259</sup>

One who succumbed temporarily to this temptation was Sergei Alexandrovich Nilus. "I was born," he wrote, "in 1862 (25 August), in a family which on my mother's side counted in its midst not a few advanced people - advanced in the spirit for which the 60s of what is now already the last century was distinguished. My parents were nobles and landowners - major ones. It was perhaps because of their links with the land and the peasants that they escaped any extreme manifestation of the enthusiasms of the 70s. However, they could not escape the general, so to speak platonic-revolutionary spirit of the times, so great then was the allure of the ideas of egalitarianism, freedom of thought, freedom of thought, freedom... yes, perhaps freedom of action, too, which overcame everyone. It seems that at that time there was not one home of the nobility in both the capitals where the state structure of the Russian empire was not reshaped in its own model, according to the measure of its understanding and according to the last book it had read, first from *Sovremennik* [*The Contemporary*], and then *Otechestvennie Zapiski* [*Notes on the Fatherland*] or *Vestnik Evropy* [*Herald of Europe*]. Of course, the hard food of conversations of a political character did not much help to develop in me religious dreams, as they were then called, and I grew up in complete alienation from the Church, uniting it in my childish imagination only with my old nanny, whom I loved to distraction. Nevertheless, I did not know any prayers and entered a church only by chance; I learned the law of God from teachers who were indifferent, if not outrightly hostile, to the word of God, as an intractable necessity of the school's programme. That was the degree of my knowledge of God when I, as a youth who was Orthodox in name, went to university, where they already, of course, had no time for such trivialities as Orthodoxy. Left to my devices in the life of faith, I reached such an abominable degree of spiritual desolation as only that person can imagine who has lived in this spiritual stench and who has then, while on the path of his own destruction, been detained by the unseen hand of the benevolent Creator."<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> "Zhizneopisanie Protoiereia Valentina Amphiteatrova" (Life of Protopriest Valentine Amphiteatrov), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (*Orthodox Life*), 53, N 11 (658), November, 2004, pp. 9-10.

<sup>260</sup> Monk Boris (Ephremov), "Sergius Nilus", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 1 (1454), January 1/14, 1992, pp. 5-9.

Nilus did not become a revolutionary; he was rescued from the abyss by St. John of Kronstadt. But many others subjected to the same influences did, such as L.A. Tikhomirov. Few were those, like Nilus and Tikhomirov, who found their way back to the ancestral faith of Orthodoxy. Thus did the woolly liberalism of the fathers corrupt the sons, preparing the way for the revolution...

For "the revolution," wrote the philosopher Ivan Ilyin, "is a spiritual, and perhaps also a directly psychological illness. The revolution is the unleashing of atheist, unnatural, destructive and base passions. It is born from the mistakes of the ruling power, and from the vanity and envy of its subjects. It begins with violation of the law and ends with demoralization and death."

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The most typical of the young devils who came to dominate the revolutionary underground inside Russia was Nicholas Ishutin. Ronald Seth writes: "He was the son of a merchant and of a mother who came of a noble family. When he was two both his parents died, and he was brought up until he was eleven by relatives of his father. In 1863 he entered Moscow university, where he quickly gathered round him a group of young men upon whom he was soon exerting a quite extraordinary influence.

"Ishutin was not an intellectual, and though his scorn of learning might have been a pose, he had not been long at the university when he decided to give up his studies in order to devote all his time to The Cause. Many of his followers imitated their leader in this.

"The group quickly became strong and active, and determined, as they phrased it, 'to go to the people', they sacrificed not only careers but all personal belongings. As a practical step in making contact with the people they set up co-operative and friendly societies for the workmen, artisans and students."

However, this romantic Populist phase did not last long.

For in fact "all Ishutin's efforts and multifarious schemes were directed to one sole end – the creation of a revolutionary force. To achieve this he tossed all scruples out of the window, and introduced a new approach to the means by which the end might be attained – naked terrorism.

"The group believed that a peasant revolution would take place within five years. Their conception of this revolution differed from any previous conception of popular revolt; it was to be radical and 'economic' and nothing must be allowed to prevent its happening.

"The ruthless extremist policy preached by Ishutin did not appeal to all the members of the group, and as a result, between 1865 and 1866, there came into being a smaller group-within-the-group who were prepared to transmute into activity the extreme ideas of their leader. Named by Ishutin *The Organization*, this smaller group consisted mostly of extremely poor young men, many of whom were the sons of

country priests whose *modus vivendi* differed little from that of the peasants. A few came from peasant families.

“Even this small and select band, however, did not entirely respond to all the aims of its founder. Extremist propaganda and agitation, yes – but not out and out terrorism, and this last was dear to Ishutin’s heart. So within *The Organization* there also developed another group, a secret cell, even more select, composed of students who lived together ‘in common’. They gave themselves the name *Hell*...

“The existence of *Hell* was to be kept secret even from the members of The Organisation...”<sup>261</sup>

This secrecy, not only from outsiders, but even from lower-level members of the Organization, recalled Weishaupt’s *Illuminati*...

“Each member of *Hell* had to see himself as a doomed man, cut off from ordinary society and totally dedicated to the revolution. They were from *Hell* because they could not fear the most terrible and dirty methods, so long as they served the revolution. To impress new members, Ishutin would tell them how one of the circle poisoned his own father for the inheritance that he gave to the revolutionary work.

“These methods would later be use by the uncompromising Russian revolutionary, the precursor of the Bolsheviks, Sergei Nechaev.”<sup>262</sup>

One member of *Hell* was Dmitri Vladimirovich Karakozov (1840-66), who now made the first practical demonstration of the Organization’s power. “Racked by remorse for his father’s exploitation of the peasantry, he was personally enthusiastic about his mission. ‘I have decided to destroy the evil Tsar,.. and to die for my beloved people.’ On 4 April, 1866, the date predicted for the revolution in *What is to be Done?*, he rushed towards the tsar as he was leaving the Summer Garden in St. Petersburg, but as he took aim with his pistol his arm was jostled and he missed; the guards arrested him as he tried to take a second shot, and found a phial of strychnine in his jacket. ‘What do you want?’ the tsar asked him. ‘Nothing, nothing,’ he replied. Despite begging forgiveness and converting to Orthodoxy, Karakazov was executed by hanging on 3 September 1866; ten of his accomplices were sentenced to hard labour.”<sup>263</sup>

These included Ishutin, who spent the last eleven years of his life insane...<sup>264</sup>

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Alarmed by Karakozov’s attempt on his life, and another one in Paris in 1867, the tsar put a brake on reform (except military reform), and recalled General Muraviev, nicknamed “the Hangman” after his brutal suppression of the Polish Uprising, to head an Ivestigative Commission into the attempted assassination. Muraviev demanded,

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<sup>261</sup> Seth, *The Russian Terrorists*, London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966, pp. 28-29.

<sup>262</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, London: Free Press, 2005, p. 176.

<sup>263</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

<sup>264</sup> Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

and got, the sacking of some prominent liberal officials. Thus Prince Dolgorukov, a friend of the tsar, was replaced by the reactionary Peter Shuvalev at the head of the Third Department, and the Minister of Education Golovin was replaced by Count Dmitri Tolstoy.

Muraviev began interrogating a wide range of people. "Panic and fear ruled the capital. People remembered the reprisals of Nicholas I after the Decembrist uprising. The most unstable (just as they had been then) were some of the liberals. Nekrasov was frightened, too. The great poet worried for himself and for his journal, *Sovremennik*. He first turned for help to his card partner, Count Adlerburg, who could do nothing. The zealot Muravyev had everything in his power. So Nekrasov decided on an action he thought would help.

"The English Club gave Muravyev an honorary membership, which was cause for a celebratory dinner. Nekrasov attended. After the lavish dinner, Muravyev, a ton of wheezing blubber, rested in an armchair. The civic poet Nekrasov asked for permission to read his new poem dedicated to the man all decent people had just recently called the Hangman. But Muravyev did not bother with a response, continuing to smoke his pipe. He seemed not to have noticed Nekrasov. When he finished, he said beseechingly, 'Your Excellency, will you permit me to publish this poem?'

"Muravyev replied dryly, 'It's your property and you can do what you wish with it.' He turned his back on the poet. One of the people in the room said very loudly, 'He thinks he can bribe justice by reading verse! You just wait, you won't get away!'

"The poet left, mortified.

"The *Sovremennik* was shut down. Neither Russian youth nor high society could forgive Nekrasov. Students took his picture down from their walls and threw it away, or, scribbling 'scoundrel!' across it, mailed it to him. He suffered terribly..."<sup>265</sup>

Nevertheless, when Nekrasov was dying nine years later, liberal society decided to forgive him, and he was given a huge funeral... Nothing changed much when the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917. The savagery of the terrorists was multiplied a thousand-fold, as was the cowardice and hypocrisy of the liberal intelligentsia...

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If Marx and his wife were the foremost revolutionary couple of Europe, then the foremost anti-revolutionary couple (after the Tsar and Tsaritsa) was Dostoyevsky and his new wife Anya, who, like the Marxes, were fleeing from creditors when they arrived in Geneva in autumn, 1867.

"Dostoyevsky, completely unknown in Europe, worked on *The Idiot* in their small room in a cheap pension, while Anya took walks to be out of his way.

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<sup>265</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 182-183.

"The next book after *The Idiot* would be based on another Russian visiting Geneva. Just eighteen months later, on the same shore in that city, the forerunner of the bloody Russian revolution and the hero of Dostoevsky's next novel would appear - Sergei Gennadievich Nechaev."<sup>266</sup>

Nechaev (1847-82) was a teacher of Holy Scripture who from his student years devoted himself to political activity. The combination of seminary training and revolutionary activity was, intriguingly, not uncommon. Dobroliubov was the son of a priest; Stalin was a seminarian...

In 1869 Nechaev went on a false passport to Geneva, where he joined Bakunin and Ogarev, a friend of Herzen's. Like Bakunin, he was an anarchist: "We are destroyers," he declared, "others will create".

Together with Bakunin Nechaev wrote *The Revolutionary's Catechism*, which declared: "1. The revolutionary is a doomed person. He has neither his own interests, nor affairs, nor feelings, nor attractions, nor even name. Everything in him is swallowed up by a single exclusive interest, a single thought, a single passion - the revolution.

"2. In the depth of his essence he has broken - not in words only, but also in fact - every bond linking him with the civil order and with the whole civilized world, with all the laws, decencies, social conditions and morality of this world. He is its pitiless enemy, and if he were to continue to live in it, then it would only be in order to destroy it more reliably.

"3. The revolutionary despises all doctrinaire attitudes and has rejected secular science, presenting everything to future generations. He knows only one science - the science of destruction. For this and only for this has he studied mechanics, physics, chemistry and, perhaps, medicine.

"4. He despises and hates contemporary social morality in all its manifestations. Morality for him is that which aids the triumph of the revolution. Immorality and crime is everything that hinders it...

"7. The nature of the genuine revolutionary excludes all romanticism, all sensitivity, exaltation or amusement. It excludes even personal hatred and revenge. Revolutionary passion, having become in him an everyday, every-minute phenomenon, must be united with cold calculation...

"25. In coming closer to the people, we must first of all be united those elements of the people's life which since the time of the foundation of the Muscovite State power have not ceased to protest, not in words, but in deeds, against everything that is directly or indirectly linked with the State: against the nobles, against the officials, against the popes, against the world of Guilds and against the rich peasant, the devourer of the *mir*. We shall unite with the savage world of the thieves, this true and only revolutionary in Russia..."

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<sup>266</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 215.

In Nechaev's plan for the revolution, various public figures were to be shot, but Alexander II himself was not to be killed, but would be publicly tortured and executed "*before the face of the whole of the liberated plebs, on the ruins of the State*".<sup>267</sup>

After the great work of destruction, according to Nechaev, all power would necessarily be concentrated in the hands of a Central Committee. (In this centralism, he differed from the more democratic Bakunin.) Everybody was to undertake physical work. Dissidents were to be executed...

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In 1868 Nechaev "met a well-known radical, the writer Petr Tkachev. The son of a wealthy landowner, brilliantly educated, a follower of Blanqui and Machiavelli, Tkachev had served time in tsarist prisons but continued to dream of the revolution that would destroy his own class. This short and shy young man, slender and easily embarrassed, with a smiling cupid's face, resembled a pretty girl ('pretty maiden' is what his friends called him). He hailed a centralized party dictatorship that would seize power and crush resistance through terror.

*No, not humility, not love  
Will save us from our shackles.  
Now we need the axe,  
We need the knife.*

"That was the pretty maiden's poetry. Released yet again from the fortress, the pretty maiden, smiling shyly, told his astonished sister his new discovery: 'Only people under twenty-five are capable of self-sacrifice, and therefore everyone over that age should be killed for the good of society.'

"When asked how many would have to be killed in the revolution, he replied with the same shy smile: 'We should be thinking about how many can be left.'

"But when they met, the not very educated and unknown teacher Nechaev absolutely dominated the celebrated intellectual Tkachev, who subsequently never forgave him for it."<sup>268</sup>

Tkachev influenced Lenin to such a degree that he is sometimes called "the first Bolshevik" ...

In the 1870s, writes Orlando Figes, he "argued for a seizure of power and the establishment of a dictatorship by a disciplined and highly centralized vanguard on the grounds that a social revolution was impossible to achieve by democratic means: the laws of capitalist development meant that the richer peasants would support the status quo. Tkachev insisted that a coup d'état should be carried out as soon as

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<sup>267</sup> Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>268</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 217-218.

possible, because as yet there was not real social force prepared to side with the government, and to wait would only let one develop.

“All the main components of Lenin’s ideology – his stress on the need for a disciplined ‘vanguard’; his belief that action (the ‘subjective factor’) could alter the objective course of history (and in particular that the seizure of the state apparatus could bring about a social revolution); his defence of terror and dictatorship; his contempt for liberals and democrats (and indeed for socialists who compromised with them) – stemmed not just from Marx but from Tkachev and the People’s Will. He injected a distinctly Russian dose of conspiratorial politics into a Marxist dialectic that would otherwise have remained passive...”<sup>269</sup>

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In August, 1869, Nechaev returned to Russia as the self-styled representative of the World Revolutionary Movement at Geneva and organized a ‘Society of National Retribution’ in Moscow. On 21 November he and four members of the Moscow ‘group of five’ murdered the fifth member of the group, a young student of the Moscow Agricultural College called Ivanov, for allegedly refusing to carry out the instructions of the Geneva committee. Ivanov was strangled, then shot, and his body was weighted with stones and thrown into the pond.

The story of Ivanov’s murder is closely matched in the story of Shatov’s murder in Dostoyevky’s *The Devils* (1872), a spell-binding description of how a bourgeois society is as if possessed by demons and hurls itself to destruction like the Gadarene swine of the Gospel (which is cited at the beginning of the novel). This was a stunningly brilliant and profound prophecy of the revolution, and of how the well-meaning liberal fathers of Russia’s older generation, begetting the most illiberal and barbarous sons, would, through them, lay society open to demonic possession.

As Leo Shestov wrote: “If Darwin had seen in his life what Dostoyevsky saw, he would not have talked about a law of self-preservation, but about a law of self-annihilation...”<sup>270</sup>

“After the murder, Nechaev, like Peter Verkhovensky in the novel, escaped first to Petersburg and then abroad. He went back to Geneva, where he rejoined Bakunin and Ogaryov and assisted them in their abortive attempt to revive Herzen’s London journal *The Bell*. His ruthlessness in carrying out Bakunin’s own principle that the end justifies the means appalled even Bakunin, who soon broke with him. Nechaev then went to London, where he began publishing his terrorist journal *Village Commune*, which was sharply condemned by Engels...

“He later returned to Switzerland, where he was arrested by the Swiss police on an extradition order as a criminal and not a political offender and handed over to the Russian police. On 8 January 1873 he was tried for murder by the Moscow District Court and sentenced to twenty years’ penal servitude. He was not sent to Siberia,

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<sup>269</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, pp. 22-23.

<sup>270</sup> Shestov, *Na Vesakh Iova* (On the Scales of Job), Paris: YMCA Press, 1975, p. 67.

however, but incarcerated in the Peter and Paul fortress in Petersburg, where he died one year and ten months after Dostoyevsky, in November 1882."<sup>271</sup>

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"Atheist anarchism," wrote Dostoyevsky, "is near – our children will see it. The Internationale has decreed that the European revolution should begin in Russia, and it will begin, for there is no reliable buttress against it with us, neither in the administration nor in society. The revolt will begin with atheism and the robbing of all wealth. They will begin to pull down religion, destroy the churches and turn them into barracks and stalls. They will drown the world in blood and then they themselves will get frightened..."

Frightened of what? Frightened of hell. And indeed, by giving their organizations such names as "Hell", the terrorists demonstrated that they knew exactly where their inspiration came from and where they were going. Not that they admitted it. It was not fashionable to admit to supernatural realities in the positivist 1860s and 70s. A sophisticated rationalization of devilry in psychological terms was commonplace already in Dostoyevsky's time, as exemplified by Ivan Karamazov's words to the devil: "'Never for a moment have I taken you for reality,' cried Ivan with a sort of fury. 'You're a lie, you're my illness, you're a phantom. I only don't know how to destroy you and I'm afraid I shall have to suffer for a time. You are my hallucination. You're the embodiment of myself, but only of one side of me – of my thoughts and feelings, but only the most vile and stupid. From that point of view you might even interest me, if only I had time to waste on you...'"<sup>272</sup>

But the demons were only too real; they were no hallucination. Dostoyevsky hoped that they would enter the swine and hurl themselves into the abyss, as the Gospel story said, leaving Russia, clothed and in her right mind, at the feet of Christ. It was not to be. The first part of the prophecy was fulfilled: the devils of socialist terrorism entered Russia and the country hurled itself into the abyss. But so far she has not been exorcised...

"The twentieth century would belong to the devil. Nechaev and the victory of Bolshevism would be his victory. In Bolshevik Russia, people were appalled when they read *The Devils* and the monologue of the book's hero, Petr Verkhovensky (Nechaev), on the society he would create after the revolution. 'Every member of society looks after the other and must inform on them. All are slaves and are equal in their slavery... First of all, the level of education, science, and talent is lowered. A high level of science and talent can be achieved only by people with higher abilities, and we don't need higher abilities! People with higher abilities have always seized power and were despots... They are cast out or executed. Cicero's tongue is cut out, Copernicus's eyes are gouged out, and Shakespeare is stoned to death.'

"The Bolsheviks implemented it all. Nikolai Bukharin, the main Bolshevik theoretician, called for 'organized reduction of culture': celebrated philosophers were

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<sup>271</sup> David Magarshack's introduction to *The Devils*, London: Penguin, 1971, pp. x-xi.

<sup>272</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, XI, 9.

forced to leave the country; there was equality in slavery and universal informing was enforced. In the 1920s, a popular joke in Russia said that the Bolsheviks erected a monument to Dostoevsky with a plaque reading: 'To Fedor Dostoevsky from the Grateful Devils.'" <sup>273</sup>

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While the imperialists expanded their often racist-based empires, the socialists continued to plot their internationalist revolution. The strategy of international revolution came in two forms: the socialist, supposedly science-based revolution favoured by Marx and Engels, and the anarchist revolution favoured by the Russian nobleman Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin (1814-1876).

Marx's main aims, as declared in *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848, were the destruction of private property, the destruction of the family and the destruction of religion as a prelude to the triumph of the proletariat and the coming of communism. The revolution would be violent, but it would follow certain historical laws which Marx spent his life trying to find. Or rather, he didn't find any laws, but first proclaimed them, and then spent his life trying (with very little success) to find evidence to support them.

The revolution of 1848 had been a failure from Marx's point of view. In Marx, as "Gareth Stedman-Jones writes, "visions of the disappearance of the state belonged to the 1840s: 1848 dashed these innocent [!] hopes." <sup>274</sup>After that failure a mild conservative reaction set in throughout Europe as some of the wealth generated by a period of rapid growth in the world economy trickled down to the workers and dulled their zeal for revolution, thereby refuting Marx's main prediction that the proletariat would get steadily poorer.

In 1864 Marx founded the International Working Men's Association in London. In his Inaugural Address he claimed that the industrial revolution had impoverished the English working class, and declared: "In all countries of Europe it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind, and only denied by those whose interest is to hedge other people in a fool's paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, no new colonies, no emigration, no opening of markets, no free trade, nor all these things put together, will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses." And yet the most blindingly obvious fact of the later nineteenth century was that while modern technology did not abolish the miseries of the working class, it certainly alleviated them, raising their standard of living! And if, as seemed certain, technology continued to develop, there was no reason why their living standards should not continue to rise. However, as their numbers increased in direct proportion to the increase in factory production, so did their power. It would only take another downturn in the economy to bring them out on the streets again...

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<sup>273</sup> Rdzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>274</sup> Steadman-Jones, "The Routes of Revolution", *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 3 (6), June, 2002, p. 36.

Marx continued to control this, the First Internationale, until its Congress in Basle in 1869, when the delegates were captivated by a new star, Bakunin.<sup>275</sup> However Marx expelled Bakunin from the Internationale, and they were ardent enemies thereafter. Unlike the bookish Marx, Bakunin was a real revolutionary man of action and the father of Russian anarchism. There is a strong case for asserting that he was the real father of the Russian revolution.

“The scion of a wealthy aristocratic family, Bakunin graduated from the brilliant Mikhailovsky military school. Since the very thought of serving in the guards ‘brought on melancholy’, Bakunin quite his military career and left for Europe without telling his father. There, ‘like a savage thirsting for culture, he threw himself into the study of philosophy.’ Young Bakunin quickly came to prefer the pistol to the pen. The admirer of great philosophers turned into a fearless revolutionary. Unlike Marx, who preferred his exploits at his desk, Bakunin fought on all the barricades of European revolutions and spent time in the most horrible prisons.

“In Prussia the Russian rebel was sentenced to death; but then the Prussians turned him over to the Austrians, who also condemned him to death. He tried to escape, so he was chained to the wall. He spent several months in chains. Then the Austrians turned him over to Nicholas I. The tsar personally interrogated him. Praising him for his courage on the revolutionary barricades, Nicholas sent him to the stone sack, solitary confinement in the Alexeyevsky ravelin in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. His influential relatives persuaded the tsar to commute the sentenced to exile in Siberia. The giant escaped and soon after took part in the Polish uprising against Nicholas I.

“After the Poles were quelled, Bakunin moved to Geneva. From there, the aficionado of Chopin’s music and of philosophy, tender and loving in person, called on Russia to start a bloody revolution and naturally he joined the International. But every visit to Marx turned into a verbal battle...”<sup>276</sup>

Richard Wagner (who was a socialist in 1848, but then turned sharply to the right) said of him: “In this remarkable man, the purest humanitarianism [!] was combined with a savagery utterly inimical to all culture, and thus my relationship with him fluctuated between instinctive horror and irresistible attraction... The annihilation of all civilisation was the objective on which he had set his heart; to use all political levers as a means to this end was his current preoccupation, and it often served him as a pretext for ironic merriment.”<sup>277</sup>

Bakunin, wrote Sir Isaiah Berlin, “was a born agitator with sufficient scepticism in his system not to be taken in himself by his own torrential eloquence. To dominate individuals and sway assemblies was his *métier*: he belonged to that odd, fortunately not very numerous, class of persons who contrive to hypnotise others into throwing themselves into causes – if need be killing and dying for them – while themselves remaining coldly, clearly and ironically aware of the effect of the spells which they cast. When his bluff was called, as occasionally it was, for example, by Herzen,

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<sup>275</sup> Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station*, London: Phoenix, 2004, pp. 256-258, 259-260, 261.

<sup>276</sup> Edvard Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>277</sup> Wagner, in Stephen Johnson, *Wagner. His Life and His Work*, London: Naxos, 2007. p. 59.

Bakunin would laugh with the greatest good nature, admit everything freely, and continue to cause havoc, if anything with greater unconcern than before. His path was strewn with victims, casualties, and faithful, idealistic converts; he himself remained a gay, easy-going, mendacious, irresistibly agreeable, calmly and coldly destructive, fascinating, generous, undisciplined, eccentric Russian landowner to the end...<sup>278</sup>

"Bakunin joined the Scottish Lodge of the Grand Orient de France in 1845. However his involvement with freemasonry lapsed until he was in Florence in the summer of 1864. Garibaldi had attended the first real Italian Masonic Constituent Assembly in Florence in May of that year, and been elected Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy. Here, the local head of the Mazzinist party was also grand master of the local lodge. Although he was soon to dismiss freemasonry, it was in this period that he abandoned his previous belief in a god and embraced atheism. He formulated the phrase "God exists, therefore man is a slave. Man is free, therefore there is no God. Escape this dilemma who can!" which appeared in his unpublished *Catechism of a Freemason*. It was during this period that he established the International Revolutionary Association with Italian revolutionaries who had broken with Mazzini because they rejected his Deism as well as his purely 'political' conception of the revolution, which they saw as being bourgeois with no element of a social revolution."<sup>279</sup>

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The basic difference between Marx and Bakunin was in their attitude to the State. While Marx called for the overthrow of the old regimes, he was not against the State as such, at any rate before the advent of the communist paradise, and believed that the State could be used to free the workers. And the importance of the State in his thinking, combined with a more "scientific" and collectivist approach, became more pronounced with time. "It meant," as M.S. Anderson writes, "a fundamental change of emphasis in his thinking. The fulfilment and true freedom of the individual still remained the objective of revolution and the end of the historical process. As far as the making of revolutions was concerned, however, his 'alienation' and his revolutionary consciousness, so important in the early works of the 1840s and still important in those of the 1850s, were now threatened with submersion in a vast and impersonal process of social evolution governed by laws analogous to those of the physical world and quite impossible to divert or restrain."<sup>280</sup>

Bakunin, however, believed that the State was simply another form of oppression and had to be destroyed. In the *Catechism of a Revolutionary* that he wrote with Nechaev, he advocated the "absolute rejection of every authority including that which sacrifices freedom for the convenience of the state." "The desire to destroy," he said, "is also a creative desire." "The whole of Europe," he said, "with St. Petersburg, Paris and London, will be transformed into an enormous rubbish-heap." "I am not a Communist," he said, "because Communism, by concentrating all property in the

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<sup>278</sup> Berlin, "German Romanticism in Petersburg and Moscow", in *Russian Thinkers*, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 164-165.

<sup>279</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail\\_Bakunin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Bakunin)

<sup>280</sup> M.S. Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914*, London: Longman, 1985, pp. 350-351.

State, necessarily leads to the concentration of all the power of society in the State. I want to abolish the State..."<sup>281</sup> Like the French philosopher-anarchist Proudhon, Bakunin believed that all property was theft, and that included State property. Like Proudhon again, he believed that States would be replaced by local workers' organizations.

In 1883 Engels criticised Bakunin's anarchism, writing: "The anarchists have put the thing upside down. They declare that the proletarian revolution must *begin* by doing away with the political organisation of the state... But to destroy it at such a moment would be to destroy the only organism by means of which the victorious proletariat can assert its newly-conquered power, hold down its capitalist adversaries and carry out that economic revolution of society without which the whole victory must end in a new defeat and in a mass slaughter of the workers similar to those after the Paris Commune."<sup>282</sup>

True; and yet "Bakuninist" anarchism corresponded more closely to the spirit of the revolution than all the treatises of Marx, whose only purpose was to give a pseudo-scientific justification to an essentially destructive, satanic force not dissimilar to Bakunin's. Thus the victory of Bakunin over Marx at the meeting of the First Internationale in Basle was no accident - the delegates recognised in Bakunin the true incarnation of the spirit of the revolution. As Baron Wrangel said of his speech: "I no longer remember what Bakunin said, and it would in any case scarcely be possible to reproduce it. His speech had neither logical sequence nor richness in ideas, but consisted of thrilling phrases and rousing appeals. It was something elemental and incandescent - a raging storm with lightning flashes and thunderclaps, and a roaring as of lions. The man was a born speaker, made for the revolution. The revolution was his natural being. His speech made a tremendous impression. If he had asked his hearers to cut each other's throats, they would have cheerfully obeyed him."<sup>283</sup>

This sounds satanic, and it is. Fr. Seraphim Rose writes: "Bakunin found himself on the side of 'Satan, the eternal rebel, the first freethinker and emancipator of worlds'. Nietzsche proclaimed himself 'Antichrist'. Poets, decadents, and the avant-garde in general since the Romantic era have been greatly fascinated by Satanism, and some have tried to make it into a religion. Proudhon in so many words actually invoked Satan: 'Come to me, Lucifer, Satan, whoever you may be! Devil whom the faith of my fathers contrasted with God and the Church. I will act as spokesman for you and will demand nothing of you.'... The Nihilist, since he usually believes in neither God nor Satan, may think it mere cleverness to defend, in his fight against God, the age-old enemy of God; but while he may think he is doing no more than playing with words, he is actually speaking the truth. De Maistre, and later Donostio Cortes, writing in a day when the Church of Rome was more aware of the meaning of the Revolution than it is now, and was still capable of taking a strong stand against it, called the Revolution a Satanic manifestation; and historians smile at them. Fewer, perhaps, smile today when the same phrase is applied - though rarely with full seriousness even now - to

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<sup>281</sup> Bakunin, in Julius Braunthal, *History of the International 1864-1914*, 1966, p. 139.

<sup>282</sup> Engels, in Chomsky, *Understanding Power*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>283</sup> Wrangel, in Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

National Socialism or Bolshevism; and some may even begin to suspect that there exist forces and causes that have somehow escaped the attention of their enlightened gaze.”<sup>284</sup>

Another person present at Bakunin’s speech was Dostoyevsky. He was less impressed by Bakunin’s speech than Baron Wrangel, remarking that the whole speech had been given “without the slightest proof, all this was learned by rote twenty years ago and has not changed one bit. Fire and sword! And when all has been destroyed, then, in their opinion, there will be peace...”

And yet Bakunin’s anarchism was not just thunder and lightning. For him “the withering away of the State” was not, as in Marx and Engels, an essentially utopian idea that was secondary to the central idea of class struggle; for him, it was the heart of the matter.

And he was more perceptive about the direction of Marxism than most. Being a more consistent libertarian than any of the Marxists, he perceived that even the socialist State would be an instrument of oppression. In fact, he warned that the “red bureaucracy” would be “the vilest and most dangerous lie of the century”. And in 1870 he accurately predicted what actually took place in 1917: “Take the most radical of revolutionaries and place him on the throne of all the Russias or give him dictatorial powers... and before the year is out he will be worse than the Tsar himself...”

Bakunin’s vision of socialism looked more likely than Marx’s to triumph in the years 1869-1871, between the Basle Congress and the Paris Commune. However, Marx defeated Bakunin by claiming that the Paris Commune was the beginning of the new proletarian (as opposed to bourgeois) revolution, which would spread from France to Germany to all Europe. It did spread, but not in the way he predicted: its first success was in peasant Russia, not proletarian Germany – as Bakunin, not Marx, had predicted.

For Bakunin was able to foresee, as Berlin wrote, “that [revolutions] were liable to develop not in the most industrialised societies, on a rising curve of economic progress, but in countries in which the majority of the population was near subsistence level and had least to lose by an upheaval – primitive peasants in conditions of desperate poverty in backward rural economies where capitalism was weakest, such as Spain and Russia.”<sup>285</sup>

“Bakunin pinned his hopes for revolution in Russia on the national character, and on the hatred peasants felt for the nobility.

“The Russian people have an either childish or demonic love of fire... no wonder we burned down our capital during Napoleon’s invasion. It is easy to convince peasants that setting fire to the estate and their massacred with all their riches is a just and God-pleasing idea.

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<sup>284</sup> Rose, *Nihilism*, Forestville, Ca.; St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1994, pp. 72-73.

<sup>285</sup> Berlin, “Nationalism”, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 584.

“Bakunin, himself a landowner and descendant of landowners, gleefully recalled the rebellions of Stepan Razin and of Pugachev, when landowners were hanged and estates burned. ‘The time is drawing nigh to the rebellions of Stenka Razin and Pugachev. We will prepare for the festivities,’ Bakunin declared. Bandits were the main resource for the future Russian revolution, according to Bakunin. ‘Bandits are respected in Russia.

“Bakunin went on revealing the joyful horizons of the coming apocalypse. ‘Engulfing Russia, the fire will spread to the whole world. Everything will be destroyed that is deemed holy from the heights of modern European civilization, because it is the source of inequality, the source of man’s misery. Bringing into motions a destructive force is the sole good worthy of a rational man.’”<sup>286</sup>

Marx and Engels had this in common with Bakunin: they saw clearly that the enemy that had to be destroyed if the revolution was to succeed was Russia. As Engels said: “Not one revolution in Europe and in the whole world can attain final victory while the present Russian state exists...”<sup>287</sup>

But the man who saw this most clearly was Bakunin: “The goal of the revolution is Russia! It is there that its greatest power will unfold; there will it attain its perfection. In Moscow the constellation of the revolution will rise high and beautiful out of a sea of blood and fire, to become the guiding star for the good of the whole of liberated humanity...” “Russian democracy with its tongues of fire will swallow up all of Europe in a bloody glow.” “The miracles of the revolution,” he said, “will come out of the depths of this fiery ocean. Russia is the aim of the revolution, its greatest forces will be unleashed there, and there it will attain its perfection.”

As Hosking remarks, “this proved to be a contagious and attractive vision, not only in Russia but especially there...”<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>287</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx and the Revolutionary Movement in Russia*.

<sup>288</sup> Hosking, *Russia and Russians*, p. 307.

## 18. GOING TO THE PEOPLE

The emancipation of the serfs, and the arguments surrounding it, had drawn the attention of educated Russians as never before to the lot of the vast majority of their compatriots – the peasants. “Writers such as Dostoyevsky compared the Decree of 1861 to the conversion of Russia to Christianity in the tenth century. They spoke about the need for the landlord and the peasant to overcome their old divisions and become reconciled by virtue of their shared faith and *narodnost*’. For, as Dostoyevsky wrote in 1861, ‘every Russian is a Russian first of all, and only after that does he belong to a class.’ The educated classes were called upon to recognize their ‘Russianness’ and to turn towards the peasants as a cultural mission – educating them as citizens and reuniting Russia on the basis of a national literature and art.

“It was such a vision that inspired the students to go to the people. Brought up as they were in the European world of the noble palace and the university, they were on a journey to an unknown land and a new and moral life based on ‘Russian principles’. They saw the emancipation as an exorcism of Russia’s sinful past – and out of that a new nation would be born. The writer Gleb Uspensky, who joined the Populists in their ‘going to the people’, vowed to start a new life in ‘the year of ‘61’. ‘It was utterly impossible to take any of my personal past forward... To live at all I had to forget the past entirely and erase all the traits which it had instilled in my own personality.’”<sup>289</sup>

The main leader of the “going-to-the-people” movement was Peter Lavrov, a tsarist colonel, professor of mathematics, and editor of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. He had been court-martialled for following ‘the dangerous direction of Chernyshevsky’. He was exiled from St. Petersburg and then escaped abroad. Lavrov lived in Paris, went through the Paris Commune, and befriended the communards. After the fall of the commune, he hurried to London, where, naturally, he met Marx and joined the International.”<sup>290</sup>

Knowing neither themselves nor the peasants they felt called to enlighten, the students inevitably fell prey to revolutionary teachers like Bakunin and Lavrov, who believed in the power of a small but dedicated minority to create the revolution among the inert masses. “It is evident,” wrote Lavrov, “that the existence of the revolutionary minority, the amount of power and the influence it exercises, are in inverse proportion to the revolutionary potential of the masses. In the event of a weak potential the share of the masses in bringing about a social revolution must of necessity be restricted, while the importance of the revolutionary minority becomes increasingly great. Once having freed the people of the fear inspired by constituted authority, it will offer them the opportunity of demonstrating their full revolutionary strength. By making use of this destructive force the revolutionary minority will, first, annihilate the enemies of the revolution and then proceed to lay the foundations of the new social order, based on the ideals of the people... Neither today, nor at any future date, will the people, if not suitably guided, be capable of producing a social revolution. Only we, the

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<sup>289</sup> Oliver Figes, *Natasha’s Dance*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 121.

<sup>290</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 225-226.

revolutionary minority, possess this ability, and it is our duty to create a revolution at the earliest possible opportunity.”<sup>291</sup>

“They called on young people to abandon universities and go to the village. Bakunin wished them to carry the message of immediate rebellion. He believed that the muzhik [peasant] was a born anarchist, and only a spark was needed to set the countryside on fire. That spark was to be carried by the intelligentsia in the form of revolutionary ‘agitation’. Lavrov adopted a more gradual approach. Before he would turn into a revolutionary, the Russian peasant needed exposure to ‘propaganda’ which would enlighten him about the injustices of the Emancipation Edict, about the causes of his economic predicament, and about the collusion between the propertied classes, the state and the church. Inspired by these ideas, in the spring of 1874 several thousand youths quit school and went ‘to the people’. Here disappointment awaited them. The muzhik, known to them largely from literary descriptions and polemical tracts, would have nothing to do with idealistic students come to save him. Suspecting ulterior motives... he either ignored them or turned them over to the rural constabulary. But even more disappointing than the peasants’ hostility, which could be explained away by his ignorance, were his ethics. Some radical youths scorned property because they came from propertied backgrounds: they associated concern for wealth with their parents, whom they rejected. Hence they idealized the rural commune and the artel. The muzhik, living from hand to mouth, looked at the matter quite differently. He desperately wanted to acquire property... The intellectuals could indulge in talk of selfless brotherhood because, being supported by their families or the government (by means of stipends), they were not required to compete with one another.”<sup>292</sup>

Turgenev depicted some of these student populists in his novel *Virgin Soil* (1877). “Though he saw through the illusions of the Populists, he managed to convey his admiration, too. These ‘young people are mostly good and honest’, he wrote to a friend on finishing his novel in 1876, ‘but their course is so false and impractical that it cannot fail to lead them to complete fiasco!’”<sup>293</sup>

“The Populists returned from their defeat in deep despair. They had invested so much of their own personalities in their idealized conception of the peasantry, they had hung so much of their personal salvation on the ‘people’s cause’, that to see them both collapse was a catastrophic blow to their identity. The writer Gleb Uspensky, to cite an extreme and tragic example, essentially became insane after many years of trying to reconcile himself to the stark reality of peasant life; and many of the Populists were driven to the bottle by this rude awakening. It was suddenly made clear that the idea of the peasantry they had in their minds did not in fact exist – it was no more than a theory and a myth – and that they were cut off from the actual peasants by a cultural, social and intellectual abyss that they could not hope to bridge. Like an unsolved riddle, the peasant remained unknown and perhaps unknowable...”<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> *Narodniki (1873-1878)*, St. Petersburg, 1907, pp. 173, 174.

<sup>292</sup> Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 273.

<sup>293</sup> Figes, *op. cit.* p. 227.

<sup>294</sup> Figes, *op. cit.* pp. 227-228.

“By the end of 1874,” writes Richard Evans, “the movement was over. The Minister of Justice reported that 770 people had been arrested, including 158 women. Fifty-three Narodniki had escaped but 265 were imprisoned on remand.

“The sheer extent of the movement was deeply worrying to the tsarist authorities, who ordered a mass trial of 193 individuals in 1877. Lasting for several months, the trial was conducted in public, and the defendants, who also included participants in student demonstrations, heckled the judges, delivered lengthy political speeches, and impressed the jury to the extent that 153 of them were acquitted. Forty of them were sentenced all the same, and the rest had been in prison for many months awaiting trial. This trial further radicalized the remaining revolutionaries, who formed a new organization, ‘Land and Liberty’, the first proper political programme with a title and a programme, rather than a loose network grouped around a single individual. It sent out its members to the provinces in the spirit of the movement ‘to go to the people’, and had considerable influence among the students. It advocated the ‘disorganization of the state’ by selective assassinations. In the middle of the trial of the 193, the Governor of St. Petersburg, Fyodor Fyodorovich Trepov (1809-89), was shot by the young secretary Vera Zasulich (1849-1919), a close associate of Nechayev. Zasulich belonged to a small Bakuninist group in Kiev and, like many others, was outraged by Trepov’s flogging of a political prisoner who had refused to doff his cap in his presence. Her shot only wounded Trepov, and in her subsequent trial so much evidence emerged of his brutality that the jury acquitted her of all charges. Fearing re-arrest, she fled to Switzerland. The government responded by transferring political trials to military courts.

“The revolutionary movement was now pulled in different directions by the followers of Bakunin and Lavrov. One wing, styling itself ‘Black Partition’, and led by Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1918) and Pavel Borisovich Axelrod (1850-1928), eschewed violence; the leaders left for Switzerland in 1880 and continued their political activities in exile, joining Zasulich in the formation of a new Marxist movement. The other wing, ‘The People’s Will’, focused on realizing the anarchist vision of the collapse of the state by killing the tsar. They got one of their members into Alexander II’s palace and supplied him with dynamite, which he used to set an explosive device timed to go off under the dining room of the Winter Palace when the tsar was present. Eleven people were killed but the tsar’s arrival had been delayed and so he escaped. A second attempt was made, involving digging a tunnel under a railway line and planting a bomb which the People’s Will would detonate when the tsar’s train passed over it. Through a double agent in the Third Section, they had obtained detailed plans of the tsar’s movements, and knew he would be in the first of the two trains, but the order of the trains was changed at the last moment, and the bomb only destroyed the wagons carrying the tsar’s baggage. To try and defuse the movement, Alexander II ordered a degree of liberalization to include the first steps towards a system of representative institutions...”<sup>295</sup>

“In response to these disappointments, the radical movement broke up into warring factions. One group, called *narodniki* from their unbounded faith in the *narod* or people,

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<sup>295</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 613-614.

decided that it was improper for intellectuals to foist their ideas upon the masses. The toiling man was always right. Intellectuals should settle in the village and learn from the peasant instead of trying to teach him. Another group, convinced that this method would end in renunciation of revolution, began to veer towards terrorism. A third developed an interest in western Social Democracy and, having concluded that no social revolution in Russia was possible until capitalism had done its work, braced themselves for a long and patient wait."<sup>296</sup>

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How had the country reached such a point that a deliberate attempt at murder was acquitted without punishment? We have seen that the purpose of the introduction into Russia of the jury system on the adversarial Anglo-Saxon model with prosecutors (*prokuratory*) and defence lawyers (*advokaty*) had been to destroy the notorious corruption in the Russian judicial system, and that this aim had been to a large extent attained. However, the acquittal of the flagrant terrorist Vera Zasulich on the grounds that she had "meant well" shows that judicial corruption had been replaced by a kind of moral corruption, a cowardice in the face of revolutionary concepts of "justice".

Let us return to this case as Hosking describes it: "In the 1870s, cases with any political element were withdrawn from the investigating magistrates and handed back to the police. This did not prevent a remarkable case in 1878, involving the attempted murder of the Governor of St. Petersburg, General Trepov, in retribution for his ordering the flogging of a political prisoner. The law stated that corporal punishment could only be applied to members of the lower, tax-paying estates. Bogoliubov was a *meshchanin* by origin, so that Trepov was legally justified in ordering the punishment. But in the eyes of the radicals, Bogoliubov had by his membership of their movement promoted himself to a kind of aristocracy of the spirit, so that Trepov's act was an unforgivable breach of elementary decency.

"On 24 January 1878, a young radical, Vera Zasulich, requested an audience with Trepov. Waiting till she was summoned, she went into his office, took a revolver out of her muff and, in the sight of several witnesses, shot at him, wounding him. The government sought to make an example of Zasulich, as it had of Nechayev, by trying her before a normal jury and having her case reported in the newspapers. Minister of Justice Count Palen asked the presiding judge, A.F. Koni, whether he could guarantee a verdict of 'guilty' in such a clear-cut case: 'In this damned case the government has the right to expect special services from the court'. Koni replied, 'Your Excellency, the court gives verdicts, not services'. These were two concepts of justice which it was difficult to reconcile. The press supported Koni's view and backed it up with human-interest stories about Zasulich; even the staunch monarchist Dostoevskii [while not approving of her act] wrote that 'to punish this young woman would be inappropriate and superfluous'.

"In the event, the defence counsel, falling in with this mood, did not argue about the evidence of the crime, but evoked Zasulich's unhappy youth in exile under police supervision, and praised her as a 'woman who had no personal interest in her crime,

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<sup>296</sup> Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, pp. 273-274.

a woman who bound up her crime with the fight for an idea', and appealed to the jury as a 'court of the people's conscience'. They duly acquitted her, to the deafening applause of the public. The outcome of this case was a remarkable revelation of the rift between the government and public opinion, and moved the government to transfer all further cases involving violence against officials to military courts."<sup>297</sup>

"Thus Russia demonstrated," write Edvard Radzinsky, "that it was still its judicial infancy. The trial by justice (by liberal lights) won a crushing victory over trial by law. It created a legal precedent for the right to shoot out of your convictions. From this moment of the great humiliation of the law, the clock of the revolution started ticking..."

"Western newspapers hailed [Zasulich] and the court's heroic decision, acting against autocracy. Zasulich's fame must have been contagious. Right after the trial came two attempts on the German emperor's life, an attempt on the Italian king, and one of the Spanish king.

"Vera's shot was ricocheting all over Europe.

"It ricocheted most loudly in Russia. Members of Land and Freedom began taking revenge. They shot at the prosecutor of the Kiev District Cour, Kotlyarevsky, whose thick fur coat acted as a bulletproof vest. Police agent Nikonov was killed. Gendarme officer Baron Geiking was shot in the street. In Kharkov the governor general Prince Kropotkin was killed.

"The government responded with arrests. During an arrest in Odess, I. Kovalsky, another member of Land and Freedom, shot a policeman. He was captured and executed. The revolutionaries considered his sentence unjust and took commensurate action.

"Terror came to St. Petersburg..."<sup>298</sup>

Next, on August 9, N. Mezentsov, head of the Third Department and the gendarmes, was stabbed to death by Sergei Stepnyak-Kravschinsky, one of the leaders of Land and Freedom. "The 'sleepy tiger' Mezentsov had not been known for cruelty or bloodthirstiness. He was killed as a symbol, for being the head of the Third Department..."<sup>299</sup>

This was getting very close to the Tsar himself, who bitterly disappointed by the Congress of Berlin, returned to Russia to find what seemed like all the educated classes against him and the law courts – his own creation – being manipulated against justice.

In fact, the courts now became a major weapon of the revolution. As Hosking writes, "the reformed law courts created a whole new profession which was to prove very important to Russia's future: among its future members were Kerenskii and Lenin.

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<sup>297</sup> Hosking, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-336.

<sup>298</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>299</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 283.

This was the *advokatura*, the corporation of defence counsels, or sworn attorneys.”<sup>300</sup> The fact that Kerensky and Lenin were among the members of this new class of lawyers reminds us that, whatever the undoubted virtues of the Russian justice system, the fact that it was based on western models meant that inevitably a new, western spirit, the spirit of the human rights philosophy, was introduced into Russian jurisprudence...

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The Zaslulich trial clearly influenced Dostoyevsky in his writing of the famous trial scene in his most famous novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879). The novel centres around the murder of Fyodor Karamazov and the trial for his murder of his eldest son, Dmitri. A miscarriage of justice takes place, and Dmitri is wrongly convicted. The truthful confession of the real murderer is rejected.

The question was: who was to blame for this? And where did *real* justice lie in this case?

It is too simple to say that the system of European justice recently introduced into Russia was to blame. The lawyers are presented sympathetically and their arguments contain much that is true. The facts as presented at the trial definitely pointed towards Dmitri, while the confession of the guilty man was easily overturned.

Moreover, the question arises whether Russian justice would not have come to the same verdict as the European system. After all, the chapter in which the verdict is proclaimed is entitled “The Peasants Stood Up for Themselves”, which implies that it was precisely the peasant members of the jury, with their non-European concept of justice, that determined the outcome. Moreover, from a moral point of view Dmitri *was* guilty, in that he clearly wanted the death of his father, and himself (in his better moments) saw his exile to Siberia as a fitting expiation for that murderous desire.

The novel raises the question: what is the purpose of criminal justice? At one point the defence lawyer Fetyukovich says: “Is it for me, insignificant person that I am, to remind you that a Russian court does not exist for punishment only, but also for the salvation of a ruined man? Let other nations adhere to the letter of the law and exact punishment, we will adhere to its spirit and meaning – the salvation and regeneration of the lost. And if that is so, if Russia and her courts of justice are really such, then let her go forward on her way...”<sup>301</sup>

And yet no court in history, whether Orthodox or non-Orthodox, has been able to deliver justice in this sense, regenerating and saving men rather than simply punishing them. Only the Spirit of God is able to do that. And it is a tribute to the greatness of Dostoyevsky’s vision that that is precisely the conclusion that the attentive reader comes to: that the fates of his characters, even the injustices they are subjected to, are determined by the all-encompassing Providence of God, Who alone can deliver, true justice because He, as the prophet says, is “the God of justice”...

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<sup>300</sup> Hosking, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-336.

<sup>301</sup> *The Brothers Karamzzov*, XI, 13.



## 19. PAN-HELLENISM AND PAN-SLAVISM

If liberalism, socialism, anarchism and other false beliefs were sapping the foundations of Holy Russia in the nineteenth century, a different, albeit related disease was corrupting the rest of the Orthodox *oikoumene*: *nationalism*. Like many in the West, the Orthodox nations of the Balkans and the Middle East were thinking of one thing: *freedom!* The Balkan Orthodox had already started to liberate themselves from the weakening Turks. And the Greeks in the Free State of Greece wanted freedom for their fellow countrymen still under the Ottoman yoke in accordance with their "great idea" of the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire. Whether the Greek dreams of the resurrection of Byzantium were compatible with the Slav dreams of their own liberation was a moot point...

These winds of freedom were less strongly felt by the Greeks still under the Ottoman yoke (as by the Serbs still under the Habsburg yoke). For one thing, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, together with the monks of Mount Athos over whom it had jurisdiction, stood for strict, traditional Orthodoxy, for which spiritual freedom is much more important than national freedom. As such, it resisted the liberal, westernizing trends that were gradually gaining the upper hand in Athens, Belgrade, Sophia and Bucharest. Another reason was that they already had considerable power. The Ecumenical Patriarch was the civil as well as the ecclesiastical head under the Sultan of all the Balkan Orthodox, and the rich Phanariots that supported the Patriarch were among the most privileged citizens of the Ottoman empire.

Orthodox traditionalism and anti-liberalism made the patriarchate a natural ally of the Russian government. However, after the Crimean War, Russia was no longer protector of the Christians at the Sublime Porte - and the Greeks felt the difference. And not only the Greeks. Thus in 1860 the Orthodox of Damascus were subjected to a massacre which the Russians were not able to prevent or avenge. According to A.P. Lopukhin, "the Christian subjects of the Sultan, whatever oppression and humiliation they were suffering, were now unable to rely on any outside help but were obliged to rely solely on their own resources... During the last years of the reign of Abdul Mecid [1839-61],... the Greeks... not only remained in a dreadful social and economic state, but even lost many of their former rights and privileges."<sup>302</sup>

The reason for this was a series of liberal reforms that the Western Powers imposed on Turkey at the Treaty of Paris in 1856, and which the Ottomans issued in the form of an Imperial Rescript. These were seen as supplementing and strengthening the policy of reform known as *tanzimat* that Turkey had begun in 1839. Their aim was to improve the lot of the Christians under Ottoman rule. In fact, however, they made it worse. Thus both Christians and Muslims were promised equality before the law in place of their separate legal systems - which, however, both groups wanted to retain. Again, the economic reforms, which essentially involved the imposition of liberal free-trade principles on the empire, were harmful to both groups. For neither the Orthodox nor the Muslims could compete with the mass-produced products now pouring in from

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<sup>302</sup> Lopukhin, *Istoria Khristianskoj Tserkvi v XIX veke* (A History of the Christian Church in the 19th Century), St. Petersburg, 1901, vol. II, pp. 47-48.

the West, while Ottoman industries were deprived of the protection they needed in order to survive. But the Ottomans were massively in debt to the West, so they were in no position to refuse the terms of trade imposed upon them.

As living conditions declined, and the power of the patriarch over his people weakened, national passions exploded. In 1861 rebellions broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria, Wallachia and Moldavia. In 1866 it was the turn of the island of Crete, where in an extraordinary outburst of nationalist passion reminiscent of the Russian Old Ritualists Abbot Gabriel of the monastery of Arkadiou blew up himself and nearly a thousand other Greeks rather than surrender to the Turks. Further rebellions broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria in the 1870s.

These events placed the Russian government in a quandary. Russia had been looking to liberate the Balkans and Constantinople from the Turkish yoke since the seventeenth century.<sup>303</sup> Catherine the Great hoped to liberate Constantinople and place her grandson Konstantin on the throne there, and the liberation of Constantinople would continue to be seen as an imperial aim until the very fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. But it was only at two moments in the nineteenth century, 1829-30 and 1877-78, that its achievement looked probable, or even remotely possible.

“The Eastern Question” therefore came down to: which power was to rule Constantinople? Or: were the Orthodox nations subject to the Ottoman empire to be liberated at their own hands, at the hands of the Russians, or through the concerted pressure of the great powers on Turkey?

For most of the nineteenth century Russia had been governed in her foreign policy by two not completely compatible principles or obligations: her obligations as a member of the Triple Alliance of monarchist states (Russia, Austria and Prussia) against the revolution, and her obligations as the Third Rome and the Protector of Orthodox Christians everywhere. As a member of the Triple Alliance Russia could not be seen to support any revolution against a legitimate power. That is why Tsar Alexander I refused to support the Greek Revolution in 1821 - the monarchist powers considered the Ottoman empire to be a legitimate power. On the other hand, as the Third Rome and Protector of all Orthodox Christians, Russia naturally wished to come to the aid of the Orthodox Greeks, Serbs, Bulgars and Romanians under the oppressive Turkish yoke.

In spite of Nicholas I's intervention in Greece in 1829, his priority was not the protection of Orthodox Christians from the Turkish authorities but the protection of all legitimate regimes against the revolution. In practice, this meant all the major powers including Turkey but excluding France. So it was from a legitimist position that he intervened in the Greek revolution in 1829 by invading the Ottoman empire,

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<sup>303</sup> Thus "on April 12th, 1791," writes Roman Golicz, "a cartoon was published in London entitled 'An Imperial Stride!' depicting Catherine the Great with one foot in Russia and the other in Constantinople. The image recalls the empress's epic tour to the Crimea in 1787 when she entered Kherson through an arch inscribed 'The Way to Constantinople'" ("The Russians Shall Not Have Constantinople", *History Today*, September, 2003, p. 39.

twice crushed uprisings of the Poles against his own rule, and in 1849 crushed the Hungarian rising against Austria-Hungary. However, the quarrels between the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholics over the Holy Sepulchre led him to take a more specifically "Third Rome" stand. As we have seen, this led eventually to the Crimean War against Turkey, Britain and France, which, as Oliver Figes' authoritative study of the war confirms, was essentially a religious war between Orthodoxy and Islam, with the Western states supporting the Muslims.<sup>304</sup>

Although the Crimean War constituted a defeat for the "Third Rome" policy, it inflicted even more damage on the legitimist principle; for illegitimate France was now legitimized again (the treaty ending the war was signed in Paris), while the Tsars never again fully trusted the legitimate monarchy of Austria-Hungary, which had not supported Russia in the war in spite of Russia's vital intervention to save it in the revolution of 1848-49.

So intervention for the sake of the Orthodox again became popular, especially as a new wave of rebellions against Turkish rule began in the Balkans.

Russian intervention under Alexander II was different from earlier interventions under Nicholas I. Under Nicholas, wrote Leontiev, "there was more talk of *the rights of Russian protection, of Russian power.*" However, from the 1860s "Russian diplomacy, the Russian press and Russian society began to speak more and more loudly in favour of the Christians of the East, without relying, as in the 50s, on the right of *our power*, but much more on *the rights of the Sultan's Christian subjects themselves.*" In other words, *human rights*, rather than *Russia's rights*. And so Turkey "was forced to make concessions to us constantly on the path of the liberal reforms that we suggested for the Christians. Because of this Turkey became weaker; the Christians became bolder and bolder, and we in the course of twenty years in all, step by step, destroyed the Turkish empire."<sup>305</sup>

But the paradoxical fact was that the gradual weakening of the Ottoman empire, and liberation of the Christians from under the Turkish yoke, while to be welcomed in itself, contained great spiritual dangers for the Orthodox commonwealth. For the removal of the yoke gave renewed strength to two diseases that had plagued the Orthodox since even before 1453: the inclination towards western humanist culture, and the nationalist rivalries between the Orthodox powers themselves.

Moreover, after the French revolution, and especially after the Greek revolution of 1821, the two diseases began to work on each other. Thus western ideas about freedom and the rights of individuals and nations began to interact with frictions among the Christians caused by Greek bishops' insensitivity to the needs of their Slavic, Romanian and Arabic flocks to produce a potentially revolutionary situation.

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<sup>304</sup> Figes, *Crimea*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>305</sup> Leontiev, "Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh - I" (Letters on Eastern Matters - I), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 354. Cf. Mansel, *Constantinople*, p. 248: "Wellington revealed the great truth: 'The Ottoman Empire stands not for the benefit of the Turks but of Christian Europe.' Metternich pronounced the preservation of the Ottoman Empire in Europe 'a political necessity for Austria'."

The Turkish conquest of the whole of the Balkans suppressed both diseases without completely eliminating either. On the one hand, western influence was seen as harmful by the Turks as it was by the Orthodox Christians, and the Ottoman authorities acted to cut it off.<sup>306</sup> On the other hand, the *millet* system recognized only one Orthodox nation under the Ecumenical Patriarch, thereby cutting off the possibility of inter-Orthodox wars.

These two very important benefits of the Turkish yoke went some way to offsetting its disadvantages in the form of the restrictions on missionary activity, the forced induction of Bosnian boys into the Janissaries, and intermittent persecutions; just as the advantages of the pagan *pax Romana* had outweighed its disadvantages during the pagan Roman empire. The Christian leaders in both Church and State - specifically, the Tsar of Russia and the Patriarch of Constantinople - understood this. So they did not try to destroy the empire, while at the same time trying to mitigate its savagery.

Leontiev also understood this. Thus "it is necessary," he wrote, "as far as possible, to preserve the Porte; the Porte must be served; it must be defended. And I agree with this point of view of the Phanariots: the pasha is better than the Hellene democratic nomarch (prefect): the pasha is more monarchical, more statist, cleverer, broader."<sup>307</sup>

Now the Greek "great idea" (μεγάλη ιδέα), otherwise known as *Pan-Hellenism*, consisted in the idea that all the traditionally Greek lands not yet freed from the Turks - Crete, Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, even Constantinople and the vast territory of Asia Minor - should be united under Greek suzerainty. This idea dated from well before the Greek revolution of 1821; some say it began immediately after the fall of Constantinople in 1453; but it gathered headway after the foundation of the Free State of Greece, being nourished especially by western-educated liberal thinkers in Athens. It is not to be confused with the universalist idea of *Byzantinism*, the faith and culture of Christian Rome...

Unfortunately, Pan-Hellenism tended to enter into conflict with other Orthodox nationalisms, especially those of the Serbs and Bulgars. Thus in Macedonia and Thrace there were now more Slavs than Greeks - and the Slavs were not going to give up their lands to the Greeks without a fight. Moreover, Greek nationalist pressure was exerted not only in lands that had traditionally been inhabited mainly by Greeks, like Macedonia and Thrace, but also in originally Slavic (and Arab) lands, where Greek-speaking priests were imposed on non-Greek-speaking populations.

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<sup>306</sup> For example, "when in the eighteenth century the Orthodox in Syria complained to the Porte of Catholic propaganda, the following decree was issued: 'Some of the devilish French monks, with evil purposes and unjust intentions, are passing through the country and are filling the Greek rayah with their worthless French doctrine; by means of stupid speeches they are deflecting the rayah from its ancient faith and are inculcating the French faith. Such French monks have no right to remain anywhere except in those places where their consuls are located; they should not undertake any journeys or engage in missionary work' (in Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963, p. 284).

<sup>307</sup> Leontiev, "Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh" (Letters on Eastern Affairs), *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo*, op. cit., p. 362.

These injustices suffered by the Slavs at the hands of the Greeks elicited the sympathy of notable Russians such as Alexis Khomiakov and Bishop Theophan the Recluse. The latter, as archimandrite, was sent by the Russian government and the Holy Synod to Constantinople to gather information on the Greco-Bulgarian quarrel. On March 9, 1857 he presented his report, in which his sympathies for the Bulgarians were manifest. However, on the broader political plane he by no means rejected the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but called on "magnanimous" Russia to come to her aid - "we must not abandon our mother in the faith in this helpless situation of hers".<sup>308</sup>

The Greeks distrusted this movement in Russian society for the liberation of the Southern Slavs. Whereas earlier generations would have welcomed any incursion of Russia into the Balkans, hoping that the Tsar would liberate Constantinople and give it to the Greeks, the modern, more nationalist-minded Greeks rejected any such interference. For in Free Greece Russia was no longer seen as the liberator of the Balkans for the sake of the Orthodoxy that the Russian and Balkan peoples shared, but as the potential enslaver of the Balkans for the sake of Russian *Pan-Slavism*. More specifically, the Greeks suspected that Russia wanted to help Bulgaria take the ancient Greek lands of Thrace and Macedonia in which there was now a large Bulgarian population. Thus Pan-Slavism was seen as the great threat to Pan-Hellenism. True, many Greeks, especially in the Ottoman Empire and on Mount Athos, cherished more charitable views of Russia, which continued to support the Orthodox under the Turkish yoke in many ways. But the views of the western-educated liberals in Athens were gaining ground...

A sign of the times was the court case that took place on Mount Athos in 1874/1875 between the Russian and Greek monks of the monastery of St. Panteleimon with regard to the rights of the Russian monks to stay there. "The case divided the whole of Athos into two opposing camps: the Greek monks and the Russian monks. Only a few of the Greeks had the courage to support the Russians. Thanks to the energy and insistence with which the Russian monks defended their rights to the monastery, with documents in their hands and with the strong support of the Russian consul at the Porte [Count N.P. Ignatiev], the case ended with victory for the Russians."<sup>309</sup>

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The phenomenon of so-called Pan-Slavism was misunderstood and exaggerated by the Greeks. While there was some talk in Russia - for example, by Michael Katkov at the ethnographic exhibition in Moscow in 1867<sup>310</sup> - of bringing all the Slavs together into a single polity under Russia just as the German lands were being brought together under Prussia, this was never a serious political proposition and never entertained by any of the Tsars. It existed more in the minds of the Greeks than in reality.

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<sup>308</sup> St. Theophan's *Life*, in Archimandrite Nikon (Ivanov) and Protopriest Nicholas (Likhomakov), *Zhitia Russkikh Sviatykh (Lives of the Russian Saints)*, Tutaev, 2000, vol. 2, p. 716.

<sup>309</sup> Lopukhin, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137. For more on this quarrel, see Deacon Peter Pakhomov, "O Prekraschenii Afonskoj Smuty, Igumene Makarii i Generale Ignatieve" (On the Ending of the Athos Time of Troubles, Abbot Macarius and General Ignatiev), 1 October, 2015.

<sup>310</sup> Sir Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire, 1552-1917*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 369.

Indeed, the famous Serbian Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovich) was inclined to deny the very existence of Pan-Slavism, saying that it was invented by the Germans: "Who thought up Pan-Slavism and spoke about it to the world? The Pan-Germanists! Yes, it was precisely the Pan-Germanists who thought up Pan-Slavism and sounded out about it to the whole world. Man always judges about others from himself. If Pan-Germanism exists, then why should Pan-Slavism not exist? However, this analogy, however much it may appear to represent the rule, is inaccurate in this case. Pan-Germanism existed and exists, while Pan-Slavism was not and is not now. Everybody knows that there is a Pan-German party in both Germany and Austria. We know that there exists Pan-German journalism, and pan-German clubs, and pan-German literature, and pan-German organizations, and pan-German banks. But in the Slavic world, by contrast, there exists nothing of the kind. As a Slav, I would have known about it, and as a free man I would have spoken about it all openly. However, in the Slavic world there exists something which is somewhat different from the Pan-Slavic spectre - a feeling, only a feeling, which is to be found more often in literature than in politics - Slavophilism. This is the same feeling of blood kinship and sympathy that exists in Italy towards the French, which is far from political Pan-Romanism, or the same feeling of kinship that exists in the United States towards the English and in England towards the Americans, although here also it is far from any kind of fantastic Pan-Anglicanism. It is a sentimental striving for kin, a nostalgia of the blood, a certain organic fear of being separated from one's own. And if in this Slavophilism the penetrating note of love is just a little more audible than in Romanophilism or Anglophilism (and I think that it is audible), then this is completely natural and comprehensible. People who suffer are closer to each other than people who are lords. We Slavs, first of all as Slavs, and secondly as oppressed slaves, love and strive towards those who suffer from the same injustice, from the same arrogant pride, from the same disdain. Who can understand a slave better than a slave? And who is more likely to help a sufferer than a sufferer?..."<sup>311</sup>

Even the Pan-Slavism of a man like General Fadeyev can be called this only with major qualifications. Thus consider his *Opinion on the Eastern Question* of 1876, in which he writes: "The liberated East of Europe, if it be liberated at all, will require: a durable bond of union, a common head with a common council, the transaction of international affairs and the military command in the hands of that head, the Tsar of Russia, the natural chief of all the Slavs and Orthodox. Every Russian, as well as every Slav and every Orthodox Christian, should desire to see chiefly the Russian reigning House cover the liberated soil of Eastern Europe with its branches, under the supremacy and lead of the Tsar of Russia, long recognized, in the expectation of the people, as the direct heir of Constantine the Great."<sup>312</sup>

The ideology expressed here is not Pan-Slavism, but that of *Russia the Third Rome*, the idea - which goes a long way back, before the age of nationalism - that Russia, as the successor of Rome and Byzantium, is the natural protector of all Orthodox Christians. Hence the reference to "all the Slavs *and Orthodox*", and "every Slav *and every Orthodox Christian*", and to Constantine the Great - who, needless to say, was not a Slav.

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<sup>311</sup> Velimirovich, *Dusha Serbii* (The Soul of Serbia), Moscow, 2007, pp. 572-573.

<sup>312</sup> A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, London: Arrow Books, 2002, p. 395.

Another writer who is sometimes mistakenly thought to be Pan-Slavist was Fyodor Tiutchev. He wrote "as early as 1849 of 'the city of the Constantines' as one of the 'secret capitals of Russia's realm', and he evoked an unfading empire stretching 'from Nile to Neva and from Elbe to China... as the Spirit foresaw and Daniel prophesied.'"<sup>313</sup> But again this is the vision of Russia the Third Rome, not Pan-Slavism.

For what in fact united *all* the Slavs as opposed to the Orthodox Slavic nations? Less than one might expect. Russia herself was far from being a purely Slavic empire; her aristocracy had been accepting Tatar and German nobles into its ranks for centuries. With the next largest Slavic nation, Poland, she was in a state of constant friction, as the Roman Catholic Poles did everything in their power to undermine Orthodox Russian power. With the Catholic and Protestant Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire - Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes - she was on more friendly terms. But it was not in her interests to foment revolution on ethnic lines in Austria, and as recently as 1848 Russian armies had acted to bolster Austrian power against the Magyars. With the Serbs and the Bulgars, Russia had both blood and Orthodox Christianity in common. But a political union with these nations - even if they wanted it, which most did not - would have required absorbing non-Orthodox Hungary and non-Slavic Romania as well.

Nor was it in Russia's interests to support individual Slavic nationalisms. As Tom Gallacher points out, "as a multi-national empire in its own right, Russia was hostile to the pretensions of European small state nationalism."<sup>314</sup> As Hosking points out, "the official Foreign Office view was that Russia should cooperate with Germany and Austria to reaffirm the legitimist monarchical principle in Eastern Europe, to counteract revolutionary movements there, whether nationalist or not, and to promote a stable balance of power. Panslavism could never be consistently espoused by the Russian government, for it was a policy which would inevitably lead to war against the Ottomans and Habsburgs, if not against the European powers in general. Besides, it was in essence a revolutionary strategy, directed against legitimate sovereign states. For the Russian empire to promote the principle of insurrectionary nationalism was, to say the least, double-edged."<sup>315</sup>

For to support, say, Bulgarian pretensions to an independent Greater Bulgaria - as opposed to simply protecting Bulgarians suffering from Turkish cruelty - would have created conflicts with the Greeks, the Romanians and the Serbs; whereas it was in Russia's interests to see unity among all the Orthodox nations.

Even supposing that Russia in the name of some mythical Pan-Slavist ideal had been willing and able to conquer the whole of the Balkans and take Constantinople, she could not have held on to her gains for long. First, the western powers, including the new rising power of Germany, would have been stirred up to launch another crusade against her. Secondly, to drive the Turks out of Constantinople would not have meant their final defeat, and further operations deep into Asia would have been

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<sup>313</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 313.

<sup>314</sup> Gallagher, "Folly & Failure in the Balkans", *History Today*, September, 1999, p. 48.

<sup>315</sup> Hosking, *Russia. Empire and People*, pp. 370-371.

necessary. But thirdly and most importantly, the union between the Tsar of Russia and the Patriarch of Constantinople, upon which the whole of the Orthodox commonwealth was based, would have been shattered. For what then would the position of the Patriarch within the Russian empire have been? Still the first hierarch of Orthodoxy, or *de facto* subordinate to the Russian Synod? How would the Greeks (not to mention the Southern Slavs) have reacted to exchanging one form of foreign dominion for another, albeit Orthodox?

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A rare true Pan-Slavist in the political sense was Nicholas Danilevsky, whose *Russia and Europe* (1869) made use of Slavophile ideas from the 1840s. Danilevsky distinguished ten types of civilization in history: (1) Egyptian, (2) Chinese, (3) Assyrian-Babylonian-Phoenician or Ancient Semitic, (4) Hindu, (5) Iranian, (6) Hebrew, (7) Ancient Greek, (8) Roman, (9) Neo-Semitic or Arabian, and (10) Romano-Germanic or European. He believed that after Russia had conquered Constantinople and liberated and united the Slavs under her rule, she would create an eleventh type of civilization or cultural type.<sup>316</sup>

Being a form of nationalist historicism, Danilevsky's theory identified the *latest* in history with the *best*. And so Slavism, being the last in the series of "historico-cultural" types was the best, in his view. "The new Slavic civilization, with its capital at Constantinople, would synthesize the highest achievements of its predecessors in religion (Israel), culture (Greece), political order (Rome) and socio-economic progress (modern Europe), and would supplement them with the Slavic genius for social and economic justice. 'These four rivers will unite on the wide plains of Slavdom into a mighty sea.'<sup>317</sup>

Strictly speaking, however, "best" should not be understood here in relation to a universal scale of values, insofar as each "historico-cultural" type was *sui generis* and incommensurable, according to Danilevsky. However, this reduced the significance of Danilevsky's theory. For if no single civilization, even the Slavic, can be considered better than any other according to a universal scale of values, then there is no reason to consider it to be better in any real, objective sense.

As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes, speaking of the later Slavophiles, "Significance is ascribed to this or that cultural achievement or discovery of the Slavic nationality not because we see in it the manifestation of the highest values, values which surpass those that inspired 'European' culture, but simply because they are the organic offshoots of the Slavic national genius. And so not because they are *good*, but because they are *ours*."

"The ideals and concrete tasks for action are inspired not by autonomous seeking and 'the re-evaluation of all values', but solely by 'the milieu' and 'circumstances' of one's 'chance' belonging to the given 'cultural-historical type', to the given 'ethnic group of peoples'. This nationalism should be given the epithet '*anthropological*', as opposed to the *ethnic* nationalism of the 'older Slavophiles', [since] the basis for

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<sup>316</sup> Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, pp. 291-293, 295-297.

<sup>317</sup> Hosking, *Russia. Empire and People*, p. 369.

'idiosyncrasy' is sociological or anthropological particularity, not originality of cultural content. There individual variations are allowed on universal and eternal motifs: here they are taken to be various unshakeable and unmixed relative melodies..."

"It was on this plane, that the annihilating criticism to which Vladimir Soloviev subjected the imitative nationalism of the later Slavophiles lay. His words had the greater weight in that, even though he was not conscious of it, he stood squarely on the ground of the old, classical Slavophile principles. True, his criticism suffered from wordiness and 'personalities'. Too often a harsh phrase took the place of subtle argumentation. But the basic fault of 'false' nationalism was sensed by him and illuminated completely correctly. *Only on the soil of universal principles that are absolutely significant to all is genuine culture possible*, and the national task of Slavdom can lie only in actively converting itself to the service of values that will be chosen for their supreme good in the free exercise of thought and faith... But the denial of the 'universal-historical' path is a step towards nihilism, to the complete dissolution of values,... in the final analysis, the abolition of the category of values altogether..."<sup>318</sup>

In spite of the existence of one or two true Pan-Slavists like Danilevsky, "Pan-Slavism remained a minority taste in Alexander II's Russia. Although it attracted interest among journalists and academics as well as curious politicians wondering whether it might serve imperial interests abroad or undermine stability at home, even the Slavic Congress founded in 1858 or the high profile Slavic Congress in Moscow in 1867 attracted little more than interest. Cash to support the idea of Pan-Slavism was in short supply. The Slavic Committee made do with 1700 rubles a year even in 1867, at the height of public interest before the war a decade later."<sup>319</sup>

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An important disciple of Danilevsky was Constantine Leontiev. However, if Leontiev had ever really been an adherent of Danilevsky's Pan-Slavism, he soon abandoned it under the influence of the holy Optina Elders, especially St. Ambrose, and a closer knowledge of the East. Thus "towards the end of his life, in the early 1890s, he finally lost his faith in Russia's ability to create a distinctive new cultural type. The future, he prophesied, belonged to socialism; possibly a Russian tsar would stand at the head of the socialist movement and would organize and discipline it just as the Emperor Constantine had 'organized' Christianity; or perhaps, he wrote in another apocalyptic prediction, a democratic and secular Russia would become the home of the Antichrist..."<sup>320</sup>

A more important enduring influence than Pan-Slavism in the work of Leontiev was early Slavophilism...<sup>321</sup> However, he was more appreciative than any of the

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<sup>318</sup> Florovsky, "Vechnoe i prekhodiashee v uchenii russkikh slavianofilov" (The eternal and the passing in the teaching of the Russian Slavophiles), in *Vera i Kul'tura* (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 101, 102-103).

<sup>319</sup> Mark Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, London: Mandarin, 1994, p. 105.

<sup>320</sup> Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-305.

<sup>321</sup> Thus "one of the sources of Leontiev's ideas", writes S.V. Khatuntsev, "on the inevitability of serious conflicts between a Russia that was renewing and transforming itself and the civilization of the West was, without a doubt, the ideas of the Slavophiles. Proceeding from a recognition of the complete

Slavophiles of the continuing importance of Greek Orthodoxy to Slavic Orthodoxy. Leontiev believed that if one subtracted Byzantinism from Slavdom, very little distinctively different was left. An ardent Philhellene, he thought that narrowly *Serbian* and *Bulgarian* nationalisms were real and powerful forces, very similar in their aims and psychology to Greek nationalism, and, like contemporary Greek nationalism, sadly lacking in that exalted and spiritual form of "universalist nationalism" that he called *Byzantinism*. These petty nationalisms, argued Leontiev, were closely related to liberalism. They were all rooted in the French revolution: just as liberalism insisted on the essential equality of all men and their "human rights", so these nationalisms insisted on the essential equality of all nations and their "national rights". But this common striving for "national rights" made the nations very similar in their essential egoism<sup>322</sup>; it erased *individuality* in the name of *individualism*, *hierarchy* in the name of *egalitarianism*<sup>323</sup>.

Leontiev believed, as Walicki writes, that "nations were a creative force only when they represented a specific culture: 'naked' or purely 'tribal' nationalism was a corrosive force destroying both culture and the state, a levelling process that was, in the last resort, cosmopolitan; in fact, nationalism was only a mask for liberal and egalitarian tendencies, a specific metamorphosis of the universal process of disintegration".<sup>324</sup> According to Leontiev, the nations' striving to be independent was based precisely on their desire to be like every other nation: "Having become politically liberated, *they are very glad, whether in everyday life or in ideas, to be like everyone else*". Therefore nationalism, freed from the universalist idea of Christianity, leads in the end to a soulless, secular cosmopolitanism. "In the whole of Europe the purely national, that is, *ethnic* principle, once released from its *religious fetters*, will at its triumph give

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opposition of the two worlds – the 'western', 'Romano-Germanic', 'Catholic-Protestant', and the 'eastern', 'Slavic-Orthodox', the Slavophiles concluded that conflicts and wars between them were inevitable. So for Yu.F. Samarin, 'the essential, root difference' between the two worlds was already 'a condition of struggle' between them in all spheres, including the political. The political opposition between Western Europe and Slavdom was the initial basis of the views of I.S. Aksakov. Already in 1861 he was speaking about 'the hatred, which is often instinctive' of Europe for the Slavic, Orthodox world, the case of which was 'the antagonism between the two opposing educational principles and the envy of the decrepit world for the new one, to which the future belongs'. Several years later Aksakov wrote: 'The whole task of Europe consisted and consists in putting an end to the material and moral strengthening of Russia, so as not to allow the new, Orthodox-Slavic world to arise...' However, he did not think that the opposition between the West and Russia unfailingly signified enmity or war between them. No less important for the genesis of the ideas of Leontiev that are being reviewed was his conception of the war of 1853-56 and the anti-Russian campaigns in Europe during the Polish rebellion of 1863-1864. Both the Eastern war and the anti-Russian campaigns convinced him that the West was irreconcilably hostile to Russia." ("Problema 'Rossia-Zapad' vo vzgliadakh K.N. Leontieva (60-e gg. XIX veka)" (The Problem of Russia and the West in the views of K.N. Leontiev (in the 60s of the 19th century)), *Voprosy Istorii (Questions of History)*, 2006 (3), p. 119)

<sup>322</sup> As Leontiev put it: "The Greeks have 'the Byzantine empire', 'the Great Hellenic Idea'; while the Bulgars have 'Great Bulgaria'. Is it not all the same?" ("Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh - IV" (*Letters on Eastern Matters - IV*), op. cit., p. 363.

<sup>323</sup> "So much for the national development, which makes them all similar to contemporary Europeans, which spreads petty rationalism, egalitarianism, religious indifference, European bourgeois uniformity in tastes and manners: machines, pantaloons, frock-coats, top hats and demagoguery!" ("Plody natsional'nykh dvizhenij" (The Fruits of the National Movements), op. cit., p. 560).

<sup>324</sup> Walicki, op. cit., p. 303.

fruits that are by no means national, but, on the contrary, in the highest degree cosmopolitan, or, more precisely, *revolutionary*."<sup>325</sup>

Leontiev foresaw that Bulgarian nationalism would lead to a diplomatic break with Bulgaria's liberator and protector, Russia, which took place in the reign of Tsar Alexander III.<sup>326</sup> He also foresaw that state nationalism in general could lead to the internationalist *abolition* or *merging* of states. "A grouping of states according to pure nationalities will lead European man very quickly to the dominion of internationalism"<sup>327</sup> - that is, a European Union or even a Global United Nations. "A state grouping *according to tribes and nations* is... nothing other than the preparation - striking in its force and vividness - for the transition to a cosmopolitan state, first a pan-European one, and then, perhaps, a global one, too! This is terrible! But still more terrible, in my opinion, is the fact that so far in Russia nobody has seen this or wants to understand it..."<sup>328</sup>

"This striving for unity", writes Wil van den Bercken, "provoked in Leontiev a fear of cultural impoverishment. He feared that the old capital cities of Europe would be swept off the map because formerly they had been centres of hostility between the European nations, and that the monarchies would disappear in favour of 'a banal workers' republic. Leontiev asks himself: 'What price must be paid for such a fusion? Will not a new pan-European state have to dispense in principle with recognizing all local differences?... In any case France, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc. will cease to exist as states; they will become districts of the new state as former Piedmont, Tuscany, Rome and Naples have become districts for Italy, and as now Hessen, Hanover and Prussia have themselves become districts of pan-Germany; they will become for pan-Europe what Burgundy and Brittany have long become for France!' According to Leontiev, the cultural complexity of Europe cannot be maintained in a Europe which has been democratically levelled down, but only in the various monarchistic states of Europe..."<sup>329</sup>

Orthodoxy recognizes no essential difference between Jew and Greek, Scythian and barbarian *so long as they are all Orthodox*, all right-believing members of the One True Church. The same applies on the collective level, between nations. This is the *Orthodox egalitarianism*. So it went against the spirit of Orthodoxy for Russia to take the side of one Orthodox nation against another, or of Slavs against non-Slavs. The aim of Russia, as the protectress of Orthodoxy throughout the world, had to be to cool passions, avert conflicts and build bridges among the Orthodox of different races, rejecting both Pan-Hellenism and Pan-Slavism. Therefore neither Pan-Hellenism nor Pan-Slavism but *Byzantinism*, or *Romanity* (*Romanitas* or *Ρωμειοσυνη*), was the truly Orthodox ideal, the ideal of a commonwealth of all Orthodox nations united by a strict adherence to Holy Orthodoxy in the religious sphere and loyalty to the Orthodox Emperor in the political sphere.

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<sup>325</sup> Leontiev, *Letter of a Hermit*.

<sup>326</sup> Vadim Venediktov, "Pravoslavnij Vostok Glazami Russkogo Filosofa K.N. Leontiev".

<sup>327</sup> Leontiev, "On Political and Cultural Nationalism", letter 3, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>328</sup> Leontiev, "Tribal Politics as a Weapon of Global Revolution", letter 2, in Constantine Leontiev, *Izbrannie Sochinenia (Selected Works)*, edited and with an introductory article by I.N. Smirnov, Moscow, 1993, p. 314.

<sup>329</sup> Wil Van Den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 212.

This vision has repelled many. Thus it has been argued that "for Leontiev, 'ascetic and dogmatic Orthodoxy' was mainly distinguished by its 'Byzantine pessimism', its lack of faith in the possibility of harmony and universal brotherhood."<sup>330</sup> However, this criticism is unjust: Orthodoxy does not reject the *possibility of universal brotherhood*, still less the *actuality of Orthodox brotherhood*. After all, what is the Kingdom of God, according to Orthodoxy, if not the complete brotherhood of man in the Fatherhood of God, when God will be "all in all"? But the Orthodox are also realistic; they know that man is fallen, and that neither the idea of human rights nor that of national rights can take the place of true fraternity, or love in Christ, acquired through true faith in Christ and ascetic struggle. Moreover, the eschatological teaching of Orthodoxy, according to which things will get worse and worse until the enthronement of the Antichrist towards the end of the world, does not leave much room for optimism in the long term, but only for temporary improvements in certain regions...

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<sup>330</sup> Walicki, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

## 20. THE GRECO-BULGARIAN SCHISM

In her role as the defender of Ecumenical (non-nationalist) Orthodoxy, Russia's natural ally was the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the more perspicacious Russians always strove to preserve good relations with the patriarchate. Thus Leontiev's spiritual father, Elder Ambrose of Optina, wrote: "In your note about the living union of Russia with Greece, in our opinion you should first of all have pointed out how the Lord in the beginning founded the Ecumenical Orthodox Church, consisting of five Patriarchates, or individual Churches; and, when the Roman Church fell away from the Ecumenical Church, then the Lord as it were filled up this deprivation by founding the Church of Russia in the north, enlightening Russia with Christianity through the Greek Church, as the main representative of the Ecumenical Church. The attentive and discerning among the Orthodox see here two works of the Providence of God. First, the Lord by his later conversion of Russia to Christianity preserved her from the harm of the papists. And secondly, He showed that Russia, having been enlightened with Christianity through the Greek Church, must be in union with this people, as the main representative of the Ecumenical Orthodox Church, and not with others harmed by heresy. That is how our forefathers acted, seeing, perhaps, a pitiful example, beside the Romans, in the Armenian Church, which through its separation from the Ecumenical Church fell into many errors. The Armenians erred for two reasons: first, they accepted slanders against the Ecumenical Church; and secondly, they wanted self-government and instead of this subjected themselves to the subtle influence of the westerners, from which they were protected by their very geographical position. The cunning hellish enemy also wove his nets and is still weaving them over the Russians, only in a somewhat different form. The Armenians were confused first by accepting a slander against the Ecumenical Church, but afterwards by their desire for self-government. But the Russian could be closer to the same actions by accepting slanders against the first-hierarchs of the Ecumenical Church. And thus, through the enemy's cunning and our blunders, it will turn out that we, wilfully departing from a useful and saving union with the Ecumenical Church, involuntarily and imperceptibly fall under the harmful influence of western opinions, from which Providence Itself has preserved and protected us, as was said earlier... You should have pointed out that absolute obedience is one thing, and relations with the Greek Church another. In the latter case there is nothing obligatory with regard to absolute obedience..."<sup>331</sup>

In 1872, however, relations with Constantinople were put to a severe test when an ecclesiastical schism took place between the Greeks and the Bulgarians... Of the Balkan Christian nations in 1871, only the Bulgarians had no independent State or statelet - almost all Bulgarians were all living within the borders of one State - the Ottoman empire. But by the same token they were the only nation that had not been divided by revolution. Thus the Greek revolution had divided the Greek nation between the Free State of Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and successive Serbian rebellions had divided the Serbs between the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, the Free States of Serbia and Montenegro. Romania was a more-or-less independent state, but with many Romanians still outside her borders.

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<sup>331</sup> St. Ambrose, Letter 226, *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 478, November, 1989, pp. 208-209.

However, things were stirring in Bulgaria, too. National self-consciousness was stirring among them, helped by historical works such as the *History of the Bulgarian Kings and Queens* (first written in 1762) by St. Paisius of Chilandar. Only the Bulgarians saw the main obstacle to their ambitions not in the Turks - some were even happy at the thought of a "Turkish tsar" (after all, the Bulgarians were partly of Turkic origin) - but in the neighbouring Christian nations. There was particular tension in Thrace and Macedonia, which from ancient times had been Greek<sup>332</sup>, but where there were now more Bulgarians than Greeks. The question was: if Turkish power finally collapsed, which nation would take control in those provinces - the Greeks or the Bulgarians?

Parallel to the movement for political independence was a movement for ecclesiastical independence. "In 1839," writes Christopher Walter, "the Ottoman government published the first of a series of edicts, granting liberty of conscience to its Christian subjects. The Bulgarians then petitioned the Phanar to appoint Bulgarian bishops and to authorize the celebration of the liturgy in Slavonic.<sup>333</sup> Progressively the Bulgarians became more insistent. When the Phanar so manipulated the election to the synod convoked in 1858 to study the Bulgarians' demands that none of them were accepted, the first symptoms of rupture became manifest. Greek bishops were expelled from districts where Bulgarians were in the majority. On Easter Sunday 1860, the Liturgy was celebrated in the church of St. Stephen in Constantinople in Slavonic, and the commemoration of the patriarch was omitted."<sup>334</sup>

"There followed," writes Eugene Pavlenko, "a *de facto* refusal of the Bulgarians to submit to the Patriarchate, which did not satisfy their demands for the right to elect their own bishops in their own dioceses and the granting to them the possibility of occupying the higher Church posts on an equal basis with the Greeks. The Patriarchate of Constantinople made various concessions: it issued Divine service books for the Bulgarian clergy in the Slavonic language, and appointed archimandrites from the Bulgarians. Later, under the influence of passions aroused on both sides, the demands of the Bulgarians intensified and flowed out into the desire to have their own separate exarchate. In 1867 the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Gregory VI proposed a project for the creation of a separate Bulgarian exarchate, but no meeting of minds was achieved on this project. It was hindered not only by the impossibility of precisely delineating dioceses with Greek and Bulgarian populations, but also by the gradually formed striving of the Bulgarians to create their own national Church, in which every Bulgarian, wherever he might be - in Bulgaria or in Asia Minor, would be in subjection only to the Bulgarian hierarchy. Such a striving was leading to a situation of ecclesiastical dual powers and to schism, but the Bulgarians were no longer upset by this. They wanted a schism, they were seeking it. They wanted separation not only from the Greeks, but also from the whole of Orthodoxy, since such a separation made them an independent people. 'Look how willingly religion has been sacrificed for the

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<sup>332</sup> Moreover, the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council specifically mentions Thrace and Macedonia as coming within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Greeks were to use this canon in defence of their position.

<sup>333</sup> The Phanar's refusal led to two distinct movements for Bulgarian ecclesiastical independence: the Bulgarian Uniate Church, which was in communion with Rome, and the Bulgarian exarchate, later the Bulgarian patriarchate, which remained Orthodox. What is written here relates exclusively to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

<sup>334</sup> Walter, "Raphael Popov, Bulgarian Uniate bishop: problems of uniatism and autocephaly", *Sobornost'*, 6:1, 1984, p. 53.

same purely tribal principle, for the same national-cosmopolitan impulses!' said K.N. Leontiev in this connection.<sup>335</sup>

"In 1868 Patriarch Gregory VI of Constantinople attempted to settle the Greco-Bulgarian question by convening an Ecumenical Council, but without success. In these circumstances the Bulgarians decided to act through the sultan and submitted to him a petition concerning the re-establishment of ecclesiastical independence which had been lost because of the abolition of the Trnovo Patriarchate. 'Asking the Porte to establish their national independent hierarchy,' wrote Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, 'shows that although the Bulgarians have had sufficient time to think over what they are doing, they still have the stubborn desire without having acquired understanding. It is possible to establish a new independent hierarchy only with the blessing of a lawfully existing hierarchy.'<sup>336</sup> In reply to this request of the Bulgarians the Porte put forward two projects. According to point 3 of both projects, 'in Constantinople, next to the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch, a pre-eminent Orthodox Metropolitan of Bulgaria must be introduced..., to whom the supervision of the administration of the Bulgarian churches is to be entrusted and under whom there will be an assembly, that is, a kind of Synod, occupied with church affairs.' In point 5 of one of these projects the Bulgarian Church is also called 'a separate body', while the aforementioned assembly is more than once called a Synod.

"It goes without saying that Patriarch Gregory VI spoke out against such projects that transgress the canons of the Church. The ecclesiastical decrees which forbid such dual power situations are contained in:

- The 8th canon of the First Ecumenical Council: 'Let there not be two bishops in a city.'
- The 35th canon of the Holy Apostles: 'Let not a bishop dare to carry out ordinations outside the bounds of his diocese in cities and villages not subject to him', which is confirmed and clarified by the 22nd canon of the Council of Antioch: 'Let a bishop not go into another city that is not subject to him, nor into a settlement that does not belong to him, in order to ordain someone, and let him not establish priests or deacons in places subject to another bishop...'
- The 34th canon of the Holy Apostles: 'The bishops of each people should know the first among them, and recognise him as their head, and do nothing exceeding their authority without obtaining his permission: but each must do only that which touches his diocese and those places that belong to it.'

"With regard to the words from the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles: 'The bishops of each people', there developed a polemic between the Bulgarians and Constantinople which was destined to have a long history. The Bulgarians considered that the words: 'The bishops of each people' meant the order of the joint administration of one and the same (geographical) district by several priestly hierarchies belonging to different nationalities. But this passage was interpreted in a different way by the Byzantine

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<sup>335</sup> Leontiev, "Plody natsional'nykh dvizhenij" (The Fruits of the National Movements), *op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>336</sup> Metropolitan Philaret, in Leontiev, "Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh" (Letters on Eastern Matters), *op. cit.*, p. 360.

interpreters Zonaras, Balsamon and Aristene. Zonaras, in his explanation of the 34th Apostolic canon, says: 'With this aim (the prevention of ecclesiastical disorder) the present canon commands that the first bishops of each district, that is, the hierarchs of the metropolia, should be recognized by all the bishops of that district as their head.' Thus Zonaras considers the expression 'of each people' to be identical with the expression 'of each district'. This interpretation is confirmed by the juxtaposition of the 34th Apostolic canon with the 9th canon of the Council of Antioch: 'In each district it behoves the bishops to know the presiding bishop in the metropolia... in accordance with the rule of our fathers that has been in force since ancient times.' Zonaras: 'Although this canon does not coincide completely in its wording with the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles, nevertheless as far as the meaning is concerned it agrees with it in everything.' Balsamon: 'The content of this canon is explicated by the interpretation of the 34th Apostolic canon.' Aristene: 'This canon has exactly the same teaching as the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles.' As we see, the authoritative Byzantine interpreters agree that by the expression 'the bishops of each people' 'the bishops of each district' must be understood, and so this canon agrees with all the remaining canons which forbid dual power in the Church.

"The Patriarch's refusal to make concessions irritated the Turkish government, and in 1870 the sultan issued a firman, in which permission was granted to the Bulgarians to establish a separate exarchate with a specified number of dioceses. The administration of the exarchate was given to the Synod of the Bulgarian bishops under the presidency of the exarch, who had to commemorate the name of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch during the Divine service. The Synod was obliged to refer to the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in connection with the most important matters of the faith, and after the election of its exarch it had to seek a confirmatory certificate from the Patriarch. The Bulgarians also had to receive chrism from the Patriarch. In accordance with the ecclesiastical canons (the 6th and 7th canons of the First Ecumenical Council and the 3rd canon of the Second Ecumenical Council), independent patriarchal sees and the Synods having equal honour to them have to be established in a conciliar fashion, and not on the orders of a secular power. Patriarch Gregory VI asked the Turkish government for permission to convene an Ecumenical Council to examine this question, but he was refused, and he resigned his see. In accordance with the decree of the Turkish government, the Bulgarian Assembly in Constantinople elected its exarch, who was presented to the sultan on April 4, 1872. However, the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, who was now Anthimus IV, did not agree not only to recognize, but also to receive the exarch, from whom he demanded written repentance for all that had been done. But the semi-independent existence of the exarchate no longer suited the Bulgarians, either. They longed for complete separation from the Greeks, which could only be achieved by means of an ecclesiastical schism. On May 11, 1872, after the Gospel during the Liturgy, which was celebrated in Constantinople by the exarch together with the other Bulgarian bishops and many clergy, an act signed by the Council of seven Bulgarian bishops was proclaimed, which declared that the Bulgarian Church was independent. On May 15, the Patriarchal Synod declared the Bulgarian exarch [Atanas] deprived of his rank and defrocked; the other Bulgarian bishops, together with all the clergy and laity in communion with them, were subjected to ecclesiastical punishments. A declaration was also made concerning the convening of a Local Council.

“The feelings of the sides drawn in one way or another into the ecclesiastical conflict between the Greeks and the Bulgarians were described in detail on the eve of the Local Council of 1872 by K.N. Leontiev in his work, *The Fruits of the National Movements*. The Bulgarians affirmed that they would fight until ‘the last Bulgarian village, even including those in Asia Minor, is liberated from the ecclesiastical authority of the Patriarch’.<sup>337</sup> The Bulgarians did not fear a schism, they found a schism convenient for themselves. While the Turks, in their turn, considered that a quarrel between the Orthodox would be useful for their disintegrating state. The liberally inclined Russians sympathized with the ‘national-liberation’ movement of the Bulgarians... At the same time the Athenian Greeks were trying by all means to bring the matter to the convening of a Council and the ecclesiastical condemnation of the Bulgarians. Besides, they hoped that the Russian Holy Synod would finally come out openly in defence of the Bulgarians, after which they would be able to declare the Russians, too, to be schismatics, and having thereby separated themselves from the whole of Slavdom, tie their fate in with the peoples of Western Europe. The Athenian Greeks were drawn by the idea of a Great Hellas, the Bulgarians – by the idea of a Great Bulgaria. ‘We must baptize the sultan,’ they dreamed, ‘merge with the Turks, become established in Tsargrad and form a great Bulgar-Turkish state, which instead of aging Russia would take up the leadership of Slavdom.’<sup>338</sup> ‘Who has remained faithful to Orthodoxy?’ cried K.N. Leontiev. ‘It is only these same Greek bishops who are subjects of the Turks who have remained faithful to these foundations, to Orthodoxy and its ancient rules and spirit.’<sup>339</sup> He called these bishops Phanariots (after the Phanar, the quarter of Istanbul in which the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate was situated). They cursed Bulgarian phyletism at the Council of 1872, but did not allow a break also with Russia. The Russian Holy Synod, which at that time supported neither side, made no mistake meanwhile. The Constantinopolitan Patriarchate could not without transgressing the canons break with us, to which they were being urged by the Greeks of Hellas. But Constantinople did not wish to transgress the canons. Both in relation to the Bulgarians and in relation to Russia the Phanariots remained unshaken and faithful to the laws and traditions, in spite of all the difficulties caused by our liberals’ flirting with the Bulgarians.

“The Local Council of Constantinople opened on August 29, 1872. 32 hierarchs and all the Eastern Patriarchs except Jerusalem took part in it. On September 16, in its third session, the Constantinopolitan Council confirmed the decision according to which all

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<sup>337</sup> Leontiev, “Plody natsional’nykh dvizhenij”, *op. cit.*, p. 558.

<sup>338</sup> Leontiev, “Plody natsional’nykh dvizhenij”, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>339</sup> Leontiev, “Plody natsional’nykh dvizhenij”, *op. cit.*, p. 560. As he wrote in another place: “They wanted to have, not an *administrative*, or *topographical* exarchate within definite boundaries, but a *tribal [ethnic]* exarchate, a ‘phyletic’ exarchate as the Greek clergy put it at the council of 1872. The Ecumenical Patriarch could have given them an administrative exarchate or even a patriarchy, and he would have been forced to do that later by force of circumstances... but the Bulgarians wanted a ‘tribal’ exarchate, that is, they wanted all Bulgarians, wherever they lived, to depend directly and in all respects on their national clergy. Of course, the Patriarch *did not even have the right* to bow to their wishes *in this form*. The Bulgarians then separated in a self-willed manner; while the council declared them to be... ‘schismatics’...” (“Dopolnenie k dvum stat’iam o panslavizme” (Supplement to Two Articles on Pan-Slavism), *op. cit.*, p. 81.)

And again: “In the ecclesiastical question the Bulgarians and the Greeks were equally cunning and wrong according to conscience. The difference lay in the fact that *canonically*, formally, in the sense precisely of *abstract principles of tradition*, the Greeks were more right” (“Khram i Tserkov” (Temple and Church), *op. cit.*, p. 165). (V.M.)

the Bulgarian hierarchs with their clergy and laity were declared schismatics, and the whole of the Bulgarian Church was declared schismatic. In relation to phyletism the Council made the following decision: ‘...We have concluded that when the principle of racial division is juxtaposed with the teaching of the Gospel and the constant practice of the Church, it is not only foreign to it, but also completely opposed, to it.’ ‘We decree the following in the Holy Spirit: 1. We reject and condemn racial division, that is, racial differences, national quarrels and disagreements in the Church of Christ, as being contrary to the teaching of the Gospel and the holy canons of our blessed fathers, on which the holy Church is established and which adorn human society and lead it to Divine piety. 2. In accordance with the holy canons, we proclaim that those who accept such division according to races and who dare to base on it hitherto unheard-of racial assemblies are foreign to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are real schismatics.’<sup>340</sup>

The leaders of the Churches of Serbia and Russia refused to attend this Council, and Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem refused to sign, which led to his uncanonical deposition for being a “Muscovite traitor”.<sup>341</sup> Nevertheless, the Churches of Russia, Jerusalem, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania remained in communion with both the Greeks and the Bulgars.<sup>342</sup> As Sir Richard Evans writes, “In 1874 the Christian population of the bishoprics of Skopje and Ohrid voted in 1874 to join [the Exarchate] by 91 per cent and 97 per cent respectively, bringing a substantial part of Macedonia under the control of the Bulgarian Church.”<sup>343</sup> Leonidas Pittas writes: “Aside from the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria (which before 1878 was the Vilayet of the Danube), the Exarchate extended throughout the Ottoman Vilayets of Eastern Rumelia, Adrianople, Constantinople, Salonica, and Monastir. Abdulaziz I granted the right to each village to hold a referendum on which ecclesiastical jurisdiction to join. In some regions all the villages went over to the Exarchate. In other regions only some, and many times villages were split between the two. Thus, throughout the same regions, the Exarchate and the Patriarchate maintained parallel ecclesiastical administrations.”<sup>344</sup>

Bishop Theophan the Recluse was completely on the side of the Bulgars: “The ‘East’ does not understand the Bulgarian affair. For them the Bulgarians are guilty. But in fact they are not guilty. They could not of themselves separate from the patriarchate – and they did not separate, but asked [to separate]. But when they asked, the patriarchate was obliged to let them go... How did we [the Russian Church] separate from the patriarchate?! We stopped sending [candidates to the metropolitanate] to

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<sup>340</sup> Pavlenko, “The Heresy of Phyletism: History and the Present”, *Vertograd-Inform*, (English edition), September, 1999. The full report of the special commission can be found in Hildo Boas and Jim Forest, *For the Peace from Above: an Orthodox Resource Book*, Syndesmos, 1999; in “The Heresy of Racism”, *In Communion*, Fall, 2000, pp. 16-18.

<sup>341</sup> “A Truthful Evaluation of 1872 Council of Constantinople and Phyletism”, <https://ssjgblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/30/a-truthful-look-at-the-1872-council-of-constantinople-and-phyletism/>

<sup>342</sup> See K. Dinkov, *Istoria na B'lgarskata Ts'rkva (A History of the Bulgarian Church)*, Vratsa, 1953, pp. 80-96; D. Kosev, “Bor'ba za samostoyatel'na natsionalna tserkva” (The Struggle for an Independent National Church), in *Istoria na B'lgaria (A History of Bulgaria)*, Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1987, vol. 6, pp. 124-188 (in Bulgarian); Fr. German Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “Novij podkhod k greko-bolgarskomu raskolu 1872 goda” (A New Approach to the Greco-Bulgarian Schism), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1987 (I), pp. 193-200.

<sup>343</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 462.

<sup>344</sup> Pittas, personal communication, May 26, 2015.

them, and that was the end of it. That is what they [the Bulgars] have done. The patriarchate is guilty. But their Council which condemned the Bulgarians was the height of disorder. There it was the Hellene γένος that ruled."

For many Russians the conciliar condemnation of nationalism carried little weight because it came from the patriarchate that they considered the first sinner in this respect. Thus D.A. Khomiakov wrote. "Is not 'pride in Orthodoxy' nothing other than the cultural pride of the ancient Greek? And, of course, the true 'phyletism', formulated for the struggle against the Bulgarians, is precisely characteristic of the Greeks themselves to a much greater extent than the Bulgarians, Serbs, Syrians and others. With them it is only a protest against the basic phyletism of the Greeks. The contemporary Greek considers himself the exclusive bearer of pure Orthodoxy..."<sup>345</sup>

Again, Professor Nicholas Glubokovsky wrote: "Greek nationalism historically merged with Orthodoxy and protected it by its own self-preservation, while it in its turn found a spiritual basis for its own distinctiveness. Orthodoxy and Hellenism were united in a close mutuality, which is why the first began to be qualified by the second. And Christian Hellenism realized and developed this union precisely in a nationalist spirit. The religious aspect was a factor in national strivings and was subjected to it, and it was not only the Phanariots who made it serve pan-hellenic dreams. These dreams were entwined into the religious, Orthodox element and gave it its colouring, enduing the Byzantine patriarch with the status and rights of 'ethnarch' for all the Christian peoples of the East, and revering him as the living and animated image of Christ (Matthew Blastaris, in his 14th century *Syntagma*, 8). As a result, the whole superiority of the spiritual-Christian element belonged to Hellenism, and could be apprehended by others only through Hellenism. In this respect the enlightened Grigorios Byzantios (or Byzantijsky, born in Constantinople, metropolitan of Chios from 1860, of Heraklion in 1888) categorically declared that 'the mission of Hellenism is divine and universal'. From this source come the age-old and unceasing claims of Hellenism to exclusive leadership in Orthodoxy, as its possessor and distributor. According to the words of the first reply (in May, 1576) to the Tübingen theologians of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Jeremiah II (+1595), who spoke in the capacity of a 'successor of Christ' (introduction), the Greek 'holy Church of God is the mother of the Churches, and, by the grace of God, she holds the first place in knowledge. She boasts without reproach in the purity of her apostolic and patristic decrees, and, while being new, is old in Orthodoxy, and is placed at the head', which is why 'every Christian church must celebrate the Liturgy exactly as she [the Greco-Constantinopolitan Church] does (chapter 13). Constantinople always displayed tendencies towards Church absolutism in Orthodoxy and was by no means well-disposed towards the development of autonomous national Churches, having difficulty in recognizing them even in their hierarchical equality. Byzantine-Constantinopolitan Hellenism has done nothing to strengthen national Christian distinctiveness in the Eastern patriarchates and has defended its own governmental-hierarchical hegemony by all means, fighting against the national independence of Damascus (Antioch) and Jerusalem. At the end of the 16th century Constantinople by no means fully accepted the independence of the Russian Church and was not completely reconciled to Greek autocephaly (from the middle of the 19th century), while in relation to the Bulgarian Church they

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<sup>345</sup> Khomiakov, *Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost'* (Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality), Minsk: Belaruskaya Gramata, 1997, p. 19.

extended their nationalist intolerance to the extent of an ecclesiastical schism, declaring her (in 1872) in all her parts to be 'in schism'. It is a matter of great wonder that the champions of extreme nationalism in the ecclesiastical sphere should then (in 1872) have recognized national-ecclesiastical strivings to be impermissible in others and even labelled them 'phyletism', a new-fangled heresy."<sup>346</sup>

Nevertheless, ecclesiastical nationalism, or phyletism, was a major problem that would get worse in the coming decades leading to the First World War. So to that extent the Greek anathema on phyletism was legitimate and necessary. Moreover, on the strictly canonical issue, the Greeks were right and the Bulgarians were wrong.

Perhaps the most balanced judgement came from the Philhellene Leontiev. Although he supported the Greeks on the purely canonical issue, he thought that both sides were equally responsible for the schism: "Both you [Greeks] and the Bulgarians can equally be accused of *phyletism*, that is, of introducing ethnic interests into Church questions, and in the use of religion as a political weapon. But the difference lies in the fact that Bulgarian *phyletism* is defensive, while yours is offensive. Their phyletism seeks only to mark out the boundaries of their tribe; yours seeks to cross the boundaries of Hellenism..."<sup>347</sup>

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Cyril Hovorun has an interesting take on the 1872 Council, distinguishing between two kinds of nationalism: "One is 'ethnic' nationalism, and the other is 'imperial' or 'civilizational' nationalism. The former helps shape an 'imagined community' (to use the famous phrase of Benedict Anderson), sharing the same language, culture, and ethnic origin. The latter also shapes an imagined community; however, this community can include several languages and cultures, as well as peoples with different ethnic backgrounds, because they more highly value their belonging to a common political milieu – in other words, an empire. When there is no acknowledged empire, people instead tend to think that they belong to a common 'civilization.' This imperial/civilizational identity may lead to imperial/civilizational nationalism—a feeling of superiority over other civilizations.

"Imperial/civilizational nationalism is larger and less particularistic than ethnic nationalism. Nevertheless, it is not large enough for Christianity. Neither type of nationalism is compatible with Christianity, which is opposed to the idea of superiority on the basis of any criterion, including ethnic and civilizational criteria. Furthermore, these two types of nationalism are incompatible with each other. Although their nature is similar (nationalistic), they are enemies. The bloodiest battle in human history was between extreme examples of these two nationalisms: Nazism was a monster grown from ethnic nationalism, and its rival in the World War II, Soviet Communism, was another monster, but one which grew from a class-based quasi-imperial nationalism. The initial friendship between Stalin and Hitler—founded on their opposition to the free democratic world—and their subsequent deadly clash,

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<sup>346</sup> Glubokovsky, "Pravoslavie po ego sushchestvu" (Orthodoxy in its essence), in *Tserkov' i Vremia* (The Church and Time), 1991, pp. 5-6.

<sup>347</sup> Leontiev, "Panslavism i Greki" (Pan-Slavism and the Greeks), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

together reveal the homogeneity of the two nationalisms on the one hand and the existential incompatibility of their purposes on the other.

“It is particularly tragic when a nation is affected by both sorts of nationalism. This is the case with the Greek people. Since the beginning of the struggle for the independence of a Hellenic state in the early nineteenth century, proponents of Greek ethnic nationalism were confronted by advocates of Greek imperial nationalism, such as the Phanariots. Later, these bearers of imperial nationalism were succeeded by adherents to the idea of ‘Greek civilization,’ in the form of either the Megali Idea or the Romeosyne. The two groups still wrestle with each other in modern Greek political discourse. For instance, the famous philosopher and publicist Christos Yannaras, who leads the group of ‘civilizational’ nationalists, tirelessly attacks what he calls the ‘Neo-hellenic’ or ‘Helladitic’ myopia of modern Greek culture and politics.

“We can interpret the 1872 Council as one of the battlefields between ethnic and civilizational nationalisms. Ethnic particularism was condemned there under the name of ‘ethnophyletism.’ However, it appears that it was condemned from the perspective of its rival, imperial/civilizational nationalism. The latter was supported by the Sublime Porte, which pursued its imperialist interests, and by the Phanariots, who also had in mind the interests of the Ottoman Empire—as far as they coincided with the interests of what Arnold Toynbee would later call ‘the civilization of Hellenism.’ It is remarkable that the Council of Constantinople was not attended or endorsed by the other Churches that pursued ethnic agendas or represented an alternative imperial/civilizational nationalism, such as the Russian Church, which promoted Pan-Slavism. Instead, these Churches perceived the Council as an attack by the Hellenic world against Slavic ethnic particularism.”<sup>348</sup>

The fact that, even while condemning nationalism, the Council was championing Hellenism against Slavism shows how deeply nationalism had penetrated into the Orthodox world. In fact, both Greeks and Slavs belonged to a *single* Orthodox Christian civilization that originated in Byzantium but spread to the Slavic nations. As such, it was not to be linked with one nation primarily or exclusively. Both Greeks and Bulgars were heirs of the truly superior civilization of *Christian Rome*; and both betrayed one of the basic principles of that civilization when they deemed themselves to be intrinsically superior to other bearers of that same civilization...

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<sup>348</sup> Hovorun, “Ethnophyletism, Phyletism, and the Pan-orthodox Council”, based on a presentation given at a meeting of the European Academy of Religion in Bologna, June 18-22, 2017.

## 2!. AT THE GATES OF CONSTANTINOPLE

There had been many wars between Russia and Turkey in the last few centuries, as Russia slowly but steadily expanded south, first towards the northern coast of the Black Sea, and then on towards the Straits and Constantinople herself. But the aim of the war that broke out now was not expansionist: its aim was to rescue the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans, who were suffering persecution at the hands of their Turkish overlords.

The conflict really began in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where, as Andrew Wheatcroft writes, "a series of disconnected incidents, beginning with strident Muslim resistance to the plan that a new Orthodox cathedral being built in Sarajevo would tower over the sixteenth-century Begova mosque, sparked violence. From 1872 onwards there was resistance to Ottoman tax-gatherers, with peasants arming themselves and taking refuge in nearby Montenegro. The local authorities responded, as they usually did, with a knee-jerk brutality: by 1876 hundreds of villages had been burned and more than 5,000 Bosnian peasants killed. Soon the contagion of rebellion began to seep into the Bulgarian provinces. The threat of a general uprising seemed imminent.

"Every piece of revolutionary propaganda and each intelligence report read served to bolster the fear. Was the government in Constantinople to disregard the terrorist threats made by the Bosnian and Bulgarian revolutionaries? The insurgents wrote: 'Herzegovina is fighting; Montenegro is spreading over the mountains and coming with help; Serbia is ready to put its forces on the move; Greece is about to declare war; Rumania will not remain neutral. Is there any doubt that death is hanging over Turkey?' In July 1875, at Nevesinje in Herzegovina, the clan chiefs had met and thrown down a challenge to the Turks. One declared: 'Ever since the damned day of Kosovo [in 1389] the Turk robs us of our life and liberty. Is it not a shame, a shame before all the world, that we bear the arms of heroes and yet are called Turkish subjects? All Christendom waits for us to rise on behalf of our treasured freedom... Today is our opportunity to rebel and to engage in bloody fight.' This guerilla war, in Harold Temperley's view, led directly to the revolt in Bulgaria and all that followed. It was a cruel war on both sides. The first things that the British Consul Holmes [in Sarajevo] saw as he entered Nevesinje were a Turkish boy's head blackening in the sun, and a bloody froth bubbling from the slit throat of a young Turkish girl..."<sup>349</sup>

The Turks replied in kind. When the Bulgars rebelled in the town of Panagyurishte the Turkish irregulars known as "Bashi Bazouks" unleashed a savage wave of reprisals

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<sup>349</sup> Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 260. As Noel Malcolm writes, "the basic cause of popular discontent was agrarian; but this discontent was harnessed in some parts of Bosnia by members of the Orthodox population who had been in contact with Serbia, and who now publicly declared their loyalty to the Serbian state. Volunteers from Serbia, Slavonia, Croatia, Slovenia and even Russia (plus some Italian Garibaldists, and a Dutch adventuress called Johanna Paulus) were flooding into the country, convinced that the great awakening of the South Slavs was at hand. The Bosnian governor assembled an army in Hercegovina, which acted with ineffective brutality during the autumn and harsh winter of 1875-6. The fiercer begs raised their own 'bashi-bazooks' (irregular troops) and, fearing a general overthrow in Bosnia, began terrorizing the peasant population. During 1876, hundreds of villages were burnt down and at least 5000 peasants killed; by the end of the year, the number of refugees from Bosnia was probably 100,000 at least, and possibly 250,000." (*Bosnia: A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1996, p. 132)

that left about 12,000 dead. Many were martyred precisely because they refused to renounce their Orthodox faith for Islam.<sup>350</sup>

"Russia and Germany tried to intervene in Bulgaria in May 1876 with a general plan of reform for the Ottoman provinces in the Balkans, but they were rebuffed by the sultan."<sup>351</sup>

The Serbs and the Montenegrins then declared war on the Turks on 30 June. "This time we have to avenge Kosovo!" said Montenegro's Prince Nikola. "Under Murad I the Serbian empire was destroyed - now during the reign of Murad V it has to rise again."<sup>352</sup>

Western governments at first dismissed reports of atrocities against the Orthodox populations, preferring to believe their ambassadors and consuls rather than *The Daily Telegraph*. Disraeli dismissed public concern about the Bulgarian atrocities as "coffee-house babble". And when a conference was convened in Constantinople by the Great Powers, it failed to put any significant pressure on the Turks.

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Why did Disraeli support Turkey? The answer was: fear and suspicion of Russia, and in particular Russia's supposed desire to conquer India. Tsar Alexander, writing to Queen Victoria through his daughter, the Duchess of Edinburgh, denied that he had any thoughts about either India or Constantinople: all he wanted was to defend his fellow-Slavs.<sup>353</sup> However, Russia had rebuilt her military strength since the Crimean War; and Disraeli thought that Turkey should be supported as a buffer against Russian expansion.

He also proposed giving Queen Victoria the title "Empress of India" in order to stress that the British Empire was fully equal to that of Russia. There was disagreement on the subject. "Some MPs were unconvinced of the need to compete in this way. Surely we British, 'who had ruled India for a hundred years', aid one parliamentarian, 'are not so unsure of ourselves that we need to alter the title of the queen, solely 'in order that our sovereign may be placed on terms of equality with the Emperor of Russia?' Others, however, stressed the dramatic change to the situation in the east, defiantly proclaiming that 'the British hold over Hindoostan is intended to endure', and that therefore 'no part of that territory must be ceded'. That Russia's territories were now only a few days' march from those of Her Majesty's dominions in India was a cause for alarm'. After heated debate in Parliament, the Bill was passed in 1876, proclaiming that Victoria was not only a queen, as she had been crowned nearly four decades earlier, but an empress too. She liked it: at Christmas she sent Disraeli a card signed 'Victoria, Regina et Imperatrix' - Victoria, Queen and Empress.

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<sup>350</sup> "Proslavlenie khristian iz Bataka, muchenicheski postradavshikh za sv. Pravoslavnuuu veru v 1876 godu" (Glorification of the Christians from Batak who suffered martyringly for the holy Orthodox faith in 1876), [http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print\\_page&pid=910](http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=910); Rassophore Monk Euthymius, "The New Martyrs of Batak", *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 2007, p. 8.

<sup>351</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 673.

<sup>352</sup> Tim Judah, *The Serbs*, London and New York: Yale University Press, third edition, 2009, pp. 66, 67

<sup>353</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 260.

“Seemingly superficial steps like this were accompanied by more practical measures in an increasingly tense environment as the British constantly fretted about losing ground to their rivals. Both Britain and Russia became obsessed with setting up networks to spy on each other, to win over the local population and to cultivate those with influence. Colonel Maclean of the Punjab Cavalry and the Indian Political Service was one of those deputed to monitor events in the borderlands between Persia, India and Afghanistan in the 1880s. He established groups of merchants and operatives of local telegraph exchanges and incentivized them to pass on information about what was going on in the region. Maclean homed in on Muslim clerics, providing them with gifts of shawls, carpets, cigars and even diamond rings in order to impress the local population with the benefits of co-operating with Britain. Maclean justified these bribes as a way of channeling support to influential friends. In fact they served to strengthen religious authority across a fractious region that was the focus of intense competition from outside.

“From the British point of view, there was real concern about Russia’s intentions and capabilities and about the threat that its expansion in Central Asia posed to the defences of India. Talk in London turned to military confrontation with Russia, with Disraeli advising the Queen to be ready to authorize British troops to be sent to the Persian Gulf, and [that] the Empress of India should order her armies into the Caspian. So nervy were the authorities that the viceroy, Lord Lytton, ordered not one but two invasions of Afghanistan in 1878-80, installing a puppet ruler on the throne in Kabul. Persia was assiduously courted and persuaded to sign the Heart Convention to which it committed to protect Central Asia against Russian advance. This was no easy task, as Persia had its own interests in the region and was nursing bruises following the recent and unhelpful British intervention that had favoured Afghanistan at its expense. In the meantime, steps were taken to build up contacts beyond Kandahar in order to have better early warning systems for any Russian initiative, military or otherwise...”<sup>354</sup>

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However, opposition to Disraeli's policy of inaction with regard to Turkish atrocities in the Balkans was mounting. In September 1876 Gladstone, his great rival, published *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*: "Let the Turks now carry off their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mindirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall I hope to clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned."

Disraeli, on the other hand, ascribed the violence to the activities of the secret societies, which he said were on the side of Serbia. "Serbia declared war on Turkey, that is to say, the secret societies of Europe declared war on Turkey, societies which have regular agents everywhere, which countenance assassination and which, if necessary, could produce massacre." Then Disraeli and his cabinet, supported by Queen Victoria, decided that if the Russians took Constantinople, this would be a *casus belli*.

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<sup>354</sup> Frankopan, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-298.

For “if the Russians had Constantinople,” thought Disraeli, “they could at any time march their Army through Syria to the mouth of the Nile, and then what would be the use of our holding Egypt. Not even the command of the sea could help us under such circumstances... Our strength is on the sea. Constantinople is the Key of India, and not Egypt and the Suez Canal.”<sup>355</sup>

Public opinion in Russia was also demanding action. Thus the pan-Slavist General Fadeev wrote: “The liberated East of Europe, if it be liberated at all, will require: a durable bond of union, a common head with a common council, the transaction of international affairs and the military command in the hands of the head, the Tsar of Russia, the natural chief of all the Slavs and Orthodox... Every Russian, as well as every Slav and Orthodox Christian, should desire to see chiefly the Russian reigning House cover the liberated soil of Eastern Europe with its branches, under the supremacy and lead of the Tsar of Russia, long recognized, in the expectation of the people, as the direct heir of Constantine the Great.”<sup>356</sup>

But this conception was at least two centuries out of date. Gone were the days when the Greeks longed for the Russian tsar to rule over them “as the direct heir of Constantine the Great”. Greeks, Bulgars and Serbs were far too preoccupied with their dreams of national glory; they welcomed Russian interference, but not as “the Third Rome”, but as providing the blood and money necessary to throw out the Turks and put Greeks, Bulgars and Serbs in charge of the Balkans...

Nevertheless, as Sir Geoffrey Hosking writes, “Army officers, society ladies and merchants formed Slavic Benevolent Committees which called meetings, collected money, and began to send volunteers to fight for the Serbian army. Dostoevskii... preached war against the Turks as a means of achieving ‘eternal peace’. The authorities decided they could not condemn these efforts out of hand, and allowed Russian officers and men to take leave and volunteer for the Serbian army: among them was Fadeyev’s friend, General Mikhail Cherniaev [the conqueror of Tashkent], who soon became an emblematic hero for the Panslavs.”<sup>357</sup>

3500 volunteers eventually crossed the border. Seven hundred Russian officers and two thousand soldiers joined Chernyaev’s home guard.<sup>358</sup> Moreover, borrowing folk tunes and patriotic themes, in the extraordinarily swift period of five days [Peter Ilyich] Tchaikovsky composed the *Slavonic March* or *Marche Slave*, orchestrating it as well. The premiere was an absolute triumph. A member of the audience reported: “The rumpus and roar that broke out beggars description. The whole audience was on its feet. Many jumped on to their seats: cries of *bravo* and *hurrah* were mingled together. The march had to be repeated, after which the same storm broke out afresh. Many in the hall were weeping...”<sup>359</sup>

The Tsar, writes Evans, “had to yield to Pan-Slav pressure to allow volunteers to go and fight with the Serbs. On 11 November, indeed, he praised ‘our volunteers, many

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<sup>355</sup> Disraeli, in A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, London: Arrow Books, 2003, p. 395.

<sup>356</sup> Fadeyev, *Opinion on the Eastern Question* (1876), in Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

<sup>357</sup> Hosking, *Russia: People & Empire*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 371.

<sup>358</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 263.

<sup>359</sup> John Suchet, *Tchaikovsky. The Man Revealed*, London: Elliott & Thompson, 2018, p. 147.

of whom have paid with their blood for the cause of Slavdom'. But the Serbs did not do well. They had failed to train their forces, and they only had 460 officers, augmented by 700 Russian volunteer officers, to command a rabble of 125,000 peasants. They were poorly armed, with weapons that were either obsolete or homemade, and relied on numbers rather than equipment. Recent Ottoman Army reforms, by contrast, had created an effective force, armed with Martini Henry and Snider-Enfield rifles and Krupp military field artillery. Led by a Russian general [Cherniaev], 68,000 Serbs attacked the Ottoman fortress of Niš and were soundly defeated in August 1876, with 5,000 dead and 9,500 wounded.<sup>360</sup> At this point the Russians stepped in and threatened war on the Ottomans unless peace was concluded on the basis of the *status quo ante*, which it was on 17 February 1877.

"These events had major repercussions in Constantinople. Sultan Abdul-aziz (1830-76) was deposed in a military coup led by the so-called Young Ottomans, most of whom had been educated in western European universities, on 30 May 1876, and murdered a few days later. His successor and nephew, Murad V (1840-1904), was not a strong character; on hearing the news of his uncle's death, he fainted, and on coming round is said to have vomited continuously for a day and a half. The Young Ottomans had wanted Murad to grant a constitution, but he failed to do anything, so they deposed him on grounds of insanity on 31 August 1876 in favour of his brother Abdulhamid II (1842-1918). Realizing the need to keep in with the Young Ottomans, Abdulhamid granted a constitution almost immediately. Together with the defeat of the Serbian Army, this made him for the moment extremely popular. He thus felt strong enough to reject another attempt at international mediation in the so-called London Protocol, agreed by all the major powers on 31 March 1877, which contained a demand for further reforms in the Balkan Provinces..."<sup>361</sup>

The Turks' main weakness consisted in their empire's financial dependence on the West. "Unable to finance its military operations in view of the massive public debt with which it was burdened, amounting by this time to more than half the state's revenue every year, the Ottoman government had declared bankruptcy in 1875. In 1881 an international agreement created the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, which soon had a staff of more than 5,000 officials. It was run by the empire's creditors, effectively on behalf of the British and French banks to which most of the money was owed, and it had the right to collect taxes and customs dues and finance profitable ventures such as railway construction. This humiliating situation continued until after the First World War."<sup>362</sup>

Meanwhile, the Russians were faced with a dilemma. Either they committed themselves officially to war with Turkey, or the cause of the liberation of their brothers under the Turkish yoke, for which every Russian peasant prayed in his daily prayers, would be lost. In November, 1876 the Tsar spoke of the need to defend the Slavs. And his foreign minister Gorchakov wrote that "national and Christian sentiment in Russia... impose on the Emperor duties which His Majesty cannot disregard".

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<sup>360</sup> According to Judah, Cherniaev's troops were "often drunk and had little or no military experience" (*op. cit.*, p. 66). (V.M.)

<sup>361</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 673-674. Cf. Misha Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 132.

<sup>362</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 675.

Ivan Aksakov then took up the Tsar's words, invoking the doctrine of Moscow the Third Rome: "The historical conscience of all Russia spoke from the lips of the Tsar. On that memorable day, he spoke as the descendant of Ivan III, who received from the Paleologi the Byzantine arms and combined them with the arms of Moscow, as the descendant of Catherine and of Peter... From these words there can be no drawing back... The slumbering east is now awakened, and not only the Slavs of the Balkans but the whole Slavonic world awaits its regeneration."<sup>363</sup>

However, not all were in favour of the campaign. One of those was Lev Tolstoy; he expressed his opposition in the epilogue to *Anna Karenina*. In spite of the extreme popularity of the novel as a whole, "not all readers," writes Rosamund Bartlett, "relished the epilogue. Levin's disparaging remarks about the Balkan Question and the Russian Volunteer Movement were highly contentious, and ran exactly counter to those of Tolstoy's great rival Dostoyevsky... Although Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy never met, they were, of course, aware of each other, but were natural antipodes who found many shortcomings in each other's work. As a journalist, it was more or less incumbent upon Dostoyevsky to deliver a verdict on Tolstoy's novel, and after much prevarication he finally came out in print with an opinion of *Anna Karenina* in early 1877. Tolstoy, however, never returned the compliment of publicly commenting on any of Dostoyevsky's fiction, remaining, as always, aloof.

"To begin with, Dostoyevsky was generous with his praise of *Anna Karenina*. He was particularly enthusiastic about Levin as a literary character, and he devoted several pages to the novel in the February issue of his *Diary of a Writer*, the independent monthly journal he had started up in 1876 to explore the character and destiny of the Russian people. But when he read the epilogue he lambasted Levin for being egocentric, unpatriotic and out of touch with the Russian people. He took a dim view of Levin's claim that the Russian people shared his lack of concern for the predicament of the Balkan Slavs, and took strong exception to his declared unwillingness to kill, even if it resulted in the prevention of atrocities. It is here, of course, that we meet in embryonic form the idea of non-resistance to violence which would lie at the heart of the new religious outlook which Tolstoy would develop over the next decade. People like Tolstoy were supposed to be our teachers, Dostoyevsky concluded at the end of his lengthy tirade, but what exactly were they teaching us? Needless to say, Dostoyevsky did not receive a response either in 1877 or in the years leading up to his death in January 1881..."<sup>364</sup>

On April 24, 1877 Russia declared war on Turkey, "but more", argues Hosking, "to preserve Russia's position in the European balance of power than with Panslav aims in mind. At a Slavic Benevolent Society meeting Ivan Aksakov called the Russo-Turkish war a 'historical necessity' and added that 'the people had never viewed any war with such conscious sympathy'. There was indeed considerable support for the

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<sup>363</sup> Almond, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>364</sup> Rosamund Bartlett, *Tolstoy. A Russian Life*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, pp. 249-250. At about the same time (May, 1877) Tolstoy visited Elder Ambrose of Optina. The Elder said prophetically about Tolstoy: "His heart seeks God, but there is muddle and a lack of belief in his thoughts. He suffers from a great deal of pride, spiritual pride. He will cause a lot of harm with his arbitrary and empty interpretation of the Gospels, which in his opinion no one has understood before him, but everything is God's will..." (*op. cit.*, p. 256)

war among peasants, who regarded it as a struggle on behalf of suffering Orthodox brethren against the cruel and rapacious infidel. A peasant elder from Smolensk province told many years later how the people of his village had been puzzled as to 'Why our Father-Tsar lets his people suffer from the infidel Turks?', and had viewed Russia's entry into the war with relief and satisfaction."<sup>365</sup>

However, the Russians had to reckon, not only with the Turks, but also with the western great powers, and especially Britain... "British interests in the Balkans," writes Roman Golicz, "derived from wider economic interests in India via the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1858 the British Government had taken direct control over Indian affairs. Since 1869 the Suez Canal had provided it with a direct route to India. Britain needed to secure the shipping routes which passed through areas, like Suez, that were nominally Turkish."<sup>366</sup>

Or rather, that was the theory. In fact, Russia presented no real threat to British interests in India. The real cause of British hostility to Russian expansion was simply visceral jealousy - the jealousy of the world's greatest maritime empire in relation to the world's greatest land-based empire. As Selishchev writes: "If Palmerston unleashed the Crimean war, then Disraeli was ready to unleash war with Russia in 1877-78, in order, as he wrote to Queen Victoria, to save the Ottoman state and 'cleanse Central Asia from the Muscovites and throw them into the Caspian sea.'"<sup>367</sup>

Palmerston himself commented once that "these half-civilized governments such as those of China, Portugal, Spanish America require a Dressing every eight or ten years to keep them in order".

"And no one who knew his views on Russia," writes Dominic Lieven, "could doubt his sense that she too deserved to belong to this category."<sup>368</sup>

In the spring of 1877 the Russian armies crossed the River Prut into the Romanian Principalities. Then, with Romanian support, they crossed the Danube, cut off Plevna and defeated the Turks who tried to break out of the city. On December 9, Osman Pasha with 2,000 officers and 44,000 men surrendered and went into captivity. Meanwhile, Russian armies had captured Kars in the Caucasus, capturing 17,000 men. On December 23, the Russians conquered Sofia, then defeated the Turks at Plovdiv and scaled the Shipka Pass. Meanwhile, in the East General Loris-Melikov stormed Kars and Erzerum. Finally, on January 8, Adrianople (Edirne), only a short march from Constantinople, was seized...

The Russians were now in a similar position to where they had been in the war of 1829-31, when Tsar Nicholas I had reached Adrianople but held back from conquering Constantinople because he did not have the support of the Concert of Europe. Now, however, the Concert no longer existed, and the commander-in-chief of the Russian

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<sup>365</sup> Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

<sup>366</sup> Golicz, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>367</sup> Selischev, "Chto neset Pravoslaviu proekt 'Velikoj Albanii'?" (What will the project of a 'Greater Albania' bring for Orthodoxy), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 2 (1787), January 15/28, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>368</sup> Lieven, *Empire*, London: John Murray, 2000, p. 213.

armies and brother of the Tsar, Grand Duke Nicholas, wrote to the Tsar: "We must go to the centre, to Tsargrad, and there finish the holy cause you have assumed."

He was not the only one who clamoured for the final, killer blow: "'Constantinople must be ours,' wrote Dostoyevsky, who saw its conquest by the Russian armies as nothing less than God's own resolution of the Eastern Question and as the fulfillment of Russia's destiny to liberate Orthodox Christianity.

"It is not only the magnificent port, not only the access to the seas and oceans, that binds Russia as closely to the resolution... of this fateful question, nor is it even the unification and regeneration of the Slavs. Our goal is more profound, immeasurably more profound. We, Russia, are truly essential and unavoidable both for the whole of Eastern Christendom and for the whole fate of future Orthodoxy on the earth, for its unity. This is what our people and their rulers have always understood. In short, this terrible Eastern Question is virtually our entire fate for years to come. It contains, as it were, all our goals and, mainly, our only way to move out into the fullness of history."<sup>369</sup>

However, there were powerful reasons that made the Russians hesitate on the eve of what would have been their greatest victory. First, and most obviously, there was the fierce opposition of the western great powers, and especially Britain. The entire British Mediterranean Squadron was steaming towards the Dardanelles, dispatched by Disraeli as British public opinion turned "jingoistic":

*We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men, and we've got the money too;  
We've fought the bear before, and while we're Britons true,  
The Russians shall not have Constantinople.*

Under the influence of this threat, the Russians agreed not to send troops into Constantinople if no British troops were landed on either side of the Straits... Then, on March 3, at the village of San Stefano, just outside Constantinople, they signed a treaty with the Turks, whereby the latter recognized the full independence of Romania, Serbia and Montenegro. "A large independent state of Bulgaria was set up stretching right across the Balkan peninsula and with a coastline on the Aegean Sea. Bulgaria was to be administered by Russia 'for an initial period'; she would have the use of the Aegean coastline which would enable her to by-pass the Dardanelles... Serbia, Montenegro and Romania were recognized as independent of Turkey; but there was no mention of Bosnia-Herzegovina being given to Austria-Hungary, which had been hinted at as a reward for Austria's remaining neutral."<sup>370</sup>

"The Treaty also... required a heavy financial indemnity from Turkey [310 million rubles]; it gave to Russia the right to select a port on the Black Sea; it opened up the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus at all times to Russian vessels; it obtained full rights for all Christians remaining under Turkish rule; and it gave Bessarabia to Russia in

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<sup>369</sup> Dostoyevsky, in Orlando Figes, *Crimea*, London: Allen Lane, 2010, p. 462.

<sup>370</sup> Lowe, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

exchange for the corner of Bulgaria known as Dobruja."<sup>371</sup> The forts of Ardagan, Kars, Batum and Bayzet in the Caucasus were given to Russia.

In little more than 20 years the Russian defeat in the Crimean war had been avenged. It was indeed a great victory for the Orthodox armies...

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However, the Great Powers were determined to rob Russia of the fruits of her victory by diplomatic means. Dominic Lieven points out that "before embarking on the struggle, Petersburg agreed with Vienna to limit its war aims and offer territorial compensation to the Habsburgs. In 1877-78, spectacular victories brought the Russian army to the gates of Constantinople. In the excitement, the hero of the Russian nationalist and Slavophile camp, Count Nikolai Ignatiev, was allowed to ignore the promises to Austria and to impose a punitive peace on the Ottomans. In part, this reflected the weak control over policy exercised by Alexander II and his aging foreign minister, Prince Alexander Gorchakov. Britain and Austria threatened war unless the terms of the peace were revised. At this point, control over Russian foreign policy was seized by the ambassador in London, Count Petr Shuvalov, who persuaded Alexander II to agree on a compromise with London and Vienna. The terms of this deal were thrashed out at a congress held in Berlin in 1878 under the chairmanship of the German chancellor, Prince Bismarck.

"The events of 1875-78 resonated right down to the First World War in important ways. The crisis revealed the battles over foreign policy within the ruling elite. Petr Shuvalov came from one of Russia's richest and best-connected aristocratic families. Both in his person and in his policies, he was the epitome of the 'court' party. His struggle with Nikolai Ignatiev was perceived by much of public opinion as a perfect illustration of how a cosmopolitan Petersburg elite appeased foreign powers at the expense of the national cause. Meanwhile, for foreign observers the chief lesson learned from these years was that nationalist and Slavophile public opinion could push the government into a war that the tsar did not want and could result in policies that risked confrontation with the other powers. No foreign diplomat ever ignored public opinion again or imagined that in autocratic Russia only the emperor and his foreign minister mattered. But the biggest single result of the crisis was the lasting damage it caused to Russo-German relations.

"Ever since Russia had rescued Prussia from Napoleon's dominion in 1813, the Russo-Prussian alliance had been a constant element in international relations. Alone among the European powers, Prussia had not opposed Russia during the Crimean War. Tsar Alexander II not only remained neutral while Prussia united Germany under its rule but also stopped Austria from intervening on France's side in 1870. Russia had not gone unrewarded for taking this stance. At the end of the Crimean War, the victorious Anglo-French coalition had imposed a peace treaty on Russia that denied it the right to a navy or land fortifications on the Black Sea coast. This was not just humiliating but also a great threat to Russian security. With France defeated and Britain isolated in 1871, Alexander II took the opportunity to force Europe to accept Russia's right to rebuild its land and sea defences in the south. Despite this gain,

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<sup>371</sup> Golicz, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

Russian public opinion continued to believe that Prussia-Germany was in Russia's debt for Russian support both against Napoleon and in the wars of German unification. When at the Congress of Berlin, Bismarck played the role of chairman and 'honest broker', Russian nationalist opinion boiled over. It failed to recognize that Bismarck's efforts had helped Russia to avoid a potentially disastrous confrontation with Austria and Britain. The raging of Russian public opinion helped to persuade Bismarck to sign the Dual Alliance with Austria in 1879, which committed Germany to defend the Habsburg Empire against Russian aggression.

"Perhaps the break between Germany and Russia would have come in any case. Alexander II might rejoice in the victories over France in 1870-71 of his favourite uncle, Kaiser William I, but his generals immediately saw a united Germany as a threat and began to plan to defend Russia against it. Regardless of government policies, there were deep currents in public opinion pushing toward Germanic solidarity in central Europe. Even leaving these aside, Bismarck had good practical reasons for backing Austria against Russia. Russia was stronger than Austria and might well destroy it in single combat, with dangerous consequences for the European balance of power and internal policies in Germany. Should the Habsburg Empire collapse, Berlin would probably be forced to intervene on behalf of the Austrian-Germans. This might result in a European war. Berlin might even need to absorb the Austrian-Germans into its own empire. Because this would turn the Protestant and Prussian-dominated *Reich* into a country with a Catholic majority, this was a prospect both Bismarck and all traditional Prussians dreaded..."<sup>372</sup>

The Congress agreed that all Russian troops should be withdrawn from the area around Constantinople, and Greater Bulgaria cut down into two smaller, non-contiguous areas.

Britain opportunistically took this opportunity to add Cyprus to her dominions. Thus before the Russo-Turkish war was over, "Indian troops were dispatched to occupy Cyprus, since it was deemed necessary for Britain to have a Mediterranean base to strengthen her negotiating position with Russia. By the time the sepoys had warmed up their first billycan of curry on Cypriot soil, the Russo-Turkish crisis was over. Rather than withdraw from the island, Britain held on to Cyprus."<sup>373</sup>

Serbia, Montenegro and Romania were recognized as independent States (on condition that they gave full rights to the Muslims and Jews), but Serbia and Montenegro lost the acquisitions they had made in the war. To Romania's intense annoyance, Russia gained Bessarabia, the mainly Romanian-speaking province that she had annexed in 1812 and lost in 1856. For this she earned the hatred of the Romanians, who had fought alongside the Russians in the war...

Bosnia, Herzegovina and Novi Bazar were left nominally under Ottoman rule but were from now on to be administered by Austria, which had played no part in the war.<sup>374</sup> In that region, "conflicts began almost immediately with an ethnic Albanian

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<sup>372</sup> Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, pp. 77-79.

<sup>373</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

<sup>374</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 677.

rebellion against Montenegro, and a Macedonian uprising against the Ottomans. Muslims in Bosnia, as in Albania, rebelled against the Christian rule imposed by the Treaty of Berlin. There was a peasant revolt in Serbia...<sup>375</sup>

Most serious was the awarding of the administration of Bosnia to Austria, which enraged the Serbs. In this way, as Archpriest Lev Lebedev pointed out, a mine was laid at the base of the structure of international relations that would later explode into the First World War...<sup>376</sup>

Russia gained nothing from the war of 1877-78, in which they had expended so much blood and money, except for Batum and Kars in the Caucasus. The Bulgarians proved to be less than amenable to Russian interests. As for the Serbs, "Indignant at Russian support for their Bulgarian rival, they had become clients of Vienna."<sup>377</sup>

Perhaps this is why by this time Dostoyevsky was becoming disillusioned with the Balkan Slavs. "Russia will never have, and never has had, such haters, enviers, slanderers and even open enemies as all these Slavic tribes. Immediately Russia liberates them [this was written in December 1877], and Europe agrees to recognize them as liberated, they will begin their new life, after their liberation, by asking Europe - England and Germany, for example - for the guarantee of their protection of their freedom, and although Russia will be in the concert of European states, they will do that to defend themselves from Russia.

"They will unfailingly begin by saying within themselves, if not out loud, and persuade themselves that they are not obliged to show the slightest gratitude to Russia: on the contrary, they have just saved themselves from Russian ambition by concluding peace through the intervention of the European concert, for if Europe had not intervened, Russian would have swallowed them up immediately, 'having in mind the expansion of their frontiers and the foundation of a great Pan-Slavic empire, enslaving the Slavs to the greedy, cunning and barbaric Great Russian tribe.'

"Perhaps a whole century, or even more, will pass, and then they will constantly tremble for their freedom and fear the ambition of Russia; they will suck up to the European states, and will slander Russia, will gossip about her and intrigue against her.

"Oh, I'm not talking about individual people: there will be those who will understand what Russia meant, means and will always mean for them. But these people, especially at the beginning, will be in such a small minority that they will be subject to mockery, hatred and even political persecution.

"It will be especially pleasant for the liberated Slavs to say and proclaim to the whole world that they are educated tribes, capable of the highest European culture, while Russia is a barbaric country, a dark, northern colossus that is not even of pure Slavic blood, the persecutor and hater of European civilization.

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<sup>375</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 678.

<sup>376</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, p. 349.

<sup>377</sup> Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, p. 80.

“From the beginning, of course, they will have constitutional government, parliaments, responsible ministers, orators, speeches. This will be of extraordinary comfort and joy for them. They will exultant on reading about themselves in the Paris and London newspaper, about telegrams informing the whole world that after a long parliamentary storm the ministry for (such-and-such a country) has finally fallen and a new one has been formed from the liberal majority and that a certain (such-and-such a surname) has finally agreed to accept the portfolio of the President of the Council of Ministers.

“Russia has to make serious preparations for the time when all these liberated Slavs will exultantly rush into Europe, completely losing themselves in their delight in European political and social customs. In this way they will be forced to live through a whole long period of Europeanism before they attain anything of their Slavic significance and of their particular Slavic calling in the midst of humanity...

“It goes without saying that at some moment of serious disaster they will unflinchingly turn to Russia for help. However they hate and gossip and slander us to Europe, flirting with her and affirming their love for her, still they will always instinctively feel (of course at the moment of disaster, not before), that Europe was and always will remain the natural enemy of their unity, and that if they survive on the earth, it will, of course, be because there is a huge magnet – Russia, which, unconquerably drawing them to herself, will thereby maintain their integrity and unity.”<sup>378</sup>

However, between 1878 and 1881 Russia was hardly a magnet, but rather the opposite: in a critical state, her tsar discredited and under attack from terrorists at home, and her foreign policy in tatters. Nevertheless, Constantinople and the Straits would not cease to be vitally important to the Russian public and Russian politicians, whose nationalist wing could continue to threaten it – and not only for political or military reasons, to put pressure on the Turks and liberate the Balkan Slavs. By the early twentieth century, the Straits were even more important to the Russians than Suez was to the British, or Panama to the Americans, for economic reasons. It not only shortened trade routes for nearly half Russia’s exports; effectively, it was the *only* trade route for her most important export, grain. So as time passed, and the Ottoman empire became weaker, and the competition between the great powers increased (Germany taking Britain’s place as the power with the greatest influence in the City), Dostoyevsky’s cry became ever louder: “Constantinople will be ours!”

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<sup>378</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, September-December, 1877.

## 22. THE RISE OF JEWISH POWER

The triumph of the Jewish Disraeli at the Congress of Berlin resurrected an old concern that was becoming acute again in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe: the Jewish question. Were important Jewish politicians and bankers such as Disraeli, Crémieux and the Rothschilds to be seen as working for their national governments in the first place (Britain or France usually) or as part of a Jewish government working independently of the Gentile nations and exclusively for Jewish national interests? After all, had not Disraeli been the prime architect of Russia's humiliation at the Berlin Congress? And was it really just a coincidence that immediately after the Congress, "in 1877-78, the House of Rothschild, by agreement with Disraeli, first bought up, and then threw out onto the market in Berlin a large quantity of Russian securities, which elicited a sharp fall in their rate"<sup>379</sup>?

The British-Jewish scholar Sir Isaiah Berlin writes: "Perpetual discussions went on, during the nineteenth century - the most historically conscious of all ages - about whether the Jews were a race, or solely a religion; a people, a community, or merely an economic category. Books, pamphlets, debates increased in volume if not in quality. But there was one persistent fact about this problem, which was in some respects more clearly perceived by the Gentiles than by the Jews themselves: namely, that if they were only a religion, this would not have needed quite so much argument and insistence; while if they were nothing but a race, this would not have been denied quite so vehemently as it has been by persons who nevertheless professed to denote a unique group of human beings by the term 'Jew'.

"It gradually became clear, both to Jews and to those who took an interest in their affairs, that in fact they constituted an anomaly, which could not be defined in terms of the ordinary definition of nations, as applied at any rate to European nations; and that any attempt to classify them in such terms would lead to unnatural, artificial and Procrustean consequences. Despite passionate denials of this proposition from many sides, it became increasingly clear to almost everyone who approached the problem from outside that the Jews were a unique combination of religion, race and people; that they could not be classified in normal terms, but demanded an extraordinary description, and their problem an extraordinary solution."<sup>380</sup>

The problem was made more complex by the fact that there were large differences between the Sephardic Jews of the West, who were not particularly numerous and were in general striving for assimilation, and the more numerous, poorer and more religious Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe, whose attitude to the Gentiles among whom they lived was disdainful and hostile. Correspondingly, governments in East and West took very different views of "the Jewish problem". In the West, the Jews were disliked, not so much for their Talmudic religious beliefs, of which most Westerners were profoundly ignorant, as for their racial characteristics, whether real or imaginary. In the East, however, the Jews were discriminated against, not on racial but on religious grounds, as is proved by the fact that the Karaite Jews, who rejected the Talmud, were freed of all restrictions by the Russian government.

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<sup>379</sup> V. Zombardt, in O.A. Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998, p. 275.

<sup>380</sup> Berlin, "The Origins of Israel", *The Power of Ideas*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2000, pp. 143-144.

The question that all governments had to answer was: what were the real intentions of the Jews? Just a place under the sun like every other nation? Or something more, perhaps even world domination?

Certainly, the Jews were beginning to organize themselves on the international scene. The *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (in Hebrew: *Khaburi Menitsi Indrumim*, "Brotherhood Arousing the Sleepy") was founded in 1860 in Paris with a Central Committee led by Adolphe Crémieux, at one time the minister of justice in the French government. It was the first of a series of national Jewish organisations, such as the Anglo-Jewish Association in Great Britain, the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* in Germany and the *Israelitische Allianz zu Wien* in Austria, which began to campaign for Jewish rights in this period. Although the Alliance considered itself to be motivated by universalist sentiments, it did not disguise the fact that its aim was the defence of the Jewish faith: "Universal union is among our aspirations without any doubt, and we consider all men our brothers, but just as the family comes before strangers in the order of affection, so religion inspires and memory of common oppression fortifies a family sentiment that in the ordinary course of life surpasses others... Finally, there is the decisive consideration for not going beyond the religious confraternity: all other important faiths are represented in the world by nations - embodied, that is to say, in governments that have a special interest and an official duty to represent and speak for them. Ours alone is without this important advantage; it corresponds neither to a state nor to a society nor again to a specific territory: it is no more than a rallying-cry for scattered individuals - the very people whom it is therefore essential to bring together."<sup>381</sup>

Already in 1861 Crémieux wrote: "The Messianism of the new era must arise and develop; the Jerusalem of the New World Order, which is established in holiness between the East and Asia, must occupy the place of two forces: the kings and the popes... Nationality must disappear. Religion must cease to exist. Only Israel will not cease to exist, since this little people is chosen by God."<sup>382</sup>

These words show that concerns about rising Jewish power were not just anti-semitic prejudice. Moreover, there were prominent Jews who believed that members of their own race were striving precisely for world domination. Thus Benjamin Disraeli, the Christianized Jew and British Prime Minister, "made sensational statements about Jewish and secret society conspiracies' running Europe's public affairs. In *Coningsby*, a novel published in 1844, he had one character declare that 'The first Jesuits were Jews... that mighty revolution which is at this moment preparing in Germany,... and of which so little is yet known in England, is entirely developing under the auspices of Jews.' Two pages further, a character makes an even more ominous statement, one quoted time and again by conspiracy theorists: 'So you see, my dear Coningsby, that the world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes.' Nor did Disraeli confine himself to making such statements in fictional works. In a biographical work of 1852, he asserted that Jews 'wish to destroy that ungrateful Christendom.' He even took his conspiracism to the floor of Parliament, announcing in 1856 that 'a British Minister has boasted - and a very unwise boast it was

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<sup>381</sup> Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-486.

<sup>382</sup> Crémieux, *Archives Israelites (Israelite Archives)*, 1861, N 25.

- that he had only to hold up his hand and he could raise a revolution in Italy to-morrow. It was an indiscreet boast, but I believe it not impossible, with the means at his disposal, that he might succeed. What would happen? You would have a republic formed on extreme principles.'"<sup>383</sup>

Were these just aspirations, or was there really a secret government in existence in order to put them into effect? Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov wrote: "The main defender of this thesis is Copen Albancelli. His argumentation is based not so much on any factual data, of which, in essence, there are none, as on logic.

"The question,' he writes, 'can be summarized in very few words. In order that the descendants of the ancient nation of the Jews should preserve the ideal of this nation, it is necessary that their generations should be bound amongst themselves in space and time by one organization, one government. This is necessary for the simple reason that the Jewish race is ruled by the same laws of nature as all other races. This government, it is true, has not manifested itself since the 9th century (the end of the *Resh Golut*), but the conditions of existence ruling over the Jewish people from the time of its dispersal have been such that its government could not exist, if it were well-known. Since it had to exist, it had to become secret.' Perhaps, he says, the majority even of the Jews know nothing about it, but this does not prove its non-existence.

"But where are these ruling circles directing their nation? Since the matter is secret, of course, we can only make guesses, the more so in that no powerful organization and no government has set itself the task of making any kind of investigation into the question whether the Jews have any world plans and how these are to be achieved. In this area we have only the surmises of the anti-Semites, and in particular Copen Albancelli, which we cannot fail to mention for lack of any more positive material. Copen Albancelli's assertions come down to the following. But first we must note that Albancelli was a Freemason for quite a long time (eight years) and attained in it the degree of Rosicrucian, which is quite high in the degrees of classification - the 18th degree. True, Copen Albancelli considers that after the 33 degrees of capitularies a new layer of the organization of Masonry begins - an 'invisible' layer, and on top of that yet another layer of the now [purely] Jewish administration of Masonry. But although, in this way, Copen Albancelli was still far from the highest degrees, nevertheless with great skill he was able to notice and listen into a lot. However they may be, these are his presuppositions.

"First of all, he considers that the secret Jewish government has as its weapon of influence in the extra-Jewish world - precisely the Masonic organization, which subconsciously carries out the aims of the Jewish government. But the aim of the latter is the universal dominion of the Jews.

"The aim of the Masonic machinations,' says Copen, 'is not the destruction but the submission of the Christian world. The Jewish Secret Government (*Pouvoir Occulte*) wishes to destroy *the Christian spirit* because the Christian spirit constitutes the true defence of the world born from it. In exactly the same way if this secret government destroyed the French monarchy, it was only because this monarchy was the best

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<sup>383</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy*, p. 32.

defence of France.' 'The dream [of universal mastery] is supported in the heart of the Jewish people by its religion. The Jews at first thought that mastery would come about sometime, would be given to their race by a triumphant Messiah. But now the idea has spread amongst them that the word 'Messiah' must be applied not to a certain son of the Israelite race, but to the race itself, and that the conquest of the world can be carried out without the use of weapons. They are now convinced that the future victor will be the Jewish people itself, and that the Messianic times are those in which this people will succeed in subduing to itself the world begotten by the Christian Messiah, who has for so long taken the place appointed for the true messiah, that is, the Jews themselves.'

"The dream of universal dominion, continues Copen, is not new to humanity. Other peoples also dreamed of universal dominion. 'Perhaps this idea was not always the ruling one for Israel to the extent that it is now.' It developed gradually. But to the degree that they seized the most powerful weapon - gold - this dream matured. The successes of Masonry strengthened it. 'Jewry has begun to see the growth of its might in every corner of the globe in proportion as the power of the solidarity, and consequently resistance of the Christian races has declined as the result of the loss of tradition. Its government sees everything while not being seen by anyone. For that reason it probably bursts out when nobody is even thinking of defending himself against it, since nobody knows of its existence. In such conditions it would be complete senselessness on the part of the Jewish government if it did not come to the idea of conquering the world which nothing or almost nothing is defending... Having accomplished a miracle - the keeping of the race that had wandered over the world in fidelity to its ancient national ideal - and seeing that the other races senselessly consider progress to be the abandonment of their ideals the Jewish government must have recognized itself capable of giving its own people rule over the whole world.'

"But in order to secure dominion a new organization of the subject races is needed. Every ruler over peoples strives to give them an organization adapted to the possibility of administering them. For the Jews in this respect it was necessary to destroy nationality. This is now taking place under the banner of progress. But in the place of an organization growing on the soil of nationality, another one is needed: it is being prepared in the form of socialism.

"'We,' says Copen Albancelli, 'are going towards a universal republic because only under it can the financial, industrial and commercial kingdom of the Jews be realized. But under the mask of a republic this kingdom will be infinitely more despotic than any other. This will be absolutely the same mastery as that which man organizes over the animals. The Jewish race will hold us by means of our needs. It will lean on a well-chosen police force, well organized and richly rewarded. Besides this police force, in this new society there will be only administrators, directors and engineers, on the one hand, and workers on the other. The workers will all be non-Jews, while the administrators and engineers will be Jews... The peoples themselves will facilitate the destruction in their midst of every power besides the State, while it will be insinuated to them that the State possessing everything is they themselves. They will not cease to work on their own enslavement until the Jews will tell them: "Excuse us, you have not understood us in the right way. The all-possessing State is not you, but *we*." Then the peoples will try to rebel, but it will be too late, for their moral and material springs that

are necessary for action will already have disappeared. Flocks cannot resist dogs trained to watch over them. The only thing that the working world will be able to do is refuse to work. But the Jews will not be so stupid as not to foresee this. They will lay up enough stores for themselves and their guard dogs, while they will starve the resisters to death. If necessary, they will hurl onto the rebels their police force, which will be invincible and provided with the most advanced means of destruction.'

"That is the plan of the Secret Government,' says Copen Albancelli, 'the establishment of the universal dominion of the Jews by means of the organization of collectivism under the form of a universal republic. Masonry will lead us to the realization of this.'"<sup>384</sup>

Nesta Webster confirmed this link between the Jews, Masonry and the aspiration for a world government: "The formula of the 'United States of Europe' and of the 'Universal Republic' [was] first proclaimed by the *Illuminatus* Anacharsis Clootz", whose *La République universelle* was published in 1793. "It has long been the slogan of the French lodges."<sup>385</sup> And "in 1867," writes Lebedev, "the Masons created the 'International League of Peace and Freedom' with Garibaldi at its head. In it for the first time the idea of *the United States of Europe* under Masonic leadership was put forward."<sup>386</sup>

"But of course," notes Tikhomirov, "the very forms of collectivism can give way to a single Jewish national organization."<sup>387</sup> In other words, the Jewish leaders of Masonry might wish to destroy the various nationalisms of Europe in order to create a single socialist republic, but only as a steppingstone to the realisation of their own nationalist dreams. For, as Baruch Levy wrote to Marx: "The Jewish people as a whole will be its own Messiah. It will attain world dominion by the dissolution of other races, by the abolition of frontiers, the annihilation of monarchy, and by the establishment of a world republic in which the Jews will everywhere exercise the privilege of citizenship. In this 'new world order' the children of Israel will furnish all the leaders without encountering opposition. The Governments of the different peoples forming the world republic will fall without difficulty into the hands of the Jews. It will then be possible for the Jewish rulers to abolish private property, and everywhere to make use of the resources of the state. Thus will the promise of the Talmud be fulfilled, in which it is said that when the Messianic time is come, the Jews will have all the property of the whole world in their hands."<sup>388</sup>

Let us look more closely at how the Jewish institutions operated in the Orthodox lands of Eastern Europe.

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<sup>384</sup> Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-378.

<sup>385</sup> Webster, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, Christian Book Club of America, 1924, p. 275.

<sup>386</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 35.

<sup>387</sup> Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, pp. 378

<sup>388</sup> Levy, *La Revue de Paris* (Paris Review), June 1, 1928, p. 574; in Eddie Kadach, "The Jews' God", <http://www.stormfront.org/posterity/ci/tjg.html>.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes that, "'insufficiently informed... about the situation of the Jews in Russia', the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* 'began to interest itself in Russian Jewry', and soon 'began to work for the benefit of the Jews in Russia with great constancy.' The Alliance did not have departments in Russia and 'did not function within her frontiers'. Besides charitable and educational work, the Alliance more than once directly addressed the government of Russia, interceding for Russian Jews, although often inopportunately... Meanwhile, the newly-created Alliance (whose emblem was the Mosaic tablets of the law over the earthly globe), according to the report of the Russian ambassador from Paris, already enjoyed 'exceptional influence on Jewish society in all States'. All this put not only the Russian government, but also Russian society on their guard. [The baptised Jew] Jacob Brafmann also agitated intensively against the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. He affirmed that the Alliance, 'like all Jewish societies, has a two-faced character (its official documents tell the government one thing, but its secret documents another)', that the Alliance's task was 'to guard Judaism from the assimilation with Christian civilization that was harmful to it'...

"Fears about the Alliance were nourished by the original very emotional appeal of the Alliance's organizers 'to the Jews of all countries, and by forgeries. With regard to Jewish unity it declared as follows: Jews,... If you believe that the Alliance is for you - good, and that in constituting a part of various peoples, you nevertheless can have common feelings, desires and hope... if you think that your disunited attempts, good intentions and the strivings of individual people could become a powerful force, uniting into a single whole and going in one direction and to one goal... support us by your sympathy and cooperation'.

"But later there appeared a secondary document which was printed in France - supposedly an appeal of Adolphe Crémieux himself 'To the Jews of the Whole World'. It is very probable that this was a forgery. It is not excluded that it was one of the drafts of an appeal that was not accepted by the organizers of the Alliance (however, it fell in with Brafman's accusations that the Alliance had hidden aims): 'We live in foreign lands and we cannot interest ourselves in the passing interests of these countries as long as our own moral and material interests are in peril... the Jewish teaching must fill the world...'<sup>389</sup> A sharp controversy broke out in the Russian press,

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<sup>389</sup> "The Union which we want to create is not French, English, Swiss or German; it is Jewish, it is universal. The Jew will not become a friend of the Christian or the Muslim before the light of the Jewish faith, the only religion of reason, shines out everywhere among the other peoples and countries that are hostile to our manners and interests. We first of all want to be and remain Jews; *our nationality is the religion of our fathers, and we do not recognize any authority*. We lived in foreign lands and cannot about the changing desires of countries that are completely alien to us while our own material and moral tasks are in danger.

"The Jewish teaching must fill the whole world... The Christian churches are obstacles to the Jewish cause, and it is necessary in the interests of Jewry not only to fight the Christian churches, but also to annihilate them... Our cause is great and holy, and its success guaranteed. Catholicism, our age-old enemy, lies face down, wounded in the head. The net cast by Israel over the whole earthly globe will spread with each day, and the majestic prophecies of our sacred books will finally be fulfilled. The time is approaching when Jerusalem will become a house of prayer for all peoples, and the banner of Jewish monotheism will be unfurled on distant shores. We will take advantage of circumstances. Our power is huge. We shall learn how to apply it for our cause. What have we to be frightened of? Not far distant is the day when all the riches of the earth will pass into the possession of the children of Israel." (italics mine - V.M.).

at the peak of which I.S. Aksakov in his newspaper *Rus'* concluded that 'the question of the inauthenticity... of the appeal does not in the present case have any particular significance in view of the *authenticity* of the Jewish views and hopes expressed in it'.

"The pre-revolutionary *Jewish Encyclopaedia* writes that in the 70s in the Russian press 'voices in defence of the Jews began to be heard less frequently... In Russian society the thought began to be entrenched that the Jews of all countries were united by a powerful political organization, the central administration of which was concentrated in the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*'. So its creation produced in Russia, and perhaps not only in Russia, a reaction that was the reverse of that aimed at by the Alliance."<sup>390</sup>

The leader of this trend in Russian thought was I.S. Aksakov. Relying especially on Brafman's testimony, he wrote: "The Jews in the Pale of Settlement constitute a 'state within a state', with its own administrative and judicial organs, and with a national government - a state whose centre lies outside Russia, abroad, whose highest authority is the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Paris."<sup>391</sup>

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Another country in which the Alliance's influence was felt was Romania, where the long reign of Prince, later King Carol I (1866-1914) brought much-needed stability and peace. Under Carol, Romania's relations with her neighbours were good (even with Russia - Russians and Romanians fought together in the siege of Pleven in 1877), and the king proved remarkably skillful in controlling the elected politicians. The only major blot on the reign was the bloody suppression of the peasant uprising of 1907 - the peasant problem would not be solved until 1921...

But as far as the West was concerned, Romania's main problem was not her peasants but her *Jews* - or rather, her refusal, like Russia, to treat the Jews in the same way as all other citizens...

"At the beginning of the nineteenth century," writes Barbara Jelavich, "the Danubian Principalities had no problem with minorities as such. Their population was in the vast majority Romanian in nationality and Orthodox in religion. This situation changed, however, in the second half of the century, when Russian Jews moved in ever-increasing numbers into the Habsburg Empire and the Principalities. In 1859 about 118,000 Jews lived in Moldavia and 9,200 in Wallachia. By 1899 the number had increased to 210,000 in Moldavia and 68,000 in Wallachia. They thus formed a minority of about a quarter of a million in a population of 6 million."<sup>392</sup>

According to David Vital, the Jews were in a worse situation in Romania than in Russia. "The Jews of Russia... were citizens. Theirs were diminished rights - as were, for different reasons and in different respects, those of the peasants of Russia as well. But they were not without rights; and both in theory and in administrative practice their legal situation and their freedoms were superior to those of the peasants..."

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<sup>390</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-180.

<sup>391</sup> Aksakov, *Rus'*, October 10, 1881; in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 627.

<sup>392</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans, vol. 2: Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 26.

[However,] contrary to Russian practice, let alone that of the central and western European states, the new rulers of Romania set out not only to deny Jews ordinary civic rights, but to place them outside the law of the country altogether and to subject them to a system of arbitrary and punitive rule..."<sup>299</sup>

The Convention of Paris in 1858 had stipulated, as a condition of Romania's autonomy from Turkey, that "all Moldavians and Wallachians shall be equal in the eye of the law and with regard to taxation, and shall be equally admissible to public employments in both Principalities" (Article XLVI). However, under pressure from the Prince of Moldavia the Powers had agreed that only *Christians* in Moldavia and Wallachia should have political rights. And in 1866, as the central synagogue of Bucharest was being destroyed, the national parliament, led by Ion Bratianu, the minister of finance, enacted Article VII of the new constitution which declared that "only foreigners of the Christian religion may obtain the status of a Romanian".

"Jews were also prevented from buying rural property. Because of these limitations, they tended to congregate in the large cities, particularly in Bucharest and Iași, where they took up occupations such as that of merchant or small trader. In the countryside they could be found as stewards on large estates, as owners of inns selling alcoholic drinks, and as moneylenders - occupations that could bring them into conflict with the peasant population."<sup>393</sup>

At this point the Alliance became involved. "When a greatly agitated Adolphe Crémieux, now the grand old man of western European Jewry, turned to Napoleon III in 1867 to protest against [the Romanians'] conduct he was assured that 'this oppression can neither be tolerated nor understood. I intend to show that to the Prince [Charles].' As good as his word, the emperor telegraphed a reprimand to Bucharest, marginally softened by the ironic conclusion that 'I cannot believe that Your Highness's government authorizes measures so incompatible with humanity and civilization'. The Hohenzollern prince, only recently installed as ruler of the country, still sufficiently uncertain of his status and throne not to be embarrassed by the image Romania and he himself might be presenting to 'Europe', took action. Bratianu was made to resign. Émile Picot, one of the prince's private secretaries, was sent to Paris to meet the directors of the AIU in person (on 22 July 1867) and give them as good an account of the government's position as he was able. Crémieux presiding, the meeting passed off civilly enough although, as Picot's assurances of the good intentions of the Romanian government failed to correspond to what the AIU knew of the true conditions on the ground in Romania itself, the effort to mollify the Parisian notables failed. Crémieux then addressed himself directly to Prince Charles. Hardly less than imperious, his language speaks volumes both for the mounting indignation with which the condition of Romanian Jewry had come to be regarded by the leading members of the western European Jewish communities and for the historically unprecedented self-assurance with which many of them now approached their public duty. 'The moment has come, Prince,' Crémieux wrote, 'to employ [your] legitimate authority and break off this odious course of events.' Bratianu should be dismissed 'absolutely'. The savage measures taken against the Jews should be annulled. The unfortunates who had been torn violently from their homes must be allowed to return. For the rest, 'Inform [the country] that nothing will be neglected to erase the traces of

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<sup>393</sup> Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

this evil, pursue without respite the newspapers that have for the past year continually engaged in incitement to hatred, contempt, assassination, and expulsion of the Jews, dismiss all the cowardly officials who have lent a violent hand to this dreadful persecution and deal energetically with all violence directed at the Jews from this time on.'

"One may assume that this made unpleasant reading for Prince Charles, but it remained without real effect. Bratianu was not dismissed 'absolutely'. He was, on the contrary, given a new post. The press was not restrained. Officials engaged in active persecution of Jews were not removed from office. And after 1870 and the plummeting of French prestige, Émile Picot, a Frenchman, was out of favour in Bucharest anyway and the channel he had opened to western Jewry collapsed - as, of course, did the political weight ascribed in Bucharest to the AIU itself."<sup>394</sup>

However, the French had another chance at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, demanding that the independence of Romania should be recognized on the same terms as that of Bulgaria and Serbia - that is, acceptance of Article XLIV, which guaranteed equality of treatment in all places and in all circumstances for members of all religious creeds. The Russian Foreign Minister Gorchakov "tried to block the move, arguing that the Jews of Russia and Romania were a social scourge, not to be confused with the fine merchants of London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna".<sup>395</sup> But the French, supported by Bismarck and Disraeli, won the day.

Since Article XLIV contravened the provisions of the constitution of 1866, it "required a special act of the assembly. Most Romanian leaders regarded the measure as an unwarranted interference in their internal affairs, an issue on which they were particularly sensitive. In fact, the government never fully complied with the intent of the treaty. In 1879, under great pressure, it was agreed that Jews could become naturalized citizens, but special action would have to be taken on each individual case. The Jewish question was to remain controversial and to cause many problems in the future..."<sup>396</sup>

This seemed to demonstrate the impotence of the Jews in one part of Europe to help their compatriots in another. On the other hand, "the campaign mounted on behalf of Romanian Jewry had been remarkably well organized and well supported... The exertions of the notables and philanthropic organizations of western and central European Jewry on behalf of the Romanian Jews added more than a mite to the mythology of the 'international power' of the Jews"<sup>397</sup> - if it was only a myth...

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<sup>394</sup> Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 495-496.

<sup>395</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>396</sup> Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 26. 67,000 Jews eventually emigrated to the USA (Winder, *op. cit.* p. 394).

<sup>397</sup> Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 504, 505.

## 23. DOSTOYEVSKY ON UNIVERSALISM AND NATIONALISM

The Treaty of Berlin was seen by the Russians as an unprecedented interference by the western Great Powers in Eastern Europe at the expense of Russia in particular. "At a Slavic Benevolent Society banquet in June 1878 Ivan Aksakov furiously denounced the Berlin Congress as 'an open conspiracy against the Russian people, [conducted] with the participation of the representatives of Russia herself!'"<sup>398</sup> As a partial result of the tensions caused by the Treaty, writes Misha Glenny, "the 1870s saw another very dangerous development in great-power attitudes to the region. France, Britain and Russia had, in their dealings over Greece in the 1830s, acted in harmony with one another to protect their strategic interests. From the Congress of Berlin onwards, cooperation was replaced by competition, harmony by discord. The peoples of the Balkans would pay dearly for this transformation."<sup>399</sup>

Dostoyevsky shared the general feeling of disillusionment. But his feeling was not the product of the failure of his "Pan-Slavist" dreams, as some have made out. Dostoyevsky's dreams were not "Pan-Slavist", but "Pan-Human", genuinely universalist. His dream was the conversion of the whole world to Christ, and thereby to real fraternity – that fraternity which the revolutionaries had promised, but had not delivered and would never be able to deliver. Dostoyevsky found real brotherhood only in the Orthodox Church, and in that Orthodox nation which, he believed, had most thoroughly incarnated the ideals of the Gospel – Russia. But that Orthodox fraternity need not be confined to Russia and the other Orthodox peoples alone. It could be spread, as "Light from the East" westwards into Europe, and thence throughout the world.

A major step on the road to the realization of this dream was to be the liberation and unification of the Orthodox peoples of the East under the Russian tsar through the planting of the Cross on the dome of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, the centre of the Orthodox world, by the conquering Russian armies. It was for the sake of Orthodoxy, the true brotherhood of man, that the Russian armies had sacrificed, and would continue to sacrifice themselves. Russia, Dostoyevsky believed, had only temporarily been checked at the Gates of Constantinople, and would one day conquer it and hand it back to the Greeks, even if took a hundred years or more: "Constantinople shall be ours!"

But before that came about, what sorrows, what torture and bloodshed, lay in store for Europe, and first of all for Russia, whose ruling classes were already Orthodox only in name! It was all the fault of the misguided idealism that sought, on the basis of science and rationalism, to *force* men to be happy – or rather, to give them happiness of a kind in exchange for their freedom. This rationalist-absolutist principle was common both to the most believing

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<sup>398</sup> Hosking, *op. cit.*, pp. 372-373.

<sup>399</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, pp. 133-134.

(Catholic) and most unbelieving (Socialist) factions in Western political life, and was typified in the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*, who “in his last remaining years... comes to the clear conviction that it is only the advice of the great and terrible spirit [Satan] that could bring some sort of supportable order into the life of the feeble rebels, ‘the unfinished experimental creatures created as a mockery’. And so, convinced of that, he sees that one has to follow the instructions of the wise spirit, the terrible spirit of death and destruction. He therefore accepts lies and deceptions and leads men consciously to death and destruction. Keeps deceiving them all the way, so that they should not notice where they are being led, for he is anxious that those miserable, blind creatures should at least on the way think themselves happy. And, mind you, the deception is in the name of Him in Whose ideal the old man believed so passionately all his life! Is not that a calamity?....”<sup>400</sup>

Since so many in Russia’s educated classes thought like Ivan Karamazov and the Grand Inquisitor (although much less seriously and systematically, for the most part), it was premature to think of the unification of the Orthodox peoples – still less, of the whole of Europe – under the leadership of Russia. The first need was to unite Russia *within* herself. And that meant uniting the educated classes with the bulk of the population, the peasants, whose lack of education and poverty, and attachment to the Orthodox Tsar and Church, repelled the proud, self-appointed guardians of the nation’s conscience...

In his youth Dostoyevsky had been converted from the socialist ideas of his youth to the official slogan of Nicholas I’s Russia, “Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality”.<sup>401</sup> But he wrote little directly about Orthodoxy or Autocracy, probably because this would immediately have put off his liberal audience. A generation earlier, Slavophiles such as Khomiakov and Kireyevsky had been able to speak more or less openly in support of the Church and the Tsar. But the years 1860-1880 had entrenched liberalism and positivism firmly in the hearts and minds of the intelligentsia. So Dostoyevsky had to approach the subject more indirectly, through the third element of the slogan – Nationality.

Dostoyevsky himself had returned to the faith by this indirect route: from the time of his imprisonment in Siberia, his eyes had slowly been opened to the reality of the people, their spiritual beauty and their Orthodox faith. At the same time, a whole pleiad of artists, the so-called *pochvenniki*, “lovers of the soil”, were coming to a similar discovery, giving a kind of second wind to Slavophilism. For example, in 1872, during the celebrations of the bicentenary of that most “anti-*pochvennik*” of tsars, Peter the Great, the young composer Modest Mussorgsky wrote to his closest friend: “The power of the black earth will make itself manifest when you plough to the very bottom. It is possible to plough the black earth with tools wrought of alien materials. And at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they ploughed Mother Russia with just *such* tools, so that she did not immediately realize what they were ploughing with, and, like the black

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<sup>400</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, book V, chapter 5.

<sup>401</sup> Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

earth, she *opened up* and began to *breathe*. And she, our beloved, received the various state bureaucrats, who never gave her, the long-suffering one, time to collect herself and to think: *'Where are you pushing me?'* The ignorant and confused were executed: *force!*... But the times are out of joint: the state bureaucrats are not letting the black earth *breathe*.

*"'We've gone forward!' - you lie. 'We haven't moved!' Paper, books have gone forward - we haven't moved. So long as the people cannot verify with their own eyes what is being cooked out of them, as long as they do not themselves will what is or is not to be cooked out of them - till then, we haven't moved! Public benefactors of every kind will seek to glorify themselves, will buttress their glory with documents, but the people groan, and so as not to groan they drink like the devil, and groan worse than ever: they haven't moved!"*<sup>402</sup>

Mussorgsky composed in *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina* two "popular" operas which evoked the spirit of Mother Russia and the Orthodox Church as no other work of secular art had done. There were other *pochvennik* composers such as "the Mighty Five" (Balakirev, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin as well as Mussorgsky) and others such as Glazunov.<sup>403</sup> Dostoyevsky was to do the same in *The Brothers Karamazov*. He hoped, through the beauty of his artistic creations, to open the eyes of his fellow *intelligenty* to the people's beauty, helping them thereby to "bow down before the people's truth" - Orthodoxy. In this way, as the Prince said in *The Idiot*, "beauty" - the beauty of the people's truth, the Russian God - "will save the world".

However, Dostoyevsky's concept of the people has been widely misunderstood, and needs careful explication. Some have seen in it extreme chauvinism, others - sentimentalism and cosmopolitanism. The very diversity of these reactions indicates a misunderstanding of Dostoyevsky's antinomical way of reasoning.

Let us consider, first, the following words of Shatov in *The Devils*: "Do you know who are now the only 'God-bearing' people on earth, destined to regenerate and save the world in the name of a new god and to whom alone the keys of life and of the new word have been vouchsafed?"<sup>404</sup>

The "people" here is, of course, the Russian people. And the God they bear is Christ, Who is "new" only in the sense that the revelation of the truth of

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<sup>402</sup> Mussorgsky, quoted in Richard Taruskin, "The Power of Black Earth: Notes on *Khovanshchina*", *Classic FM Magazine*, May, 2006. In *Boris Godunov* Mussorgsky tried to "view the people as one giant being, inspired by one idea" (Julian Haylock, "Mussorgsky", *Classic FM Magazine*, May, 2006, p. 31).

<sup>403</sup> The first Russian nationalist composer was Glinka, whose opera *For the Life of the Tsar* was to be a favourite of Tsar Nicholas II. Tchaikovsky, though not usually categorized as a nationalist composer, often expressed great love for Mother Russia, and his famous *1812 Overture* (1880), written in commemoration of the completion of the building of the cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, was certainly a patriotic piece.

<sup>404</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Devils*, p. 253.

Christ in Orthodoxy is something new for those other nations who were once Christian but who have lost the salt of True Christianity. It is not that the Russians are considered *genetically* or *racially* superior to all other nations; for "Russianness" is a spiritual concept closely tied up with confession of the one true faith, which may exclude many people of Russian blood (for example, the unbelieving intelligentsia), but include people of other nations with the same faith.

Thus Shatov agrees with Stavrogin that "an atheist can't be a Russian". And again, "an atheist at once ceases to be a Russian". And again: "A man who does not belong to the Greek Orthodox faith cannot be a Russian."<sup>405</sup>

It follows that "the Russian people" is a concept with a universalist content insofar as her Orthodox faith is universal; it is virtually equivalent to the concept of "the Orthodox Christian people", in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither barbarian nor Scythian" (Colossians 3.11).

For "if," writes M.V. Zyzykin, "it is possible to call the fact that Christianity has become the content of a certain people's *narodnost'* the national property of that people, then such a property belongs also to the Russian people. But we should rather add the term 'universal' here, because the very nationality is expressed in universality, *universality has become the content of the narodnost'*."<sup>406</sup>

Shatov continues: "The purpose of the whole evolution of a nation, in every people and at every period of its existence, is solely the pursuit of God, their God, their very own God, and faith in Him as the only true one... The people is the body of God. Every people is a people only so long as it has its own particular god and excludes all other gods in the world without any attempt at reconciliation; so long as it believes that by its own god it will conquer and banish all the other gods from the world. So all believed from the very beginning of time - all the great nations, at any rate, all who have been in any way marked out, all who have played a leading part in the affairs of mankind. It is impossible to go against the facts. The Jews lived only to await the coming of the true God, and they left the true God to the world. The Greeks deified nature and bequeathed the world their religion - that is, philosophy and art. Rome deified the people in the State and bequeathed the State to the nations. France throughout her long history was merely the embodiment and development of the idea of the Roman god, and if she at last flung her Roman god into the abyss and gave herself up to atheism, which for the time being they call socialism, it is only because atheism is still healthier than Roman Catholicism. If a great people does not believe that truth resides in it alone (in itself alone and in it exclusively), if it does not believe that it alone is able and has been chosen to raise up and save everybody by its own truth, it is at once transformed into ethnographical material, and not into a great people..."<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Devils*, p. 255.

<sup>406</sup> Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931.

<sup>407</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Devils*, pp. 256, 257-258.

It follows that what we would now call “ecumenism” – the belief that other nations’ gods or religions are as good as one’s own – is the destruction of the nation. And indeed, this is what we see today. For the ecumenist nations who recognize each other’s gods have become mere “ethnographical material”, members of the United Nations but not nations in the full sense of entities having a spiritual principle and purpose for their independent existence.

Therefore, according to this logic, any nation that asserts its own truth in the face of other supposed truths must be “nationalist”, and steps must be taken to reduce or destroy its power. Universalism is declared to be good and nationalism bad. However, this fails to recognize the possibility – a possibility that Dostoyevsky insisted upon as a fact in the case of Russia – that a nation’s particular, *national* faith may have a *universalist* content; for faith in Christ is universalist in the sense that any man, of any nation, can accept it, enter its universal brotherhood, and thereby receive its blessings.

Universalism as the Europeans understood it was subtly different. It was not so much a unity of faith (except in liberalism) as a commonality of international law, a pattern of international agreements and institutions arrived at in a democratic manner. One such agreement was the Berne Convention on copyright of 1878. Another was the International Red Cross, which “was established in all the major countries of Europe, when Socialists were organized through the Second International, and the women’s international movement took substantial form. The force of international law was increasing, and European states were signing up to international norms and conventions: an International Telegraphic Union (1865), a Union for the Metric System (1875); a Universal Postal Union (1875); and an Agreement on Goods Transport by Rail (1890), which coordinated the timetables and technical requirements for the railway companies of nine continental European states.”<sup>408</sup>

But international cooperation was a pale shadow of what Dostoyevsky meant by universalism. Such cooperation may have been rational and useful, even necessary. But it was not what Christ meant when He prayed “that they may be one as We are One” (John 17.11). Indeed, in its origins and ultimate end it was darkness coming from the West rather than Light from the East, the scheme of Masonic-inspired Socialism rather than the Grace of the Living Russian God. It was not Christ but *a substitute for, instead of* (“anti”) Christ.

For “Dostoyevsky,” writes Florovsky, “was a faithful follower of the classical Slavophile traditions, and he based his faith in the great destiny marked out for the God-bearing People, not so much on historical intimations, as on that Image of God which he saw in the hidden depths of the Russian people’s soul, and on the capacities of the Russian spirit for ‘pan-humanity’. Being foreign to a superficial disdain and impure hostility towards the West,

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<sup>408</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Europeans*, London: Penguin, 2020, p. 414.

whose great 'reposed' he was drawn to venerate with gratitude, he expected future revelations from his own homeland because only in her did he see that unfettered range of personal activity that is equally capable both of the abyss of sanctity and the abyss of sin..., because he considered only the Russian capable of becoming 'pan-human'."<sup>409</sup>

"Do you know, gentleman," he wrote in 1877, "how dear this very Europe, the 'land of sacred miracles', how dear it is to us, Slavophile dreamers - according to you, haters of Europe! Do you know how dear these 'miracles' are to us; how we love and revere with a stronger than brotherly feeling, those great nations that inhabit her, everything great and beautiful which they have created."<sup>410</sup>

The attainments of European civilization had to be honoured and absorbed, not despised. They must be brought home, as it were, and integrated with "the people's truth", Orthodoxy. Without such integration, as Fr. Georges Florovsky warns, this "universal responsiveness" becomes "a fatal and ambiguous gift."<sup>411</sup>

Walicki writes: "Westernisation had widened Russia's horizons, Dostoyevsky acknowledged, and this must be appreciated by all. The intelligentsia, too, had a valuable contribution to make: 'We must bow down before the people's truth and recognise it as such, we must blow like prodigal children who, for two hundred years, have been absent from home, but who nevertheless have returned Russians...'

"Dostoyevsky, therefore (like Chaadaev before him), regarded divorce from the soil and 'homeless wandering' not just as a misfortune, but also as a chance to create a new type of 'universal man' freed from the burden of the past and from national prejudices - a man who would 'bear the world's sufferings'. He agreed with Herzen that 'the thinking Russian is the most independent man in the world.' The cultivated elite in Russia, says Vershilov in *The Adolescent*, has 'produced perhaps a thousand representatives (give or take a few) who are freer than any European, men whose fatherland is all mankind. No one can be freer and happier than a Russian wanderer belonging to the "chosen thousand"; I really mean that; it's not just a joke. Besides, I would never have exchanged that mental anguish for any other kind of happiness.'

"Nevertheless, Dostoyevsky called on the 'chosen thousand' to give up their wanderings and return home. Only a 'return to the soil' and submission to 'the people's truth' would enable them to find true peace and would heal their split personality. A symbolic expression of this is the scene in *The Adolescent* when Vershilov breaks the ancient icon of the old pilgrim Makar. Here we have the smashing of the folk (Orthodox Christian) heritage, the inner

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<sup>409</sup> Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>410</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, 1977, in Brasol's translation, p. 782.

<sup>411</sup> Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology*.

dualism (the icon breaks into two equal parts), and the hint of the return to the people through Sonia, a woman of the people. The marriage of the lost intelligentsia and the people who, in spite of temptation (Sonia's seduction by Vershilov), have kept faith with their moral ideas and have preserved in their religion the pure, undefiled image of Christ..."<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323.

## 24. THE PEOPLE'S WILL

Tsar Alexander's reign was a long and painful carrying of his cross, his responsibility for the survival and strengthening of the Russian empire. Coming to the throne at a time of national defeat and humiliation, he immediately saw that profound and difficult reforms, especially the emancipation of the serfs, were necessary, and he did not flinch from them, although his "centrist" position, neither liberal nor conservative, elicited reproaches from both sides. In the middle of the reforms, in 1866, he experienced the first attempt on his life; there were many more to follow, causing him both fear and sadness that the people did not appreciate what he was trying to do for them. Gradually his zeal for reform declined, angering not only the terrorists but also the leading liberal members of government, such as his brother, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich. The successful war against Turkey restored Russia's prestige; but at the Congress of Berlin Bismarck robbed the tsar of the fruits of his victory, for which he suffered more opprobrium from society. This was not the profile of a real westernizer; and if western influences increased during his reign, the same could be said of every tsar since Peter the Great with the possible exception of Tsar Paul.

His greatest temptation came at the end of his reign, as multiple attempts on his life engendered a siege mentality in the Winter Palace and weakened its occupant's resistance to a constitution...

The repression of the Going-to-the-People movement by the authorities produced a twofold reaction, one terrorist and the other more cerebral. The People's Will, writes S.A. Smith, "was a conspiratorial organization that looked to act of terror as the means to provoke popular insurgency, convinced that if those who personified the tyranny of autocracy were struck down, this would spark a revolutionary conflagration among the people. Between 1879 and 1881 they launched a wave of killings that culminated on March 1881 in the assassination of Alexander II (after several failed previous attempts). Far from precipitating popular revolt, however, it led to the decimation of the movement, as leaders were hanged or sent to Siberia. The debacle led some, notably Georgii Plekhanov, to turn to Marxism as offering a more scientific, less morally inspired theory of revolution. Plekhanov, who earned the epithet 'father of Russian Marxism', argued that rural society, far from representing an embryonic form of socialism, was undergoing capitalist development and that the peasantry was beginning to split along class lines. The proletariat, not the peasantry, would be the agent of revolution, and in 1881, he helped establish the Emancipation of Labour group which began to form propaganda circles among the educated workers of the cities. In Paris in 1889 at the founding congress of international parties, known as the Second International, Plekhanov made the bold prediction that the Russian Revolution 'will triumph as a proletarian revolution or it will not triumph at all'." <sup>413</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 42.

However, in the last years of the reign of Alexander II, Plekhanovite Marxism was less of a threat than simple terrorism... Thus on April 2, 1879 the village teacher Alexander Soloviev fired several times at the emperor, who zigzagged across the square in front of the Winter Palace "like a hare", in the empress's words. Fortunately, the terrorist was a bad shot, and he also bungled his attempt to kill himself. He was hanged.

Three weeks later a secret congress of ten male and one female revolutionaries met in Lipetsk. Preliminary meetings were held at the appropriately named Antichrist Pond. On June 15 they held their first official meeting in a forest glade, forming an "Executive Committee" (EC) of the revolution composed of: A.I. Barannikov, A.I. Zhelyakov, A.A. Kvyatkovsky, N.N. Kolotkevich, A.D. Mikhailov, N.A. Morozov, M.M. Oshanina, L.A. Tikhomirov, M.E. Frolenko, S.G. Shiryayev and G. Goldenburg.

"At the head of the EC stood the Administrative Commission. The members of the EC met and passed resolutions, and the commission supervised their execution. Between meetings, the commission had dictatorial powers and demanded absolute execution of its own decisions. It met almost daily. The Administrative Commission consisted of three people elected by the members of the EC from its members. At that time the three were Alexander Mikhailov [the real leader], Lev Tikhomirov, and Alexander Kvyatkovsky.

"An iron dictatorial discipline was maintained in the new party, from top to bottom. That is exactly how Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin would build his party.

"At its first meeting Kvyatkovsky and Mikhailov read the program and bylaws of the new party. They were accepted unanimously. This was the first time political terror was part of a party program.

"Two more meetings were held in the cheerful green glade. At the last one, they defined the main goal of the coming terror. "At the third meeting... Alexander Mikhailov read a long list of charges against Emperor Alexander II... 'The Emperor has destroyed in the second half of his reign,' said Mikhailov, 'almost all the good he permitted to be done by the progressive figures of the sixties.'..."

"The bylaws described terror as the main means and the main goal of the party. There were several departments subordinate to the EC. The Military Department was headed by Andrei Zhelyakov, who formulated the first rule of future terrorism: its relentlessness. 'The meaning of terror and all the chances of its success lies in consistency and relentlessness of action... Under the blows of systematic terror autocracy will start to crack. The Government is not able to withstand such pressure for long and it will make actual, instead of virtual, concessions. Any deceleration is disastrous for us: we must go by forced march, straining out abilities.' Besides, uninterrupted terror would blow up the

existing order, as Nechaev had once dreamed. Nikolai Morozov and the chief ideology Lev Tikhomirov were elected editors of their planned underground newspaper.”<sup>414</sup>

Tikhomirov, however, later repented deeply of his participation in the party, was forgiven by Tsar Alexander III, and after being “our acknowledged ideological representative, theoretician, and best writer”, according to the terrorist Vera Figner”, became the “acknowledged ideological representative, theoretician, and best writer” of the Orthodox defenders of the autocracy. His *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood) is perhaps the best defence of the Orthodox Autocracy ever written...

The terrorists “moved on to a discussion of the first steps of the new party. It was decided to start with a bang – blowing up the tsar in a railroad car. It had to be done that very fall, when he was returning from his usual stay in Livadi. The Lipetsk congress was declared closed. The next day the participants left for Voronezh, two or three at a time, as they had arrived for this meeting.

“The Congress of Land and Freedom met in Voronezh and concluded with a schism. The former Land and Freedom was buried. Two months later the terrorist of the Lipetsk congress announced the creation of their own organization. They called it the People’s Will, as it is usually translated, even though the Russia word *volya* means both freedom and will.

“The Voronezh congress added new members to the EC, including Vera Figner and Sofia Perovskaya”, the daughter of the governor of St. Petersburg.<sup>415</sup>

On November 19, 1879 the terrorists of the People’s Will tried to blow up the Emperor’s train. The attempt was bungled. But the young people learned from their mistakes, and their determination remained undimmed.

Grigory Goldberg, the Jewish member of the party, was arrested, gun in hand... He was taken to the Peter and Paul fortress and was persuaded to reveal all about the organization. Then he hanged himself in his cell.<sup>416</sup>

The terrorists were actively helped from abroad. Thus “the participation of the Masons in this deed,” writes Selyaninov, “cannot be doubted. This was discovered when the Russian government [Foreign Minister Gorchakov] turned to the French government with the demand that it hand over Hartman, who was hiding in Paris under the name Meyer. Scarcely had Hartman been arrested at the request of the Russian ambassador when the French radicals [led by Victor Hugo] raised an unimaginable noise. The Masonic deputy Engelhardt took his defence upon himself, trying to prove that Meyer and Hartman were different people. The Russian ambassador Prince Orlov began

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<sup>414</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>415</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 309-312.

<sup>416</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 320.

to receive threatening letters. Finally, the leftist deputies were preparing to raise a question and bring about the fall of the ministry. The latter took fright, and, without waiting for the documents promised by Orlov that could have established the identity of Hartman-Meyer, hastily agreed with the conclusions of Brother Engelhardt and helped Hartman to flee to England... In London Hartman was triumphantly received into the Masonic lodge 'The Philadelphia'."<sup>417</sup>

"In this connection an interesting correspondence took place between two high-ranking Masons, Felix Pia and Giuseppe Garibaldi. Pia wrote: 'The most recent attempt on the life of the All-Russian despot confirms your legendary phrase: 'The Internationale is the sun of the future!', and speaks about the necessity of defending 'our brave friend Hartman'. In reply, Garibaldi praised Hartman, and declared: 'Political murder is the secret of the successful realization of the revolution.' And added: 'Siberia is not the place for the comrades of Hartman, but for the Christian clergy.' In 1881 Hartman arrived in America, where he was received with a storm of ovations. At one of the workers' meetings he declared that he had arrived in the USA with the aim of... helping the Russian people to win freedom."<sup>418</sup>

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On February 5, 1880, with the aid of a palace informer, the People's Will created a vast explosion under the Tsar's dining room in the Winter palace. Many sentries were killed, but the Tsar and his family escaped.

Some days later, the conservative owner of *Novoe Vremia*, Alexei Sergeevich Suvorin, visited Dostoyevsky. They speculated whether, if they had known about the explosion, they would have gone with their information to the Winter Palace or to the police. And they agree that they would not. "'But why?' asked Dostoyevsky in Suvorin's account. 'It's horrible, it's a crime. We might have been able to prevent it.' He explains why: 'I was filling my *papirosy* and going over the reasons why it should be done: serious, important reasons of state significance and Christian duty. The reasons for not doing it were totally insignificant. Simply – the fear of being known as an informer. I pictured how I would arrive, how they would look at me, start questioning me, making me look at suspects, probably offering me a reward, or even suspecting me of being part of the conspiracy. They would publish: Dostoyevsky fingered the criminals. Is that my business? It's the business of the police. That's what they're for, that's what they get paid to do. The liberals would not forgive me. They would torment me and bring me to despair. Is that normal? Everything is abnormal in our country.'

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<sup>417</sup> Selyaninov, in F. Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo ot Petra I do nashikh dnei* (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 346.

<sup>418</sup> Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

“Suvorin continued, ‘Dostoevsky talked on the theme for a long time, and spoke animatedly.

“The worst had happened. The liberal part of Russian society sympathized with the terrorists. They had become heroes, sacred cows that could not be touched. In the eyes of the progressive Russian intelligentsia, the killers had become fighters against the regime, which had once seduced the country with reforms and had now rejected reforms for ruthless oppression. It was no accident that famous writers, journalists, and lawyers were friends of the terrorists. For example, the writer Gleb Uspensky was a close friend of Vera Figner; another EC member, the terrorist Nikolai Morozov, hid in 1879 in the apartment of the writer Vladimir Zotov. Vera Figner wrote then, ‘We are surrounded by the sympathy of the greater part of society.’

“As if to confirm this, Dostoevsky concluded his conversations with Suvorin by telling him that ‘he would write a novel in which Alyosha Karamazov would be the hero. He wanted to take him through a monastery. And make him a revolutionary. He would commit a political crime. He would be executed. He sought truth and the search would, naturally, make him a revolutionary,’ noted Suvorin in his diary.

“The ‘political crime’ punishable by execution was terrorism.

“Thus, Dostoevsky, who had censured ‘Russian nihilism’ in *The Devils* now declared that he would make his beloved character, the holy Alyosha Karamazov, a revolutionary (that is, a devil)...”<sup>419</sup>

However, we must be careful not to confuse fiction with reality. Great imaginative artist that he was, - that is, great *empathetic* and even *sympathetic* artist that he was - Dostoevsky wanted to penetrate into the mind of the terrorists. How could talented, well-bred, well-meaning and well-educated men and women convince themselves that it was right to commit such terrible crimes, which, as Dostoevsky superbly demonstrated in his novels *The Devils* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, were truly demonic in nature and in origin? How could believing people, even monks who had devoted their whole lives to God, turn against Him so thoroughly (as many did during the real-life revolution)? Could even a holy person, like Alyosha in his last novel, become one of those of whom the Lord said that in the reign of the Antichrist “false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect?” (Matthew 24.24)? These were the questions he sought to answer in his work - by means of imagination and intuition, based on the common human nature he shared with the terrorists, - but not by moralizing, which may be a product of imagination, but is not in itself a work of imagination.

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<sup>419</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 349-341.

And since every great work of fiction and imagination involves *self-expression* and the knowledge of *the artist's own self*, Dostoyevsky's novel-to-be would surely have involved probing some further questions about himself. Such as: Why would he not dare to inform on the terrorists if the opportunity arose?

We shall never know the answers to those further questions because God did not give him the time to write that future novel...

## 25. THE CONSERVATIVES VS. THE CONSTITUTION

There were still some real anti-terrorists left... The most important were the Tsarevich Alexander, who in a few short months would become Tsar Alexander III, his tutor Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev and Mikhail Nikolaevich Katkov, the publisher of both *War and Peace* and *Crime and Punishment*.

In 1880, writes Radzinsky, "certain letters came to Moscow from St. Petersburg. Their recipient was former lady-in-waiting Ekaterina Fedorovna Tyutcheva (sister of now also retired lady-in-waiting Anna Tyutcheva). This is what was in the letters.

"'God's fates sent him to the misfortune of Russia. Even the healthy instinct for self-preservation has dried up in him: the only instincts left are of dull love of power and sensuality...' 'Pathetic and miserable man!'... 'I am pained and ashamed; it sickens me to look at him...' 'It is clear that he has lost his will: he does not want to hear, does not want to see, does not want to act. He only wants to live by the mindless will of the belly.'

"The man reviled in these letters was Alexander II, emperor of Russia. The writer was neither a revolutionary nor a liberal, but a key antiliberal and antirevolutionary. Those antisarist remarks came from one of the most influential officials, Konstantin [Petrovich] Pobedonostsev, [law professor,] tutor of the heir to the throne and soon to become [secular] head [over-procurator] of the Holy Synod of the Church. He was the true head of the retrograde party.

"His office had an oversized desk with bronze lions. The desk was always piled with papers and was surrounded by bookshelves. His ascetic face, so like the Grand Inquisitor's [in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*] rose above the desk. The high forehead ended in a bare skull, his ears stuck out, and his nose was beaklike. His constant scornful gaze rattled his interlocutors...

"Pobedonostsev dreamed of freezing Russia in order to save it. But for that, he needed a leader. When the tsar appointed him tutor of the new heir, Alexander, after the death of Niki, Pobedonostsev said, 'I will bring him to the other pole.' And he did..."<sup>420</sup>

Montefiore writes: "Pobedonostsev cultivated a network of reactionary allies through the nationalist newspaper barons Mikhail Katkov and Prince Vladimir Meshchersky, who had hired Dostoevsky to edit the newspaper *The Citizen* which the heir secretly funded. The prince introduced Dostoevsky to Pobedonostsev, and they became best friends, meeting on Saturday night for hours of discussion. 'I shall run again to you as I came to you on other days for instructions,' wrote the novelist as he developed *The Brothers Karamazov*.

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<sup>420</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 342-343.

Dostoevsky best expressed their Slavophile instincts: "the Russian nation is an extraordinary phenomenon in the history of human genius.' He was an avid monarchist, seeing the tsars as 'a mystery, a sacrament, an anointment... the primary fact of our history.' Delighted that one of the titans of Russian literature had decent views, Pobedonostsev introduced Dostoevsky to Sasha [the future Alexander III] who had read and admired *Crime and Punishment*. The meeting was awkward – Dostoevsky could not play the courtier but it did not matter. Alexander II invited him to give lectures to the younger grand dukes, Sergei and Paul and their cousin K.R. Dostoevsky, once sentenced to death by one tsar, had become the confidant of the Romanovs."<sup>421</sup>

Tsar Alexander II, always wavering between reform and reaction, called Pobedonostsev a "desperate fanatic" and a "Pharisee". However, he had a genuine Christian insight into the relationship between Holy Russia and the revolution. Thus as early as 1873, *The Citizen* published a series of articles of his entitled "Russian Leaflets from Abroad", in which he wrote: "A cloud can be seen on the horizon that will make things terrible, because we did not see it before. This is the fanaticism of unbelief and denial. It is not simple denial of God, but denial joined to mad hatred for God and for everyone who believes in God. May God grant that nobody lives to the time when fanaticism of this type gains power and receives the power to bind and to loose the human conscience." And again: "There is no doubt that if the atheists of our time ever come to the triumph of the Commune and the complete removal of Christian services, they will create for themselves some kind of pagan cult, will raise some kind of statue to themselves or their ideal and will begin to honour it, while forcing others to do the same."<sup>422</sup>

Pobedonostsev's view of human nature, writes Dominic Lieven, "was even gloomier than that of other European conservatives: the majority of human beings were weak, selfish, gullible and largely immune to the call of reason. Given this reality, democracy was likely to turn into a chaotic sham, with professional politicians, plutocrats and press pandering to the prejudices and short-sighted greed of the electorate. In the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries, with their centuries-old tradition of individualism, an educated and self-disciplined citizenry had emerged which might just be able to sustain democratic politics, especially in a land of plentiful resources like the United States. Russian traditions were different, however, and the country was both more primitive and multi-national. In consequence, liberalism and democracy would bring disaster in their wake. Only the power and symbolism of an autocratic monarchy, advised by an elite of rational expert officials, could run the country effectively. Russia was built on communities – the peasant village, the Church and the nation – and these must be preserved and protected from the attacks of Western-style individualism. The educated classes, including the aristocracy, were bearers of this bacillus and were therefore dangerous. The

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<sup>421</sup> Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 442. Note.

<sup>422</sup> Pobedonostsev, in Protopriest Michael Arlov, "Arkhi-Kontrevoliutsioner", *Nasha Strana*, N 2929, December 3, 2011, p. 3.

religious and patriotic instincts of the peasantry were a firmer basis for political stability and Russian power, but the simple people must be protected from outside influences which would sow doubts among them about values and loyalties, thereby undermining the Russian national solidarity between ruler and people on which the empire's future depended."<sup>423</sup>

"The liberals were against the emperor because the reforms had stopped and the retrogrades were against him because there had been reforms. But these were politicians, leaders of public opinion. What about the ordinary people, what did they think? They were unhappy too: 'The basic underpinning of their dissatisfaction was obvious: the general economic downturn with individual artificial exceptions' wrote the contemporary historian Klyuchevsky.

"The half-measures of the reforms, and particularly the unfinished agrarian reform, coupled with robber-baron capitalism, had done their work. There appeared 'the impoverishment of the masses and general dissatisfaction' that always accompanied Russian reforms. Against the background of this impoverishment, Klyuchevsky continued, 'the persistent work of the old guard continued.' The retrograde party tried to persuade the public that all the ills were due to the reforms and that the only way out was back to Muscovite Russia, the reign of Nicholas, and autocracy. They successfully insisted on the favourite Russian contradiction: Forward means going back.

"As a result, the apathy of the days of Nicholas I ceded to general grumbling' and 'wan docility to fate was replaced by malicious rejection of the existing order,' wrote Klyuchevsky. War Minister Mailyutin wrote in his diary: 'No one supports the government now.'

"Fedor Dostoevsky described the situation in Russia as 'vacillating on the brink.'"<sup>424</sup>

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On February 12, 1880, on the insistence of the Tsarevich-heir, Tsar Alexander established a Supreme Administrative Commission headed by Count Loris-Melikov and including senators, generals and officials responsible for preserving order in the country, among them Pobedonostsev and another man very close to the Tsarevich, Deputy Chief of the Third Department Major-General Cherevin.

Loris-Melikov was an Armenian aristocrat not connected with the Petersburg elite. He had distinguished himself in the war on the Transcaucasian Front and had successfully dealt with an outbreak of plague in Astrakhan Province. "During the war on terror, Loris-Melikov had been appointed governor-general of Kharkov. He ruled the province harshly but

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<sup>423</sup> Lieven, *Nicholas II*, London: Pimlico, 1993, pp. 35-36.

<sup>424</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 347-348.

without excess. He used repression, but he also made concessions to public opinion. As a result, he was the only military governor general to have ended terrorism in his province."<sup>425</sup>

Which way would this clever man go? Towards the liberals or the retrogrades? Was there a Third Way?

He began, on February 20, by executing a terrorist, Ippolit Mlodetsky, a Jew from Slutsk who did not belong to the People's Will. He was not even given a trial. It looked as if the government were moving towards the retrogrades.

However, his next steps seemed designed to please the liberals. He tried to conciliate both the press and the ever-rebellious students. He removed the conservative Count Dmitri Tolstoy from the post of Minister of Education, and appointed the liberal Abaza as Minister of Finance. Abaza had argued in favour of a constitution, declaring: "The throne cannot rest exclusively on a million bayonets and an army of officials." So although his powers were dictatorial, it was, as the sceptics put it, "a dictatorship of the heart".

Then the count proposed liquidating the Third Department and making it a department of the Interior Ministry. This entailed the removal of one of the key retrogrades, Cheverin. And there were other points in the programme that were controversial. "For instance, it spoke of a 'new management of the periodic press, which has an influence here that is not comparable to Western Europe, where the press is merely the expression of public opinion, whereas in Russia the press forms it.' Other proposals included giving rights to sects, a review of the passport system, an easing of peasant migration, and so on. Pobedonostsev felt this was a very dangerous beginning..."<sup>426</sup>

Ivanov represents the conservative point of view: "The liberals from the *zemstvos* and the professors were demanding a constitution, for this was the only way to struggle with the insurrection. The terrorists were attacking the government with bombs, daggers and revolvers, while the government replied with freedoms and constitutions.

"Count Loris-Melikov was... under the direct influence of the Mason Koshelev.

"Lev Tikhomirov, the penitent revolutionary and former terrorist, being well acquainted with the events and people of the reign of Alexander II Nikolayevich, affirmed that Count Loris-Melikov was deceiving his Majesty and by his 'dictatorship of the heart' was creating a revolutionary leaven in the country.

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<sup>425</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 352.

<sup>426</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 359.

The critical issue between the conservatives and the liberals was the constitution, which the liberals supported and the conservatives opposed. Dostoyevsky, characteristically, took a different line from either camp. "With great fervor he had urged that the people's representatives should have greater influence; otherwise the planned constitution would be merely a 'landowners' constitution'. The Tsar ought to consult the Russian peasant about what was not going right in Russia. Could he really not see that he was the father of the people?"<sup>427</sup>

Dostoyevsky was the enemy of all legalism, all placing of the letter of the law above the living judgement of the individual human being. That is why he was a monarchist and not a constitutionalist. Or rather, "our constitution," he wrote, "is mutual love of the Monarch toward the people and the people toward the Monarch."<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Geir Kjetsaa, *Fodor Dostoyevsky*, London: Macmillan, 1987, p. 368.

<sup>428</sup> Dostoyevsky, Letter to Maikov, no. 302.

## **26. DOSTOYEVSKY'S PUSHKIN SPEECH**

One of the good products of Loris-Melikov's administration was that he allowed certain important cultural events to go ahead in spite of the state of virtual martial law that the government was in. And so three days of celebration of Pushkin took place in Moscow at the unveiling of a statue to the great poet. At this celebration, on June 8, 1880, the opening speech was given by Turgenev. "As a famous exponent of the Westernist philosophy, he had given much offence to the Slavophiles and nationalists by cutting Russia's cultural achievements down to size. Turgenev's eulogy was a disappointment to his audience. While acknowledging that Pushkin was the first and finest national poet, he stopped short of ranking him with the greatest European poets - Shakespeare, Goethe and Homer who had higher universal qualities. It was a measured, nuanced argument, which paid homage to the great leap Pushkin had made in the creation of a Russian literature, but it did not satisfy the nationalist, euphoric mood, which demanded Pushkin's elevation to a higher world significance."<sup>429</sup>

That demand was satisfied by Dostoyevsky in the celebrated speech on the next day. As Walicki writes, Dostoyevsky presents Pushkin as the supreme embodiment in art "of the Russian spirit, a 'prophetic' apparition who had shown the Russian nation its mission and its future.

"In the character of Aleko, the hero of the poem *Gypsies*, and in Evgeny Onegin, Dostoyevsky suggested, Pushkin had been the first to portray 'the unhappy wanderer in his native land, the traditional Russian sufferer detached from the people...' For Dostoyevsky, the term 'wanderer' was an apt description of the entire Russian intelligentsia - both the 'superfluous men' of the forties and the Populists of the seventies. 'The homeless vagrants,' he continued, 'are wandering still, and it seems that it will be long before they disappear'; at present they were seeking refuge in socialism, which did not exist in Aleko's time, and through it hoped to attain universal happiness, for 'a Russian sufferer to find peace needs universal happiness - exactly this: nothing less will satisfy him - of course, as the proposition is confined to theory.'

"Before the wanderer can find peace, however, he must conquer his own pride and humble himself before 'the people's truth'. 'Humble thyself, proud man, and above all, break thy pride,' was the 'Russian solution' Dostoyevsky claimed to have found in Pushkin's poetry. Aleko failed to follow this advice and was therefore asked to leave by the gypsies; Onegin despised Tatiana - a modest girl close to the 'soil' - and by the time he learned to humble himself it was too late. Throughout Pushkin's work, Dostoyevsky declared, there were constant confrontations between the 'Russian wanderers' and the 'people's truth' represented by 'positively beautiful' heroes - men of the soil expressing the spiritual essence of the Russian nation. The purpose of these confrontations

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<sup>429</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Europeans*, London: Penguin, 2020, p. 421.

was to convince the reader of the need for a 'return to the soil' and a fusion with the people.

"Pushkin himself was proof that such a return was possible without a rejection of universal ideals. Dostoyevsky drew attention to the poet's 'universal susceptibility', his talent for identifying himself with a Spaniard (Don Juan), an Arab ('Imitations of the Koran'), an Englishman ('A Feast During the Plague'), or an ancient Roman ('Egyptian Nights') while still remaining a national poet. This ability Pushkin owed to the 'universality' of the Russian spirit: 'to become a genuine and complete Russian means... to become brother of all men, an all-human man.'

"In his speech Dostoyevsky also spoke about the division into Slavophiles and Westernizers, which he regretted as a great, though historically inevitable, misunderstanding. The impulse behind Peter's reform had been not mere utilitarianism but the desire to extend the frontiers of nationality to include a genuine 'all-humanity'. Dreams of serving humanity had even been the impulse behind the political policies of the Russian state: 'For what else has Russia been doing in her policies, during these two centuries, but serving Europe much more than herself? I do not believe that this took place because of the mere want of aptitude on the part of our statesmen.'

"'Oh the peoples of Europe,' Dostoyevsky exclaimed in a euphoric vein, 'have no idea how dear they are to us! And later - in this I believe - we, well, not we but the Russians of the future, to the last man, will comprehend that to become a genuine Russian means to seek finally to reconcile all European controversies, to show the solution of European anguish in our all-human and all-unifying Russian soil, to embrace in it with brotherly love all our brothers, and finally, perhaps, to utter the ultimate word of great, universal harmony, of the fraternal accord of all nations abiding by the law of Christ's Gospel!'

"Before delivering his 'Address', Dostoyevsky was seriously worried that it might be received coldly by his audience. His fears proved groundless. The speech was an unprecedented success: carried away by enthusiasm, the crowd called out 'our holy man, our prophet', and members of the audience pressed around Dostoyevsky to kiss his hands. Even Turgenev, who had been caricatured in *The Possessed* [*The Devils*], came up to embrace him.<sup>430</sup> The solemn moment of universal reconciliation between Slavophiles and Westernizers, conservatives and revolutionaries, seemed already at hand..."<sup>431</sup>

The Slavophile Ivan Aksakov "ran onto the stage and declared to the public that my speech was not simply a speech but an historical event! The clouds had been covering the horizon, but here was Dostoyevsky's word, which, like the appearing sun, dispersed all the clouds and lit up everything. From now on

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<sup>430</sup> In his description of the speech to Stasiulevich as "false from start to end, but extremely pleasing to Russian self-esteem Turgenev was less flattering" (in Figes, p. 421). (V.M.)

<sup>431</sup> Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-325.

there would be brotherhood, and there would be no misunderstandings."<sup>432</sup> And indeed, for a brief moment it looked as if the "the Two Russias" created by Peter the Great's reforms might be united.

However, the Two Russias could never be fully reconciled; for as Gogol put it, the Westernizers were right about many smaller things but the Slavophiles were right about the main thing – that is, the centrality of Orthodoxy to the Russian identity and Russian greatness.

And there was a religious exaltation to Dostoyevsky's speech that was by no means as false as Turgenev asserted. As Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) writes: "However accustomed people are to crawling in the dust, they will be grateful to every one who tears them away from the world below and bears them up on his powerful wings to the heavens. A man is ready to give up everything for a moment of pure spiritual joy and bless the name of him who is able to strike on the best strings of his heart. It is here that one must locate the secret of the amazing success won by the famous speech of Dostoyevsky at the Pushkin festival in Moscow. The genius writer himself later described the impression produced by him upon his listeners in a letter to his wife: 'I read,' he writes, 'loudly, with fire. Everything that I wrote about Tatiana was received with enthusiasm. But when I gave forth at the end about the universal union of men, the hall was as it were in hysterics. When I had finished, I will not tell you about the roars and sobs of joy: people who did not know each other wept, sobbed, embraced each other and swore to be better, not to hate each other from then on, but to love each other. The order of the session was interrupted: *grandes dames*, students, state secretaries – they all embraced and kissed me.' How is one to call this mood in the auditorium, which included in itself the best flower of the whole of educated society, if not a condition of spiritual ecstasy, to which, as it seemed, our cold intelligentsia was least of all capable? By what power did the great writer and knower of hearts accomplish this miracle, forcing all his listeners without distinction of age or social position to feel themselves brothers and pour together in one sacred and great upsurge? He attained it, of course, not by the formal beauty of his speech, which Dostoyevsky usually did not achieve, but the greatness of the proclaimed idea of universal brotherhood, instilled by the fire of great inspiration. This truly prophetic word regenerated the hearts of people, forcing them to recognize the true meaning of life; the truth made them if only for one second not only free, but also happy in their freedom."<sup>433</sup>

But besides the Two Russians of the Slavophiles and the Westernizers, there was a Third Russia of the radicals and the terrorists, whom Turgenev and Dostoyevsky were united in disavowing. Could they be included in the idea of universal brotherhood? Dostoyevsky thought so – but they had to humble themselves... "He addressed a crazed Russia vacillating at the brink. He spoke

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<sup>432</sup> Igor Volgin, *Poslednij God Dostoevskogo* (Dostoyevsky's Last Year), Moscow, 1986, p. 267.

<sup>433</sup> Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky), *Besedy so svoim sobstvennym serdtsem* (Conversations with my own Heart), Jordanville, 1948, pp. 9-10.

of the tragedy of Aleko,... the proud murderer who dreamed of freedom and who (as Dostoevsky wrote in *Diary of a Writer*) 'needed universal happiness... he would not accept anything less.' The audience knew he was addressing other murderers who also believed that they were killing for the sake of freedom and who also dreamed of universal happiness.

"He entreated them. 'Humble yourself, proud man, and only then will you be free!' "Labor, idiot!" He addressed those wretches who had forgotten what productive labor was, devoting their talents and youth to revenge and killing.

"Those young wastrels who every day eat bread made with another's labor, do they have the right to any pride? If you take any of those possessed people and ask them what, finally, are their contributions to society, what tangible efforts permit them to live this way, there will be none. The great majority of them are parasites or semiparasites," wrote a contemporary meanly about the young terrorists.

"But that was the point: In Dostoevsky's speech there was no anger. No reproach. Only love for the lost, only one fervent prayer - to repent, to unite, and to love one another..."<sup>434</sup>

And what is the milieu in which love for the lost, repentance and real union can and does take place? The Church... But this, sadly, Dostoevsky's audience did not understand, even while applauding him. For "the main thing about me," said Dostoevsky sadly, "they don't understand. They extol me for not being satisfied with the present political situation of our country. But they don't see that *I am showing them the way to the Church...*"<sup>435</sup>

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June 9, 1880 was perhaps the last date on which the deep divisions in Russian society might have been healed, and the slide to revolution halted, and a return to the Church initiated. However, the opportunity was lost. Disillusion and criticism set in almost immediately from all sides. This was less surprising from the liberals, who were looking for another, leftist answer to the question: "What is to be done?" from Dostoevsky, another kind of criticism of the regime. They forgot that, as Chekhov wrote in 1888, an artist does not attempt to solve concrete social, political or moral problems, but only to place them in their correct context...<sup>436</sup> Somewhat more surprising was the less than ecstatic reaction of the right-wing litterati. Thus Katkov was very happy to publish the Speech in his *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette) - but laughed at it in private.<sup>437</sup> Perhaps for him, too, the Speech offered too little

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<sup>434</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 366.

<sup>435</sup> Dostoevsky, in David Magarshack, translator's introduction to *The Brothers Karamazov*, London: Penguin, 1958, p. xxiii. My italics (V.M.)

<sup>436</sup> Volgin, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

<sup>437</sup> Volgin, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

in the form of concrete political solutions or advice - an open endorsement of the monarchy, for example.

And yet Katkov was not far from Dostoyevsky in his views. "M.N. Katkov wrote that the opposition between Russia and the West consists in the fact that there everything is founded on contractual relations, and in Russia - on faith. If western society is ruled by law, then Russian society is ruled by the idea. There is no question that good principles can be laid at the base of any state, but they are deprived of a firm foundation by the absence of religious feeling and a religious view of the world. Good principles are then held either on instinct, which illumines nothing, or on considerations of public utility. But instinct is an unstable thing in a reasoning being, while public utility is a conventional concept about which every person can have his own opinion."<sup>438</sup>

Like Dostoyevsky, Katkov was striving to build bridges, especially between the Tsar and the People (he, too, had been a liberal in his youth). "Russia is powerful," he wrote, "precisely in the fact that her people do not separate themselves from their Sovereign. Is it not in this alone that the sacred significance that the Russian Tsar has for the Russian people consists?"<sup>439</sup> "Only by a misunderstanding do people think that the monarchy and the autocracy exclude 'the freedom of the people'. In actual fact it guarantees it more than any banal constitutionalism. Only the autocratic tsar could, without any revolution, by the single word of a manifesto liberate 20 million slaves."<sup>440</sup>

"They say that Russia is deprived of political liberty. They say that although Russian subjects have been given legal civil liberty, they have no political rights. Russian subjects have something more than political rights: they have political obligations. Each Russian subject is obliged to stand watch over the rights of the supreme power and to care for the benefit of the State. It is not so much that each one only has the right to take part in State life and care for its benefits: he is called to this by his duty as a loyal subject. That is our constitution. It is all contained, without paragraphs, in the short formula of our State oath of loyalty..."<sup>441</sup>

This was all true, and Dostoyevsky undoubtedly agreed with it in principle. However, he was doing something different from Katkov, and more difficult: not simply *stating the truth* before an audience that was in no way ready to accept it in this direct, undiluted form, but *bringing them closer to the truth, and inspiring them with the truth* by indirect, aesthetic means.

And with this aim he did not call on his audience to unite around the Tsar. In any case, he had certain reservations about the Tsardom that made him in

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<sup>438</sup> K.V. Glazkov, "Zashchita ot liberalizma" ("A Defence from Liberalism"), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 15 (1636), August 1/14, 1999, pp. 9, 10, 11.

<sup>439</sup> Katkov, *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), 1867, N 88; in L.A. Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, p. 31.

<sup>440</sup> Katkov, *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), 1881, N 115; in Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>441</sup> Katkov, *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), 1886, N 341; in Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

some ways closer to his liberal audience than Katkov. In particular, he did not support the “paralysis” that the Petrine system had imposed on the Church, whereas Katkov’s views were closer to the official, semi-absolutist position.<sup>442</sup>

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If Katkov may have preferred more on the monarchy in Dostoyevsky’s speech, Constantine Leontiev was scandalised by the lack of mention of *the Church*. Volgin writes that “at the end of the Pushkin festival Pobedonostev in a restrained way, without going into details, congratulated Dostoyevsky on his success. And then immediately after his congratulations he sent him ‘Warsaw Diary’ with an article by Constantine Leontiev. This article was angry and crushing. C. Leontiev not only annihilated the Speech point by point from the point of view of his ascetic Christianity, but compared it directly with another public speech that had taken place at almost the same time as the Moscow festivities, in Yaroslavl diocese at a graduation ceremony in a school for the daughters of clergymen. ‘In the speech of Mr. Pobedonostev (the speaker was precisely him – I.V.),’ writes Leontiev, ‘Christ is known in no other way that through the Church: “love the Church first of all”. In the speech of Mr. Dostoyevsky Christ... is so accessible to each of us in bypassing the Church, that we consider that we have the right... to ascribe to the Saviour promises that He never uttered concerning “the universal brotherhood of the peoples, “general peace” and “harmony” ...”<sup>443</sup>

We will recall that Leontiev wrote much about the invasion of the twin spirits of liberal cosmopolitanism and nationalism into the Orthodox world. So when he writes that Dostoyevsky “extracted out of the spirit of Pushkin’s genius the prophetic thought of the ‘cosmopolitan’ mission of the Slavs”<sup>444</sup>, it is with scarcely concealed irony. This irony becomes crushing when he speaks about waiting for “the fulfilment of the prophecy of Dostoyevsky, ‘until the Slavs teach the whole of humanity this pan-human love’, which neither the

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<sup>442</sup> For example: “The whole labour and struggle of Russian History consisted in taking away the power of each over all, in the annihilation of many centres of power. This struggle, which in various forms and under various conditions took place in the history of all the great peoples, was with us difficult, but successful, thanks to the special character of the Orthodox Church, which renounced earthly power and never entered into competition with the State. The difficult process was completed, everything was subjected to one supreme principle and there had to be no place left in the Russian people for any power not dependent on the monarch. In his one-man-rule the Russian people sees the testament of the whole of its life, on him they place all their hope” (*Moskovskie Vedomosti (Moscow Gazette)*, № 12, 1884; in Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 312).

Again, “[the Tsar] is not only the sovereign of his country and the leader of his people: he is the God-appointed supervisor and protector of the Orthodox Church, which does not recognize any earthly deputy of Christ above it and has renounced any non-spiritual action, presenting all its cares about its earthly prosperity and order to the leader of the great Orthodox people that it has sanctified” (in Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 313).

<sup>443</sup> Volgin, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>444</sup> Leontiev, “G. Katkov i ego vragi na prazdnike Pushkina” (G. Katkov and his enemies at the Pushkin festivities), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo (The East, Russia and Slavdom)*, p. 279.

Holy Fathers nor the Apostles nor the Divine Redeemer Himself was able to confirm absolutely in the hearts of men".<sup>445</sup>

But was he being fair? Dostoyevky was not looking to the fusion of the races into one liberal-ecumenist conglomerate, but to their union in spirit through the adoption of the Orthodox faith, the essential condition of true brotherhood among both individuals and nations. Nor was he a chauvinist, but simply believed that the Russian people was the bearer of a truly universal content, the Orthodox Christian Gospel, which it would one day preach to all nations; for "this Kingdom of the Gospel shall be preached to all nations, and *then* shall the end come" (Matthew 24.14).

As he wrote in another place: "You see, I've seen the Truth. I've seen it, and I know that men can be happy and beautiful without losing the ability to live on earth. I cannot - I refuse to believe that wickedness is the normal state of men. And when they laugh at me, it is essentially at that belief of mine."<sup>446</sup>

Vladimir Soloviev was closer to understanding Dostoyevsky's true meaning when he wrote: "The true Church which Dostoyevsky preached is pan-human, first of all in the sense that in it the division of mankind into rival and hostile tribes and peoples must disappear." "He believed in Russia and foretold her great future, but the main earnest of this future was, in his eyes, precisely the weakness of national egoism and exclusiveness in the Russian people."<sup>447</sup> This belief that Dostoyevsky was not a chauvinist is the more striking in that it was expressed by a man who was a sworn foe of Russian chauvinism...

Leontiev returned to his criticism of this supposedly romantic, cosmopolitan or "chiliast" faith of Dostoyevsky's, as he considered it, in an article entitled "On Universal Love", in which he supported the liberal writer A.D. Gradovsky's claim that Dostoyevsky was ignoring the prophecies of the Antichrist. "The prophecy of the general reconciliation of people in Christ," he wrote, "is not an Orthodox prophecy, but some kind of general-humanitarian [prophecy]. The Church of this world does not promise this, and 'he who disobeys the Church, let him be unto thee as a pagan and a publican'".<sup>448</sup>

Dostoyevsky himself replied to Gradovsky (and therefore also to Leontiev) as follows: "In your triumphant irony concerning the words in my Speech to the effect that we may, perhaps, utter a word of 'final harmony' in mankind, you seize on the Apocalypse and venomously cry out: 'By a word you will accomplish that which has not been foretold in the Apocalypse! On the contrary, the Apocalypse foretells, not "final agreement", but final "disagreement" with the coming of the Antichrist. But why should the Antichrist come if we utter a word of "final harmony".'

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<sup>445</sup> Leontiev, op. cit., p. 282.

<sup>446</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*.

<sup>447</sup> Soloviev, *Sobranie Sochinenij* (Collected Works), St. Petersburg, volume III, 1911-1914, pp. 201, 202.

<sup>448</sup> Leontiev, "O vseмирnoj ljubvi", op. cit., p. 315.

"This is terribly witty, only you have cheated here. You probably have not read the Apocalypse to the end, Mr. Gradovsky. There it is precisely said that during the most powerful disagreements, not the Antichrist, but Christ will come and establish His Kingdom on earth (do you hear, on earth) for 1000 years. But it is added at this point: blessed is he who will take part in the first resurrection, that is, in this Kingdom. Well, it is in that time, perhaps, that we shall utter that word of final harmony which I talk about in my Speech."<sup>449</sup>

Leontiev counters by more or less accusing Dostoyevsky of the heresy of chiliasm: "It is not the complete and universal triumph of love and general righteousness on *this* earth that is promised to us by Christ and His Apostles; but, on the contrary, something in the nature of a seeming *failure* of the evangelical preaching on the earthly globe, for *the nearness of the end* must coincide with the last attempts to make everyone good Christians... Mr. Dostoyevsky introduces too *rose-coloured* a tint into Christianity in this speech. It is an *innovation* in relation to the Church, which expects nothing specially beneficial from humanity in the future..."<sup>450</sup>

However, of one thing the author of *The Devils*, that extraordinary prophecy of the collective Antichrist, cannot be accused: of underestimating the evil in man, and of his capacity for self-destruction. The inventor of Stavrogin and Ivan Karamazov did not look at contemporary Russian society with rose-tinted spectacles. Dostoyevsky's faith in a final harmony before the Antichrist did not blind him to where the world was going in his time.

"Europe is on the eve of a general and dreadful collapse," he wrote. "The ant-hill which has been long in the process of construction without the Church and Christ (since the Church, having dimmed its ideal, long ago and everywhere reincarnated itself in the state), with a moral principle shaken loose from its foundation, with everything general and absolute lost - this ant-hill, I say, is utterly undermined. The fourth estate is coming, it knocks at the door, and breaks into it, and if it is not opened to it, it will break the door. The fourth estate cares nothing for the former ideals; it rejects every existing law. It will make no compromises, no concessions; buttresses will not save the edifice. Concessions only provoke, but the fourth estate wants everything. There will come to pass something wholly unsuspected. All these parlamentarisms, all civic theories professed at present, all accumulated riches, banks, sciences, Jews - all these will instantly perish without leaving a trace - save the Jews, who even then will find their way out, so that this work will even be to their advantage."<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Dostoyevsky, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), Leningrad, 1984, vol. 26, p. 323; in Leontiev, *op. cit.*, p. 717.

<sup>450</sup> Leontiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 315, 322.

<sup>451</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, Haslemere: Ianmead, 1984, p. 1003.

However, Leontiev accuses him also, and still more seriously, of distorting the basic message of the Gospel. Dostoyevsky's "love" or "humaneness" (*gumannost'*) is closer to the "love" and "humaneness" of Georges Sand than that of Christ. Christian love and humaneness is complex; it calls on people to love, not simply as such, without reference to God, but "in the name of God" and "for the sake of Christ". Dostoyevsky's "love", on the other hand, is "simple and 'autonomous'; step by step and thought by thought it can lead to that dry and self-assured utilitarianism, to that epidemic madness of our time, which we can call, using psychiatric language, *mania democratica progressiva*. The whole point is that we claim *by ourselves*, without the help of God, to be either very good or, which is still more mistaken, useful... "True, in all spiritual compositions there is talk of love for people. But in all such books we also find that *the beginning of wisdom* (that is, religious wisdom and the everyday wisdom that *proceeds from it*) is "the fear of God" – a simple, *very simple fear* both of torments beyond the grave and of other punishments, in the form of earthly tortures, sorrows and woes."<sup>452</sup>

However, far from espousing a "dry and self-assured utilitarianism", Dostoyevsky was one of its most biting critics, satirising the rationalist-humanist-utilitarian world-view under the images of "the crystal palace" and "the ant-hill". Nor did he in any way share in *mania democratica progressiva*. Moreover, he was quite realistic about the obstacles that had to be overcome before men could love each other: "To transform the world, it is necessary that men themselves should suffer a change of heart. Until you have actually become everyone's brother, the brotherhood of man will not come to pass. People will never be able to share their property and their rights fairly as a result of any scientific advance, however much it may be to their advantage to do so. Everything will be too little for them and they will always murmur, envy and destroy each other. You ask me when it will come to pass. It will come to pass, but first the period of human *isolation* will have to come to an end... the sort of isolation that exists everywhere now, and especially in our age, but which hasn't reached its final development. Its end is not yet in sight. For today everyone is still striving to keep his individuality as far apart as possible, everyone still wishes to experience the fullness of life in himself alone, and yet instead of achieving the fullness of life, all his efforts merely lead to the fullness of self-destruction, for instead of full self-realization they relapse into complete isolation. For in our age all men are separated into self-contained units, everyone crawls into his own hole, everyone separates himself from his neighbour, hides himself away and hides away everything he possesses, and ends up by keeping himself at a distance from people and keeping people at a distance from him..."<sup>453</sup>

Moreover, while Dostoyevsky believed in universal *love*, he did not believe in universal *rights*. "The world has proclaimed freedom, especially in recent times, but what do we see in this freedom of theirs? Nothing but slavery and

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<sup>452</sup> Leontiev, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

<sup>453</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, VI, 2.

self-destruction! For the world says: 'You have needs, and therefore satisfy them, for you have the same rights as the most rich and most noble. Do not be afraid of satisfying them, but multiply them even.' This is the modern doctrine of the world. In that they see freedom. And what is the outcome of this right of multiplication of needs? Among the rich *isolation* and spiritual suicide and among the poor envy and murder, for they have been given the rights, but have not been shown the means of satisfying their needs."<sup>454</sup>

Again, Leontiev rejects Dostoyevsky's call to the intelligentsia to humble themselves before the people. "I don't think that the family, public and in general *personal* in the narrow sense qualities of our simple people would be so worthy of imitation. It is hardly necessary to imitate their dryness in relation to the suffering and the sick, their unmerciful cruelty in anger, their drunkenness, the disposition of so many of them to cunning and even thievery... Humility before the people... is nothing other than *humility before that same Church which Mr. Pobedonostsev advises us to love.*"<sup>455</sup>

However, "one must know," wrote Dostoyevsky, "how to segregate the beauty of the Russian peasant from the layers of barbarity that have accumulated over it... Judge the people not by the abominations they so frequently commit, but by those great and sacred things for which, even in their abominations, they constantly yearn. Not all the people are villains; there are true saints, and what saints they are: they are radiant and illuminate the way for all!... Do not judge the People by what they are, but by what they would like to become."<sup>456</sup>

"I know that our educated men ridicule me: they refuse even to recognize 'this idea' in the people, pointing to their sins and abominations (for which these men themselves are responsible, having oppressed the people for two centuries); they also emphasize the people's prejudices, their alleged indifference to religion, while some of them imagine that the Russian people are simply atheists. Their great error consists of the fact that they refuse to recognize the existence of the Church as an element in the life of the people. I am not speaking about church buildings, or the clergy. I am now referring to our Russian 'socialism', the ultimate aim of which is the establishment of an oecumenical Church on earth in so far as the earth is capable of embracing it. I am speaking of the unquenchable, inherent thirst in the Russian people for great, universal, brotherly fellowship in the name of Christ. And even if this fellowship, as yet, does not exist, and if that church has not completely materialized, - not in prayers only but in reality - nevertheless the instinct for it and the unquenchable, oftentimes unconscious thirst for it, indubitably dwells in the hearts of the millions of our people.

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<sup>454</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, VI, 3.

<sup>455</sup> Leontiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 326, 327.

<sup>456</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*; in Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

“Not in communism, not in mechanical forms is the socialism of the Russian people expressed: they believe that they shall be finally saved *through the universal communion in the name of Christ*. This is our Russian socialism! It is the presence in the Russian people of this sublime unifying ‘church’ idea that you, our European gentlemen, are ridiculing.”<sup>457</sup>

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So Dostoyevsky’s “theology” was by no means as unecclesiastical as Leontiev and Pobedonostsev thought. The hope of universal communion in the name of Christ may be considered utopian by some, but it is not heretical as long as it is not understood in an ecumenist sense or as denying the reign of the Antichrist. “People laugh and ask: ‘When will this time come and is it likely that it will ever come?’ But I think that with Christ we shall accomplish this great work. And how many ideas have not been on earth in the history of man which were unthinkable ten years before and which, when their mysterious hour struck, suddenly appeared and spread all over the earth? So it will be with us too, and our people will shine forth in the world, and all men will say: ‘The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner’. And those who scoff at us, we shall ask: if our idea is a dream, then when are you going to erect your building and organise your life justly by your reason alone, without Christ?”<sup>458</sup>

Not that Dostoyevsky believed that all will be saved; he was by no means an Origenist. This is clear from the last words of the Elder Zosima: “Oh, there are some who remain proud and fierce even in hell, in spite of their certain knowledge and contemplation of irrefutable truth; there are some fearsome ones who have joined Satan and his proud spirit entirely. For those hell is voluntary and they cannot have enough of it; they are martyrs of their own free will. For they have damned themselves, having damned God and life. They feed upon their wicked pride, like a starving man in the desert sucking his own blood from his body. They will never be satisfied and they reject forgiveness, and curse God who calls them. They cannot behold the living God without hatred and demand that there should be no God of life, that God should destroy himself and all his creation. And they will burn eternally in the fire of their wrath and yearn for death and non-existence. But they will not obtain death...”<sup>459</sup>

But even if some of Dostoyevsky’s phrases were not strictly accurate as theological theses, it is quite clear that the concepts of “Church” and “people” were much more closely linked in his mind than Leontiev and Pobedonostev gave him credit for. Indeed, according to Vladimir Soloviev, on a journey to Optina in June, 1878, Dostoyevsky discussed with him his plans for his new

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<sup>457</sup> Dostoyevsky, “The Pushkin Speech”, in *The Diary of a Writer*, January, 1881, p. 1029.

<sup>458</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, VI, 3.

<sup>459</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, VI, 3.

novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and “the Church as a positive social ideal was to constitute the central idea of the new novel or series of novels”.<sup>460</sup>

In some ways, in fact, Dostoyevsky was more inoculated against Westernism than Leontiev. Thus Leontiev complained to Vasily Rozanov that Dostoyevsky’s views on Papism were too severe. And Leontiev was so fixated on the evils of liberalism and cosmopolitanism that he could have been called an ecumenist in relation to Papism – an error that Dostoyevsky, with his penetrating analysis of the kinship between Papism and Socialism, was not prone to. “Of particular importance”, writes Fr. Georges Florovsky, “was the fact that Dostoyevsky reduced all his searching for vital righteousness to the reality of the Church. In his dialectics of living images (rather than only ideas), the reality of *sobornost’* becomes especially evident... Constantine Leontiev sharply accused Dostoyevsky of preaching a new, ‘rose-coloured’ Christianity (with reference to his Pushkin speech). ‘All these hopes on earthly love and on earthly peace one can find in the songs of Béranger, and still more in Georges Sand many others. And in this connection not only the name of God, but even the name of Christ was mentioned more than once in the West.’... It is true, in his religious development Dostoyevsky proceeded precisely from these impressions and names mentioned by Leontiev. And he never renounced this ‘humanism’ later because, with all its ambiguity and insufficiency, he divined in it the possibility of becoming truly Christian, and strove to enchurch (*otserkovit’*) them. Dostoyevsky saw only insufficiency where Leontiev found the complete opposite...”<sup>461</sup>

Dostoyevsky started where his audience were – outside Church consciousness, in the humanist-rationalist-utopian morass of westernism, and tried to build on what was still not completely corrupted in that world-view in order to draw his audience closer to Christ and the Church. In this way, he imitated St. Paul in Athens, who, seeing an altar with the inscription “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”, gave the Athenians the benefit of the doubt, as it were, and proceeded to declare: “He Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him I declare unto you” (Acts 17.23). Constantine Leontiev would perhaps have objected that the Athenians, as pagans, were certainly not worshipping the True God at this altar. And he would have been formally right... And yet St. Paul saw the germ of true worship in this inchoate paganism, and, building upon it, led at any rate a few to the truth. This was also the method of Dostoyevsky with his semi-pagan Russian audience. And he, too, made some converts...

Again, if Dostoyevsky emphasised certain aspects of Christianity such as compassionate love and the humble bearing of insults, more than others such as the fear of God, the sacramental life and obedience to authorities, this is not because he did not think the latter were important, but because he knew that his audience, being spiritually infants, could not take this “hard” food, but

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<sup>460</sup> Soloviev, in David Magarshack’s introduction to his Penguin translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>461</sup> Florovsky, *Puti Russkogo Bogoslovie* (Paths of Russian Theology), Paris, 1937, pp. 300-301.

had to begin on the “milk” of those teachings which were not so distasteful to their spoilt palates. And the results proved him right from a pragmatic, missionary point of view. For the unbelieving intelligentsia of several subsequent generations have been stimulated to question their unbelief far more by the writings of Dostoyevsky than by those of Leontiev and Pobedonostev, undoubtedly Orthodox though the latter were.

An admirer of Leontiev, V.M. Lourié, has developed Leontiev’s line of criticism. Analysing Dostoyevsky’s remarks about “that rapture which most of all binds us to [God]”, Lourié concludes that “‘deification’ is interpreted [by Dostoyevsky] as a psychological and even natural condition – a relationship of man to Christ, in Whom he believes as God. From such ‘deification’ there does not and cannot follow the deification of man himself. On the contrary, man remains as he was, ‘on his own’, and with his own psychology... In such an – unOrthodox – soteriological perspective, the patristic ‘God became man, so that man should become God’ is inevitably exchanged for something like ‘God became man, so that man should become a good man’; ascetic sobriety turns out to be simply inadmissible, and it has to be squeezed out by various means of eliciting ‘that rapture’.”<sup>462</sup>

And yet what is more significant: the fact that there is a certain inaccuracy in Dostoyevsky’s words from a strictly theological point of view, or the fact that Dostoyevsky talks about deification at all as the ultimate end of man? Surely the latter...

Even among the Holy Fathers we find inaccuracies, and as Lourié points out in other places, the Palamite ideas of uncreated grace and the deification of man through grace had almost been lost even among the monasteries and academies of nineteenth-century Russia. Which makes Dostoyevsky’s achievement in at least placing the germs of such thoughts in the mind of the intelligentsia, all the greater. For in what other non-monastic Russian writer of the nineteenth century do we find such a vivid, profound and above all *relevant* (to the contemporary spiritual state of his listeners) analysis of the absolute difference between becoming “god” through the assertion of self (Kirillov, Ivan Karamazov) and becoming god through self-sacrificial love and humility (Bishop Tikhon, Elder Zosima)?

Leontiev was certainly insightful in his musing: “Who knows how soon this people, called [by Dostoyevsky] ‘God-bearing’, will become a people persecuting Christ and the faith?”<sup>463</sup> He thought the transition could take place in as little as fifty years. But Dostoyevsky had the same insight (expressed most

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<sup>462</sup> Lourié, “Dogmatika ‘religii liubvi’. Dogmaticheskie predstavlenia pozdnego Dostoevskogo” (The Dogmatics of ‘the religion of love’. The Dogmatic ideas of the late Dostoyevsky), in V.A. Kotel’nikov (ed.), *Khristianstvo i Russkaia Literatura* (Christianity and Russian Literature), St. Petersburg, 1996, p. 305.

<sup>463</sup> Leontiev, cited in interview with Fr. George Orekhanov, “Rozovoe Khristianstvo (part 1)”, Foma, <https://foma.ru/rozovoe-xristianstvo-ch1.html>.

powerfully in *The Devils*) without losing his faith in the potential of the Russian people...

Leontiev also asserted (followed by Lourié) that Dostoyevsky's monastic types are not true depictions of monastic holiness. "In his memoirs, Leontiev wrote: '*The Brothers Karamazov* can be considered an Orthodox novel only by those who are little acquainted with true Orthodoxy, with the Christianity of the Holy Fathers and the Elders of Athos and Optina.' In Leontiev's view (he himself became an Orthodox monk and lived at Optina for the last six months of his life), the work of Zola (in *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*) is 'far closer to the spirit of true personal monkhood than the superficial and sentimental inventions of Dostoyevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*.'"<sup>464</sup>

There is some truth in this criticism, and yet it misses more than one important point. The first is that Dostoyevsky was not intending to make a literal representation of anyone, but "an artistic tableau". And for that reason, as he wrote to Pobedonostsev in August 1879, he was worried whether he would be understood. The "obligations of artistry... required that I present a modest and majestic figure, whereas life is full of the comic and is majestic only in its inner sense, so that in the biography of my monk I was involuntarily compelled by artistic demands to touch upon even the most vulgar aspects so as not to infringe artistic realism. Then, too, there are several teachings of the monk against which people will simply cry out that they are absurd, for they are all too ecstatic; of course, they are absurd in an everyday sense, but in another, inward sense, I think they are true."<sup>465</sup>

Again, as Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "To the 'synthetic' Christianity of Dostoyevsky Leontiev opposed the contemporary monastic way of life or ethos, especially on Athos. And he insisted that in Optina *The Brothers Karamazov* was not recognized as 'a correct Orthodox composition', while Elder Zosima did not correspond to the contemporary monastic spirit. In his time Rozanov made a very true comment on this score. 'If it does not correspond to the type of Russian monasticism of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (the words of Leontiev), then perhaps, and even probably, it corresponded to the type of monasticism of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries'. In any case, Dostoyevsky was truly closer to Chrysostom (and precisely in his social teachings) than Leontiev... Rozanov adds: 'The whole of Russia read *The Brothers Karamazov*, and believed in the representation of the Elder Zosima. "The Russian Monk" (Dostoyevsky's term) appeared as a close and fascinating figure in the eyes of the whole of Russia, even her unbelieving parts.'... Now we know that the Elder Zosima was not drawn from nature, and in the given case Dostoyevsky did not proceed from Optina figures. It was an 'ideal' or 'idealised' portrait, written most of all from Tikhon of Zadonsk, and it was precisely Tikhon's works that inspired Dostoyevsky, constituting the 'teachings' of Zosima... By the power of his

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<sup>464</sup> Magarshack, *op. cit.*, p. xviii.

<sup>465</sup> Magarshack, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

artistic clairvoyance Dostoyevsky divined and recognized this seraphic stream in Russian piety, and prophetically continued the marked-out line..."<sup>466</sup>

Whatever the truth about the relationship between Dostoyevsky's fictional characters and real life, one thing is certain: both Dostoyevsky and the Optina Elders believed in the same remedy for the schism in the soul of Russian society - a return to Orthodoxy and the true Christian love that is found only in the Orthodox Church. There was no substantial difference between the teaching of Elder Ambrose and Dostoyevsky (whom Ambrose knew personally and commended as "a man who repents!"). Dostoyevsky would not have disagreed, for example, with this estimate of Elder Ambrose's significance for Russia: "Fr. Ambrose solved for Russian society its long-standing and difficult-to-solve questions of *what to do*, how to live, and for what to live. He also solved for Russian society the fatal question of how to unite the educated classes with the simple people. He said to Russian society that the meaning of life consists of love - not that humanistic, irreligious love which is proclaimed by a certain portion of our intelligentsia, and which is expressed by outward measures of improvement of life; but that true, profound Christian love, which embraces the whole soul of one's neighbour and heals by its life-giving power the very deepest and most excruciating wounds. Fr. Ambrose also solved the question of the blending of the intelligentsia with the people, uniting them in his cell in one general feeling of repentant faith in God. In this way he indicated to Russian society the one saving path of life, the true and lasting foundation of its well-being - in the first place spiritual and then, as a result, material..."<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.

<sup>467</sup> Fr. Sergius Chetverikov, *Elder Ambrose of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1997, p. 437

## 27. REGICIDE

The long-suffering Empress Maria Alexandrovna died on May 22, 1880. On July 6, the Emperor married his long-term mistress, Princess Katerina Dolgorukaya, now Yuryevskaya, by whom he already had three children. This posed an immediate threat to the Tsarevich Alexander, who could be replaced as official heir by one of the new Empress' children now that (on July 6) they were granted all the rights of legitimate children by the Tsar.

"The summer of 1880 passed tranquilly. August began, and there were still no attempts on [the tsar's] life. But there was trouble brewing at court and the Romanov family. The grand duchesses, the wives of his brothers, were old women and they remained outraged by his marriage. Clearly they feared it would set a bad example. Their ladies-in-waiting and those of the late empress kept inventing terrible stories about the 'odalisque'. They even managed to find that the great beauty wasn't beautiful at all – and poorly brought up at that.

"Things got worse. [Minister of the Court] Adlerberg told them that she dared to discuss state affairs with Loris-Melikov, and this gave rise to the rumor that would find its way into their memoirs and move into the works of many historians. The emperor had turned into a useless old man who was bossed by his young and stupid wife and the slay Armenian general.

"The rumor grew stronger as it became more evident to the camarilla which way the emperor was leading the country. Princess Yuryevskaya was turned into a forerunner of Rasputin. Like Rasputin, she divided the Romanov family and the opposition used her image to undermine the tsar's prestige.

"Alexander ignored the family rebellion because his main goal had been achieved. He stopped the country from going over the brink into the abyss. His decision to bank on reform had been justified. Loris-Melikov reported the joyous tidings. It was time to disband the Supreme Administrative Commission.

"The news was announced on August 6. Russia was returning to normal life and Count Loris-Melikov was giving up his dictatorial power. At the same time the main symbol of oppression of public life, the Third Department of His Majesty's Chancellery, was being destroyed.

"To replace it, the powerful Ministry of Internal Affairs was created, with a Police Department within it. The functions and personnel of the Third Department were moved there. Count Loris-Melikov was appointed as the new minister of internal affairs, of course, and he also became chief of the Gendarme Corps."<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, pp. 370-371.

The new government – still effectively led by Loris-Melikov, but in a difference guise - adopted a “twin-track” approach. On the one hand, terrorists continued to be pursued – and executed. Thus in October five members of the People’s Will were executed. On the other hand, preparations went ahead for the creation of a constitution. This fateful development could take place because the leader of the anti-constitutional opposition, the Tsarevich Alexander, had been persuaded by Loris-Melikov to drop his oppositional stance and obey his father. Whether or not this was because he feared that, if he did not submit, he would be removed as heir in favour of his father’s eldest son by his new wife, as Radzinsky argues, is debatable. In any case, Pobedonostsev was gloomy...

On January 29, 1881, Dostoyevsky died. Although his views were always original, there is no doubt that his profoundest instincts were Orthodox and monarchical. Above all, he was a prophet of repentance to the Russian people – all classes of the Russian people. For, as St. Ambrose of Optina said, he himself “knew how to repent”. On the eve of his death, he asked his beloved wife Anna to read the parable of the prodigal son. Then he said to his children: “Children, never forget what you have heard here. Keep your faith in God and never despair of His forgiveness. I love you very much, but my love is nothing compared to the endless love of God for all people created by Him... And remember, if you should ever commit a crime in your life, still do not lose hope in God. You are His children, be as humble before Him as before your father, pray to Him for forgiveness, and He will rejoice in your repentance as He rejoiced in the return of the prodigal son.”

His funeral was an unprecedented event in Russian history that would not be matched until the funeral of Patriarch Tikhon, another great preacher of repentance, in 1925. “A human sea, thirty thousand people, followed his coffin, seventy deputations carried wreaths, and fifteen choirs took part in the procession. His wife and other witnesses of his death recounted it in detail. But they did not recount the most mysterious aspects of his death.”<sup>469</sup>

Which was that a lodger in Dostoyevsky’s house at the time of his death was the leading terrorist, Alexander Barannikov, “the Avenging Angel”, who took it because the large numbers of people who visited Dostoyevsky gave him good cover to meet his fellow terrorists, including even the leader of the People’s Will, Alexander Mikhailov. It was when police were searching the room of Barannikov, on the other side of a wall from Dostoyevsky, that the great writer had the pulmonary attack that killed him...

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The police captured all the leaders of the People’s Will: Mikhailov, Barannikov, Kolotkevich and Zhelyabov. But, encouraged by secret

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<sup>469</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 385.

communications with the imprisoned Nechaev, the People's Will were planning another attempt on the life of the tsar... The seventh, final and finally successfully attempt on his life of the tsar was inspired and organized especially by the leading women, Vera Figer, Alexandra Korba and Sophia Perosvkaya, while the bomb that killed the tsar was thrown by a student, Ignaty Grinevitsky, who wrote his last will and testament in the spirit of the new breed of suicide bombers: "Alexander II must die. His days are numbered. He will die and we, his enemies, will die with him... History will show that the luxurious tree of freedom demands human sacrifices..."<sup>470</sup>

Ivanov writes: "Emperor Alexander II confirmed the report of his minister on the constitution on February 17, 1881, and on the morning of March 1 [13 (O.S.)] also confirmed the text announcing this measure, so that before its publication it should be debated at the session of the Council of Ministers on March 4.

"On the same day that the report of Count Loris-Melikov was signed, a bomb thrown by terrorists, cut short the life of the Sovereign."<sup>471</sup>

The future Tsar Nicholas II described the event as follows: "We were having breakfast in the Anichkov palace, my brother and I, when a frightened servant ran in and said:

"An accident has happened to the Emperor! The heir [the future Tsar Alexander III, Nicholas' father] has given the order that Great Prince Nicholas Alexandrovich (that is, I) should immediately go to the Winter palace. One must not lose time.'

"General Danilov and I ran down, got into a carriage and rushed along Nevsky to the Winter palace. When we were going up the staircase, I saw that all those who met us had pale faces and that there were big red spots on the carpet - when they had carried my grandfather up the staircase, blood from the terrible wounds he had suffered from the explosion had poured out. My parents were already in the study. My uncle and aunt were standing near the window. Nobody said a word. My grandfather was lying on the narrow camp bed on which he always slept. He was covered with the military greatcoat that served as his dressing-gown. His face was mortally pale, it was covered with small wounds. My father led me up to the bed:

"Papa,' he said, raising his voice, 'your sun ray is here.'

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<sup>470</sup> Radzinsky, *Alexander II*, p. 406.

<sup>471</sup> Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-345. In broad daylight, a bomb was thrown at the Tsar's carriage. It injured some of the guards but left him unhurt. Disregarding his personal safety, he left his carriage and was attending to the injured when a second bomb was thrown, fatally wounding him and many others. He was rushed to the Winter Palace where he died in the presence of his grief-stricken family. Both his son, the future Tsar Alexander III, and his grandson, the future Tsar Nicholas II, were present.

"I saw a fluttering of his eyelids. The light blue eyes of my grandfather opened. He tried to smile. He moved his finger, but could not raise his hand and say what he wanted, but he undoubtedly recognized me. Protopresbyter Bazhenov came up to him and gave him Communion for the last time, we all fell on our knees, and the Emperor quietly died. Thus was it pleasing to the Lord."

Ironically, Russia had been saved from a constitution by the bombs of the terrorists...

On April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, a southern sympathizer, who shouted: "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" (thus will it always be for tyrants). Sixteen years later, on March 1, 1881, the other great emancipator of the age, Tsar Alexander II, was also assassinated by a supposed enemy of tyranny. The moral seemed to be: those rulers, whether democratic or monarchical, who truly desire the liberty of their peoples, are destined to be stabbed in the back by those whom they liberate...

### *III. THE WEST: THE CLASH OF EMPIRES*

## **28. RELIGION IN AMERICA**

"After the Franco-Prussian war," writes Karen Armstrong, "the nations of Europe began a frantic arms race which led them inexorably to the First World War. They appeared to see war as a Darwinian necessity in which only the fittest would survive. A modern nation must have the biggest army and the most murderous weapons that science could provide, and Europeans dreamed of a war that would purify the nation's soul in a harrowing apotheosis. The British writer I.F. Clarke has shown that between 1871 and 1914 it was unusual to find a single year in which a novel or short story describing a horrific future war did not appear in some European country. The 'Next Great War' was imagined as a terrible but inevitable ordeal: out of the destruction, the nation would arise to a new and enhanced life. At the very end of the nineteenth century, however, British novelist H.G. Wells punctured this utopian dream in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and showed where it was leading. There were terrifying images of London depopulated by biological warfare, and the roads of England crowded with refugees. He could see the dangers of a military technology that had been drawn into the field of the exact sciences. He was right. The arms race led to the Somme and when the Great War broke out in 1914, the people of Europe, who had been dreaming of the war to end all wars for over forty years, entered with enthusiasm upon this conflict, which could be seen as a collective suicide of Europe. Despite the achievements of modernity, there was a nihilistic death wish, as the nations of Europe cultivated a perverse fantasy of self-destruction.

"In America, some of the more conservative Protestants were in the grip of a similar vision, but their nightmare scenario took a religious form. The United States had also suffered a terrible conflict and an ensuing anticlimax. Americans had seen the Civil War (1861-65) between the northern and southern states in apocalyptic terms. Northerners believed that the conflict would purge the nation; soldiers sang of the 'glory of the coming of the Lord'. Preachers spoke of an approaching Armageddon, of a battle between light and darkness, liberty and slavery. They looked forward to a New Man and a New Dispensation emerging, phoenix-like, from this fiery trial. But there was no brave new world in America either. Instead, by the end of the war, whole cities had been destroyed, families had been torn asunder, and there was a white southern backlash. Instead of utopia, the northern states experienced the rapid and painful transition from an agrarian to an industrialized society. New cities were built, old cities exploded in size. Hordes of new immigrants poured into the country from southern and eastern Europe. Capitalists made vast fortunes from the iron, oil, and steel industries, while workers lived below subsistence level. Women and children were exploited in the factories: by 1890, one out of every five children had a job. Conditions were poor, the hours long, and the machinery unsafe. There was also a new gulf between town and countryside, as large parts of the United States, especially the South, remained agrarian. If a void lay beneath the prosperity of Europe, America was becoming a country without a core.

"The secular genre of the 'future war' which so entranced the people of Europe, did not attract the more religious Americans. Instead, some developed a more consuming interest than ever before in eschatology, dreaming of a Final War between God and Satan, which would bring this evil society to a richly deserved end. The new apocalyptic vision that took root in America during the later nineteenth century is called *premillennialism*, because it envisaged Christ returning to earth *before* he established his thousand-year reign. (The older and more optimistic *postmillennialism* of the Enlightenment, which was still cultivated by liberal Protestants, imagined human beings inaugurating God's Kingdom by their own efforts: Christ would only return to earth *after* the millennium was established.) The new premillennialism was preached in America by the Englishman John Nelson Darby (1800-82), who found few followers in Britain but toured the United States to great acclaim six times between 1859 and 1877. His vision could see nothing good in the modern world, which was hurtling towards destruction. Instead of becoming more virtuous, as the Enlightenment thinkers had hoped, humanity was becoming so depraved that God would soon be forced to intervene and smash their society, inflicting untold misery upon the human race. But out of this fiery ordeal, the faithful Christians would emerge triumphant and enjoy Christ's final victory and glorious Kingdom.

"Darby did not search for mystical meaning in the Bible, which he saw as a document that told the literal truth. The prophets and the author of the Book of Revelation were not speaking symbolically but making precise predictions which would shortly come to pass exactly as they had foretold. The old myths were now seen as factual *logoi*, the only form of truth that many modern Western people could recognize. Darby divided the whole of salvation history into seven epochs or 'dispensations', a scheme derived from a careful reading of scripture. Each dispensation, he explained, had been brought to an end when human beings became so wicked that God was forced to punish them. The previous dispensations had ended with such catastrophes as the Fall, the Flood, and the crucifixion of Christ. Human beings were currently living in the sixth, or penultimate, dispensation, which God would shortly bring to an end in an unprecedentedly terrible disaster. Antichrist, the false redeemer whose coming before the End had been predicted by St. Paul, would deceive the world with his false allure, take everybody in, and then inflict a period of Tribulation upon humanity. For seven years, Antichrist would wage war, massacred untold numbers of people, and persecute all opposition, but eventually Christ would descend to earth, defeat Antichrist, engage in a final battle with Satan and the forces of evil on the plain of Armageddon outside Jerusalem, and inaugurate the Seventh Dispensation. He would rule for a thousand years, before the Last Judgement brought history to a close. This was a religious version of the future-war fantasy of Europe. It saw true progress as inseparable from conflict and near-total destruction.

"There was one important difference, however. Where the Europeans imagined everybody enduring the ordeal of the next great war, Darby

provided the elect with a way out. On the basis of a remark of St. Paul's, who believed that Christians alive at the time of Christ's Second Coming would be 'taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air', Darby maintained that just before the beginning of the Tribulation, there would be a 'Rapture', a snatching-up of born-again Christians, who would be taken up to heaven and so would escape the terrible sufferings of the Last Days. Rapture has been imagined in concrete, literal detail by premillennialists. They are convinced that suddenly airplanes, cars, and trains will crash, as born-again pilots and drivers are caught up into the air while their vehicles careen out of control. The stock market will plummet, and governments will fall. Those left behind will realize that they are doomed and that the true believers have been right all along. Not only will these unhappy people have to endure the Tribulation, they will know that they are destined for eternal damnation.<sup>1472</sup>

Armstrong argues that premillennialism was modern "in its literalism and democracy. There were no hidden or symbolic meanings, accessible only to a mystical elite. All Christians, however rudimentary their education, could discover the truth, which was plainly revealed for all to see in the Bible. Scripture meant exactly what it said: a millennium meant ten centuries; 485 years meant precisely that; if the prophets spoke of 'Israel', they were not referring to the Church but to the Jews; when the author of Revelation predicted a battle between Jesus and Satan on the plain of Armageddon outside Jerusalem, that was exactly what would happen. A premillennial reading of the Bible would become even easier for the average Christian after the publication of *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), which became an instant best-seller. C.I. Scofield explained this dispensational vision of salvation history in detailed notes accompanying the biblical text, notes that for many fundamentalists have become almost as authoritative as the text itself.<sup>1473</sup>

The leader of this conservative, fundamentalist Protestantism was Charles Hodge. In 1874 he wrote *What is Darwinism?*, an attack on evolutionism. "To any ordinarily constituted mind," he wrote, "it is absolutely impossible to believe that the eye is not the work of design." However, while Hodge and the fundamentalists were pleading for common sense and doctrinal orthodoxy, "other Protestants, such as the veteran abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher (1813-87), were taking a more liberal line. Dogma, in Beecher's view, was of secondary importance, and it was unchristian to penalize others for holding different theological opinions. Liberals were open to such modern scientific enterprises as Darwinism or the Higher Criticism of the Bible. For Beecher, God was not a distant, separate reality but was present in natural processes here below, so evolution could be seen as evidence of God's ceaseless concern for his creation. More important than doctrinal correctness was the practice of Christian love. Liberal Protestants continued to emphasize the importance of social work in the slums and cities, convinced that they could, by their

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<sup>472</sup> Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, New York: Ballantyne, 2000, pp. 136-139.

<sup>473</sup> Armstrong, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.

dedicated philanthropy, establish God's Kingdom of justice in this world. It was an optimistic theology that appealed to the prosperous middle classes who were in a position to enjoy the fruits of modernity. By the 1880s, this New Theology was taught in many of the main Protestant schools in the northern states.

“American Protestants were discovering that they were profoundly at odds. Their difference threatened to tear the denominations apart. The chief bone of contention at the end of the nineteenth century was not evolution but the Higher Criticism. Liberals believed that even though the new theories about the Bible might undermine some of the old beliefs, in the long term they would lead to a deeper understanding of scripture. But for the traditionalist, 'Higher Criticism' seemed to symbolize everything that was wrong with the modern industrialized society that was sweeping the old certainties away. By this time, popularizers had brought the new ideas to the general public, and Christians discovered to their considerable confusion that [supposedly] the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, nor the Psalms by King David; the Virgin Birth of Christ was a mere figure of speech, and the Ten Plagues of Egypt were probably natural disasters which had been interpreted later as miracles. In 1888, the British novelist Mrs. Humphry Ward published *Robert Elsmere*, which told the story of a young clergyman whose faith was so undermined by the Higher Criticism that he resigned his orders and devoted his life to social work in the East End of London. The novel became a best-seller, which indicated that many could identify with the hero's doubts. As Robert's wife said, 'If the Gospels are not true in fact, as history, I cannot see how they are true at all, or of any value.'<sup>474</sup>

Outside mainstream Protestantism, there were a multitude of other religious movements in the United States. “The Harvard historian of psychiatry Eugene Taylor has identified an entire culture, what he terms a ‘shadow culture’ of more than two hundred years of alternative religions and ‘pop-psych’ movements. Standing outside mainstream psychiatry and the mainstream churches, these movements comprised a variety of attempts to live in the post-Christian world, both before and after Nietzsche. Taylor calls it both a ‘visionary’ tradition and a ‘crank literature’, a ‘folk psychology’ and a ‘psychospiritual tradition’, focusing as it does on an ‘experiential interpretation of higher consciousness’. His survey is a clear account of an otherwise woolly world...

“The fashions and fads for homeopathy, phrenology, mesmerism, hydrotherapy, shamanism and Orientalism all came and went in the nineteenth century, some making bigger waves than others, but all leaving their mark. Figures like Emerson, Thoreau and Margaret Fuller were all regarded as inspirational leaders with spiritual qualities, together with John Muir, an immigrant from Scotland who arrived in the United States in 1849 and who,

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<sup>474</sup> Armstrong, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

among his other achievements, deserves credit for preserving the Grand Canyon and the Petrified Forest in Arizona as national parks.

“Perhaps the rise and fall of many of these fads, Taylor argues, the last three decades of the nineteenth century ‘produced full-fledged organizations devoted to spiritual therapeutics that were national, even international, in scope.’ One of the reasons for this, he says, was that the visionary tradition had been gradually suppressed within American high culture ‘because of the rising tide of positivistic science’.

“Utopian socialism was another part of the visionary tradition, Taylor says, and here he includes the Mormons, the Seventh-Day Adventists, charismatic religions aiming to change the experience of intimacy and alternative forms of consciousness. Theosophy, New Thought and Christian Science drew their strengths from an interest in life after death, producing a parallel interest in ‘automatic speech’, table tipping, slate writing and ‘rapping and knocking’, as he puts it. Books with titles such as *The Divine Law of Cure*, *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography* and *Esoteric Christianity and Mental Therapeutics* proliferated. In 1881, the Massachusetts Metaphysical College was formed by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, which taught pathology, ‘therapeutics’, moral science and metaphysics. The American Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1885. Despite many experiments, Taylor reports drily, ‘the psychical researchers were unable to discover any evidence for the reality of life after death’. But they did ‘establish the reality of the unconscious’.<sup>475</sup>

“The impressive-sounding Boston School of Psychopathology comprised an additional knot of investigators, including William James, the neurologist James Jackson Putnam, Richard Clarke Cabot and the neuropsychologist Morton Prince. Many of its members ‘had direct ties either by birth or upbringing with the intuitive psychology of character formation bequeathed to them by Emerson and the Concord transcendentalists.’ The Boston School was much more scientific than any of its predecessors, being much influenced by Darwin. Even so, James maintained, it was psychic phenomena that ‘were destined to change the very shape of science in the future’.

“There was, Taylor goes on, a dramatic expansion of psychotherapy in America after 1900, as people began to acknowledge that ‘spirituality played a key role in a person’s mental health’. Mystic states were key here, he said, but they were so different from ‘the normal everyday waking state’ that ‘we don’t know how to deal with them’. The Emmanuel movement was launched in 1906 at Emmanuel Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, ‘to fuse modern scientific psychotherapy with the Christian teachings of moral character development’. These meetings, which drew upward of five hundred people twice a week, came to be called ‘moral clinics’.

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<sup>475</sup> For other scientific attempts to prove the existence of the soul, see Richard Sugg, “The Search for the Soul”, *History Today*, April 2017, pp. 48-50. (V.M.)

“In addition, from 1893 when the World’s Parliament of Religions met in America as part of the Columbian Exposition, marking the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the New World, a number of Indian swamis and Japanese Zen spiritual elders, plus the White Russian mystic G.I. Gurdjieff, toured the United States to great acclaim, speaking at universities. These events resulted in the establishment, among other things, of Vedanta societies...”<sup>476</sup>

This World Parliament of Religions could be said to mark the beginning of the age of religious indifferentism, or ecumenism, and it drew in the Orthodox Churches. Thus Fr. Panagiotis Carras writes: “In 1893 Archbishop Dionysios Latas arrived in the United States as a representative of the Church of Greece to the first Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago. This was the first time that an Orthodox bishop took part in a Humanist religious event. He proclaimed that since all people are created by the same God: I embrace, as my brothers in Jesus Christ, as my brothers in the divinely inspired Gospel, as my friends in eminent ideas and sentiments, all men; for we have a common Creator, and consequently a common Father and God. And I pray you lift with me for a moment the mind toward the divine essence, and say with me, with all your minds and hearts, a prayer to Almighty God.

“The delegates at the first Parliament of the World's Religions also heard Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu Delegate from India, proclaim: If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will hold no location in place or time; which will be infinite, like the God it will preach; whose Son shines upon the followers of Krishna or Christ, saints or sinners, alike; which will not be the Brahman or Buddhist, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have...infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms and find a place for every human being...”<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Peter Watson, *The Age of Atheists*, London:

<sup>477</sup> Facebook, October 8, 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/Fr.Panagiotis/posts/10214442156142412> on & Schuster, 2014, pp. 177-179.

## 29. CHRISTIANITY, COMMERCE AND CIVILIZATION

“Christianity, commerce and civilization” was the phrase Dr. David Livingstone used to describe the progress of, and justifications for, imperialism among the benighted peoples of the world. In different parts of the world the emphasis was on different elements of the trio – in Livingstone’s own case in Central Africa it was on mission and medicine. Missionaries penetrated the furthest corners of the earth: often they were there before the secular administrators and armies. The biggest missionary drives came from the biggest imperial empires: those of England (Protestant), France (Catholic) and Russia (Orthodox). But the United States, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Belgium were also important players.

Whatever their doubts (caused by Darwinism and other materialist theories), and however great the inconsistencies between their beliefs and their actions, the Victorians were prepared to go to great pains to export their form of Christianity to other lands. Just as English industrial products encompassed the whole world, so did English missionaries, as the efforts of Livingstone in Africa and Lord Redstock in Russia demonstrate. As late as 1904, writes Niall Ferguson, the German satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* pointed to this religiosity and missionary enthusiasm of the British Empire by comparison with the other empires “with a cartoon contrasting the different colonial powers. In the German colony even the giraffes and crocodiles are taught to goose-step. In the French, relations between the races are intimate to the point of indecency. In the Congo the natives are simply roasted over an open fire and eaten by King Leopold. But British colonies are conspicuously more complex than the rest. There, the native is force-fed whisky by a businessman, squeezed in a press for every last penny by a soldier and compelled to listen to a sermon by a missionary...”<sup>478</sup>

In spite of their missionary zeal, the British were forced to place a damper both on their zeal and on their expansionist imperialism after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. And there were financial considerations too, as well as broader geopolitical factors... As David Cannadine writes: “Gladstone’s foreign policy owed more to Aberdeen’s view of international affairs than it did to Palmerson’s, or Disraeli’s... Yet when it came to imperial affairs, there was no such clear-cut contrast; for as so often in the past, the desire for retrenchment ran up against countervailing forces requiring expenditure or annexation that could not always be resisted. In his best-selling book, *Greater Britain*, published in 1868, the young radical, republican politician, Sir Charles Dilke, urged that the colonies of settlement should free themselves from British imperial rule. For the time being they had no wish to believe in such a manner, even in New Zealand, where self-government had been granted in 1858, and where there had been serious criticism of Britain at the time of the Maori wars; but there was no real desire for independence. And although in the aftermath of the post-Rebellion proclamation, annexations were in abeyance in India for the time

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<sup>478</sup> Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, London: Penguin, 2004, p. 296.

being, the impossibility of letting go, combined with reluctant acquisitiveness, remained in practice the policy elsewhere, as evidence by the example of Africa. In 1870, while still at the Colonial Office, Lord Granville declared his willingness to give the Gambia to France; but nothing ever came of this proposal. Two years later the British government acquired, for cash down, a string of Dutch forts along the Gold Coast, and in 1873-74 it felt compelled to mount a full-scale war against the King of the Ashanti, who was threatening these recently acquired holdings from the north; and it was as the leader of the British troops in that campaign that General Garnet Wolseley first came to public notice in Britain.

“Despite such unavoidable exceptions, Gladstone’s administration of 1868-74 was generally characterized by a commitment to reform at home along with the pursuit of tranquility abroad; but in the case of Disraeli’s government that followed, the priorities were exactly the opposite. He largely left domestic matters to his colleagues, while he concentrated his declining energies and intermittent attention on foreign and imperial affairs, appropriately and aristocratically assisted until 1878 by the fifth Earl of Derby at the Foreign Office and Lord Carnarvon at the Colonial Office. Although he was in fact a far less cosmopolitan and well-travelled figure than Gladstone, Disraeli had been (at least retrospectively) prescient when he sensed in the early 1870s that nationalism and imperialism would supersede liberal nationalism, and as a past master of theatrical gestures and vague yet memorable phrases, he thought himself ideally equipped to play the role of world statesman. Such gestures and phrases were much in evidence when, in late 1875, Disraeli purchased for the British government from the bankrupt Khedive of Egypt the shares he owned in the Suez Canal for £4 million. Disraeli masterminded the acquisition in secret, with the direct help of the Rothschild Bank, and only then did he seek the approval of the cabinet and the Commons. Since the Canal was the imperial lifeline between Britain and India, Disraeli was determined that the French, who had built the Canal and were major shareholders, should not consolidate their interest by getting their hands on the Khedive’s holdings as well. Despite perceptions to the contrary, the purchase did not give Britain complete control of the Canal; but it was a remarkable deal, and a dazzling coup, which would also turn out to be a good investment...”<sup>479</sup>

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"After 1870," writes Jean Comby, "the European powers rivaled one another in the conquest of new territories: in 1885 the Treaty of Berlin divided Africa into areas of influence. Article 6 recognized the freedom of preaching under the protection of the colonial powers. Colonization opened up an immense field to evangelization and mission could favour colonization. Colonial powers and missions joined together in a common task: building schools, hospitals, and so on. The colonizers wanted the missionaries to be of their own nationality.

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<sup>479</sup> Cannadine, *Victorious Century. The United Kingdom, 1800-1906*, London: Viking, 2017, pp. 323-325.

When the territory changed hands, the old missionaries were replaced by those of the new owner.

"However, there was not always perfect agreement between the missionary, the administrator, the soldier and the colonist. While loyal to the occupying power, the missionaries did not pay any less attention to the abuses of colonization, and the administrators thought of the missionaries as a rival power. The latter were closer to the people by their presence among them and by their knowledge of the language. They protested against the forced labour and an industrialization which destroyed traditional structures."<sup>480</sup>

The European empire that probably attached the greatest importance to mission was France. Thus "when King Charles X came to the Chamber of Deputies formally to announce intervention in Algeria, he justified it as 'for the benefit of Christianity'."<sup>481</sup> The French saw the success of *la mission civilisatrice* as part of the glory of France.

This attitude is discernible even in the republican period, when French rulers officially espoused the revolution rather than Catholicism. Thus Andrew Wheatcroft writes: "If Louis-Philippe, the victor of the 1830 Revolution, did not share his predecessor's exalted Catholicism, he was nonetheless addicted to national glory. He saw a direct connection between the heroic France of the First Crusade and the triumphs of the new crusade and conquest in Algeria of the 1830s, in which his sons played an active part. The essence of this new crusade was later painted by Horace Vernet, a particular favourite of the new king, in *The First Mass in Kabylia*, which depicts a field service. The troops kneel respectfully as the celebrant holds up the Host for them to see; symbolically the body and blood of Christ subdue the lowering mountains which form the background, while a group of Arabs sit sullenly in the foreground. In 1837, as the conquest advanced, Louis-Philippe began to remodel the great palace of Versailles to create a national history museum celebrating the many centuries of French military triumph. Vernet's work would feature prominently among the vast canvases that covered the walls.

"The first rooms of the king's museum depicted the Crusades, with a mock-Gothic style of decoration and a long list of the French Crusaders, the first heroes for France. Then came the other great figures of French military history, culminating in Napoleon's supreme achievement. But the story of glory continued after the emperor. The final galleries, the Salle de Constantine and the Salle de la Smalah, honoured the new crusade in Algeria. The official guidebook to the museum left no doubt as to what was the message the visitor was intended to receive: 'We there find again, after an interval of five hundred years, the French nation fertilising with its blood the burning plains studded with the tents of Islam. These are the heirs of Charles Martel, Godfrey de Bouillon, Robert Guiscard and Philip Augustus, resuming the unfinished

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<sup>480</sup> Comby, *How to Read Church History*, London: SCM Press, 1989, vol. 2, p. 174.

<sup>481</sup> Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 213.

labours of their ancestors. Missionaries and warriors, they every day extend the boundaries of Christendom.'

"Soon a steady stream of colonists began to settle in the nascent French Proconsulate of Algeria, providing a Christianizing presence in a terrain formerly 'infidel'. A diocese was created in Algiers in 1838, which became an archdiocese in 1866, with two subsidiary bishoprics at Constantine and Oran. Two years later a new missionary order called the White Fathers was founded with the aim of carrying the Christian message into Kabylia and south into the desert. Dressed in a white robe, or gandoura, with a mantle, they looked more like Algerian Arabs than Frenchmen. Under the direct authority of the Congregation of Propaganda in Rome, in their ardour, discipline, asceticism and energy the White Fathers resembled the Jesuits in their exultant heyday centuries before.

"This preoccupation with North Africa survived Louis-Philippe, continued through the rule of Napoleon III, and on into the Third Republic that followed him. By the end of the nineteenth century, writers could look back at a constant extension of French conquest: in Algeria, in a French Proconsulate of Tunisia and in the French (and Spanish) partition of Morocco in the 1890s. The theme of the crusade remained popular. Michaud's *History* had become a school textbook in 1844, with eighteen editions published by the end of the century, and in 1877 a new luxury edition appeared, which was illustrated with a set of magnificent engravings by Gustave Doré representing Christian power and dominance. This rhetoric and image of crusade in the first half of the nineteenth century was usually a mask for grubbier enterprises, but it is wrong to regard it with complete cynicism. French Algeria may have been a colony created first by accident, and then as a device to counter the unpopularity of successive governments in Paris. But many of the migrants to Algeria and even of the soldiers who fought there, and certainly the missionaries labouring in the deserts, often believed that they were following a higher calling. Nowhere else in the Islamic lands had there been such a reprise of the medieval Latin Kingdom. Once again a Christian community had been planted among the infidels. All patriotic citizens of France could rejoice that their nation, which had won Jerusalem in the First Crusade, had now brought Christian power back to the southern shore of the Mediterranean. This had been the great mission of Saint Louis, the nation's patron saint, which was finally fulfilled some seven centuries after his death.

"Nor did France ever intend to leave. Algeria became an integral part of metropolitan France, and its existence an exemplar of France's civilization and cultural destiny. That 'civilizing mission' was taught in every school in France and in the schools of the empire beyond the seas, and this unifying ideology gradually replaced the sectarian vocabulary of crusade, except in high Catholic circles. But support for French Algeria transcended the gulf between clericals

and anticlericals. Many believed with an absolute conviction in France's mission in North Africa and were prepared to use any means to sustain it."<sup>482</sup>

Another important French colony where Catholicism came with conquest was Indochina. "By force of arms," writes Max Hastings, in the late nineteenth century France "established a progressive dominance initially in the south, Cochinchina. In May 1883, when the National Assembly in Paris voted five million francs for an expedition to consolidate the region as a 'protectorate', the conservative politician Jules Delafosse proclaimed, 'Let us, gentlemen, call things by their name. It is not a protectorate that you want, but a possession.' So it was of course. The French committed twenty thousand troops to securing Tonkin - northern Vietnam. Achieving this after a year's hard fighting, they imposed a ruthless governance. While they abolished the old custom of condemning adulteresses to be trampled to death by elephants, the penalty of beheading, formerly imposed only upon thieves, was extended to all who challenged French hegemony. Opium consumption soared after the colonial power opened a Saigon refinery..."<sup>483</sup>

Many missionaries did extraordinary work. But where conversions to Christianity were superficial - as was very often the case - the result could be a syncretistic mixture of Christianity and paganism, as when Jesuit missionaries in China were forced to compromise with pagan ancestor-worship, or hybrids between Catholicism and voodoo appeared in Latin America.

Or the superiority of Christianity might be confused in the mind of the convert with the superiority of the white race or his technological culture, as happened in New Guinea, where the cargo myth reached the following development by the 1930s:-

"In the beginning Anut (God) created the heaven and the earth. On the earth he gave birth to all the flora and fauna and then to Adam and Eve. He gave these power over all things on earth and established a paradise for them to live in. He completed his beneficial work by creating and giving them cargo: canned meat, steel utensils, sacks of rice, tins of tobacco, matches, but not cotton clothing. For a time they were content with that, but finally they offended God by having sexual relations. In anger God chased them out of paradise and condemned them to wander in the bush. He took the cargo away from them and decreed that they were to spend the rest of their existence being content with the minimum needed to live.

"God showed Noah how to build the ark - which was a steamship like those one sees at the port of Madang. He gave him a peaked cap, a white shirt, shorts, socks and shoes... When the flood ended, God gave Noah and his family cargo as a proof of his renewed goodness towards the human race... Shem and Japheth continued to respect God and Noah and as a result continued also to

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<sup>482</sup> Wheatcroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-216

<sup>483</sup> Hastings, *Vietnam*, London: William Collins, 2019, p. 2.

benefit from the resources of cargo. They became the ancestors of the white races who have profited from their good sense. But Ham was stupid. He uncovered his father's nakedness... God took the cargo away from him and sent him to New Guinea, where he became the ancestor of the natives.

"God had said to the missionaries: 'Your brothers in New Guinea are plunged into utter darkness. They have no cargo because of the folly of Ham. But now I have pity on them and want to help them. That is why you missionaries must go to New Guinea and remedy the error of Ham. You must put his descendants on the right way. When they again follow me, I will send them cargo, just as today I send it to you white people...'" <sup>484</sup>

Or a complete reversal might happen: the potential convert, seeing the bad morals of his would-be instructors, could come to the conclusion that their own faith and race were superior, as happened in China...<sup>485</sup>

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Perhaps the most unexpected result of the European missionary movement of the nineteenth century was the phenomenon of *reverse conversion* - the adoption by the conquerors of the faith of the conquered. This process may be said to have begun in 1857, the year of the Indian Mutiny. Before that, English imperialism was determined to impose Christianity on the heathen. There was no hint of ecumenist indifference or relativism. But then came the Indian Mutiny and the bloody reprisals that followed it. Missionary zeal cooled, and racism and avarice became the dominant motives of imperial rule. "A brown skin alone sufficed to earn death, and only a tiny minority among the British protested."<sup>486</sup> This was followed, however, by the gradual adoption, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the Hindu notion of the relativity of all religions. Thus Madame Blavatsky adopted a form of Hinduism in India and then preached it in Europe. And Swami Vivekandra preached Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893...

Indeed, reverse conversion may be seen to be the most profound and long-term effect of nineteenth-century imperialism: relativism and ecumenism, which are indigenous to eastern religion, became entrenched in the lands of the West...

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<sup>484</sup> Comby, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>485</sup> An anti-Christian tract of a Chinese secret society in around 1875 read: "Accursed be these Europeans, these missionary dogs or these governors of dogs who come to preach a barbarous religion and destroy the holy wisdom, who profane and defame the holy Confucius, although they have not studied the first page of a book. Heaven can no longer tolerate them and the earth refused to bear them; let us strike them, and send them to meditate eternally in the depths of hell. May their tongues be cut out because they seduce the masses by their lies and their hypocrisy has a thousand means of tearing out the heart... Let us throw their bodies in the desert to be food for dogs." (Comby, *op. cit.*, p. 178)

<sup>486</sup> Max Hastings, review of William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal*, London: Bloomsbury, 2006, in *The Sunday Times Books*, October 1, 2006, p. 46.

Of the three justifications of imperialism, the vaguest and most portentous was “civilization”. As Yuval Noah Harari writes, spreading the culture of the ruling race among the other subject peoples has two advantages. First, it makes government easier through standardization of language and money; and secondly, it gives the empire legitimacy insofar as the ruling culture or civilization is deemed to be superior to all others.

“At least since the days of Cyrus and Qin Shi Huangdi, empires have justified their actions – whether road-building or bloodshed – as necessary to spread a superior culture from which the conquered benefit even more than the conquerors.

“The benefits were sometimes salient – law enforcement, urban planning, standardization of weights and measures – and sometimes questionable – taxes, conscription, emperor worship. But most imperial elites earnestly believed that they were working for the general welfare of all the empire’s inhabitants. China’s ruling class treated their country’s neighbours and its foreign subjects as miserable barbarians to whom the empire must bring the benefits of culture. The Mandate of Heaven was bestowed upon the emperor not in order to exploit the world, but in order to educate humanity. The Romans, too, justified their dominion by arguing that they were endowing the barbarians with peace, justice and refinement. The wild Germans and painted Gauls had lived in squalor and ignorance until the Romans tamed them with law, cleaned them up in public bathhouses, and improved them with philosophy. The Mauryan Empire in the third century BC took as its mission the dissemination of Buddha’s teachings to an ignorant world. The Muslim Caliphs received a divine mandate to spread the Prophet’s revelation, peacefully if possible but by the sword if necessary. The Spanish and Portuguese empires proclaimed that it was not riches they sought in the Indies and America, but converts to the true faith. The sun never set on the British mission to spread the twin gospels of liberalism and free trade. The Soviets felt duty-bound to facilitate the inexorable historical march from capitalism towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. Many Americans nowadays maintain that their government has a moral imperative to bring Third World countries the benefits of democracy and human rights, even if these goods are delivered by cruise missiles and F-16s.

“The cultural ideas spread by empire were seldom the exclusive creation of the ruling elite. Since the imperial vision tends to be universal and inclusive, it was relatively easy for imperial elites to adopt ideas, norms and traditions from wherever they found them, rather than stick fanatically to a single hidebound tradition. While some emperors sought to purify their cultures and return to what they viewed as their roots, for the most part empires have begot[ten] hybrid civilisations that absorbed much from their subject peoples. The imperial culture of Rome was Greek almost as much as it was Roman. The imperial Abbasid culture was part Persian, part Greek, part Arab. Imperial Mongol culture was a Chinese copycat. In the imperial United States, an American president of Kenyan blood can munch on Italian pizza while

watching his favourite film, *Lawrence of Arabia*, a British epic about the Arab rebellion against the Turks.

“Not that this cultural melting pot made the process of cultural assimilation any easier for the vanquished. The imperial civilization may well have absorbed numerous contributions from various conquered peoples, but the hybrid result was still alien to the vast majority. The process of assimilation was often painful and traumatic. It is not easy to give up a familiar and loved local tradition, just as it is difficult and stressful to understand and adopt a new culture. Worse still, even when subject peoples were successful in adopting the imperial culture, it could take decades, if not centuries, until the imperial elite accepted them as part of ‘us’. The generations between conquest and acceptance were left out in the cold. They had already lost their beloved local culture, but they were not allowed to take an equal part in the imperial world. On the contrary, their adopted culture continued to view them as barbarians...

“In the late nineteenth century, many educated Indians were taught the same lesson by their British masters. One famous anecdote tells of an ambitious Indian who mastered the intricacies of the English language, took lessons in Western-style dance, and even became accustomed to eating with a knife and fork. Equipped with his new manners, he travelled to England, studied law at University College London, and became a qualified barrister. Yet this young man of law, bedecked in suit and tie, was thrown off a train in the British colony of South Africa for insisting on travelling first class instead of settling for third class, where ‘coloured’ men like him were supposed to ride. His name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

“In some cases the processes of acculturation and assimilation eventually broke down the barriers between the newcomers and the old elite. The conquered no longer saw the empire as an alien system of occupation, and the conquerors came to view their subjects as equal to themselves. Rulers and ruled alike came to see ‘them’ as ‘us’. All the subjects of Rome eventually, after centuries of imperial rule, were granted citizenship. Non-Romans rose to occupy the top ranks in the officer corps of the Roman legions and were appointed to the Senate. In AD 48 the emperor Claudius admitted to the Senate several Gallic notables, who, he noted in a speech, through ‘customs, culture, and rites of marriage have blended with ourselves’. Snobbish senators protested introducing these former enemies into the heart of the Roman political system. Claudius reminded them of an inconvenient truth. Most of their own senatorial families descended from Italian tribes who once fought against Rome, and were later granted Roman citizenship. Indeed, the emperor reminded them, his own family was of Sabine ancestry.

“During the second century AD, Rome was ruled by a line of emperors born in Iberia, in whose veins probably flowed at least a few drops of local Iberian blood. The reigns of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius are generally thought to constitute the empire’s golden age. After that, all the ethnic dams were let down. Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) was the scion

of a Punic family from Libya. Elagabalus (218-22) was a Syrian. Emperor Philip (244-9) was known colloquially as 'Philip the Arab'. The empire's new citizens adopted Roman imperial culture with such zest that, they continued to speak the empire's language, to believe in the Christian God that the empire adopted from one of its Levantine provinces, and to live by the empire's laws.

"A similar process occurred in the Arab Empire. When it was established in the mid-seventh century AD, it was based on a sharp division between the ruling Arab-Muslim elite and the subjugated Egyptians, Syrians, Iranians and Berbers, who were neither Arabs nor Muslim. Many of the empire's subjects gradually adopted the Muslim faith, the Arabic language and a hybrid imperial culture. The old Arab elite looked upon these parvenus with deep hostility, fearing to lose its unique status and identity. The frustrated converts clamoured for an equal share within the empire and in the world of Islam. Eventually they got their way. Egyptians, Syrians and Mesopotamians were increasingly seen as 'Arabs'. Arabs, in their turn – whether 'authentic' Arabs from Arabia or newly minted Arabs from Egypt and Syria – came to be increasingly dominated by non-Arab Muslims, in particular by Iranians, Turks and Berbers. The great success of the Arab imperial project was that the imperial culture is created was wholeheartedly adopted by numerous non-Arab people, who continued to uphold it, develop it and spread it – even after the original empire collapsed and the Arabs as an ethnic group lost their dominion.

"In China the success of the imperial project was even more thorough. For more than 2,000 years, a welter of ethnic and cultural groups first termed barbarians were successfully integrated into imperial Chinese culture and became Han Chinese (so named after the Han Empire that ruled China from 206 BC to AD 220). The ultimate achievement of the Chinese Empire is that it is still alive and kicking, yet it is hard to see it as an empire except in outlying areas such as Tibet and Xinjiang.<sup>487</sup> More than 90 per cent of the population of China are seen by themselves and by others as Han.

"We can understand the decolonization process of the last few decades in a similar way. During the modern era Europeans conquered much of the globe under the guise of spreading a superior Western culture. They were so successful that billions of people gradually adopted significant parts of that culture. Indians, Africans, Arabs, Chinese and Maoris learned French, English and Spanish. They began to believe in human rights and the principle of self-determination, and they adopted Western ideologies such as liberalism, communism, feminism and nationalism.

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<sup>487</sup> In Xinjiang China has now, in 2021, introduced an unprecedentedly thorough system of high-tech surveillance linked to a very modern concentration camp system that witnesses to its failure (so far) to acculturate the Uigur Muslim people of the region. As for the Tibetan Buddhists, they have remained stubbornly unacculturated since their conquest by the Chinese in the 1950s. (V.M.)

“During the twentieth century, local groups that had adopted Western values claimed equality with their European conquerors in the name of these very values. Many anti-colonial struggles were waged under the banners of self-determination, socialism and human rights, all of which are Western legacies. Just as Egyptians, Iranians and Turks adopted and adapted the imperial culture that they inherited from the original Arab conquerors, so today’s Indians, Africans and Chinese have accepted much of the imperial culture of their former Western overlords, while seeking to mould it in accordance with their needs and traditions...”<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 221-225.

### **30. THE BRITISH IN ASIA**

The greatest imperial power was still Britain, and the jewel in Britain's imperial crown was India. "After the 1857 rebellion," writes Sir Richard Evans, "the subcontinent was ruled autocratically by an appointed governor-general whose power was limited only by a small council of civil servants. Over time this was expanded, and in 1909 it was enlarged to include elected members, but the council had no power to introduce laws or stop whatever the governor-general was doing. Until the First World War, therefore, India was a kind of *ancien régime* autocracy.

By then India was ready to build a capital to match its imperial ambitions. As Tombs writes, Delhi was "a capital worthy not merely of a global but of a galactic empire [that] had been in preparation since 1911, aiming 'to rival Paris and Washington'. It was to be a garden city in a hybrid neoclassical cum Mughal style, with as its centrepiece Sir Edwin Lutyens's stunning viceregal palace."<sup>489</sup>

"British rule in India rested on two key institutions. First of these was the civil service, a central, elite organization operating across the entire country, and staffed by British men, with only 5 per cent of the posts occupied by Indians as late as 1915. The Indian Civil Service was well paid and after the corruption scandals of the late eighteenth century it had become reasonably honest and conscientious. It collected the taxes already levied by the Mughals, above all the land tax, which under the Mughals had been administered by officials known as zamindars, often indistinguishable from high aristocrats. It administered justice under a codified system begun in 1861 that mixed British and Hindu principles and customs, and it provided political advisers to the 600 or so mostly small princely states that survived the uprising of 1857 (not least because the move to assimilate them into British rule was thought to have been one of its causes). The princely states collected their own taxes and ran their own affairs, but under the advice of British officials who encouraged reform. Over time the growing habit of educating the younger generation at British schools and universities, as well as the intensification of communications through better transport, telegraph and so on, and the increasing employment of British or British-trained civil servants to administer them, the princely states developed an amalgam of Indian traditions and European modernity that struck many as an ideal example of what could be achieved by indirect rule. Not just in the princely states, however, but also in the areas under direct rule, British control depended effectively on the passive co-operation of Indians, both elites and masses. This was achieved above all by the retention of Indian customs, institutions and basic structures of administration, along with an attempt to provide good and honest government. Thus the full panoply of Victorian administration was applied to India, with the founding of educational institutions such as the University of Madras (1857), and the adoption of the principle put forward in Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835

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<sup>489</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 661.

report on Indian education that schools and colleges teaching in English should be used to create a new Indian administrative elite to act as an intermediary between British and Indian society. Police forces were created from the 1860s and unified in 1905. Free trade was used to destroy autonomous industries such as textiles in the early part of the century, but India's incorporation into a rapidly globalizing world economy stimulated new industries and an increasing rate of urbanization, helped by the construction of roads, railways and canals. The shock of the 1857 rebellion had stimulated the British to be both cautious and conservative in their handling of Indian society and traditions, and to engage in a sustained policy of improvement and development to convince Indians of the benefits of British rule.<sup>490</sup>

“Yet underpinning all this was the application, or threat, of force, in the form of the second great institution of British rule in India, namely the Indian Army. The British regular army numbered around 250,000 men and had to defend and garrison colonies all over the world. The Indian Army was almost as large, and it could quickly be expanded by calling up reserves. It was paid for by taxes levied in India and indeed consumed around a third of all Indian tax revenues. In the key area of the 1857 rebellion, Bengal, the proportion of European to Indian troops was fixed at one to one; in Madras and Bombay one to two. Altogether there were 73,000 British and 154,000 Indian troops in the charge of British senior officers in 1885. British regiments served in India in rotation, with ‘sepoy’ regiments remaining separate. Recruits were taken from the so-called ‘martial’ areas like the North-West frontier, Nepal, or the Punjab, which had largely stayed loyal in 1857, as well as from the poorest and most illiterate social groups, who were seen as less likely to ideas of rebellion and revolt. The Indian Army was an asset not only in ruling the subcontinent but also in establishing British supremacy more generally, among other things in providing backing for the acquisition of colonies in east Africa.

“In major respects, however, British rule in India brought disaster for the population. The intensive land taxes levied by the Raj, and collected with considerably greater efficiency than their equivalents had been under the Mughals, caused changes in land use and turned bad harvests into famines, with two million dying of starvation in northern India in 1860-1, six million across India in the 1870s, and another five million with a monsoon failure in 1896-7, when the situation was made worse by the outbreak of plague.

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<sup>490</sup> The recruitment of civil servants (from the 1850s on) was “by open, competitive examination, which attracted some of Britain’s best brains and made the envy of Europe, well ahead of Britain’s own domestic civil service... They were required to speak two Indian languages and spent most of their time out in the midday sun, touring remote areas, dispensing quick justice to villages that still miss them today, studying local flora, fauna and social customs and writing valuable books about them... No regime based on violence alone could have enabled a maximum of 100,000 Europeans to rule for two centuries a land of 400 million people... By the 1940s most ICS officers were Indian, as were most Indian Army officers... The judiciary, universities, professions and business had long before been ‘Indianised’ and... the new Indian middle classes were active in local and provincial governments...” (Zareer Masani, Review of “India Conquered: Britain’s Raj & the Chaos of Empire” by Jon Wilson, in *History Today*, April 2017, p. 62) (V.M.)

Communications were still not good enough for effective relief operations to be mounted, and as late as 1921 only 3 per cent of Indians had any formal education, making disease prevention difficult; reading and writing were the prerogative of only a small elite. These catastrophes were not new – the Bengal famine of 1770 is estimated to have killed nearly 10 million people, and famines were also recorded in pre-colonial times – but there is little doubt that they increased in frequency and intensity under British rule, nor did the authorities of the Raj undertake adequate measures to deal with them and mitigate their effects. India also became the major global reservoir of indentured labour, a kind of quasi-slavery where workers were paid but had neither freedom nor any significant rights. Some 60,000 South Asians were sent to Fiji to work between 1879 and 1920, 25,000 to Mauritius, and 30,000 to build Kenya's railways in the 1890s, more than a third of them suffering death or serious injury during the construction. The total number of South Asians, almost all of them Indian, working across the British Empire indicated its global nature, but it also caused disruption to Indian communities on the subcontinent, and led to racial tensions in some colonies, notably Fiji.

“Despite these problems and the failure of the British administration to deal with them adequately, in India and increasingly after 1918 in other parts of the British Empire reform was seen as the best means of bringing stability and order to colonial societies. Conquest was followed in the end by Victorian ‘improvement’. A case in point was the Kingdom of Upper Burma. Fear of growing French power in Indochina prompted British concern when the death of the Burmese king, Mindon Min (1808-78), sparked a struggle for the succession in the course of which the majority of his 110 children were strangled then trampled by elephants (it was taboo to spill royal blood). The victor, King Thibawin (1879-1916), was not disposed to yield to the British. Indeed it was not so much disapproval of this violence as concern that the new king had begun to open negotiations with the French, who agreed to build a railway and set up a bank, which led the British Conservative government of Lord Salisbury to send in 10,000 troops in 1885.<sup>491</sup> The Burmese forces were defeated and the territory was annexed in 1886 at the end of what became

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<sup>491</sup> According to Cannadine, “The French had been showing interest in the region from their adjacent possessions in Indo-China, and King Thibaw had made friendly overtures to them, even confiscating British property and transferring it to the French. He also issued a proclamation calling for the liberation of British-controlled Lower Burma. The British response to these threats was to declare the king to be a tyrant who reneged on his treaty obligations. There was no reply to it, and in October 1885 the British sent” in the troops. “They captured Mandalay, King Thibaw was deposed and sent into exile, and Lord Randolph presented Upper Burma to Queen Victoria as New Year's Day present on 1 January 1886. It would be the United Kingdom's last imperial acquisition on the Indian subcontinent. By extraordinary coincidence, on 28 December 1885, just four days before Lord Randolph offered Upper Burma to the Queen-Empress, the Indian National Congress was founded. Its initial aim was to lobby for increased indigenous representation in the British-controlled government of the sub-continent and in the Indian Civil Service; and it would subsequently and successfully campaign for Indian independence. One of the founders of the Congress was Dadabhai Naoroji, who would be the first Asian elected to the British parliament in 1892 where, as a Liberal, he would speak in favour of Irish Home Rule. (*op. cit.*, pp. 420-421). (V.M.)

known as the Third Anglo-Burmese War. This was denounced by Liberal MPs as 'an act of high-handed violence... and act of flagrant folly', through which the Burmese political system had been destroyed, leaving chaos behind. Guerilla resistance proliferated, led by some of the remaining royal princes, and soon the British had 40,000 troops in the country, engaging in a 'pacification' campaign that involved the execution of alleged 'dacoits', or rebels, and the burning of their villages.

"By 1890 peace had descended on Burma... What this meant in practice was the wholesale conversion of the countryside to commercial rice production, with vast tracts of forest being felled and British firms bringing in thousands of indentured labourers from India to do the work. This in turn meant roads, railways, seaports, urban and commercial development. Burma became a vitally important source of rice for large parts of the British Empire, notably eastern Africa and above all India, where it supplied 15 per cent of the rice consumed. Meanwhile the habit of British soldiers and administrators of taking Burmese women as their wives or more usually concubines, much complained of in the 1890s, led to the emergence of a new Anglo-Burmese elite that came to dominate the administration of the country in the interwar years, in a comparable development to the creation of the social stratum of 'Anglo-Indians' who fulfilled a similar role on the subcontinent in the same period."<sup>492</sup>

Tombs presents another side of the colonial picture, defending the British record in India: "Given the size of India (20 percent of the world population in 1820) and its centrality to the empire, it is a devastating accusation to say that it was deliberately or even accidentally impoverished by British policy. What is the verdict? Asian living standards had begun to fall relative to Europe long before imperialism, partly due to political instability; and British rule did not see a further fall, but a slow rise. Asia's export successes had depended on cheap skilled labour: and the low cost of Indian labour made early technology unviable... Rapid early-nineteenth-century improvements in technology meant that English cotton goods suddenly became both cheaper and better than those of India, which consequently lost its global markets. In space of a generation (roughly from the 1830s to the 1850s) India thus became 'de-industrialized', as did China. However, modern mechanized cotton mills began to be built in the 1850s, and by 1876 India reached the 'one million spindle mark' - twenty years before Japan and thirty before Brazil. Famous names appeared at this time: J.N. Tata visited Lancashire in 1872 and six years later opened modern cotton mills at Nagapur; his son, Sir Dorabji Tata, established a huge steelworks in 1911. By 1900 India had the fourth largest cotton industry in the world, after England, the USA and Russia. It also had the fourth-largest railway system in the world (paid for by Indians but with British technical direction and aided by cheap British capital), with three-quarters of Asia's total track - thirty-five times more than China. Agricultural export growth in India was comparable to Brazil's. Indian industry began competing successfully with British imports - especially as the imperial government gave

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<sup>492</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 665-668.

preference to Indian-produced goods. Indian taxes were 20-40 percent lower than in the non-European world in general, and lower in British India than in the semi-autonomous princely states.

“But even if all this is accepted, the worst accusation is that colonial rulers, by encouraging export-oriented commercial agriculture and building railways, destroyed traditional subsistence farming, using free-market economics as a ‘mask’ for ‘holocaust’ and ‘colonial genocide’. The worst famines in 1876-79, 1888-91 and 1896-1902, caused by severe droughts connected with variations in the ‘El Niño’ current, were worldwide, but particularly deadly in India, China, Brazil, Russia and east Africa. To what extent was Britain responsible? A popular view – propagated today in a range of American universities and racial websites – blames it for every disaster from Brazil to China because it fostered a globalization that brought political, social, economic and ecological catastrophe. Imperial government failed disastrously to prevent a terrible death toll. Yet the Famine Codes drawn up in India in the 1880s were the world’s first anti-famine policy, still consulted today. They proclaimed that ‘the object of State intervention is to save life... all other considerations should be subordinated to this.’ Nor did colonial authorities refuse funds – the spending on famine relief in India in the 1873-74 and 1896-97 was equivalent to over £700m in today’s values, and tens of millions of people were assisted. But the authorities did fear that mass relief would encourage dependency and prove financially unsustainable, and so they cut relief too quickly. They also over-estimated the ability and willingness of the market to mobilize resources in these unprecedented crises, and were too hierarchical, complacent, dogmatic and finally parsimonious. Was this ‘genocide’? Imperial government did not do enough in the face of mass hunger, and this is widely accepted as an intrinsic failure of unrepresentative governments, colonial or other. Did British policy of encouraging commercial agriculture aggravate natural disaster? The answer is not simple. It depends on whether one assumes that traditional agriculture could have averted similar famines at a time of exceptional climatic disturbance.”<sup>493</sup>

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British expansion continued to the east. Thus in Borneo, “the British were eager to prevent the northern part of the island falling into foreign hands, because of its strategic importance on the flank of the vital sea routes from Singapore to China. But they were also keen to limit and to outsource their responsibilities, so in 1881 the government chartered the British North Borneo Company, which would administer the area under the nominal authority of the Sultans of Sula and Brunei (and would also provide the precedent for contracting British imperialism out to private enterprise in large parts of Africa). Elsewhere in the region there were Australian anxieties about the active presence of the Dutch in the East Indies, especially in western New Guinea, which at its closest was less than a hundred miles from the Australian

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<sup>493</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 569-570.

mainland. Accordingly, in 1883 antipodean representatives visited Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, in London, urging that Britain annex Samoa, New Guinea and the New Hebrides. Derby was appalled: 'I asked them,' he wrote to a friend, 'whether they did not want a planet all to themselves, and they seemed to think it would be a desirable arrangement if only feasible.' 'The magnitude of their ideas,' he concluded, 'is appalling to the English mind.' But not, it seemed, to the Australians, for despite Derby's strong opposition the Australians seized part of eastern New Guinea to forestall Dutch annexation, and declared a protectorate over it. Once again, the men on the spot had pushed the boundaries of empire forward, in successful defiance of London's non-expansionist preferences."<sup>494</sup>

The Australians were persistent; and when, in 1887 they urged the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury to annex the New Hebrides, "his anger boiled over. 'They are,' he complained, 'the most unreasonable people I have ever dreamed of.' They waited, he went on, for Britain to shed all the bloodshed, the dangers and the stupendous cost of a war with France, of which almost the exclusive burden will fall upon us'; and all this 'for a group of islands which are to us as valuable as the South Pole, and to which they are only attached by a debating club sentiment'. Salisbury was quite right to doubt the worth of such acquisitions, since the small Pacific Islands were useless as markets, produced little except coconuts, and lacked mineral resources that might be profitably extracted. Yet although he fended off the annexation of the New Hebrides for the time being, Salisbury could not prevent further imperial expansion in the Pacific. In 1888 and 1889 several uninhabited islands were annexed by the British as possible relay stations for the trans-Pacific cable that would soon be laid; and although the Admiralty thought them to be of no use, the Gilbert and Ellis Islands were declared a British protectorate in 1891, on the by-now familiar pre-emptive grounds that this was to avoid the alternative of letting the Germans into our sphere of influence."<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Cannadine, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

<sup>495</sup> Cannadine, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

### 31. THE MORALITY OF IMPERIALISM AND THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

The attitude to imperialism on the part of the imperialists themselves was beginning to change... "No history written in this period," writes Simon Heffer, "would influence policy so much as *The Expansion of England* by J.R. Seeley, Regius Professor of History in Cambridge. Published in 1883, it was a development of two courses of lectures Seeley had given the previous year on the history of empire, whether British or those of former powers. Its author saw history as a study designed not so much to understand the past, as to discover possibilities for the future. It was a study that sought to exhibit the general tendency of English affairs in such a way as to set us thinking about the future and divining the destiny which is reserved for us. Men such as Rosebery, before he became either Foreign Secretary or Prime Minister, and Chamberlain, who would not only be Colonial Secretary in the Salisbury administration after 1895 but would in many respects be the key figure in that ministry, would claim to be deeply influenced by Seeley.

"His assumptions were the imperialist's: that 'part played by our country in the world certainly does not grow less prominent as history advances', whereas other nations - he named Holland and Sweden - 'might predictably regard their history as in a manner wound up.' There, the study of history could be only scientific or sentimental: but Britain's greatness was in the future as well as in the past, so the past merited detailed study. 'The prodigious greatness to which it has attained makes the question of the future infinitely important and at the same time most anxious,' he wrote, 'because it is evident that the great colonial extension of our state exposes it to new dangers from which in its ancient insular insignificance it was free.'

"Seeley's value to statesmen was that he delineated anxieties and, by warning of potential difficulties, suggested how they could be averted. He distinguished between the vast population of India under British rule, and the 10 million or so 'Englishmen' who lived outside the British Isles, either in colonies with majority white settlements, or in others where the 'Englishmen' were not so greatly outnumbered as on the subcontinent. 'The latter are of our own blood, and therefore united to us by the strongest tie. The former are of alien race and religion, and are bound to us only by the tie of conquest,' he observed. He doubted the Indian Empire added to British power or security, but felt it greatly increased the mother country's 'dangers and responsibilities'.

His doctrine therefore distinguished between the Indian and colonial empires. The latter was an astonishing prospect, not just for its geographical spread, but because of how colonists of British stock would multiply. 'In not much more than half a century the Englishmen beyond the sea - supposing the Empire to hold together - will be equal in number to the Englishmen at home, and the total will be much more than a hundred millions.' He called this 'the great fact of modern English history' and stated that 'the growth of Greater

Britain is an event of enormous magnitude' with 'moral and intellectual consequences' as well as material ones. He added: 'Evidently, as regards the future, it is the greatest event.' He admitted that losing the American colonies, a century earlier, has left 'a doubt, a misgiving which affects our whole forecast of the future of England'. He continued: 'The greatest English question of the future must be what is to become of our second Empire, and whether or no it may be expected to go the way of the first.' He detected a tendency to expansion among the English, which had to be understood before deciding how the future would develop.

"Seeley knew competitiveness with other expanding nations had caused this tendency. Canada had been acquired in the eighteenth century in competition with France, and England had checked France's progress towards India. He wrote at the start of the 'scramble for Africa', provoked by competition with France and other European powers. Politicians could doubtless have worked out the dynamic of imperialism for themselves, but it helped to have it reinforced by so distinguished an intellectual. Several times Seeley quotes an apophthegm of Turgot, the eighteenth-century French statesman and economist, who gave what hindsight proves to be the best advice for those seeking to predict the future: 'Colonies are like fruits which only cling till they ripen.'

"The need for empire grew, Seeley said, because the population had doubled in seventy years and was doubling again. Britain was of limited size, but the territory governed by the Queen is of almost boundless extent. Seeley advised his readers to regard emigrants to Canada or Australia as simply a different sort of Briton from those living in Kent or Cornwall, and he deplored thinking of colonies as 'possessions'. 'In what sense can one population be spoken of as the possession of another population? The expression almost seems to imply slavery,' he wrote. If such terminology implied a place to be 'worked' for the benefit of the mother country, that was: he 'essentially barbaric': he was clear that any gains from the colonies had to be returned in services or benefits, such as defence, provided by Britain. Countries such as India, held by right of conquest, could not be exploited by a conquering nation that wished to consider itself civilized.

"British imperialists seized on insights relevant to their own aims, as they plotted policy. 'Greater Britain is an extension of the English State and not merely of the English nationality... when a nationality is extended without any extension of the State, as in the case of the Greek colonies, there may be an increase of moral and intellectual influence but there is no increase of political power.' For such men as Chamberlain, and for another of Seeley's readers, Cecil Rhodes, the buccaneering future prime minister of Cape Colony, the increase in British power was essential to the Anglocentric, capitalist empire they wanted, and for which they would campaign. But Seeley feared India was 'precarious' because the state had advanced beyond the limits of nationality - it had imposed itself on people to whom its ways were not natural, restricting their ability to participate in their own polities. Of most interest to Seeley's

devotees was his question about the risks of expansion: whether Greater Britain... can modify here defective constitution in such a way as to escape them for the future.'

"*The Expansion of England* is a rulebook for 'decent' imperialism, an imperialism that sincerely believed it was improving the government and lives of its conquered peoples: that too made it invaluable to governors of the great imperial nation in an increasingly democratic age. It was a roadmap for a future that assumed more expansion and growing power. But in imparting the lessons of history – particularly about the American revolution – it showed what to avoid if the second British Empire was to be held. Seeley pronounced that politics and history are only different aspects of the same study... politics are vulgar when they are not liberalized by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relations to practical politics.' The subject of 'Greater Britain,' he said, 'belongs most evidently to history and politics at once': successful imperial government could be achieved only by the closest study of history. It showed that 'we are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule her as conquerors.' Given the apparent certainty of an imperial future, Seeley successfully imparted the message that that future could be embarked upon only after the closest possible study of the past..."<sup>496</sup>

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It was not only the British who were expanding. The most striking fact of the half-century before 1914 was the global expansion of European power. This expansion was astonishing. "By 1914," writes J.M. Roberts, "more than four-fifths of the world's land surface outside Antarctica was under either a European flag, or the flag of a nation of European settlement."<sup>497</sup> "Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, which among them accounted for less than 1 per cent of the world's land surface and less than 8 percent of its population, ruled in the region of a third of the rest of the world's area and more than a quarter of its people. All of Australasia, 90 percent of Africa and 56 percent of Asia were under some form of European rule, as were nearly all the islands of the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. And although only around a quarter of the American continent – mainly Canada – found itself in the same condition of dependence, nearly all the rest had been ruled from Europe at one time or another in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In both the north and the south, the politics of the American republics were fundamentally shaped by the colonial past.

"Nor do these calculations about the extent of the West European maritime empires tell the whole story of nineteenth-century empire. Most of Central and Eastern Europe was under Russian, German or Austrian imperial rule. Indeed, the Russian empire stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from Warsaw to Vladivostok. And still intact, though in a position of increasing inferiority to

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<sup>496</sup> Heffer, *The Age of Decadence*, London: Pan, 2017, pp. 214-217.

<sup>497</sup> Roberts, *The Penguin History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin Books, 2000, p. 89.

the European empires, were the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East and the Chinese empire in the Far East. Independent nation-states, in short, were the exception to a worldwide imperial rule. Even Japan, the best-known example of an Asian state that had resisted colonization (though its economy had been forcibly opened to trade by the United States), had itself already embarked on empire building, having conquered Korea. And... the United States, though forged in the crucible of an anti-imperial war, had taken its first steps on the road to empire, having annexed Texas in 1845, California in 1848, Alaska in 1867 and the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and Guam in 1898. Indeed, its nineteenth-century history can be told as a transition from continental to hemispherical imperialism. <sup>498</sup>

Other changes – the growth of nationalism, democracy and socialism, of science and pseudo-science – were more profound; they have remained while the European empires have disappeared. But it was European imperialism that spread these profounder developments throughout the world, and thereby made possible the transformation of the world in the image of the European revolution that we see today, a process that has continued in spite of the huge transfer of power from Europe to her former colonies.

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What made the Great Powers great in relation to their colonial dominions was their being on the cusp of *modernity*. Now “what we designate by *modernity*,” according to Stephen Kotkin, “was not something natural or automatic. It involved a set of difficult-to-attain attributes – mass production, mass culture, mass politics – that the greatest powers mastered. Those states, in turn, forced other countries to attain *modernity* as well, or suffer the consequences, including defeat in war and possible colonial conquest. Colonies, from the point of view of the colonizers, were not just geographical assets (in most cases), but in the words of one historian, ‘also a form of conspicuous consumption on a national scale’ – markets of geopolitical status, or the lack thereof, which drove an aggressiveness in state-to-state relations, as those on the receiving end could attest. *Modernism*, in other words, was not a sociological process – moving from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ society – but a geopolitical process: a matter of acquiring what it took to join the great powers, or fall victim to them.

“Consider the invention of systems to manufacture steel (1850s), a strong and elastic form of iron that revolutionized weapons and made possible a global economy by transforming shipping. Steel took off thanks in part to the invention of the electric motor (1880s), which made possible mass production: the standardization of core aspects of products; the subdivision of work on assembly lines; the replacement of manual labor by machinery; the reorganization of flow among shops. These new production processes boosted

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<sup>498</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, London: Allen Lane, 2004, pp. 171-172.

world steel production from half a million tons in 1870 to twenty-eight million by 1900. But the United States accounted for ten million; Germany, eight; and Britain, five; a small number of countries had almost all the steel. In this picture we could add the manufacture of crucial industrial chemicals: synthetic fertilizers for boosting agricultural yields, chlorine bleach to make cotton, and explosives (Alfred Nobel's nitroglycerine dynamite, 1866) for mining, railroad construction, and assassinations. As some countries succeeded at modern industry, the world became divided between advantaged industrializers (Western Europe, North America, Japan) and disadvantage raw material suppliers (Africa, South America, much of Asia).

“Competitive modern attributes also included finance and credit facilities, stable currencies and stock companies. But in many ways, the new world economy rested upon peasants in the tropics who supplied the primary products (raw materials) necessary for industrial countries and, in turn, consumed many of the goods produced from their raw materials. Commercializaion spurred specialization away from subsistence – in China, for example, vast acreage of subsistence agriculture had been converted to cotton to feed the English cotton mills – with the result that the spread of markets made possible huge increases in production. But that spread also undercut diverse crop raising (to minimize subsistence shortfalls) and reciprocal social networks (to enhance survival), meaning markets undercut the traditional methods for coping with cyclical drought, which was chronic. El Nino airflows (the recurrent warming of the Pacific Ocean) export heat and humidity to parts of the world, creating an unstable climate for farming; torrential rains, floods, landslides, and wildfires, as well as severe droughts. The upshot was three waves of famine and disease (1876-79, 1889-91, 1896-1900) that killed between 30 and 60 million people in China, Brazil, and India. 15 million died of famine, equal to half the population of England at the time. Not since the fourteenth-century Black Death or the sixteenth-century disease destruction of New World natives had there been such annihilation. Had such mass death occurred in Europe – the equivalent of thirty Irish famines – it would be regarded as a central episode of world history. Besides the effects of commercialization and weather, additional factors came into play. The collapse of a U.S. railroad bubble, for example, led to a sharp decline in demand for key tropical products. Above all, colonial rulers compounded the market and climate uncertainties with inept and racist rule. Only in Ethiopia in 1889 was absolute scarcity an issue; there were not ‘natural’ famines for man-made ones, the consequences of a world subjected to great power domination.

“Modernity’s power could be woefully mismanaged. While India was experiencing mass starvation between 1870-1900, grain exports to Britain were increased from 3 million to 10 million, supplying one-fifth of British wheat consumption. ‘Famine,’ admitted one British official in 1907, after thirty-five years of service, ‘is now more frequent than formerly and more severe.’ But the British themselves were responsible. They had built the fourth largest railroad network in India to take advantage of their colony, but this technology that could have brought relief instead took food away. The British viceroy in India,

Lord Lytton, opposed on principle local officials' efforts to stock grain or interfere with market prices. He demanded that the emaciated and the dying work for food because, he insisted, food relief would encourage shirking from work (not to mention cost public funds). When starving women attempted to steal from gardens, they were subjected to branding, and sometimes had their noses cut off or were killed. Rural mobs assaulted landowners and pillaged grain stores. British officials observed the desperation and reported it back home. 'One madman dug up and devoured part of a cholera victim, while another killed his son and ate part of he boy,' one report from India noted. The Qing rulers in China had resisted building railroads, fearing their use in colonialist penetration, so in China the capacity for famine relief was limited. Huge peasant revolts broke out – the Canudos war in Brazil, the Boxer rebellion in China (where posters noted: 'No rain comes from Heaven. The Earth is parched and dry.'). But the peasants could not, at that time, overthrow formal or informal imperialism..."<sup>499</sup>

There were similar famines and rebellions, albeit on a smaller scale, in Eastern Europe, as we shall see. So the modernity willed by Enlightenment Europe, while waging no direct wars, indirectly warred on most of mankind...

No less important than the technological economic aspects of modernity were its cultural and philosophical aspects. European imperialism, writes John Darwin, "provoked, and drew strength from, a fiercer assertion than ever before of Europe's cultural mission to be the whole world's engine of material progress and also its source of religious and philosophical truth. Europeans were uniquely progressive, it was variously claimed, because of their physical, social or religious evolution. This was the charter of their 'race supremacy'. Last but not least, Greater Europe's expansion into Afro-Asian lands too remote or resistant in earlier times seemed a tribute to its scientific and technological primacy. The 'knowledge gap' between Europeans and (most) others looked wider, not narrower, at the end of the century. Parts of Europe were entering the second industrial revolution of electricity and chemicals before the non-Western world had exploited coal and steam."<sup>500</sup>

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The great expansion of European power in Africa took place especially after an international conference in Berlin, at which all the Great Powers, including the United States but excluding Japan, were represented. "In the late nineteenth century," writes Yuval Noah Harari, "several European powers laid claim to African territories. Fearing that conflicting claims might lead to an all-out European war, the concerned parties got together in Berlin in 1884 and divided Africa as if it were ice. Back then much of the African interior was terra incognita to Europeans. The British, French and Germans had accurate maps

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<sup>499</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 62-64.

<sup>500</sup> Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise & Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, p. 298.

of Africa's coastal regions, and knew precisely where the Niger, Congo and Zambezi empty into the ocean. However, they knew little about the course these rivers took inland, about the kingdoms and tribes that lived along their banks, and about local religion, history and geography. This hardly mattered to the European diplomats. They unrolled a half-empty map of Africa across a well-polished Berlin table, sketched a few lines here and there, and divided the continent among them.

“When in due course the Europeans penetrated the African interior, armed with their agreed-upon map, they discovered that many of the borders drawn in Berlin did little justice to the geographic, economic and ethnic reality of Africa. However, to avoid renewed clashes the invaders stuck to their agreements, and these imaginary lines became the actual borders of European colonies. During the second half of the twentieth century, as the European empires disintegrated and their colonies gained independence, the new countries accepted the colonial borders, fearing that the alternative would be endless wars and conflicts. Many of the difficulties faced by present-day African countries stem from the fact that their borders make little sense...”<sup>501</sup>

The “Scramble for Africa”, writes Roberts, was “a spreading of European power into the non-European world unrivalled in extent and pace since the sixteenth-century Spanish conquests in the Americas. Outside Algeria or South Africa, for most of the nineteenth century only a little of Africa behind a few coastal enclaves had been in European hands. In 1879 the arrival of a British army in Egypt registered yet another setback for the Ottoman empire, of which that country remained formally a part, and also a change in the continent's fate; to the south, even before the century ended, Anglo-Egyptian rule had been pushed deep into the Sudan. Elsewhere, southwards from Morocco round to the Cape of Good Hope, the African coastline was by the beginning of the twentieth century entirely divided between Europeans (British, French, Germans, Spanish, Portuguese and Belgians) with the exception of the isolated black republic of Liberia. The empty wastes of the Sahara and Sahel became nominally French, Tunisia was a French protectorate. The Belgian king enjoyed as a personal estate (and his agents acted atrociously) most of the rest of the Congo, which was soon to prove some of the richest mineral-bearing land in Africa; the Belgian state was to take over responsibility from him for what was called the ‘Congo Free State’ in 1906. Further east, apart from the Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State over which the British government claimed suzerainty, British territories ran almost continuously from the Cape of Good Hope up to the Rhodesias, which were hemmed in by the Belgian Congo and German and Portuguese East Africa (Tanganyika and Mozambique). The last two cut them off from the sea, but further north, from Mombasa, Kenya's port, a belt of British territory stretched throughout Uganda to the borders of the Sudan and the headwaters of the Nile. Somalia (divided between the British, Italian and French) and Italian Eritrea isolated Ethiopia, the only African country other than Liberia still to escape European domination. This ancient

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<sup>501</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 195-196.

Christian [Monophysite] polity was ruled by the only African monarch of the nineteenth century to avert the European threat by a military success, the annihilation of an Italian army at Adowa in 1896. Other Africans could not prevail, as the Anglo-Egyptian conquest of the Sudan in 1898, and, in the next century, the Portuguese mastery (with some difficulty) of insurrection in Angola in 1902, the British destruction of the Zulu and Matabele in 1907, and, most bloodily, the German quelling of Tanganyika in 1907 and massacre of the Herrero of south-west Africa in the same year, were to show.”<sup>502</sup>

Most of these imperial ventures were sponsored, not by states, but by individual adventurers. That is why they did not lead to European wars. Only occasionally were major national interests involved. Thus the British and the French nearly fought over Egypt, with its vital strategic asset of the Suez Canal. In 1882 both countries sent navies to Alexandria to protect their assets in the country, which was on the brink of bankruptcy. This eventually led to Britain making Egypt a “protectorate”, which in turn led to an Islamist reaction in Sudan. Meanwhile, the British fought the Boers over the diamond-rich Transvaal, and suffered defeats against both the Boers and the Zulus before finally prevailing over them..

“In West Africa, East Africa and South Africa there were strong pressures on the government in London from the men on the spot to safeguard what was deemed to be Britain’s vital strategic and commercial interests. Sainsbury’s response, following the recent precedent of the North Borneo Company, which itself harked back to the example of the East India Company, was to try to extend the British Empire on the cheap; he would do this by subcontracting these areas of it out to private enterprise, in the hope that chartered companies would be able to make sufficient profit from the exploitation of natural resources to defray the expenses of administration, at no cost to the British exchequer. In 1886 the government bestowed a charter on the Royal Niger Company, led by Sir George Goldie, which established British claims to the areas of the Lower Niger River, against competition from the French and the Germans. Two years later, in the aftermath of an agreement reached by the British and Germans as to spheres of influence, the British East Africa Company was given a charter, under the headship of Sir William MacKinnon, to oversee the development and government of what would eventually become Kenya and Uganda; this included the aptly named Lake Victoria, widely believed to be the source of the River Nile. And in 1889 the fabulously rich Cecil Rhodes, who had made a prodigious fortune in diamonds and gold, obtained a charter for the British South Africa Company, which he would use to open up a British imperial route to the north, to exploit what were believed to be the rich gold deposits in Mashonaland, and to fend off Portuguese expansion from neighbouring Angola and Mozambique...

“For the Liberal and Conservative governments alike, there were at least two paradoxes in their imperial policies during these years. The first was that

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<sup>502</sup> Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1992, pp. 96-97.

neither party, when in government, wanted to annex more territory or acquire more colonies, but that was in fact what happened: such was the disjunction and disconnect between the 'official mind' at home and the 'men on the spot' overseas, and it was often the latter who presided over the former. The second paradox was that while this sudden expansion of the formal British Empire seemed to betoken an imperial nation extending its global reach as never before, in reality the opposite was the case. For this late nineteenth-century phase of British imperialism was more defensive and pessimistic than it was aggressive and hubristic, trying to preserve some of its overseas positions in the face of mounting competition from other European powers. Yet, and perhaps this is a third paradox, this was not how it seemed to many Britons at the time..."<sup>503</sup>

This third paradox, the popularity of British imperialism among the English working class, was an aspect of a general shift in attitudes towards the right in late Victorian Britain. There was a shift in attitudes "among the propertied classes, especially landowners, bankers and the inhabitants of suburbia, away from their mid-Victorian Liberal internationalism and towards late Victorian conservative imperialism. At the same time there was a significant upsurge in working class jingoism, of which the prime beneficiaries would be the Tory Party, the landlords of public houses, and managers of music halls up and down the country..."<sup>504</sup>

Of course, native Africans were not inclined to surrender their lands to the imperialists without a protest. Thus when Cecil Rhodes<sup>505</sup> wanted to build a railway across the whole continent from South Africa to Egypt, he came up against the opposition of King Khama III of Bechuanaland (the modern Botswana), who, with two other regional kings, went to England and persuaded the Queen to stop a project which would have been so damaging to his people and his nation's independence. This was a rare victory of African diplomacy over British colonialism.

There were also a few military successes for Africans against the tide of European imperialism. One was the victory of the Zulus over the British at Isandlwana in 1879. Another, still more significant, took place in Sudan. "Between the 1820s and 1880s Egypt (backed by Britain) conquered Sudan and

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<sup>503</sup> Cannadine, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-423, 424-425.

<sup>504</sup> Cannadine, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

<sup>505</sup> As A.N. Wilson writes, Rhodes "first sailed for Africa - the east coast - when he was seventeen, in 1870. It was in the fates that he would give his name to two great African countries, Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe). Whether he actually placed his hand on the map of Africa and said, 'That is my dream - all British' - or in another version, 'all red' - he certainly believed that in an ideal universe, Britain would hold dominion not merely over the Dark Continent, but over the world itself. In his 'Confession', written when he was a very young man, Rhodes even dreamed of the readmission of the United States to the Empire. True, 'without the low-class Irish and German emigrants' that great nation would be a greater asset. 'If we had retained America there would... be millions more of English living... Since we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race.'" (Wilson, *The Victorians*, London: Arrow books, 2003, p. 603).

tried to modernize the country and incorporate it into the new international trade network. This destabilized traditional Sudanese society, creating widespread resentment and fostering revolts. In 1881 a local religious leader, Muhammed Ahmad bin Abdallah, declared that he was the Mahdi (the Messiah), sent to establish God's law on earth. He restored slavery, which [General Charles] Gordon had abolished, and imposed a very harsh rule that according to one estimate caused the deaths of 8 million people between 1885 and 1898. Gordon, the commander of an Anglo-Egyptian army sent to recover the Sudan, was convinced that the causes of the Sudanese rebellion were political, not religious. "That the people were justified in rebelling nobody who knows the treatment to which they were subjected will attempt to deny. Their cries were absolutely unheeded at Cairo... and they rallied round the Mahdi, who exhorted them to revolt against the Turkish yoke."<sup>506</sup>

"The Mahdi defeated the Anglo-Egyptian army and beheaded Gordon in a gesture that shocked Victorian Britain. They then established in Sudan an Islamic theocracy governed by sharia law, which lasted until 1898."<sup>507</sup>

Perhaps the most significant victory of native Africans over European colonists was that of the Ethiopian Christians in the Italo-Ethiopian war. Italy, writes Evans, "had already taken control of parts of the horn of Africa and in the 1890s sought to exceed its influence over Ethiopia. Here the warlord Menelik II (1844-1913), after conquering the provinces of Tigre and Amhara, had declared himself negus, or emperor, in 1889 and concluded a treaty of friendship with the Italians. Unfortunately the treaty said different things in Italian and Amharic. While the Italians' version gave them control of Eritrea and rights of protectorate over Ethiopia, the Amharic version merely said that Menelik could use Italian diplomats as a proxy in his foreign policy if he wanted to. After this discrepancy came to light, disputes over the treaty intensified until Menelik formally repudiated it in 1893. In 1894 the Italians duly began military action, which escalated until on 1 March 1896 a major battle was fought at Adowa in the mountainous area of Tigre.

"In this encounter 15,000 Italian troops, many of them raw conscripts, equipped with outdated guns and footwear that broke up on the rough rocky terrain, advanced in three columns that became separated because the Italians did not possess proper maps. They were met by nearly 100,000 Ethiopian troops, raised under the country's feudal system, supplied with modern rifles, and aided by forty-two Russian field guns specially adapted for mountainous terrain. One of the Italian columns retreated in the wrong direction and became trapped in a ravine, where the Ethiopian cavalry slaughtered them in their thousands, egged on by cries of 'reap, reap!' from their commander. At a crucial moment Menelik brought in 25,000 fresh reserves and surrounded the other two columns, forcing them to retreat with heavy losses. Altogether 7,000 Italian troops and *askaris* - Eritrean auxiliaries - were killed. Some 3,000 soldiers in the

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<sup>506</sup> Gordon, interview in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 January, 1884.

<sup>507</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus*, pp. 315-316.

Italian expedition were taken prisoner by the Ethiopians, and the rest abandoned the field of battle, along with 11,000 rifles, all their artillery, and most of their supplies. The Italian prisoners were treated well, but 800 of the Eritrean *askaris* were treated as traitors by the Ethiopians, who chopped off their right hands and left feet. The Italians were forced to recognize Ethiopian independence; Menelik was satisfied, and preferred cautiously not to follow up his victory or provoke retaliation by advancing into Eritrea. In Italy people ripped up railway lines in case the government drafted reinforcements. Outraged patriots pelted Prime Minister Crispi's house with rocks until he was forced to resign...

"Yet overall the imbalance of forces between European and non-European powers outside the Americas was starkly illustrated in 1898 by the Battle of Omdurman, where an Anglo-Egyptian army led by Major-General Sir Herbert Kitchener (1850-1916) defeated a Sudanese Mahdist force, in what was little more than a massacre: 23,000 Sudanese were killed or wounded, whereas the dead and injured on the British side numbered no more than 430. As the Anglo-French writer Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) put it: 'Whatever happens, we have got/The Maxim gun, and they have not.' If a non-European state wanted to defeat a European invasion it had to follow the example of Ethiopia or Japan and acquire European weaponry and military hardware itself. Modern weaponry was in turn the produce of the great leap forward of European prosperity and industry, science and technology in comparison to other parts of the world. Yet far from being inevitable after 1500, as some historians have claimed, this global imbalance did not really take hold until the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It was the product not just of technological superiority but also of European peace. Things might have been very different had the European nations kept on fighting each other and exporting their conflicts to other parts of the globe, as they had done before 1815. Peace, underpinned by British naval hegemony, allowed the spread of communications networks, telegraph, cables, sea lanes and trade routes, and intercontinental railways, leading to further economic development and a dense network of rapid imperial communications. Global trade expanded almost exponentially under these conditions, in a way that would have been impossible had the major industrializing states been fighting one another. Mass European migration to the Americas and other parts of the world helped build a globalized economy of which Europe and the United States were the main beneficiaries. In this sense, Europe's borders had become porous as never before. European states were also politically better-organized and more effective in mobilizing their resources. Colonization had its limits, but overall Europe gained a dominance over the rest of the world in the second half of the nineteenth century that it enjoyed neither before nor subsequently."<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>508</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 652-654.



## 32. IMPERIALISM AND RACISM

Not all supporters of imperialism were racist exploiters of “inferior” nations; some had a real idealism, however mistaken. In 1870, write Carroll Quigley, John Ruskin “hit Oxford like an earthquake”. He “spoke to the Oxford undergraduates as members of the privileged ruling class. He told them that they were possessors of a magnificent tradition of education, beauty, rule of law, freedom, decency, and self-discipline, but that this tradition could not be saved, and did not deserve to be saved, unless it could be extended to the lower classes of England itself and to the non-English masses throughout the world. If this precious tradition were not extended to these two great majorities, the minority of upper-class Englishmen would ultimately be submerged by those majorities and the tradition lost. To prevent this, the tradition must be extended to the masses and to the Empire.”<sup>509</sup>

In 1897 many of the crowned heads of Europe assembled in London to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria’s accession to the throne. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations, bringing together representatives of every nation of the empire, marked the zenith not only of the British Empire, the largest in extent in world history, but the acme of the *idea* of empire in general, of empire as the bearer of true civilization.

But the note of caution sounded by Ruskin was there also... The great poet of empire, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), wrote a superb poem for the occasion, *Recessional* (referring to the procession of clergy out of church after a service), which was published in *The Times* the next day:

*God of our fathers, known of old,  
Lord of our far-flung battle line,  
Beneath whose awful hand we hold  
Dominion over palm and pine –  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget – lest we forget!*

*The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The Captains and the Kings depart:  
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget – lest we forget!*

*Far-called our navies melt away;  
On dune and headland sinks the fire:  
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!*

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<sup>509</sup> Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*, New York: Macmillan, 1966, p. 130.

*Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget – lest we forget!*

*If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,  
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the Law –  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget – lest we forget!*

*For heathen heart that puts her trust  
In reeking tube and iron shard,  
All valiant dust that builds on dust,  
And guarding calls not Thee to guard,  
For frantic boast and foolish word –  
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!*

Coming from the “jingoistic” poet *par excellence*, this call to humility was unexpected. The British Empire, he warned, could go the same way as those ancient empires of Nineveh and Tyre if it succumbed to pride. Exactly 100 years later, in 1997, it did disappear, when Britain handed Hong Kong back to China... Kipling’s words seemed to strike a chord in the heart of the people... And yet the pride, cruelty and rapacity of the European imperialist nations continued unabated right up to the First World War, which served as God’s punishment of these same sins.

“To administer the colonies,” writes Evans, “educated clerks and administrators were required, and given the numbers that were necessary, this meant educating a select number of the colonized. This in turn, whether it involved local education or education in Britain or other European countries, began to create new indigenous elites that imbibed European notions of nationalism, democracy and liberal values. In some colonies, including Burma, a sense of national identity pre-dated colonization. In others national identity required the language of European liberalism to find its articulation, and the model of European political parties in the age of mass democracy in the late nineteenth century to find institutional expression.

“As these developments took hold on the subcontinent, 1885 saw the formation of the Indian National Congress, based at first on the ideas of the Theosophical Movement, and involving English people as well as Indians. The aim of the Indian National Congress at first was to exert pressure for educated Indians to take a greater part in government and administration, but soon it gained widespread support among Indian elites and began to exert pressure on the government. In 1892 the Raj conceded the Indian Councils Act, allowing corporations to nominate educated Indians to legislative councils, and in 1909 it permitted them to stand for election. The British had been able to take advantage of the break-up of the Mughal Empire and the ensuing disunity to take over one Indian state after another, or play them off against each other.

But by uniting India themselves and binding it together with a unitary system of administration and communications, the British had created the potential for a new united nationalist movement. The Raj had on the other hand fastened onto traditional Indian institutions from the land tax to the maharajas and princely states, and to the new educated elite these were beginning to seem like an obstacle to progress. It was indeed possible to take an altogether different view of the 'white man's burden', one in which the imperialist was imposing a burden on the colonized, not the other way round..."<sup>510</sup>

Pride in being the citizen of a great empire was fostered by governments in order to restrain discontent in the lower classes, according to Eric Hobsbawm: "Ever since the great imperialist Cecil Rhodes observed in 1895 that if one wanted to avoid civil war one must become imperialist, most observers have been aware of so-called 'social imperialism', i.e. of the attempt to use imperial expansion to diminish discontent by economic improvements or social reform or in other ways. There is no doubt at all that politicians were perfectly aware of the potential benefits of imperialism. In some cases - notably Germany - the rise of imperialism has been explained primarily in terms of 'the primacy of domestic politics' ...

"... Imperialism encouraged the masses, and especially the potentially discontented, to identify themselves with the imperial state and nation, and thus unconsciously to endow the social and political system represented by that state with justification and legitimacy. And in an era of mass politics... even old systems required new legitimacy. Here again, contemporaries were quite clear about this. The British coronation ceremony of 1902, carefully restyled, was praised because it was designed to express 'the recognition, by a free democracy, of a hereditary crown, as a symbol of the world-wide dominion of their race' (my emphasis). In short, empire made good ideological content."<sup>511</sup>

And so the combination of the welfare state plus the "glory" of belonging to a powerful nation-state-empire helped to keep the revolution at bay, and the "old-fashioned" ideas of hierarchy and deference in play, for perhaps another generation. Indeed, the last decades before 1914 can be seen as a kind of "Indian summer" of the monarchical principle, when most European states, in spite of their democratic principles, were headed by monarchs, mostly German and mostly related in one way or another to Queen Victoria, the matriarch of Europe. This may be seen as a cultural plus of imperialism.

And yet the service that imperialism rendered in keeping alive the hierarchical principle in the imperial nation must be set against the disservice it did by encouraging racism...

Thus Charles Emmerson writes: "That some civilizations and races were superior to others was axiomatic to the existence and practice of European

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<sup>510</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 669.

<sup>511</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, London: Abacus, 1994, pp. 69, 70.

empire. As Jules Harmand, a French colonial official, put it in 1920: 'One must accept the principle and point of departure that there is a hierarchy of races and civilizations, and that we belong to the superior race and civilization... Our dignity rests on that quality, the foundation of our right to direct the rest of humanity. Material power is simply a tool.' But an account of the world in which some civilizations had progressed further than others was hardly the unique preserve of the colonial administrator seeking to burnish the mantle of his own political authority with the gold leaf of superiority. In 1913, one could find Indian nationalists, too, sadly commenting on the decline of Indian civilization – while at the same time heaping praise on European civilization, and the individual qualities of Europeans in which it had resulted. In French Algeria, one could find a group of assimilated young Algerians – the *Jeunes Algériens* – arguing that it was precisely their Europeanization, as compared to the Arabness of the old-fashioned *vieux turbans* ('old turbans'), which qualified them for leadership in Algeria, and on which basis they demanded the redistribution of political power. In China and Japan, many saw Westernisation as related to modernization – and possibly even to colonial independence, for was not the acquisition of Western technology the best means of achieving the capability to protect themselves against the West's political encroachments?

"The habit of looking at the world through the prism of race, meanwhile, was not limited to European colonisers either – even if they were sometimes the most ardent defenders of the 'whiteness' of their settle societies against perceived threats from outside and from within. While Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was in 1913 militating for the repeal of laws which persecuted the Indian community in South Africa, he was quite silent on the treatment of the '*kafirs*' – South Africa's majority black population. If anything, Gandhi waited to ensure that Indians and blacks were not confused in the mind of the governing whites, but rather distinctly separated. The idea of the importance of race – and the validity of thinking in terms of assumed racial characteristics – was widely shared."<sup>512</sup>

"The new attitude to empire," writes Evans, "contained a strong element of racism and the denigration of other cultures and civilizations. British schoolbooks now dismissed oriental culture as ornamental rather than useful, and told their readers, of monuments like the Taj Mahal, that 'it might be supposed that they had originally been erected to commemorate the virtues of some great benefactor of our species, instead of being the whim of some prince who dawdled away his years in indolence or pleasure'. Different races were no longer depicted as equal in the sight of God, sharing a common humanity, if at an earlier stage of development than that of the Victorian Englishman. Instead, textbooks now emphasized racial difference and the alleged racial inferiority of subject peoples: 'The Australian natives are an ugly, unprepossessing people, with degrading and filthy habits', as one geography textbook put it: 'Like beasts of prey... the Malays are always on the watch, to assuage their

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<sup>512</sup> Emmerson, 1913. *The World Before the Great War*, London: Vintage, 2013, pp. 228-229.

thirst of blood and plunder'; 'The tribes [of Nigeria]... are extremely savage, practicing horrible forms of religion, accompanied by human sacrifices.' In such circumstances, it now seemed to be agreed, rule by the British was morally justifiable as well as politically necessary.

"The British, indeed, were, in the view of the imperialists of the 1880s and 1890s, destined not only to rule inferior races but also to lead the entire world into the future. As Joseph Chamberlain declared in 1895: 'I believe in this race, the greatest governing race the world has ever seen; in this Anglo-Saxon race, so proud, tenacious, self-confident and determined, this race which neither climate nor change can degenerate, which will infallibly be the predominant force of future history and universal civilization.' Belief in racial hierarchies based on descent had become more widespread once it had become possible to lend it scientific legitimacy. This was not least a product of the growing influence of Darwinism in the second half of the century. In the hands of the biologist and anthropologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who coined the phrase 'the survival of the fittest', Darwinism became a harsh creed of competition, and phrases such as 'the struggle for existence' and 'the strongest prevail' soon became part of what has been termed 'social Darwinism', the application of Darwin's ideas, or a version of them, to human society.

"Social Darwinism's influence spread across Europe in the late nineteenth century. It had a progressive version, which laid on the state the duty to improve the race by better housing, hygiene and nutrition. The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) popularized Darwin's ideas in his best-selling book *The Riddle of the Universe* (1901), though he gave them a twist by arguing that human characteristics could be acquired by adaptation to the environment as well as being inherited. He divided humanity into ten, or, including their subdivisions, thirty-two races, of which the 'Caucasian' was in his view the most advanced. Africans he considered close to the apes, and he concluded that no 'woolly-haired' person had ever contributed anything to human civilization. Haeckel believed that criminals were racially degenerate and should be executed to prevent them passing on their criminal characteristics to the next generation: 'rendering incorrigible offenders harmless' would have 'a directly beneficial effect as a selection process'. The same would be desirable for the mentally ill and handicapped. Children's diseases, he thought, should be left untreated so that the weak could be weeded out from the chain of heredity by natural causes, leaving only the strong to propagate the race. Haeckel also believed, however, that war was eugenically counter-productive since it eliminated the best and bravest young men of every generation, so his self-styled Monist League (1906) campaigned vigorously in the cause of pacifism, leading the German authorities to keep it under close surveillance during the First World War..."<sup>513</sup>

These pseudo-scientific theories helped imperialists justify their dominance over others. As Dominic Lieven writes, "An autocrat or even an aristocracy

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<sup>513</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 683-684.

could rule over ethnically different peoples citing the same justifications of divine appointment, prescription or superior culture that they used to legitimise their governing of peoples of their own ethnicity. But a sovereign democratic nation could only justify its rule over other peoples in the long run by doctrines of innate racial superiority."<sup>514</sup> For the late nineteenth century was an age, on the one hand, of *empire*, and on the other of *popular democracy*, which on the face of it were incompatible concepts. And so a new justification of empire was needed, a justification that would justify the imperial people as well as the imperial dynasty - and that justification was provided by racism.

"To some," writes Diana Preston, "Darwinism seemed to legitimize distinctions between races and between individuals, and to justify the existence of social hierarchies and of rich and poor - indeed, of pecking orders of all sorts. Looking back over the nineteenth century, the well-known British journalist William Thomas Stead, later to go down with the *Titanic*, wrote: 'The doctrine of evolution... may be regarded as the master dogma of the century. Its subtle influence is to be felt in every department of life. It has profoundly modified our conceptions of creation, and it is every day influencing more and more our ideas of morality. Men are asking, Why hesitate in consigning to a lethal chamber all idiots, lunatics and hopeless incurables? And in the larger field of national politics, why should we show any mercy to the weak? Might becomes right... Wars of extermination seem to receive the approbation of nature.'

"Both Britons and Americans saw the Anglo-Saxon race as pre-eminent among the white races, which, in turn, rightly dominated the rest. One writer thought the Anglo-Saxons 'in perfect accord with the characteristic conditions of modern life.' The Anglo-Saxon focused on physical interests and material possession and consequently triumphed in world markets 'because he has supreme gifts as an inventor of material things which appeal to the average man of democracy.' His success in driving self-interest and ethical standards in double harness marked him out from others, but the writer believed the Anglo-Saxon to be 'supremely unconscious of this duality in his nature', concluding smugly that 'there is a psychological difference between English-speaking men and others, which makes that which would be hypocrisy in others not hypocrisy in them. They are sentimentalists, and, as sentimentalists, not the best analysts of their motive and impulses.'"<sup>515</sup>

The British were particularly interested in such ideas, for they saw themselves as the standard-bearers of liberal democracy, having "the mother of parliaments" and a tradition of freedom since the time of *Magna Carta*. They concluded that it was the greater innate intelligence and superior character of the British that had made them into the world's most powerful nation, and gave them a right to rule the less genetically endowed nations of Africa and Asia. So the British never tried to make the black and coloured peoples of their overseas colonies British: the perceived difference was simply too great. This

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<sup>514</sup> Lieven, *Empire*, London: John Murray, 2000, p. 49.

<sup>515</sup> Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion*, London: Robinson, 2002, pp. xxi-xxii.

was in contrast to the French, who tried to make Algerians, for example, into Frenchmen.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927), an Englishman resident in Germany and Wagner's son-in-law, introduced the idea that the master race was not the Whites in general, but the Aryans or Teutons. "True history," he wrote, "begins from the moment the German with mighty hand seizes the inheritance of antiquity."<sup>516</sup>

As Niall Ferguson writes: "If the British were, as Chamberlain and Milner believed, the master race, with a God-given right to rule the world, it seemed to follow logically that those they fought against were their natural-born inferiors. Was this not the conclusion drawn by Science itself – increasingly regarded as the ultimate authority in such matters?"

"In 1863 Dr. James Hunt had dismayed his audience at a meeting in Newcastle of the British Association for the Advancement of Science by asserting that the 'Negro' was a separate species of human being, half way between the ape and 'European man'. In Hunt's view the 'Negro' became 'more humanized when in his natural subordination to the European', but he regretfully concluded that 'European civilization [was] not suited to the Negro's requirements or character'. According to one eyewitness, the African traveller Winwood Reader, Hunt's lecture went down badly, eliciting hisses from some members of the audience. Yet within a generation such views had become the conventional wisdom. Influenced by, but distorting beyond recognition, the work of Darwin, nineteenth-century pseudo-scientists divided humanity into 'races' on the basis of external physical features, ranking them according to inherited differences not just in physique but also in character. Anglo-Saxons were self-evidently at the top, Africans at the bottom. The work of George Combe, author of *A System of Phrenology* (1825), was typical in two respects – the derogatory way in which it portrayed racial differences and the fraudulent way in which it sought to explain them: 'When we regard the different quarters of the globe [wrote Combe], we are struck with the extreme dissimilarity in the attainments of the varieties of men who inhabit them... The history of Africa, so far as Africa can be said to have a history... exhibit[s] one unbroken scene of moral and intellectual desolation... 'The Negro, easily excitable, is in the highest degree susceptible to all the passions... To the Negro, remove only pain and hunger, and it is naturally in a state of enjoyment. As soon as his toils are suspended for a moment, he sings, seizes a fiddle, he dances.' The explanation for this backwardness, according to Combe, was the peculiar shape of 'the skull of the Negro': 'The organs of Veneration, Wonder and Hope... are considerable in size. The greatest deficiencies lie in Conscientiousness, Cautiousness, Ideality and Reflection.' Such ideas were influential. The idea of an ineradicable 'race instinct' became a staple of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writing...

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<sup>516</sup> Chamberlain, in Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 817.

“Phrenology was only one of a number of bogus disciplines tending to legitimise the assumptions about racial difference that had long been current among white colonists. Even more insidious, because intellectually more rigorous, was the scientific snake-oil known as ‘eugenics’. It was the mathematician Francis Galton who, in his book *Hereditary Genius* (1869), pioneered the ideas that a ‘man’s natural abilities are derived by inheritance’; that ‘out of two varieties of any race of animal who are equally endowed in other respects, the most intelligent variety is sure to prevail in the battle of life’; and that on a sixteen-point scale of racial intelligence, a ‘Negro’ is two grades below an Englishman. Galton sought to validate his theories by using composite photography to distinguish criminal and other degenerate types. However, a more systematic development was undertaken by Karl Pearson, another Cambridge-trained mathematician, who in 1911 became the first Galton Professor of Eugenics at University College London. A brilliant mathematician, Pearson became convinced that his statistical techniques (which he called ‘biometry’) could be used to demonstrate the danger posed to the Empire by racial degeneration. The problem was that improved welfare provision and health care at home were interfering with the natural selection process, allowing genetically inferior individuals to survive – and ‘propagate their unfitness’. ‘The right to live does not connote the right of each man to reproduce his kind,’ he argued in *Darwinism, Medical Progress and Parentage* (1912). ‘As we lessen the stringency of natural selection, and more and more of the weaklings and the unfit survive, we must increase the standard, mental and physical, of parentage.’

“There was, however, one alternative to state intervention in reproductive choices: war. For Pearson, as for many other Social Darwinists, life was struggle, and war was more than just a game – it was a form of natural selection. As he put it, ‘National progress depends on racial fitness and the supreme test of this fitness was war. When wars cease mankind will no longer progress for there will be nothing to check the fertility of inferior stock.’

“Needless to say, this made pacifism a particularly wicked creed. But fortunately, with an ever-expanding empire, there was no shortage of jolly little wars to be waged against racially inferior opponents. It was gratifying to think that in massacring them with their Maxim guns, the British were contributing to the progress of mankind.”<sup>517</sup>

However, the Boer War beginning in 1899 was to sober up the British in their ideas about their empire...

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<sup>517</sup> Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, London: Penguin, 2003, pp. 262-265.

### 33. GERMAN WELTPOLITIK

The most important changes in European diplomacy in this period were, on the one hand, the increasing closeness of Russia and France, and on the other, the increasing aggressiveness and consequent isolation of Germany.

After the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, and especially after the death of the German Emperor Wilhelm I in 1888, a change in Germany's foreign policy took place with a corresponding shift in alliances among the Great Powers. Aware that Russia was unhappy with his performance as the so-called "honest broker" during the Treaty negotiations, and sensitive to the danger that a dissatisfied Russia presented, Bismarck tried to mollify the bear by distancing himself somewhat from Austria. For ten years, as Sir Llewellyn Woodward writes, he avoided a direct choice between Austria and Russia. But then "the Austro-German alliance of 1879 was supplemented by a triple agreement between Germany, Austria and Russia which checked Austrian and Russian aggression and kept both of the Powers from joining with France. Nevertheless in the middle 1880s Austro-Russian relations were strained over their respective interests in the Balkans and in 1887 Bismarck went to the edge of safety and, one might add, honesty by signing the so-called 'reinsurance treaty' with Russia which committed Germany to neutrality if Russia were attacked by Austria, and Russia to neutrality if Germany were attacked by France; both parties were to be free if Germany or Russia were the aggressors. The incompatibility of this treaty with Germany's other engagements and, above all, with the Austro-German alliance was increased because it recognized Russian influence as predominant in Bulgaria and gave a pledge of diplomatic support to Russia if she had to defend the entrance of the Black Sea. Since Bismarck was at the same time encouraging Austria and Italy to oppose Russian aims in the Straits, he could justify his pledges only as a means of convincing Russia that he would not support Austrian aggression. If Russia accepted this assurance, the treaty would never have to be implemented. In any case the recognition of a *casus belli* would ultimately depend upon the meaning which the parties gave to the term 'aggressor'; Bismarck intended that he should be the judge in the matter.

"Bismarck's successor as Chancellor," writes Sir Llewellyn Woodward, "did not feel able to continue this diplomatic juggling and the Emperor William II allowed the treaty to lapse. Meanwhile, partly to prevent Russia from getting a loan which might enable her to go to war, partly as a reprisal for a Russian decree forbidding foreigners to hold land in border areas of the Empire (the decree affected numbers of Germans in Russian Poland) Bismarck had forbidden the Reichsbank to accept Russian securities as collaterals for loans. The French at once took advantage of this measure and between 1888 and 1889 began a series of loans to Russia which ended by engulfing vast amounts of French investors' money in... the Tsarist regime."<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Woodward, *Prelude to Modern Europe 1815-1914*, London: Methuen, 1972, pp. 123-124.

Germany's dropping of the Reinsurance Treaty, and abandonment of Bismarck's system of alliances, made it possible – indeed, necessary – for Russia to get closer to France. And in 1892 Tsar Alexander said: “We must indeed come to terms with the French, and, in the event of a war between France and Germany, at once attack the Germans so as not to give them the time first to beat France and then turn against us.” This new direction in Russian foreign policy – abandoning hope of an alliance with Germany in favour one with France – would not change until the outbreak of the First World War.

Meanwhile, the new German emperor, Wilhelm II, was introducing other changes. Abandoning the liberalism of his parents, and deciding that he could rule alone, he abandoned Bismarck's policy of exclusive concentration on Europe in favour of a policy known as *Weltpolitik*, or “World Policy”.

The sacking of Bismarck was an important psychological turning-point in the life of the nation. “The Iron Chancellor,” writes Jonathan Steinberg, “embodied and manifested the greatness of Germany. His image hung in every schoolroom and over many a hearth. Yet this image became a burden to his successors. Germany had to have a genius-statesman as its ruler. Kaiser Wilhelm II outdid the Iron Chancellor in military display but failed the test. He could not control himself, still less the ramshackle structure that Bismarck had left him. The First World War destroyed much of Bismarck's Germany and defeat ended the monarchies in all the many German states...”<sup>519</sup>

The German sociologist and economist Max Weber believed that Bismarck's influence had been detrimental to Germany, in spite of external successes. For he “left a nation without political education... totally bereft of political will, accustomed to expect that the great man at the top would provide their politics for them.” The problem was that the “great man” now at the head of Germany was not Bismarck's equal.

But Weber welcomed the Kaiser's abandonment of Bismarck's foreign policy in favour of *Weltpolitik*. For he believed that Germany's power should not be confined to the European continent. ‘We must realize,’ he announced in famous lecture in Freiburg in 1895, ‘that the unification of Germany was a youthful prank which the nation played in its dotage, and should have been avoided on account of its cost, if it was to have been the completion rather than the starting point of a bid for German global power.’...<sup>520</sup>

“As early as 1896, Korvettenkapitän (later Admiral) Georg von Müller had summed up the aim of German *Weltpolitik* as being to break “Britain's domination of the world and thus make available the necessary colonial property for the central European states which need to expand.”<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Steinberg, “How Did Bismarck Do It?” *History Today*, February, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>520</sup> Bernard Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 263.

<sup>521</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 83.

In 1897 the foreign minister, Bernhard von Bülow, justified the new strategy less aggressively but still firmly: “The times when the German left the earth to one of his neighbours, the sea to the other, and reserved for himself the heavens where pure philosophy reigns – these times are over. We don’t want to put anyone in the shade, but we too demand our place in the sun.” Some such change in policy was perhaps not surprising if one bears in mind that this was the heyday of overseas imperialism, in which Germany had so far played no major part, and that much had changed in Germany herself since Bismarck’s heyday. Moreover, the Germans *needed* – or thought they needed – to look beyond Europe. Dominic Lieven explains why: “The Germany created by Bismarck in 1871 had a population of forty million. By 1925, it was estimated that the population would probably reach eighty million. When the German Empire was founded, it was self-sufficient as regards food production. By the first decade of the twentieth century, much of its food and essential raw materials for its industry came from abroad. The present and, even more, the future prosperity of the German people depended on their industrial exports and on global trade networks. If these networks were broken for any length of time, ‘the consequences would be unthinkable... [A]lmost every branch of the German economy would be dragged into a catastrophe, which would entail extreme privation for half the population.’ Germans therefore could not longer afford to think in purely European terms. They and their government had to think globally and have a ‘world policy’. The term ‘world policy’ in Germany became as fashionable as and even more ill-defined than our own contemporary references to globalization. In fact, the terms ‘world policy’ then and ‘globalization’ now reflected a similar reality. Since the mid-nineteenth century, there had been a vast growth in commercial, financial, and intellectual linkages binding the major nations of the world together far more tightly than before. Germans in the early twentieth century lived to what one could describe as the first phase of modern globalization, whose hub was London, from where so many of the financial, shipping, and other services underpinning the global economy were coordinated. Almost destroyed by two world wars and the 1930s Great Depression, globalization reemerged after 1945 in its second phase under new American leadership but based on many of the same liberal and Anglo-Saxon principles and mechanisms that had operated before 1914...”<sup>522</sup>

As David Stevenson writes: “Continental security was now no longer enough, and [Kaiser] Wilhelm and his advisers ostentatiously asserted Germany’s right to a voice in the Ottoman Empire (where he claimed to be the protector of the Muslims), in China (where Germany took a lease on the port of Jiaozhou), and South Africa (where Wilhelm supported the Afrikaners against British attempts to control them, sending a telegram of support to the president of the Transvaal, Paul Kruger, in 1896).”

However, as Christopher Clark writes, “the Kruger telegram was little more than gesture politics... To the disgust of the German nationalist press, the

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<sup>522</sup> Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 28.

German government refused to intervene on behalf of the Transvaal before or during the Boer War of 1899-1902 that resulted in the Transvaal's defeat and its conversion into a British colony.

“This, it seemed, was the only way of catching up with Britain as a world power and getting recognized by the other world powers as an equal. The fleet, combined with economic power, was to furnish the basis to support Germany's claim for a revision of the colonial *status quo*; for her late entry into the colonial race having left her with what was in her view, less than her fair share of its prizes, she proposed to use these means to obtain a position consonant with her claims and appropriate to her economic, military and cultural potential. From the 1870s on a redistribution of territory was going on in Africa and Asia which led to an extension of the colonial empires, and in this redistribution Germany participated ever more actively as the transformation of her own structure proceeded. When the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, the Spanish-American of 1898 and the Boer War of 1899-1902 seemed to prove beyond all question the importance of sea-power as a *sine qua non* of world power, the goal of the creation of a strong navy as the expression of Germany's claims was adopted by industry and popularized by new forms of mass propaganda until it became axiomatic for the whole German people.

In 1898, the Navy League was founded by the arms manufacturer Krupp with a view to catching up with Britain on the seas. It became very popular and attracted the Kaiser's support. Even the opposition Social Democrats did not oppose it, and so with parliamentary approval Wilhelm's navy secretary, Alfred von Tirpitz, began building a new fleet of short-range battleships clearly aimed at challenging the Royal Navy in the North Sea.<sup>523</sup>

However, the British responded to the challenge. In 1906 they launched the Dreadnought, a huge new kind of warship that threatened to make the German navy obsolete.<sup>524</sup> The German were neither catching up with the British in the naval arms race nor persuading them to enter into an alliance – quite the opposite. By 1912 a quarter of the state budget was being spent on the naval build-up.<sup>525</sup> So it could be argued that this policy was simply a very expensive way of alarming and antagonizing Britain without really changing the balance of power on the seas.

Moreover, the vast sums spent on the navy meant that the army was starved of cash – which annoyed the Prussian Junker aristocracy, the real basis of the Kaiser's power...

“In the course of discussions on the navy estimates, leading representatives of Germany's intellectual life – its university professors – shaped the conscious

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<sup>523</sup> As the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Selborne, said in 1902: the German fleet “is very carefully built up from the point of view of a war with us” (Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 604).

<sup>524</sup> Miranda Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2010,

<sup>525</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 605.

new German nationalism. The most prominent representatives of German academic thought... announced in unison that the age of apparently peaceful competition between states was gone for ever; equally dead was the limitation of the great powers to the European state system. Yet they were only the mouthpieces of the decisive forces in the German Reich who saw in 'neo-mercantilism' and 'imperialism' the governing forces of the new age."<sup>526</sup>

Fritz Fischer writes: "The 1890s were thus a period of deepening German isolation. A commitment from Britain [to some kind of alliance] remained elusive and the Franco-Russian Alliance seemed to narrow considerably the room for movement on the continent. Yet Germany's statesmen were extraordinarily slow to see the scale of the problem, mainly because they believed that the continuing tension between the world empires was in itself a guarantee that these would never combine against Germany. Far from countering their isolation through a policy of rapprochement, German policy-makers raised the quest for self-reliance to the status of a guiding principle. The most consequential manifestation of this development was the decision to build a large navy."<sup>527</sup>

The financial burden of the naval arms race with Britain was too great, and in 1912 the Germans threw in the towel. This turned out to be a good decision for them; for it released more money for the army just in time for the First World War. The *Wehrverein* (Defence Association) "was founded in 1912 to call for expansion of the long neglected land forces on a scale equal to that now planned for the navy. The popular appeal of the *Wehrverein* soon exceeded that of the Navy League itself..."<sup>528</sup>

For there was a contradiction between Prussian Junker policy, which favoured the army and saw the main enemy in Russia, and non-Prussian Germany policy, which favoured the navy and saw the main enemy in England.<sup>529</sup> As David Fromkin explains this contradiction at the heart of German foreign policy: "To be seen clearly, German militarism at that time has to be understood not as a single phenomenon with two aspects but as two rival programs: that of the navy and that of the army. Paradoxically... Tirpitz and Wilhelm, whether they knew it or not, headed the party of peace. This was because the navy, in the Tirpitz grand plan, would take years to be ready for any possible confrontation with England. And the navy did not want to fight until it was ready. So Tirpitz was for peace now and war so much later as to have little relevance to the politics of his time. To the navy, the enemy was the British Empire; to the army, it was Russia."<sup>530</sup>

There is no doubt that there was strong anti-British sentiment in Germany. Thus the German historian Golo Mann considered that by 1914, there was

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<sup>527</sup> Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1967, p. 8.

<sup>528</sup> Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>529</sup> Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2017, pp. 129-132.

<sup>530</sup> Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, London: Vertigo, 2005, p. 62.

really only one enemy for the Germans - England: "The question which the Germans were soon asking themselves was who was their chief enemy. Hardly France; only for the older generation who remembered 1870. Russia? That was the view of the German left, of all those whose thinking was inspired by the tradition of 1848, who saw despotic Russia as the enemy of a progressive, democratic 'greater' Germany. Or Britain? That was soon the most widely and ardently held belief. The belief of the pan-Germans, of the navy, of the patriotic professors, of the right in general, and then, under the impression of the blockade, probably also the mass of the people. The war, which the Germans had imagined as a continental war in the style of Moltke, was transformed by Britain into a world war; it deprived the German victories on land of their importance by isolating them. Britain brought into play the full strength of its national character, the whole force of its world-wide organizations and connections, of its dominions overseas; it was the bridge to America, and the channel through which all essential war material reached Germany's enemies in an uninterrupted stream. France and Russia had both been defeated more than once in modern times and had adapted themselves to defeat; Britain never. That was its glory, and its efforts were correspondingly great. Seen from that angle Britain was the fiercest of Germany's enemies. As Germany had nothing that Britain could want and as even the pan-Germans did not intend to make conquests at Britain's expense, it followed that the struggle between Britain and Germany was one of life and death. It was not a question of this or that possession but of survival. As the Germans saw it Britain envied Germany its new splendour, its industry, its trade, its power in Europe and over Europe; there were pre-war quotations from the British press to prove the point. Quietly, busily Britain had spun the poisonous web of the coalition; with unctuous words *Lügen-Grey* (liar Grey [the British Foreign Secretary]) had drawn it tight at the opportune moment.

"[As the German song put it:] 'What do we care about Russians and Frenchies; we repay shot with shot and blow with blow. We fight with bronze and with steel, and some day we shall make peace. But you we shall hate with lasting hatred and we shall not relent; hatred on the seas and hatred on land, hatred of the mind and hatred of the hand, hatred of the hammer and hatred of the crowns, strangling hatred of seventy millions. United in love and united in hatred they have only one enemy: ENGLAND.'"<sup>531</sup>

And yet it was not at all obvious why the two countries should be such implacable opponents. Britain and Prussia had been allies in the Seven Years' War and in the Napoleonic Wars, and they had never fought against each other: Britain's traditional rival was France, more recently Russia; and Germany feared above all the powerful nations to the west and east of her - the same France and Russia - who by this time had formed a military alliance. It was in fact more logical, from a geopolitical point of view, for the two Protestant nations, linked as they were by race, by religion and even by dynasty (Queen

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<sup>531</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-307.

Victoria was the Kaiser's grandmother, and Edward VII – his uncle), to unite against the two other powers.

Nor were their interests in other respects divergent. True, there were commercial rivalries. But these were not serious and easily manageable (and attempts were made to manage them in Africa). True again, Britain had a vast colonial empire overseas, whereas Germany had a much smaller one, and the British had the annoying habit of claiming that only their colonial claims were moral while those of other nations were dictated by greed and ambition. But Bismarck had set the general direction of German expansion: not overseas, but overland, and inside Europe. In line with this, compromise, mutual concessions, were possible; and in 1890 Britain and Germany signed the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty whereby Germany exchanged her East African territories for the island of Heligoland in the North Sea.

Thus it was perfectly possible for the two nations to separate their respective "spheres of influence" on land and sea. While Britain would build her power on her maritime strength and overseas empire, Germany would build up her army on land and satisfy her *Lebensraum* by looking to the east – an enterprise that Britain, with her morbid antipathy to Russia, was unlikely to oppose. Only Germany's building of the Berlin-Baghdad railway, which threatened India, really worried the British, for whom India was all-important...

The Germans nourished a feeling of love-hatred towards the English. "A yearning to emulate the British was," writes Lieven, "combined with a sense that in terms of economic power and successful modernity Germany was quickly overtaking its rival. British and German male elites had very similar conceptions of personal honour and of service to the nation; indeed, the cult of manly and patriotic heroism gripped male elites across Europe as a whole. If the British upper class's traditions were somewhat less military than those of the Prussian Junkers, the ethos of elite British public schools in 1900 was still much closer to the regiment than to the countinghouse."<sup>532</sup>

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There was a more sinister side to German *Weltpolitik* even before the end of the nineteenth century and well before Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, that was reminiscent of Wagner's religion of death or Freud's *Thanatos*. Thus in 1893, writes Sara Moore, "General Graf von Haeselt, who commanded the German troops in Lorraine, declared: 'Our civilization must build its temple on mountains of corpses, an ocean of tears and the groans of innumerable dying men. It cannot be otherwise...'"<sup>533</sup>

The idea was inoculated into the German blood-stream that Germany's rightful destiny was not in Europe, but *the world*, and that she should be

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<sup>532</sup> Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, p. 29.

<sup>533</sup> Moore, *The Fourth Reich*, Jollies Publishing, 2016, p. 51.

prepared to sacrifice everything, “mountains of corpses” and “the groans of innumerable dying men” in order to attain it...

### **34. OSCAR WILDE ON ART, LIFE AND GOD**

During the 1880s, British upper-class culture and society became increasingly decadent; there was even a specific group calling themselves “decadents”. This tendency became still more evident in the Edwardian era, following the notoriously decadent example of King Edward VII himself. Again, “in Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle had created a resonantly hybrid figure, in one guise a reassuring Nietzschean superman of action, but in another a Wildean decadent, dependent on cocaine, wearing make-up, and often living in a state of lethargy, boredom and ennui. In 1894 John Lane launched *The Yellow Book*, the house magazine of the decadent group, whose spirit was powerfully captured by Aubrey Beardsley (or Aubrey Wierdsley, as *Punch* called him), with his disturbing, erotic pen and ink drawings conveying intimations of cruelty and vice through their sinuous lines. In 1895 the Hungarian Max Nordau published *Degeneration*, denouncing such decadent aesthetes as portending the end of European civilization, and four years later the American Thorstein Veblen produced *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, which criticized the new, super-rich for being in thrall to the material indulgences of ‘conspicuous consumption’.”<sup>534</sup>

The most famous proponent of decadence was the Anglo-Irish Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), “who had begun that decade as the leader of the ‘aesthetic movement’, lampooned by Gilbert and Sullivan in *Patience* (1881), but who by the end of it had become the leader of the so-called ‘decadents’, professing to prefer pessimism to optimism, the decayed to the living, the abnormal to the normal. They were also suspected of drug-taking and homosexuality, and they were widely regarded in strait-laced circles as degenerate and corrupt. In fact there were never that many of them, but the anxiety and alarm the ‘decadents’ deliberately and undoubtedly provoke, along with simultaneous fears about the ‘white slave trade’, helps explain the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which raised the age of consent for girls from thirteen to sixteen; in addition, as the result of an amendment carried by Henry Labouchère, it criminalized for the first time as ‘gross indecency’ all forms of homosexual activity, in public or in private. Hence the police raid, four years later, on a homosexual brothel in Cleveland Street in London’s plush Fitzrovia district, and although the scandal was largely hushed up, it was rumoured that some of the greatest and grandest names in the land were implicated. The four plays that Wilde wrote at this time – *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Ernest* (1895) – all explored upper-class decadence: their idle, leisure characters, interested in little but social gossip; and the darker explorations of hypocrisy, blackmail, corruption and double lives.”<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Cannadine, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

<sup>535</sup> Cannadine, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-398.

Wilde was the most famous exponent of “Art for Art’s sake”, the idea that art exists for no higher purpose than itself. He went so far as to call art “the supreme reality”. He believed, following Nietzsche, that one should make one’s own life a work of art, uniting in one artistic whole the good, the bad and the ugly of life. In his eyes, this excused his hedonistic lifestyle. Thus in *De Profundis*, written from prison after his conviction for homosexuality, he wrote: “People thought it dreadful of me to have entertained at dinner the evil things of life, and to have found pleasure in their company. But they, from the point of view through which I, as an artist in life, approached them, were delightfully suggestive and stimulating. It was like feasting with panthers. The danger was half the excitement.” As Heffer comments, “Wilde’s hedonism fed his creative temperament...”<sup>536</sup>

The one essential element in art for Wilde was *style*. As Nietzsche put it: “One thing is needful. – To ‘give style’ to one’s character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye...”<sup>537</sup>

But Wilde’s radical aestheticism was opposed by Nietzsche, who denied that there was any such thing as art for art’s sake: “When the purpose of moral preaching and of improving man has been excluded from art, it still does not follow by any means that art is altogether purposeless, aimless, senseless – in short, *l’art pour l’art*, a worm chewing its own tail. ‘Rather no purpose at all than a moral purpose!’ – that is the talk of mere passion. A psychologist, on the other hand, asks: what does all art do? does it not praise? glorify? choose? prefer? With all this it strengthens or weakens certain valuations. Is this merely a ‘moreover’? an accident? something in which the artist’s instinct had no share? Or is it not the very presupposition of the artist’s ability? Does his basic instinct aim at art, or rather at the sense of art, at life? at a desirability of life? Art is the great stimulus to life: how could one understand it as purposeless, as aimless, as *l’art pour l’art*?”<sup>538</sup>

The fluid boundaries between art and reality are explored by Wilde in his *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), in which, as Sir Richard Evans writes, “the ravages of the protagonist’s dissolute life are visited upon his portrait, while his own physical appearance remains untouched by age or the consequences of sin. Art, argued Wilde and the other proponents of Aestheticism in the 1890s, should be pursued for art’s sake, and for no other purpose.”<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> Wilde, in Simon Heffer, *The Age of Decadence*, London: Pan, 2017, p. 499. In fact, as Heffer points out, Wilde’s hedonism was pretty tame by comparison with the contemporary French decadent artists whom he so admired. He would have shocked them much less than he shocked the much more conservative British.

<sup>537</sup> Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 290.

<sup>538</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Gods*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man”, 24.

<sup>539</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 532.

Wilde devoted not only his whole artistic oeuvre to the doctrine of aestheticism, but also his whole life. He placed art higher than ethics, declaring: "Aesthetics are higher than ethics. They belong to a more spiritual sphere."<sup>540</sup> With a ferocious energy that belied the mask of idleness and indifference that he put on, he tried to make the whole of his life into a work of art. As he said to André Gide: "J'ai mis tout mon génie dans ma vie, je n'ai mis que mon talent dans mes oeuvres."<sup>541</sup> He made his art, including his greatest work, his life, into an idol in the strict sense of the word. And God destroyed him for his idolatry...

"Art is the great stimulus to life," said Nietzsche. Indeed, but how does it best accomplish this purpose? By the grim realism of the late-nineteenth-century novel? Or by some other means? The "art for art's sake" movement was reacting against grim realism in art. Their slogan did not express so much a frivolous attitude to life, as rather an exalted attitude to art, not so much "holding a mirror up to nature", in Hamlet's words, as revealing beauties in life that are invisible to the non-artistic eye, even if the artist has to resort to distorting the surface reality, in order to do it. This is a highly ambitious, romantic, if not Platonic understanding of art, which is perhaps best expressed - albeit with characteristic hyperbole - in a dialogue by Oscar Wilde called "The Decay of Lying" (1891), in which "lying" - i.e. the artistic imagination - is exalted above a narrowly realist, positivist understanding of truth.

"If something cannot be done," writes Wilde, "to check, or at least to modify, our monstrous worship of facts, Art will become sterile and beauty will pass away from the land.

"Even Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson, that delightful master of delicate and fanciful prose, is tainted with this modern vice, for we know positively no other name for it. There is such a thing as robbing a story of its reality by trying to make it too true, and *The Black Arrow* is so inartistic as not to contain a single anachronism to boast of, while the transformation of Dr. Jekyll reads dangerously like an experiment out of the *Lancet*. As for Mr. Rider Haggard, who really has, or once had, the makings of a perfectly magnificent liar, he is now so afraid of being suspected of genius that when he does tell us anything marvellous, he feels bound to invent a personal reminiscence, and to put it into a footnote as a kind of cowardly collaboration..."<sup>542</sup>

The famous French realist novelist Zola (who had taken refuge in England following the furore of his defence of Dreyfus) comes in for even harsher criticism. Although Wilde admits that Zola is "not without power" at some times, for example in *Germinal*, still "his work is entirely wrong from beginning to end, and wrong not on the ground of morals, but on the ground of Art. From any ethical standpoint it is just what it should be. The author is perfectly

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<sup>540</sup> Wilder, "The Critic as Artist" (1891).

<sup>541</sup> Collins *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, London: HarperCollins, 2003, introduction to the 1994 edition, p. 3.

<sup>542</sup> Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", *op. cit.*, p. 1074.

truthful, and describes things exactly as they happen. What more can any moralist desire?... [Zola's characters] have their dreary vices, and their drearier virtues. The record of their lives is absolutely without interest. Who cares what happens to them? In literature we require distinction, charm, beauty and imaginative power. We don't want to be harrowed and disgusted with an account of the doings of the lower orders..."<sup>543</sup>

"Charles Dickens was depressing enough in all conscience when he tried to arouse our sympathy for the victims of the poor-law administration..."

"Believe me, my dear Cyril, modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter are entirely and absolutely wrong. We have mistaken the common livery of the age for the vesture of the Muses, and spend our days in sordid streets and hideous suburbs of our vile cities when we should be out on the hillside with Apollo. Certainly we are a degraded race and have sold our birthright for a mess of facts..."

"Art begins with abstract decoration, with purely imaginative and pleasurable work dealing with what is unreal and non-existent. This is the first stage. Then Life becomes fascinated with this new wonder, and asks to be admitted to its charmed circle. Art takes life as part of her rough material, recreates it, and refashions it in fresh forms, is absolutely indifferent to fact, invents, dreams, and keeps between herself and reality the impenetrable barrier of beautiful style, of decorative or ideal treatment. The third stage is when Life gets the upper hand, and derives Art out into the wilderness. This is the true decadence, and it is from this that we are now suffering..."<sup>544</sup>

"What is true about the drama and the novel is no less true about those arts that we call the decorative arts. The whole history of these arts in Europe is the record of the struggle between Orientalism, with its frank rejection of imitation, its love of artistic convention, its dislike to the actual representation of any object in Nature, and our own imitative spirit. Wherever the former has been paramount, as in Byzantium, Sicily and Spain, by actual contact or in the rest of Europe by the influence of the Crusades, we have had beautiful and imaginative work in which the visible things of life are transmuted into artistic conventions, and the things that Life has not are invented and fashioned for her delight. But wherever we have returned to Life and Nature, our work has always become vulgar, common and uninteresting..."<sup>545</sup>

It is unexpected to find Wilde as a champion of Byzantine art, which contained a "spiritual realism" that escapes him - as it escaped the whole of

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<sup>543</sup> Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1075.

<sup>544</sup> Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", pp. 1077, 1078.

<sup>545</sup> Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1080. (His contemporary and fellow Anglo-Irish poet, W.B. Yeats, expresses a deeper appreciation of the iconic, non-representational, timeless but at the same time spiritually realistic quality of Byzantine art in "Sailing to Byzantium":

*Gather my soul  
Into the artifice of eternity.*

the West. This inability of the West to understand the essence of Byzantine art, writes Florecne Hallett, goes back to Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (1550)<sup>546</sup>, and was a consequence of its alienation from the true faith that the Byzantines confessed.

Wilde dated the beginning of Western art's imitative, representative, materialist tendency to the time of the Renaissance; it was already evident, he asserted, in the more boorish parts of Shakespeare's plays. But he laid the main blame for contemporary boorish realism on America, its "crude commercialism, its materialising spirit, its indifference to the poetic side of things..."<sup>547</sup>

"Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of herself. She is not to be judged by an external standard of resemblance. She is a veil, rather than a mirror. She has flowers that no forests know of, birds that no woodland possesses. She makes and unmakes many worlds, and can draw the moon from heaven with a scarlet thread. Hers are the 'forms more real than living man', and hers the great archetypes of which things that have existence are but unfinished copies. Nature has, in her eyes, no laws, no uniformity. She can work miracles at her will, and when she calls monsters from the deep they come..."

"Paradox though it may seem - and paradoxes are always dangerous things - it is none the less true that Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life..."<sup>548</sup>

"The Greeks, with their quick artistic instinct, understood this, and set in the bride's chamber the statue of Hermes or of Apollo, that she might bear children as lovely as the works of art that she looked at in her rapture or her pain. They knew that Life gains from Art not merely spiritually, depth of thought and feeling, soul-turmoil or soul-peace, but that she can form herself on the very lines and colours of art, and can reproduce the dignity of Pheidias as well as the grace of Praxiteles. Hence came their objection to realism. They disliked it on purely social grounds. They felt that it inevitably makes people ugly, and they were perfectly right. We try to improve the conditions of the race by means of good air, free sunlight, wholesome water, and hideous bare buildings for the better housing of the lower orders. But these things merely produce health, they do not produce beauty. For this, Art is required, and the true disciples of the great artist are not his studio-imitators, but those who become like his works of art, be they plastic as in Greek days, or pictorial as in modern times; in a word, Life is Art's best, Art's only pupil.

"As it is with the visible arts, so it is with literature..."

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<sup>546</sup> Hallett, "The Byzantine Complex", *The New European*, October 4-10, 2018.

<sup>547</sup> Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1081.

<sup>548</sup> Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", p. 1082.

“Schopenhauer had analysed the pessimism that characterises modern thought, but Hamlet invented it. The world has become sad because a puppet was once melancholy. The Nihilist, that strange martyr who has no faith, who goes to the stake without enthusiasm, and dies for what he does not believe in, is a purely literary product. He was invented by Tourgenieff, and completed by Dostoevski. Robespierre came out of the pages of Rousseau... Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose...

“Life holds up the mirror to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realises in fact what has been dreamed in fiction... Young men... have died by their own hand because by his own hand Werther died.”<sup>549</sup>

Wilde’s life held up the mirror to his art, to the whole of the “art for art’s sake” movement, and, still more generally, to the whole of western bourgeois civilization as it reached its glittering climax in the years leading up to the Great War.

After a brilliant double First in Classics at Oxford, Wilde embarked on a literary career that soon had high society gaping in astonishment. His plays *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Ernest* packed playhouses then as now, eliciting tumultuous praise.

His fellow Irishman George Bernard Shaw – no mean playwright himself – wrote after the first performance of *An Ideal Husband*: “Mr Oscar Wilde’s new play at the Haymarket is a dangerous subject, because he has the property of making his critics dull... He plays with everything with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theatre...”<sup>550</sup>

Wilde’s had a happy marriage and two sons. The themes of his plays were not particularly scandalous – otherwise he would never have become so popular in the strait-laced Victorian milieu of 1890s London. But God allowed him to fall, it would seem, in punishment of his idolatrous theory of the relationship between Art and Life in which he “served the creature rather than the Creator” (Romans 1.25). Nor was this just a conceit: while the predominant tone of his writing is not serious, he himself took his writing ultra seriously, to the point of self-worship. Thus he describes himself as “a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age. I treated Art as the supreme reality, and life as a mere mode of fiction. I awoke the imagination of my century so that it created myth and legend around me. I summed up all systems in a phrase, and all existence in an epigram...”<sup>551</sup>

So the underlying disease of Wilde, as of his whole generation, was *pride* and *blasphemy*. His gifts were genuine, and his work was by no means

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<sup>549</sup> Wilde, “The Decay of Lying”, *Collins Complete Works*, p. 1080.

<sup>550</sup> *Collins Complete Works*, Introduction to 1994 edition, pp. 10-11.

<sup>551</sup> Wilde, “De Profundis”, *Collins Complete Works*, Introduction to 1994 edition, pp. 1-2.

superficial (“the supreme vice”, according to Wilde, is “shallowness”); in it are to be found both wit and wisdom. But if “Art is the supreme reality” and “Aesthetics are higher than ethics”<sup>552</sup>, then there is no room for God or morality. Therefore, for his idolatry, God “gave him up to uncleanness” (Romans 1.24), to the demon of homosexuality, the vice which made him so notorious in contemporary England.

In order to justify his vice, he declared: “No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style. No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything...”<sup>553</sup>

Having made of himself a Romantic man-god-artist, Wilde’s fall was swift. By 1895 “Wilde had now reached the pinnacle of his success. Two plays of his were drawing crowded audiences in the West End, and actor-managers were falling over one another to write for them. Then the Marquess of Queensbury, with the object of attacking his son, Lord Alfred Douglas, because of his [homosexual] friendship with Wilde, launched a campaign of ungovernable fury on Wilde. The story has been told often enough; Alfred Douglas, whose only object was to see his father in the dock, persuaded Oscar Wilde to bring a prosecution for criminal libel against him. Lord Queensbury was triumphantly acquitted and his place in the dock was taken by Oscar Wilde, who was sentenced to two years imprisonment.”<sup>554</sup>

In *De Profundis*, a letter written from prison to Douglas, Wilde did not spare himself, nor yield to hatred of the man who “in less than three years had ruined me from every point of view” (although he did not spare him a lengthy description of how he had done that): “After my terrible sentence, when the prison-dress was on me, and the prison-house closed, I sat amidst the ruins of my wonderful life, crushed by anguish, bewildered by terror, dazed through pain. But I would not hate you. Every day I said to myself, ‘I must keep Love in my heart today, else how shall I live through the day.’ I reminded myself that you meant no evil, to me at any rate: I set myself to think that you had but drawn a bow at a venture, and that the arrow had pierced a King between the joints of the harness. To have weighed you against the smallest of my arrows, the meanest of my losses, would have been, I felt unfair. I determined I would regard you as one suffering too. I forced myself to believe that at last the scales had fallen from your long-blinded eyes. I used to fancy, and with pain, what your horror must have been when you contemplated your terrible handiwork. There were times, even in those dark days, the darkest of all my life, when I actually longed to console you. So sure was I that at last you have realised what you had done...”<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> Wilde, “The Critic as Artist”.

<sup>553</sup> Wilde, “The Picture of Dorian Gray”, *Complete Works*, p. 17.

<sup>554</sup> His grandson Vyvyan Holland, in “Introduction to the 1966 Edition”, *Complete Works*, p.11. T

<sup>555</sup> Wilde, “De Profundis”, *Complete Works*, p. 1005.

Released from prison, Wilde fled from the opprobrium of the English Pharisees – as he wrote, *I think they love not Art / Who break the crystal of a poet's heart / That small and sickly eyes may glare or gloat* - to self-imposed exile in his beloved France as a penitent publican. He died soon after, penniless and miserable, in a French hotel. His last act was to reject appreciative but moralistic and unbelieving England for frivolous but beautiful and forgiving France; he exchanged English undogmatic Protestantism for French dogmatic Catholicism...<sup>556</sup> For “all his life,” says his grandson, “my father had an intense leaning towards religious mysticism, and was strongly attracted to the Catholic Church, into which he was received on his death bed in 1900.”<sup>557</sup>

What did this final act in the life of the notorious roué mean? Perhaps, as in the similar case of Byron's death-bed conversion to Orthodoxy, it was repentance for a prodigal life. Perhaps also a final recognition that the supreme reality is not Art, but God, and that Ethics *are* higher than Aesthetics.

Certainly if there was one subject on which Wilde, against his principles, expressed an “ethical sympathy”, it was in his withering condemnation of the English middle classes who so admired him (for his art, not his lifestyle), and of the Anglican Church whose hypocrisy he abominated. It shows a certain faith that the Anglicans did not have, which partially explains his conversion to more believing Catholicism: “The dreams of the great middle classes of this country... are the most depressing things I have ever read. They are commonplace, sordid and tedious. There is not even a fine nightmare among them. As for the Church, I cannot conceive anything better for the culture of a country than the presence in it of a body of men whose duty it is to believe in the supernatural, to perform daily miracles, and to keep alive that mythopoeic faculty which is so essential for the imagination. But in the English Church a man succeeds, not through his capacity for belief, but through his capacity for disbelief. Ours is the only Church where the sceptic stands at the altar, and where St. Thomas is regarded as the ideal apostle. Many a worthy clergyman, who passes his life in admirable works of kindly charity, lives and dies unnoticed and unknown, but it is sufficient for some shallow uneducated passman out of either University to get up in his pulpit and express his doubts about Noah's ark, or Balaam's ass, or Jonah and the whale, for half of London to flock to hear him, and sit open-mouthed in rapt admiration at his superb intellect. The growth of common sense in the English Church is a thing very much to be regretted. It is really a degrading concession to a low form of realism...”<sup>558</sup>

In the twenty-first century Wilde's countrymen, exceeding even his pride and blasphemy, have made of his sin an object of “gay pride”, thereby

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<sup>556</sup> The homosexual Rupert Everett's film of Oscar's last days, *The Happy Prince*, ignores his conversion altogether.

<sup>557</sup> Holland, in “Introduction to the 1966 Edition”, *Complete Works*, p.12.

<sup>558</sup> Wilde, “The Decay of Lying”, *Complete Works*, 1089.

attempting to nullify the only real moral achievement of his life (if we can believe it really took place), his repentance. His *art* has stood the test of time. What the tragedy of the last years of his life proves is the falseness of his idolatrous theory that art and the artist are greater than life and the Supreme Artist and Giver of Life, "God, the Father Almighty, the Poet (in Greek: Poittis) of heaven and earth" ...

## 35. THE WORLD-VIEW OF THE LATE VICTORIANS

Being an aristocrat still counted for something in the last decades of the nineteenth century; in fact, it was kind of golden age of aristocratism. But political and economic power had already slipped away from the landed aristocracy to the middle classes – to the bankers and industrialists, the lawyers, the accountants and the doctors, who bought up the aristocrats' country estates when they fell into debt and whose numbers increased rapidly in the great cities of "the second industrial revolution". The middle classes were more moralistic than the aristocrats; they incorporated the ideal of Victorian morality, of respectability. Nevertheless, there, too, there were undercurrents undermining traditional faith and mores.

"Over the decades," writes Sir Richard Evans, "political systems everywhere, even in reluctant tsarist Russia, had adjusted to the new role of the middle classes. Yet there was also a sense in some quarters that their heyday was over by 1900. In the first year of the new century the German writer Thomas Mann (1875-1955) published his great novel of upper-middle-class life, *Buddenbrooks*, in which a mercantile family gradually falls apart over the decades as its members abandon their core values and sink into self-indulgence and decadence in a process symbolized in the progressively worsening tooth decay suffered by the men of each generation."<sup>559</sup>

The slide into self-indulgence portended the end of the era of the Victorian morality that had so dominated European and American upper-class life in the nineteenth century, which set its tone from Queen Victoria herself, her devotion to her husband, Prince Albert, and her stern disapproval of the sexual foibles of her eldest son and heir, the future King Edward VII. Edward was a Francophile, as was Oscar Wilde; and moralists tended to see the main threat to English conservative culture as coming from France, where republicanism in politics seemed to go hand-in-hand with decadence in art and morality. Thus Samuel Hynes writes: "For most people the splendid isolation praised by Unionist politicians created barriers against European cultural forces: and for many, even among the better-read middle classes, the idea of British superiority had as its opposite an assumption of foreign inferiority giving rise almost to a fear that European culture in particular was striving to subvert that of Great Britain."<sup>560</sup>

The conflict between the moralities of Britain and the continent, was, of course, not new; we see it even in third century Rome, when the British, by contrast, were seen, as more liberal in their morals: "Dio Cassius records a story of how Julia Domna, wife of the emperor Septimius Severus (AD 193-211), was shocked by the apparent openness with which Celtic women chose their husbands and lovers. She declared that it showed a complete lack of moral scruple.

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<sup>559</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 326.

<sup>560</sup> Hynes, in Heffer, *The Age of Decadence*, p. 503.

"The wife of the British chieftain to whom she uttered this opinion responded with some spirit: 'We Celtic women obey the demands of Nature in a more moral way than the women of Rome. We consort openly with the best of men but you, of Rome, allow yourselves to be debauched in secret by the vilest.'"<sup>561</sup>

Of course, the matter was less complicated in third-century Rome than in nineteenth-century Europe, where centuries of Christianity made it impossible simply to "go back to nature" and identify morality with the unfettered expression of passion. Nevertheless, the Enlightenment and Darwinism, together with the romantic novel, were busily undermining the foundations of contemporary morality. And the new science of psychoanalysis would further undermine in the not-so-distant future...

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Moral instability was compounded by religious uncertainty. "The malaise of the late nineteenth century," writes A.N. Wilson, "was not primarily a political or an economic one, though subsequent historians might choose to interpret it thus. Men and women looked at the world which Western capitalism had brought to pass since Queen Victoria had been on the throne - over forty years now! - and they sensed that something had gone hideously awry.

"Gladstone bellowing on the windswept moorlands of Midlothian; Wagner in the new-built Bayreuth Festival Theatre watching the citadel of the Gods go down in flames; world-weary Trollope scribbling himself to death in the London clubs; Dostoyevsky coughing blood, and thrusting, as he did, his New Testament into the hands of his son - these could hardly be more different individuals. Yet they all at roughly the same moment in history were seized with comparable misgiving. It is like one of these disconcerting moments in a crowd of chattering strangers when a silence suddenly falls; or when a sudden chill, spiritual more than atmospheric, causes an individual to shiver and to exclaim 'I feel as if a man has just walked over my grave.'"<sup>562</sup>

Christianity "had, by the time of the nineteenth century, begun to stare at its own apocalypse. The biblical scholars of Tübingen had undermined the faith of the Protestant North in the infallibility of Scripture; while the painstaking lifetime of botanical and biological observations of Charles Darwin had shaken the faith of intellectuals in the Creator himself. By the end of the Victorian century, atheism had become the religion of the suburbs, as G.K. Chesterton observed.

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<sup>561</sup> Terry Jones and Alan Ereira, *Barbarians*, London: BBC Books, 2006, p. 51.

<sup>562</sup> Wilson, *The Victorians*, London: Arrow, 2003, p. 417.

"There is no doubt that, as the career and popularity of H.G. Wells demonstrates, unbelief was rife among the masses..."<sup>563</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Wilson, "the nineteenth century was an era of faith quite as much as it was one of doubt. While sophisticates abandoned the old Bible, new bibles were in the making. An angel called Moroni directed Joseph Smith, a teen-aged labourer from New England, to find, in 1827, those Golden Plates which would contain the new gospel, *The New Mormon*. In 1875, Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) was to publish *Science and Health*, later named *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which, as the eternal document of the new religion of Christian Science, was in effect to be a further testament, assuring believers that disease and indeed evil itself were illusory. Blavatsky's new Scripture, *Isis Unveiled* (1879), was written by invisible Spirit hands. Half a million words long, it began by denouncing the scientific materialism of Darwin and Huxley, and went on to expound its key doctrine, namely that all wisdom is One, that science is not opposed to religion, and that religious differences are man-made. Anyone who has nursed the thought that 'deep down all religions are saying the same thing' is more than halfway towards Theosophy..."<sup>564</sup>

Theosophy's most famous adept was the Irish poet W.B. Yeats. Yeats, writes Peter Watson, "would probably not have turned to the occult sciences with such alacrity had not a movement in that direction already been well under way. As Richard Ellmann describes it: 'All over Europe and America young men dropped like him, and usually without his caution, into the treacherous currents of semi-mystical thought... Since Christianity seemed to have been exploded, and since science offered to Western man little but proof of his own ignominiousness, a new doctrine purporting to be an ancient and non-European one was evolved by a strange Russian lady. The new movement called itself Theosophy and offered a "synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy" which opposed the contemporary developments of all three.'

"The 'strange lady' was Madame Helen Blavatsky, born in 1831 in Yekaterinoslav, who advanced 'with certainty' her theories that 'man has never been an ape' and that Herbert Spencer was in fundamental error and accused the Christian priesthood of modern materialism. Modern religion, she insisted, was but ancient thought *distorted*; and to uncover what such thought really was, she turned to comparative mythology, which, since about 1860, had been highly developed in books by such scholars as Max Müller, a German who taught at Oxford, and culminated in James Frazier's *The Golden Bough* (1890).

"In an early work of her own, Madame Blavatsky drew attention to what she saw as the similarity in the fundamental beliefs across all religions, and attributed this 'to the existence of a secret doctrine which was their common parent'. She claimed access to an oral tradition, for the true doctrine according

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<sup>563</sup> Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, p. 80.

<sup>564</sup> Wilson, *The Victorians*, pp. 549-550.

to her had never been allowed to be set down. 'Now,' she said, 'an ancient brotherhood was keeping the secret wisdom high in the mountain fastnesses of Tibet.' The members of this brotherhood had no interest in spreading their wisdom, but should they choose to do so, she confided, they would 'astonish' the world. And they had at least shown certain things to Madame Blavatsky, for the onward transmission of their secret doctrine was the 'Theosophical Society'. 'As these mysteries were gradually revealed, the world would slowly progress towards the greater spirituality that had been prophesied for it.'

"One of the reasons the movement was popular – it was a 'magnet' for disaffected members of the educated public, says the Yeats scholar Margaret Mills Harper – was that it was both anti-atheist and anti-clerical. It attacked science but used scientific concepts where it suited the moment; it espoused fatalism, yet also offered hope of progress. 'Spiritual revolution restored the hope which natural evolution had removed.'

"And it was Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, her chief work, that drew Yeats to Theosophy, the first of several forms of occult reasoning that attracted him. Her doctrine proposed three main ideas. First, she said, there was an 'Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable Principle on which all speculation is impossible' – the Theosophists paid little attention to deity. Second, the world is essentially a conflict of polar opposites, contraries without which life cannot exist. Third, she proclaimed the fundamental identity of all souls with the 'Universal Oversoul' which carried the implication that any soul might, under proper conditions, partake of the Oversoul's power, a heady possibility. The soul had seven elements, or principles, and it evolved through these elements over time. Heaven and hell were to be considered as 'states', not actual places.

"During this spiritual evolution humankind progressed from a more intuitive way of thinking to a more intellectual style, growing more conscious. This is where the world is at present, she said, in the fourth stage. In future stages – five, six and seven – intuition, intelligence and consciousness will fuse into an intense spirituality that, at present we cannot imagine. When it suited them, the Theosophists reinforced their arguments with examples from Eastern religions – for instance, they espoused the idea of Nirvana."<sup>565</sup>

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Another popular antichristian religion was Spiritualism, part of the "epidemic of the occult" that swept the West. This, writes L.A. Tikhomirov, "was already abundant in the United States of America, and in 1852 there were up to 30,000 mediums and several million convinced spiritualists. From America spiritualism migrated in 1853 to England, and then to France and Germany, passing everywhere, as V. Bykov says, through one and the same developmental progression. That is, first it would manifest itself in knocks,

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<sup>565</sup> Watson, *The Age of Atheists*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2014, pp. 167-169.

then in table-levitation, then writing, and finally direct communications [with evil spirits]. This teaching was embraced in Europe even by noted scientists, such as Aragon, Faraday, Tyndal, Chevreul, Flammarion, Kruke, Wallace, Rimman, Tsolner, etc., who first approached spiritualist phenomena with scepticism, but then became ardent followers of spiritualism. In 1858 a certain Hippolyte Rivel, writing under the pseudonym Allan Kardek and with the help of spirits, composed a six-volumed work containing the spiritualist philosophy with a religious-mystical colouring. In the opinion of V. Bykov, it is not possible to establish exactly when spiritualism appeared in Russia, but in any case at the beginning of the 50s of the 19th century, that is, at the same time as the whole of Europe and, moreover, in its mature form (table-lifting, writing and speaking mediumism) and in 'such an epidemic force' that already in 1853 Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow considered it necessary to speak against it. In the 60s the spiritualist movement increased still more in strength. It was also joined here by several eminent scientists and social activists, such as Professor N. Wagner, Professor Yurkevich, Vladimir Dal', the academician Ostrogradsky, Professor Buglerov, etc. A.N. Aksakov was particularly involved in the popularisation of this movement. At the beginning of the 20th century a notable role in the development of our spiritualism was played by Vlad[imir] Pavl[ovich] Bykov, who later spoke out against it and became its untiring opponent.

"At the world congress in Belgium in 1910, the numbers of correctly organized spiritualists, having their own circles and meetings, were calculated at 14,000,000 people, and the numbers of sympathizers who had not yet managed to organize themselves correctly - at 10,000,000."<sup>566</sup>

Queen Victoria and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were among the most famous adepts of spiritualism.<sup>567</sup>

Bearing in mind that in the Old Testament Mosaic Law contact with demonic spirits was punishable by death, we should not wonder why from 1914 God unleashed His wrath so terribly on the so-called Christians of Europe...

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<sup>566</sup> Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religio-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, pp. 480-481.

<sup>567</sup> Douglas Smith, *Rasputin*, London: Pan Books, 2016, p. 90; Stefan Bechtel, Laurence Ray Stains, *Through a Glass Darkly*, London: St. Martins, 2017.

### **36. POPE LEO XIII, FREEMASONRY AND SOCIALISM**

After the First Vatican Council and the loss of the Papal States to Italy under Pius IX, his successor, Leo XIII, gradually brought the Papacy into a more peaceful relationship with the modern western world. As A.N. Wilson writes, "he was rumoured to be more 'liberal' than his predecessor, which would not have been difficult. Politically, the great question facing the Papacy was whether it would admit that it had lost its temporal power, and accept the new kingdom of Italy. 'To the Italians it would seem that the Pope had abjured his principles, had abolished his sovereignty. In Europe his reconciliation with the Revolution would be a triumph to the revolutionary party in every land.' So the Holy See stood firm, refused to recognize the Italian king, and put Italian Catholics in the position of having to choose whether to accept the new realpolitik or be loyal to the Church. To vote in the elections, or take posts as civil servants, automatically excommunicated them... Little by little, however, the pope began to show common sense in this respect, even going so far in 1901 as to write an encyclical (*Graves de communi*) which permitted the use of the phrase 'Christian democracy', though with the provision that this had no political implications..."<sup>568</sup>

Leo XIII continued, like all the Popes before the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, to reject ecumenism. Thus he wrote in *Libertas Praestantissimum* (1888): "Justice forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in godlessness--namely, to treat the various religions (as they call them) alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges." Ecumenical Patriarch Anthimus replied to Leo's overtures in an Encyclical of 1895: "The Western Church, from the tenth century downwards, has privily brought into herself through the papacy various and strange and heretical doctrines and innovations, and so she has been torn away and removed far from the true and Orthodox Church of Christ. How necessary, then, it is for you to come back and return to the ancient and unadulterated doctrines of the Church in order to attain the salvation in Christ after which you press."

Leo normalized relations with Germany and Bismarck after *Kulturkampf*, and even improved relations with Russia after the murder of Alexander II. He wrote no less than 88 encyclicals, which constitute perhaps the last major blast of the Counter-Revolution in Western history. The most important of these were his encyclicals against Socialism and Freemasonry.

Thus in his 1878 encyclical on Socialism he wrote: "We speak of that sect or men... called socialists, communists or nihilists... They assail the right of property sanctioned by natural laws; they strive to seize and hold in common whatever has been acquired either by title or by lawful inheritance, or by labour of brain and hands, or by theft in one's mode of life... The boldness of these

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<sup>568</sup> Wilson, *The Victorians*, pp. 515-516.

evil men... day by day more and more threatens civil society and strikes the souls of all with anxiety and fear."<sup>569</sup>

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In spite of being banned by both the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches, Masonry continued to grow during the nineteenth century, consisting of 26,000 lodges and 1,670,000 adepts by its end.<sup>570</sup> In the Anglo-Saxon countries and Germany, Masonry was theist and anti-revolutionary, concentrating on ritual. Thus at a conference of Supreme Councils in Lausanne in 1875, when some of the resolutions were tending in an antichristian direction (the word "God" was replaced by "the Creative Principle" in the constitution, and all expressions of vengefulness against the god Adonai (Christ) were removed), the English delegates called for a review of the texts in order to emphasize belief in God and the immortality of the soul. When other delegates rejected such a review, the English left the conference. Only later was their demand satisfied.<sup>571</sup>

However, it was different in France: after the Republican victory in the 1877 election, the Grand Orient "decided to remove all references to God and the Great Architect [and the immortality of the soul] from their ceremonies, to remove the Bible from their lodges, and to admit agnostics and atheists," and to create a universal republic "by destroying Monarchies and the Monarchical order, annihilating the Church and introducing complete internationalism through the abolition of borders and disarming armies", this was too much for the English Grand Lodge, which broke off relations with the Grand Orient, as did the American Freemasons. The Grand Orient declared that by their action "the English Grand Lodge has struck a blow against the cosmopolitan and universal spirit of Freemasonry".<sup>572</sup>

"The victory of universal suffrage, laicism and positivism in the Grand Orient was complete. From now on Masonry became the school and the provider of cadres of the republican party. In general it identified itself with the middle and *petit bourgeoisie*, who through their elites strove to snatch the administration of the country from the highest-placed social classes, and the history of the Third Republic demonstrates how successful they were."<sup>573</sup>

By contrast with Anglo-Saxon Masonry, the Grand Orient in France adopted a more revolutionary, naturalist and anti-theist stance. Of course, the theism of Anglo-Saxon Masonry was not Christian in even the loosest sense. If most of the lower-order Masons considered that "the Grand Architect of the Universe" was simply another name for the Christian God, higher-order

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<sup>569</sup> Leo XIII, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 667.

<sup>570</sup> O.F. Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veka* (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, p. 7.

<sup>571</sup> Soloviev, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>572</sup> Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 220; Platonov, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>573</sup> Chevallier, P. *Histoire de la franc-maçonnerie française*, in Soloviev, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

Masons knew better. Since 1750, when the Royal Arch degree had been introduced into Masonry, these higher initiates knew that the name of the Masonic god. The Mason Jasper Ridley explains who this is: "In the admission ceremony to the Royal Arch, the initiate is told the name of God, the Great Architect of the Universe. This is one of the most closely guarded secrets of the Freemasons. In recent years they have published many of the secrets that they have guarded for centuries, but not the name of God, which is revealed to the members of the Royal Arch. Renegades from Freemasonry have published it, and it is now generally known that the name is Jah-bul-on, with the 'Jah' standing for Jehovah, the 'Bul' for Baal, and the 'On' for Osiris.

"The anti-masons have made great play with the masons' worship of Jahbulon. The Egyptian God, Osiris, might be acceptable [!], but the masons' worship of Baal outrages them. The bishops of the Church of England who have become Freemasons are asked to explain how they can reconcile their Christian beliefs with a worship of Baal, who is regarded in the Bible as absolute evil; and these bishops have been very embarrassed by the question."<sup>574</sup>

There were important practical reasons why the Masonic god should be a syncretist mixture of different gods. Masonry was now spreading to non-European races, and it was desirable that the gods of these races should be given a place within the all-encompassing Masonic deity. Thus English Masonry allowed both Muslims and Hindus into its Indian lodges on the grounds, as the Duke of Sussex ruled, that "the various 'gods' of the Hindus were not separate gods but personifications of characteristics of one central deity". Implicitly, therefore, Krishna and Shiva and Allah were considered to be personifications of the Great Architect no less than Jehovah, Baal and Osiris. The result was, as Ridley writes, that "before the end of the nineteenth century Rudyard Kipling, who was an especially ardent Freemason and was first initiated as a mason in India, was claiming that the religious and racial quarrels which troubled British India disappeared inside the masonic lodges".<sup>575</sup>

The closeness of Continental Masonry and International Socialism is shown by the coincidence of their major congresses. Thus in 1889, on the one hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution, the Grand Orient "created in Paris an international Masonic congress of representatives of the centres in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Greece and other states. Almost simultaneously in Paris there took place a representative international socialist congress, which factually speak laid the foundations of the Second Internationale. At the sessions sharp differences were immediately revealed between the revolutionary wing, the reformists and the anarchists, which, however, did not prevent them from taking a series of important decisions. Among the delegates were also Masons: P. Lafargue and L. Dupré (France), A. Costa and E. Malatesta (Italy), D. Neuwenhuis (Holland) and others. It is

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<sup>574</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>575</sup> Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

important to note that from this time a definite synchronicity can be observed in the conducting of the congresses of both organizations, with essentially fairly similar problems being reviewed. It also impossible not to see a definite influence of the order on the Internationale."<sup>576</sup>

Again, in August, 1900 another international congress of Continental Masonry took place, followed soon after by another congress of the Second Internationale. Many of the delegates to the latter were Masons, including Lafargue (on the revolutionary wing), Costa and Malatesta (from the reformists). "As a result, with some qualifications a resolution was passed in the spirit of reconciliation between labour and capital, which the Masons had long insisted on."<sup>577</sup>

In 1902 the Continental Masons decided to form an International Bureau of Masonic Links (IBML) in Neuchatel, Switzerland, whose organization was entrusted to the local "Alpina" lodge. Alpina was chosen because of it had official contacts with both the French and Anglo-Saxon lodges, and still retained references to the Great Architect and the immortality of the soul in its constitution. "Although the Bureau, headed by the former Grand Master of the 'Alpina' lodge, Pastor E. Cartier la Tante (1866-1924) sent a circular informing the federations of England, the USA, Germany and their numerous allies of its formation, suggesting that they unite, the latter did not react, and with the exception of the Germans did not take part in the activity of the IBML. However, in, for example, the London Masonic press the position of the United Great Lodge of that country was laid out in some detail. The Bureau was represented as 'the central power' of Masonry having sovereignty, while 'Alpina' was seen as the captive and servant of the Grand Orient of France. In becoming friendly with GOF, which had removed from its rules the reference to the Great Architect of the Universe, Alpina had thereby 'taken a step in an atheist direction' and could not be recognized as a lawful association. As for the other members of the Bureau, they were to be considered as "underground and incorrect great lodges. The accusations had an artificial character, but with some variations they continued for several more long years."<sup>578</sup>

Pope Leo's blast against the Freemasons came in 1884 in his famous *Humanum Genus*: "In the sphere of politics, the Naturalists lay down that all men have the same rights and that all are equal and alike in every respect; that everyone is by nature free and independent; that no one has the right to exercise authority over another; that it is an act of violence to demand of men obedience to any authority not emanating from themselves. All power is, therefore, in the free people. Those who exercise authority do so either by the mandate or permission of the people, so that, when the popular will changes, rulers of State may lawfully be deposed even against their will. The source of all rights and civic duties is held to reside either in the multitude or in the ruling

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<sup>576</sup> Soloviev, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>577</sup> Soloviev, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>578</sup> Soloviev, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

power of the State, provided that it has been constituted according to the new principles. They hold also that the State should not acknowledge God and that, out of the various forms of religion, there is no reason why one should be preferred to another. According to them, all should be on the same level. Now, that these views are held by the Freemasons also, and that they want to set up States constituted according to this ideal, is too well known to be in need of proof. For a long time they have been openly striving with all their strength and with all the resources at their command to bring this about. They thus prepare the way for those numerous and more reckless spirits who, in their mad desire to arrive at equality and common ownership of goods, are ready to hurl society into an even worse condition, by the destruction of all distinctions of rank and property... In this mad and wicked design, the implacable hatred and thirst for vengeance with which Satan is animated against Our Lord Jesus Christ becomes almost visible to our bodily eyes."

Leo XIII tried to place the Church in a neutral position in the capital versus labour debate. Thus in *Rerum novarum* (1891), he wrote:- "To remedy these wrongs the socialists, working on the poor man's envy of the rich, are striving to do away with private property, and contend that individual possessions should become the common property of all, to be administered by the State or by municipal bodies. They hold that by thus transferring property from private individuals to the community, the present mischievous state of things will be set to rights, inasmuch as each citizen will then get his fair share of whatever there is to enjoy. But their contentions are so clearly powerless to end the controversy that were they carried into effect the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. They are, moreover, emphatically unjust, for they would rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the State, and create utter confusion in the community." (Par 4)

"It is surely undeniable that, when a man engages in remunerative labor, the impelling reason and motive of his work is to obtain property, and thereafter to hold it as his very own... a working man's little estate thus purchased should be as completely at his full disposal as are the wages he receives for his labor. . . . Socialists, therefore, by endeavoring to transfer the possessions of individuals to the community at large, strike at the interests of every wage-earner, since they would deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thereby of all hope and possibility of increasing his resources and of bettering his condition in life. " (Par 5).

"What is of far greater moment, however, is the fact that the remedy they propose is manifestly against justice. For, every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own. This is one of the chief points of distinction between man and the animal creation. . . . But animal nature, however perfect, is far from representing the human being in its completeness, and is in truth but humanity's humble handmaid, made to serve and to obey. . . . man alone among the animal creation is endowed with reason - it must be within his right to possess things not merely for temporary and momentary use, as other living

things do, but to have and to hold them in stable and permanent possession;" (Par 6)

"The great mistake made in regard to the matter now under consideration is to take up with the notion that class is naturally hostile to class, and that the wealthy and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict. So irrational and so false is this view that the direct contrary is the truth. . . . Each needs the other: capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital. " (Par 19)

"Of these duties, the following bind the proletarian and the worker: fully and faithfully to perform the work which has been freely and equitably agreed upon; never to injure the property, nor to outrage the person, of an employer; never to resort to violence in defending their own cause, nor to engage in riot or disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises of great results, and excite foolish hopes which usually end in useless regrets and grievous loss. The following duties bind the wealthy owner and the employer: not to look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character." (Par 20)

The encyclical, writes Wilson, "foresees the possibility of state socialism being just as prejudicial to individual liberty as voracious capitalism. It asserts - is it the first major political tract of the nineteenth century to do so? - the notion of *human rights*:

"'Rights must be held sacred wherever they exist... Where the protection of private rights is concerned, special regard... must be had for the poor and the weak. Rich people can use their wealth to protect themselves and have less need of the State's protection; but the mass of the poor have nothing of their own with which to defend themselves and have to depend above all on the protection of the state.'

"The encyclical was inspirational to figures such as Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton and Eric Gill in the twentieth century, who drew from it the inference that socialism and capitalism were two sides of the same coin, both dedicated to depriving the individual of liberty..."<sup>579</sup>

In spite of this gesture of reconciliation from the Vatican, the Grand Orient and its affiliates in continental Masonry did not let up in their attacks on the Christian Faith. Thus in 1881 the Belgian Mason Frély wrote: "Down with the Crucified One! You have already held the world under your yoke for 18 centuries, your kingdom is finished. God is not needed!"<sup>580</sup>

Again, at the 1902 Convent of the Grand Orient, the Grand Master, Brother Delpêche, expressed this hatred of Christ in a striking form: "The triumph of

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<sup>579</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 516.

<sup>580</sup> Frély, in Archpriest Lev Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 357.

the Galilean has lasted twenty centuries. In his turn he is dying. That mysterious voice, which once cried: 'Great Pan is dead!' from the mountains of Epirus, is today proclaiming the end of that deceiving God who had promised an age of peace and justice to those who would believe in him. The illusion has lasted long enough; but the lying God is disappearing in his turn; he is going to take his place, amidst the dust of the ages, with those other divinities of India, Egypt, Greece and Rome, who saw so many deluded creatures prostrate themselves before their altars. Freemasons, we realise, not without joy, that we ourselves are no strangers to this downfall of false prophets. The Church of Rome, based on the Galilean myth, began to decline rapidly from the very day on which the Masonic association was established. From a political point of view, Freemasons have often differed among themselves. But at all times Freemasonry has stood firm on this principle - to wage war against all superstitions and against all forms of fanaticism."<sup>581</sup>

Again, in 1913 the Convent of the Grand Orient of France declared: "We no longer recognize God as the aim of life; we have created an ideal which is not God, but humanity."<sup>582</sup>

That ideal would be shattered in the following decade...

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<sup>581</sup> De Poncins, *Freemasonry and the Vatican*, Chulmleigh: Britons Publishing Company, p. 73.

<sup>582</sup> V.F. Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dnei* (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry: from Peter I to our Days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 67.

### **37. THE WESTERNIZATION OF JAPAN**

In 1853, the arrival of the American naval commander Matthew Perry in Yokohama harbor with four ships, and his demand that Japan open herself to trade with America, caused a major change in Japanese society and the country's place in the world, beginning in 1867 with the coming to power of a new regime called "Meiji" or "Enlightened Rule".

Commodore Perry, as Henry Kissinger writes, "bore a letter from President Millard Fillmore to the Emperor of Japan, which he insisted on delivering directly to imperial representatives in the Japanese capital (a breach of two centuries of Japanese law and diplomatic protocol). Japan, which held foreign trade in as little esteem as China, cannot have been particularly reassured by the President's letter, which informed the Emperor (whom Fillmore addressed as his 'Great and Good Friend!') that the American people 'think that if your imperial majesty were so far to change the ancient laws as to allow a free trade between the two countries it would be extremely beneficial to both.' Fillmore clothed the de facto ultimatum into a classically American pragmatic proposal to the effect that the established seclusion laws, heretofore described as immutable, might be loosened on a trial basis...

"The Japanese recipients of the message recognized it as a challenge to their concept of political and international order. Yet they reacted with the reserved composure of a society that had experienced and studied the transitoriness of human endeavors for centuries while retaining its essential nature. Surveying Perry's far superior firepower (Japanese cannons and firearms had barely advanced in two centuries, while Perry's vessels were equipped with state-of-the-art naval gunnery capable, as he demonstrated along the Japanese coast, of firing explosive shells), Japan's leaders concluded that direct resistance to the 'black ships' would be futile. They relied on the cohesion of their society to absorb the shock and maintain their independence by that cohesion. They prepared an exquisitely courteous reply explaining that although the changes America sought were 'most positively forbidden by the laws of our Imperial ancestors', nonetheless, 'for us to continue attached to ancient laws, seems to misunderstand the spirit of the age'. Allowing that 'we are governed now by imperative necessity', Japanese representatives assured Perry that they were prepared to satisfy nearly all of the American demands, including constructing a new harbor capable of accommodating American ships.

"Japan drew from the Western challenge a conclusion contrary to that of China after the appearance of a British envoy in 1793... China reaffirmed its traditional stance of dismissing the intruder with aloof indifference while cultivating China's distinctive virtues, confident that the vast extent of its population and territory and the refinement of its culture would in the end prevail. Japan set out, with studious attention to detailed and subtle analysis of the balance of material and psychological forces, to enter the international order based on Western concepts of sovereignty, free trade, international law,

technology, and military power – albeit for the purpose of expelling the foreign domination. After a new faction came to power in 1868 promising to ‘revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians’, they announced that they would do so by mastering the barbarian concepts and technologies and joining the Westphalian world order as an equal member. The new Meiji Emperor’s coronation was marked with the Charter Oath signed by the nobility, promising a sweeping program of reform, which included provisions that all social classes should be encouraged to participate. It provided for deliberative assemblies in all provinces, an affirmation of due process, and a commitment to fulfill the aspirations of the population. It relied on the national consensus, which had been one of the principal strengths – perhaps the most distinctive feature – of Japanese society...

“Japan would henceforth embark on the systematic construction of railways, modern industry, an export-oriented economy, and a modern military. Amidst all these transformations, the uniqueness of Japanese culture and society would preserve Japanese identity...”<sup>583</sup>

"Modernizing the Japanese economy," writes J.M. Roberts, "required strong governmental initiatives and harsh fiscal policies. There had been for a time a grave danger of opposition and disorder. Centuries before, the imperial power had gone into eclipse, unable to control over-mighty subjects; its restored authority faced new dangers in a new age. Not all conservatives could be reconciled to the new model Japan. Discontented *ronin* or retainers - rootless and masterless *samurai*, the traditional fighting class - had been one source of trouble. Another was peasant misery; in the first decade of the Meiji era there had been scores of agrarian revolts, but reform had created unconditional private ownership in land and many tenant farmers were to benefit from it. There had also been a last feudal rebellion, but the energies of the discontented *samurai* were gradually siphoned off into the service of the new state; building their interests into it, though, only intensified an assertive nationalism in certain key sectors of the national life. It was soon expressed not only in continuing resentment of western powers but also in support of imperial ambitions directed towards the nearby Asian mainland..."<sup>584</sup>

All this took place under the banner of the restoration of power from the shogunate to the emperor. Thus on January 3, 1868, the Emperor made a formal declaration: "The Emperor of Japan announces to the sovereigns of all foreign countries and to their subjects that permission has been granted to the *Shōgun* Tokugawa Yoshinobu to return the governing power in accordance with his own request. We shall henceforward exercise supreme authority in all the internal and external affairs of the country."

However, although the Meiji restoration appeared to take away power from the shogunate and restore it to the emperor, the emperor-god reigned but did

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<sup>583</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 184-186, 187.

<sup>584</sup> Roberts, *The Penguin History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 63.

not rule. The real rulers were a group of oligarchs. As Dominic Lieven writes: "Japanese tradition was totally opposed to the Emperor actually attempting to act as the chief executive officer of his government. For centuries the Emperor's role had been purely ceremonial and priestly, actual power being exercised by the Shogun. In the last decades of the Tokugawa era even the Shogun did not rule personally, his powers being used by subordinates in his name. Although in theory the Meiji restoration returned power to the monarchy's hands, it was never the intention of the restoration's key statesmen that the monarch should literally run his own government like a Russian or German emperor. On the contrary, the monarchy's role was to provide legitimacy for the Meiji era's reformist oligarchy and to act as a symbol around which the Japanese nation could rally. As in Europe, however, one key reason for the oligarchy's determination to locate sovereignty in the Emperor was their opposition to accepting the only alternative principle, namely the sovereignty of the people exercised through elected institutions.

"In a way that was not true even in Prussia, let alone Russia, court and government were always sharply separated in Meiji Japan. The court was the world of priestly rites and Confucian moral virtues, never of actual political rule. Though in theory the Emperor chose prime ministers, in fact they were selected by the *genro*, in other words the tiny group of elder statesmen who constituted a sort of supreme privy council and presented the monarch with a candidate whom he never rejected. Recommendations on policy were submitted to the crown in the unanimous name of the government. The Emperor was never asked to adjudicate personally between conflicting choices or groups, still less to devise his own policies and find minister to support them. The traditions of the imperial house meant that the monarchs did not revolt against this passive role. The Emperor Meiji, for instance, is said to have rebuffed efforts to draw him more directly into government by commenting that 'when one views [our] long history one sees that it is a mistake for those next to the throne to conduct politics'. In any case since no modern Japanese emperor, Meiji included, had ever possessed real political power there was never any question of the need to surrender it into the oligarchy's hands. When the Emperor Hirohito contemplated intervening personally to tilt the balance against military extremists in 1937 he was warned by the sole remaining *genro*, Prince Saioniji, that the monarchy must not endanger itself by active political engagement. Only in the apocalyptic circumstances of 1945 did the monarch decisively enter the political arena and even then this happened because the government was split down the middle on the issue of peace or war and requested his intervention."<sup>585</sup>

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Let us look more closely at this change in Japanese statehood. As W.H. Spellman writes: "Against the considerable opposition of the Tokugawa shogun and the emperor..., economic, military and political modernization

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<sup>585</sup> Lieven, *Nicholas II: Emperor of all the Russias*, London: Pimlico, 1994, pp. 126-127.

became the rallying cry of those samurai elites and urban commercial leaders who were determined not to allow Western domination of the country to proceed unchecked. Turning from the shogunate to the imperial office for support, a new monarchical regime called 'Meiji' or 'Enlightened Rule' was inaugurated after the death of the emperor Komei in January 1867. Leaders of the four most important feudal families turned over their estates to the new 15-year-old emperor Mutsuhito (1852-1912) in a gesture of insurgent nationalism. In a memorial addressed to the emperor, the clan leaders maintained that they were returning to the Son of Heaven what had originally been his 'so that a uniform rule may prevail throughout the empire. Thus the country will be able to rank equally with the other nations of the world.' In July 1869 an imperial decree ordered all other landed elites to make the same submission. In return these aristocrats would become provincial governors under the crown; private political authority in the countryside, the norm for over a millennium, was now defined as usurpation and effectively brought to a close.

"Under Mutushito, the 122nd monarch in a line from Jinmu, calls for the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate intensified. Seeing the scale of the opposition to his family's rule and unwilling to plunge the country into civil war, Tokugawa Yoshinobu abolished the family office - and eight centuries of military government - in November 1867. Establishing a new capital in Tokyo (formerly Edo), the emperor enjoyed enough support from disgruntled samurai warriors, clan leaders and urban commercial interests to defeat the hold-out troops of the now-defunct shogunate. There ensued three decades of unprecedented reform, catapulting feudal Japan into the industrial age. Feudalism was officially abolished in 1871, a national conscript army based on the German model was created, and Western military advisors were recruited in order to assist with the building of a modern navy. State-sponsored and mandatory elementary education was adopted, the Gregorian calendar was introduced, a representative system of local government was created, and a robust commercial and industrial revolution began, the first of its kind in the non-western world. No other non-European nation responded as quickly and as effectively as Japan to the threat of Western imperialism.

"The ideological components of the revolution which occurred in Japan in 1868 centred on two key elements: nationalism and tenno-ism [the service of *tenno*, the Lord of heaven]. The historic uniqueness of Japanese civilization was stressed while the monarchy was held up as the embodiment of the nation's highest ideals, its closest bond with earlier times. There was no establishment of direct imperial rule in 1868, but instead the emperor's authority was gradually enhanced as anti-Tokugawa reformers claimed a mandate from the divine ruler. By linking the ancient institution of monarchy with the innovative programme of economic modernization and social change, reformers hoped to make change more palatable in traditionalist circles. Not the least of these changes involved the new national political institutions. After a series of delegations sent to Europe and the United States during the 1870s and 1880s returned with their suggestions for constitutional reform, in 1889 a new framework of government, reflecting the German imperial model, established

a bicameral parliamentary structure with cabinet responsibility for national policy. The lower house or diet, elected on a restricted franchise which excluded 95 per cent of the adult male population, served as an advisory body to the government, but the emperor retained control over the military and named his chief ministers, all of whom served at the pleasure of the monarch. An upper house composed of former nobles and Meiji leaders rounded out the parliamentary system.

"The first article of the new German-style constitution emphasized the centrality of the sacred monarch's role in the new government. Here it was stated plainly that 'The empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal.' Ito Hirobumi, one of the principal authors of the new constitution, provided a commentary on the document which encapsulates the thinking of the Meiji reformers. The emperor, according to Hirobumi, 'is Heaven-descended, divine and sacred; he is pre-eminent above all his subjects. He must be revered and is inviolable. He is indeed to pay due respect to the law, but the law has no power to hold Him accountable to it.'<sup>586</sup>

"Unlike his predecessors, the Meiji emperor undertook a new public role designed to link the monarchy with the actions of the state. Reviewing troops, giving audiences to foreign envoys, presiding at various public awards ceremonies, placing his name on a large list of policy decrees, the emperor became the exclusive focus of national loyalty. At court, traditional dress was abandoned in favour of mandatory Western styles, and young Japanese eagerly embraced the idea of modernization in the service of the monarchy.

"It is in this last idea - service to the *tenno* (lord of heaven) - that the uniqueness of Japan's drive towards modernization must be assessed. The revolution of 1868 was not a middle-class, bourgeois-inspired call for an individualistic and capitalist state along Western lines. Instead the reforming oligarchs who were responsible for the end of the shogunate continued to emphasize the virtues of obedience, loyalty and acquiescence in the service of one's superiors. In an imperial rescript on education issued by the emperor in 1890 - a document to be memorized by generations of schoolchildren down to 1948 - young Japanese were exhorted to 'offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.' These

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<sup>586</sup> Prince Ito, the effective creator of modern Imperial Japan, wrote in his *Commentary* on the Constitution: "The Sacred Throne was established at the time when the heavens and the earth became separated" (in Harold Nicolson, *Monarchy*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962, p. 38). However, he goes on to say that "the Emperor is heaven descended, divine and sacred", which implies that while the empire is a product of the fall, its purpose is also to overcome the fall, at least in part. It is possible that Prince Ito was here betraying the influencing of Christian ideas which he picked up during his education in Europe. (V.M.)

values, it was hoped would combine to shape a nationalist ideology unique in its association with the institution of monarchy."<sup>587</sup>

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At first, the West welcomed Japan's move towards westernization. As E.H. Gombrich writes, "the Europeans were delighted. What sensible little people the Japanese had turned out to be, opening up their country in this way. They made haste to sell them everything they asked to see. Within a few decades the Japanese had learnt all that Europe could teach them about machines for war and for peace. And once they had done so, they complimented the Europeans politely, as they cone more stood at their gates: 'Now we know what we know. Now *our* steamships will go out in search of trade and conquest, and *our* cannons will fire on peaceful cities if anyone in them dares form a Japanese citizen.' The Europeans couldn't get over it, nor have they, even today. The Japanese turned out to be the best students in all the history of the world..."<sup>588</sup>

However, Japan's nationalist ideology, unrestrained by any independent religious institution preaching universalist values, laid the foundations of the tragedy of 1945. As Ienaga Saburo writes: "The vast majority of the people were educated from youth into a frame of mind in which they could not criticise state policies independently and had to follow them, mistaken though they were. Education since 1868 carries heavy responsibility for bringing on that tragedy."<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Spellman, *Monarchies, 1000-2000*, Trowbridge: Reaktion, 2001, pp. 62-64.

<sup>588</sup> Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*, London: Yale University Press, 2008, pp. 252-253.

<sup>589</sup> Ienaga, in Rikki Kersten, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Japan", *History Today*, vol. 54 (3), March, 2004, p. 21.

## **38. THE WELFARE STATE: (1) GERMANY**

The welfare state was not a new idea. Most states in ancient times accepted some, though not exclusive, responsibility for looking after the poor, the sick, the old, the disabled, the widowed and the orphaned. In modern times, we find it again as early as 1601, when, according to Robert Tombs, “the best system of poor relief in Europe” was introduced “under Elizabeth’s Poor Law Act (1601), brought in to replace monastic charity”<sup>590</sup> after Elizabeth’s father, Henry VIII, dissolved the monasteries...

Nevertheless, the Church remained the main helper of the poor for a long time. Until the nineteenth century, in both East and West, the poor had been looked after by individual wealthy Christians and by the Church; almsgiving remained a cardinal virtue, and the best Church leaders took poor relief very seriously. Thus it was said of St. Gregory the Great (+604) that he would not receive Communion as long as there was one beggar on the streets of Rome. All the saints were merciful. Some were renowned especially for this virtue, such as the Byzantines Sampson the Hospitaller and Philaret the Merciful, the Alexandrian Patriarch John the Merciful and the Russian noblewoman Juliana Olshanskaya.

The State supported the Church in this. Thus Bishop Enoch writes: “While it is true that monasteries, parishes, and other institutions in the ancient and medieval world were the main avenues for free health care, and social support, this cannot be divorced from the fact that these institutions received support not simply via voluntary donations from private individuals, but also heavily in the form of tax money via active support from civil rulers, governors, kings; i.e, land grants, monthly donations directly from the civil authorities, and so forth [ money that came directly from tax coffers of the general population]. No one, of course, had a problem with this, as a rule; no Fathers or Saints ever condemned the King or Emperor, governors or generals, or civil government apparatus, using tax money to give to social service institutions run by clergy, monastics, or lay associations for the purpose of providing health care for the poor, indigent, and so forth; nor the laws in many kingdoms requiring that local parishes open up schools for teaching children, with money provided from the civil authorities as well as voluntary donations.”<sup>591</sup>

However, the complete elimination of poverty was recognized to be a utopian dream. After all, “The poor you have always with you” (John 12.8) – which was not to say, of course, that the poor should not always be helped as much as possible. God, Christians believe, allows some people to be rich and others to be poor for the salvation of both categories – the rich by showing compassion on the poor and through the prayers of those whom they help, and the poor by enduring poverty with patience and thanksgiving, like Lazarus in the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16.19-31). And all

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<sup>590</sup> Robert Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 211.

<sup>591</sup> Bishop Enoch, Facebook communication, June 14, 2020.

this is done in the name of Christ and for the sake of salvation in Christ, the Poor Man *par excellence*: indeed, by giving to the poor man in the name of Christ, you are giving to Christ Himself, Who will reward you accordingly (Matthew 24.31-46). In this way, as the Holy Fathers explained, social inequality can serve for the salvation of all.

However, after the French revolution, the Christian approach to poverty and inequality was increasingly discarded. Under the influence of the false ideas of the revolution, poverty was considered a "scandal", whose solution lay not in voluntary charity by the rich to the poor (they were in any case too hard-hearted to give more than a fraction of what was needed), but in compulsory taxation or expropriation of the rich and handouts to the poor administered by bureaucrats. But neither the Napoleonic state created by the revolution, nor any of the states of the post-Napoleonic counter-revolution were at first able to respond to the need.

However, on one thing all intelligent observers could agree: as populations increased and the industrial revolution overturned old economic patterns, employment practices and social structures, the need for welfare increased exponentially. And that welfare had to be provided by the by now essentially secular state.

Thus Socialism did not arise on an empty space: it filled the gap caused by the decline in Christian faith and morality with its own faith and morality. Socialism provided a kind of faith without Christ that appeared to many - falsely - to be an expression of Christian love.

Until the late nineteenth century, as Sir Richard Evans writes, "poverty in its deepest and most radical form had been the object of religious philanthropy, which was gradually being replaced by private and municipal initiative. In Britain it was driven forward in particular by middle-class women such as Octavia Hill (1838-1912), who pioneered the 'model dwelling' movement for improved working-class housing, and founded the Charity Organization Society in 1869. This introduced into England the Elberfeld System of poor relief, pioneered in 1852 as a response to the 1848 Revolution in the industrial conurbation where Friedrich Engels grew up. The System established a network of overseers whose task it was to visit the poor, recommend a suitable level of support, check on the probity of their domestic circumstances, and find them a job as soon as possible, which they were obliged to accept on pain of forfeiting their benefits. It took the problem of poverty out of the hands of the Church and turned relief into an instrument of secular social control. The changing rules of secular and ecclesiastical charity over the decades can be observed with particular clarity in the case of the Netherlands, where a new law passed in 1854 made the Churches the primary relief agency; municipalities were only to step in as a last resort. More and more, however, the state had to take on the burden of support - covering 40 per cent of the costs of poor relief in 1855, and 57 per cent in 1913. The medical profession increasingly urged a more dynamic approach to health care, because as the

Dutch social commentator Jeronimo de Bosch Kemper (1808-76) wrote in 1851: 'Improve the health of the people and you will have removed a major, a very great cause of poverty.' The debate continued until in 1901 the Netherlands finally introduced a Public Health Act, a Housing Act and an Industrial Injuries Act, taking away the primary task of combatting poverty from the Church to which it had been entrusted in the previous century. In many respects, however, such secular institutions were not so different from the traditional charitable institutions of the Churches...

"The rise of the welfare state was in essence a response to the growing popularity of left-wing politics, especially among the working-class. Conservatives and liberals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could see no greater threat to their political position than that posed by socialism, whose central tenets were diametrically opposed to the priority given by mainstream political parties to the idea of the nation. Under the influence of Marx and Engels and their disciples, socialists came to believe that workers in industrialized or industrializing countries were so exploited and oppressed that they owed no allegiance to the capitalists who ruled them nor to the nation state they controlled. Still less did they have an interest in fighting wars, which would only use them as cannon fodder while industrialists grew fat on war profits. The declared aim of the socialist movement was to overthrow the central institutions of 'bourgeois' society, including private property, business corporations, the police, the army, the Church, and even the family. They were to be replaced by a state in which property would be owned collectively, children brought up communally, religion abolished, and businesses run by the workers. In practice, however, the politics of socialism turned out to be more complex, and less frightening, than these terrifying visions suggested. The socialists' bark was often worse than their bite, and the grand intentions stated in party programmes were in many cases belied by the pragmatism of socialist politicians in practice. Part of the reason for these developments was indeed the rise of the welfare state, which gave the workers a growing stake in the society that socialist theory said should be destroyed..."<sup>592</sup>

Politicians had to respond to the challenge posed by the socialists because the workers, at different speeds in different countries, were acquiring the vote, and the newly enfranchised workers wanted more than liberal reforms: they wanted an increase in their standard of living...

The symbol of Democracy, as E.P. Thompson writes, "was the right of the individual citizen to vote - a right increasingly buttressed from the 1880s onwards by secrecy of the ballot. The vote was often endowed, by enthusiastic radicals and frightened conservatives alike, with a magic power. Too many radicals expected universal suffrage to bring the millennium - to sweep away before it the last relics of feudalism, of aristocratic and plutocratic privilege, of popular squalor and ignorance. Many conservatives and moderate liberals took the radicals at their word, and feared that democracy would demolish

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<sup>592</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 552-553.

monarchy, church, religion, public order, and all that they cherished. Therefore the struggles for extensions of the franchise and secrecy of the ballot were often long and bitter.

"The immense increase of population in earlier decades was now producing the most momentous of all modern European phenomena - 'the age of the masses'. This, even more than the spread of democratic ideas, compelled every state to overhaul its machinery of government and administration... Every European government now had to administer and serve the interests of larger and denser agglomerations of people than ever before in the history of mankind. When the First World War began, the United Kingdom was still, as she had been since 1815, the most highly urbanized country in Europe, whereas France clung stubbornly to her rural character. But after her political unification Germany swung over sharply from a population almost as rural as the French to a position in which three out of every five Germans lived in towns. This 'flight to the towns' had begun before 1871, but it now took place in Germany at a speed unrivalled by any other nation.

"These changes in greater or lesser degree affected all European countries. In terms of politics and administration they meant that all governments were confronted with problems that British governments had been obliged to tackle earlier in the century. These were problems of how to govern densely populated industrial towns; how to ensure adequate provision for public health and sanitation, public order, and police; how to protect industrial workers against bad conditions of working and living. Perplexing social problems were forced upon every government by the course of events; and the parallel growth of democratic ideas and of wider electorates ensured for these problems a high priority of attention...

"... Nearly every state in Europe, by 1914, had a code of legislation governing the building of houses and the making of streets; ensuring minimum standards of sanitation, safety, and conditions of labour in factories, mines and mills; regulating the entry of ships into ports and enforcing standards of purity and cleanliness in food and drink. In Britain the first landmarks were Disraeli's Public Health Act of 1875 and a series of housing acts from 1875 onward. With the rapid growth of large towns and of mechanized industry, a larger proportion of every electorate was an industrial, wage-earning class dwelling in or near large towns and making its living in conditions that demanded greater social discipline, a higher degree of organization, and more sustained administrative activity on the part of governments. Every state, in this minimum sense, was becoming a welfare state..."<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Thompson, *Europe since Napoleon*, London: Penguin Books, 1966, pp. 353-354, 355.

The first country to introduce welfarism on a large scale was Bismarck's Prussia-Germany, which thereby, according to Philip Bobbitt, accomplished the transition from state-nation to nation-state. For if the state serves the nation, rather than the other way round, it must deliver a minimum of material prosperity to all the people. For conservatives, this had the added attraction that it pre-empted the socialists who were trying to overthrow the state. Thus in 1884 Bismarck said: "Give the working man a right to work as long as he is healthy, assure him care when he is sick, assure him maintenance when he is old. If you do that and do not fear the sacrifice, or cry out at state socialism - if the state will show a little more Christian solicitude for the working man, then I believe that the gentlemen of the social-democratic programme will sound their bird-call in vain."<sup>594</sup>

"Far from being the paradoxical fact it is sometimes presented as, Bismarck's championing of the first state welfare systems in modern Europe, including the first social security program, was crucial to the perception of the State as deliverer of the people's welfare. If the wars of the state-nations were wars of the State that were made into wars of the peoples, then the wars of the nation-states were national wars, fought on behalf of popular ideals. The legitimation of the nation-state thus depends upon its success at maintaining modern life; a severe economic depression will undermine its legitimacy in a way that far more severe financial crises scarcely shoot earlier regimes."<sup>595</sup> Thus according to Harari, Bismarck's "chief aim was to ensure the loyalty of the citizens rather than to increase their well-being. You fought for your country when you were eighteen, and paid your taxes when you were forty, because you counted on the state to take care of you when you were seventy."<sup>596</sup>

This achievement was made easier by the statist Prussian political philosophy of the second Reich, which stood in sharp contrast to the *laissez-faire* political philosophy of the most powerful and influential state of the time, Britain. Clark writes: "Whereas historical narration in Victorian Britain carried the imprint of the Whig teleology, according to which all history was the rise of civil society as the carrier of liberty *vis-à-vis* the monarchical state, in Prussia the polarities of the argument were reversed. Here it was the state that rose, gradually unfolding its rational order in place of the arbitrary personalized regimes of the old grandees.

"This celebration of the state as the carrier of progress was no nineteenth-century invention - it can be traced back, for example, to the treatises and narratives of the Hobbesian political theorist and sometime Brandenburg

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<sup>594</sup> Bismarck, in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 674.

<sup>595</sup> Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 204.

<sup>596</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2017, p. 36. As Bismarck himself put it in 1884: "Give the working man the right to work as long as he is healthy, assure him care when he is sick, assure him maintenance when he is old. If you do that and do not fear the sacrifice, or cry out at state socialism - if the state will show a little more Christian solicitude for the working man, then I believe that the gentlemen of the social-democratic programme will sound the bird-call in vain" (in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 674).

court historiographer Samuel Pufendorf. But the idea of the state acquired an intense charisma at the time of the [early nineteenth-century] Stein-Hardenburg reforms, when it became possible to speak of merging the life of the state with that of the people, of developing the state as an instrument of emancipation, enlightenment and citizenship. And no one, as we have seen, sang the song of the state more sweetly than Hegel... By the 1820s Hegel, now something of an academic celebrity, was teaching generations of Berlin students that the reconciliation of the particular and the universal – the Holy Grail of German political culture – has been achieved in the reformed Prussian state of his own time.

“The influence of this exalted conception of the state was felt so widely that it bestowed a decisive flavour on Prussian political life and social thought. In his *Proletariat and Society* (1848), Lorenz Stein, one of Hegel’s most gifted pupils, observed that Prussia, unlike either France or Britain, possessed a state that was sufficiently independent and authoritative to intervene in the interest-conflicts of civil society, thereby preventing revolution and safeguarding all the members of society from the ‘dictatorship’ of any one interest. It was therefore incumbent upon Prussia to fulfill its mission of a ‘monarchy of social reform’. A closely affiliated position was that of the influential conservative ‘state socialist’ Carl Rodbertus, who argued in the 1830s and 1840s that a society based upon the property principle alone would always exclude the propertyless from true membership – only a collectivized authoritarian state could weld the members of society into an inclusive and meaningful whole. Robertus’s arguments influenced in turn the thinking of Hermann Wagener, editor of the ultra-conservative *Neue Prussische Zeitung* (known as the *Kreuzzeitung* because it bore a large black iron cross on its banner). Even that most romantic of conservatives, Ludwig von Gerlach, viewed the state as the only institution capable of bestowing a sense of purpose and identity upon the masses of the population.

“For many protagonists of this tradition, it appeared self-evident that the state must take a more or less limited responsibility for the material welfare of the governed. Among the most influential later nineteenth-century readers of Lorenz Stein was the historian Gustav Schmoller, who coined the term ‘social policy’ (*Sozialpolitik*) to convey the right and obligation of the state to intervene in support of the most vulnerable members of society; to leave society to regulate its own affairs, Schmoller argued, was to invite chaos. Schmoller was closely associated with the economist and ‘state socialist’ Adolph Wagner, who took up a professorial chair at the University of Berlin in 1870. Wagner, a keen student of Rodbertus’s writings, was among the founding members of the Association for Social Policy founded in 1872, an important early forum for debate on the social obligations of the state. Wagner and Schmoller exemplified the outlook of the ‘young historical school’ that flourished in the soil of the Hegelian-Prussian tradition. Their belief in the redemptive social mission of the state resonated widely in a political environment troubled by the pains of the recession that set in from 1873 and looking for alternatives to a liberal doctrine of laissez-faire that appeared to have exhausted its

credibility. So strong was the intellectual pull of social policy that it attracted a highly diverse constituency, including National Liberals, Centre Party leaders, state socialists and conservative figures close to Bismarck, including the *Kreuzzeitung* editor Hermann Wagener, who advised Bismarck on social matters in the 1860s and 1870s.

“The scene was thus set long in advance for the pioneering Bismarckian social legislation of the 1880s. The medical insurance law of 15 June 1883 created a network of local insurance providers who dispensed funds from income generated by a combination of worker and employee contributions. The accident insurance law of 1884 made arrangements for the administration of insurance in cases of illness and work-related injury. The last of the three foundational pillars of German social legislation came in 1889, with the age and invalidity insurance law. These provisions were quantitatively small by present-day standards, the payments involved extremely modest, and the scope of the new provisions far from comprehensive – the law of 1883, for example, did not apply to rural workers. At no point did the social legislation of the Empire come close to reversing the trend towards increased economic inequality in Prussian or German society. It is clear, moreover, that Bismarck’s motives were narrowly manipulative and pragmatic. His chief concern was to win the working classes back to the Prussian-German ‘social monarchy’ and thereby cripple the growing Social Democratic movement.

“But to personalize the issue is to miss the point. Bismarck’s support for social insurance was, after all, merely one articulation of a broader ‘discourse coalition’ with deep cultural and historical roots. In this congenial ideological setting, the provisions available under the state insurance laws swiftly expanded, to the point where they did begin to have an appreciable impact on the welfare of workers, and perhaps even, as Bismarck had hoped, a mollifying effect on their politics. The momentum of reform continued into the early 1890s, when the new administration under William II and Chancellor Caprivi enacted labour laws that brought progress in the areas of industrial safety, working conditions, youth protection and arbitration. The principle they embodied, namely that ‘entrepreneurial forces must respect the state-enforced interests of all groups’, remained a dominant theme in imperial and Prussian social policy during the following decades...”<sup>597</sup>

According to Sir Arnold Toynbee, “the emphasis in the German system lay neither on factory legislation, which Bismarck distrusted as external interference in employers’ affairs, nor on unemployment insurance, which he treated as of minor importance. It aimed at a comprehensive national provision for security against the three commonest vicissitudes of urban life - sickness, accident, and incapacity in old age. Acts tackling successively these three problems were passed in 1883, 1884, and 1889. In 1911 the whole law of social insurance was codified and extended to various classes of non-industrial workers, such as agricultural labourers and domestic servants. Before these

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<sup>597</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 615-618.

laws were passed, a multitude of local provisions had been made voluntarily by benefit societies, guilds, burial clubs, and parishes. The Reich system utilized these older forms but gradually absorbed and replaced them by new local and factory associations which administered the insurance schemes. By 1913 some fourteen and a half million persons were insured in this way. To the sickness and pension funds, both workers and employers contributed and both were represented on their management. In the course of time such benefits as free medical attendance and hospital care were extended, and by 1914 codes of factory legislation and of child labour were at last added. Although the pre-war Reich did not set up unemployment insurance, it set up labour exchanges, and some municipalities had local schemes of insurance and relief for unemployed workers. Germans were pioneers in the thoroughness and extent of their welfare system. When war began, German workers were more protected against the hazards of an industrial society than those of any other country. This was a not unimportant element in her national solidarity and strength."<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Toynbee, *A Study of History*. Abridgement of vols. I-VI Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 95.

## **39. THE WELFARE STATE: (2) ENGLAND**

As we have noted, the welfare state came less naturally to liberal and laissez-faire Britain than to statist Germany. Nevertheless, the English, too, were adapting to changing times, albeit more slowly.

In Britain in the first half of the century, as John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge write, the liberals had done a remarkably good job in embodying the liberal principles of John Stuart Mill. "A succession of British governments dismantled old systems of privilege and patronage and replaced them with a capitalist state. Government, the Victorians believed, should solve problems rather than simply collect rents. They built railways, paved roads, and furnished cities with sewage systems and policemen, known as 'bobbies', after their inventor, Sir Robert Peel.

"Throughout the nineteenth century, this kind of lean government liberalism spread throughout Europe and across the Atlantic to the United States. Yet its moment did not last long. Mill himself typified the change. The older he grew, the more troubled he became by some profound questions, mainly to do with the persistence of poverty among plenty. How could a society judge each individual on his or her own merits when rich dunces enjoyed the best educations and poor geniuses left school as children to work as chimney sweeps? How could individuals achieve their full potential unless society played a role in providing them with a fair start? The state, he came to feel, had to do more. By its third edition, Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, the bible of British liberalism, had begun to look ever more collectivist...

"Mill was not alone: the late Victorians (and their imitators around the world) increasingly questioned the laissez-faire certainties of their predecessors, on two grounds. First, the night-watchman state stigmatized the poor: they were deprived of the vote and consigned to workhouses in order to discourage idleness and provide incentives to work and save. In his 1854 novel, *Hard Times*, Charles Dickens turned 'utilitarianism', the term commonly attached to Mill's thought, into a byword for heartless calculation. Second, British critics of liberalism argued that the only way to outcompete other nations, especially Prussia, was to expand the state. Confronted with Prussia's world-class public educational system and effective tariffs, the British elite fretted about the naivety of free trade and the quality of their country's breeding stock..."<sup>599</sup>

"Lean government" remained an ideal of British and American libertarians for a long time, enjoying a revival under Thatcher in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the British reluctantly accepted that government had to expand in response to the unprecedented demands of the modern world. Britain's first welfare

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<sup>599</sup> Micklethwait and Wooldridge, "The State of the State", *Foreign Affairs*, July-August, 2014, pp. 122-124.

legislation may be said to have been Disraeli's Public Health Act of 1875 and Housing Acts of the late 1870s. This followed on his reform bill of 1867, which extended the franchise to property-owning workers.

Thus "under the stewardship of Richard Assheton Cross, the Home Secretary, Disraeli's new government enacted many reforms, including the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act 1875, which made inexpensive loans available to towns and cities to construct working-class housing. Also enacted were the Public Health Act 1875, modernising sanitary codes through the nation, the Sale of Food and Drugs Act (1875), and the Education Act (1876).

"Disraeli's government also introduced a new Factory Act meant to protect workers, the Conspiracy, and Protection of Property Act 1875, which allowed peaceful picketing, and the Employers and Workmen Act (1875) to enable workers to sue employers in the civil courts if they broke legal contracts."<sup>600</sup>

However, most Conservatives, with their instinctive opposition to Prussian-style statism, continued also to oppose welfarism. As late as 1886, the minister responsible for the Poor Law, Joseph Chamberlain, said: "The spirit of independence which leads so many of the working classes to make great personal sacrifices rather than incur the stigma of pauperism, is one which deserves the greatest sympathy and respect... It is not desirable that the working classes should be familiarized with poor relief."<sup>601</sup>

But labour unrest was on the rise all over Europe, and the success of the London Dockers' strike in 1889 showed that the age of labour had arrived (the creation of the Labour Party followed soon after, in 1893), and changes had to be made. Moreover, somebody had to pay for them...

"During the 1890s, *pari passu* with the growth of governmental expenditures on social services and on armaments, Germany and her component states, as well as Italy, Austria, Norway, and Spain, all introduced or steepened systems of income tax. France repeatedly shied away from it, though in 1901 she resorted to progressive death duties; it was 1917 before she at last introduced a not very satisfactory system of income tax. With the drift back to protectionism in commercial policy in the last quarter of the century, indirect taxes generally yielded a higher share of revenue than before. Every state had clung to considerable sources of indirect taxation, and as late as 1900 the bulk of the revenue of most governments came from these sources. Progressive taxation, weighing heavier on the more wealthy, was accepted by liberals as in accord with the principle of equality of sacrifice. To radicals and socialists it was welcome in itself as an instrument for achieving greater equality by

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<sup>600</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin\\_Disraeli#Reforming\\_legislation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Disraeli#Reforming_legislation).

<sup>601</sup> Chamberlain, in Derek Fraser, *The Welfare State*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000, pp. 33-34.

systematically redistributing wealth. The modern state was to assume more and more the role of Robin Hood, robbing the rich to feed the poor."<sup>602</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Thompson, op. cit., p. 361.

## 40. REVOLUTIONARY AND NON-REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

It is necessary, following E.P. Thompson, to distinguish between minimum (welfare) and maximum (revolutionary) socialism. After reviewing the proliferation of socialist parties before 1914, Thompson suggests "two general conclusions that have great importance for the later history of Europe. One is that within socialism there was a recurrent and inescapable cleavage: between those parties which, from an early stage in their growth, came to terms with the institutions of parliamentary democracy, with trade unionism and the cooperative movements; and those which held to more absolutist revolutionary doctrines, whether of Marxism or anarchism, and so dedicated themselves to the task of fighting and overthrowing all other parties and institutions. The best examples of the former are the British and Scandinavian Labour parties and the parliamentary socialist groups of France and Italy; of the latter, the supreme example is the Russian Social Democratic party after 1903. It had not yet become customary to distinguish between them by labelling the former Socialists, the latter Communists. That convention arose only after 1918. But here was the origin of the mid twentieth-century cleavage between western parliamentary socialism and eastern revolutionary communism. All the essentials of that conflict are already present in 1914, save that neither socialism nor communism had by then won power in any country.

"The second conclusion is that parliamentary socialism, like other working-class movements and organizations, grew and flourished most where the traditions and institutions of liberal democracy had already become most fully established. It was in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, and France that reformist socialism took shape most quickly and won its earliest triumphs. Wherever universal suffrage remained for a long time impeded, as in Italy and Austria-Hungary, or wherever its operation was severely limited by strong central authority, as in Germany, socialists went on using the language and preaching the ideas of revolutionary doctrinaire Marxism... The pattern of socialism is, so to speak, a pattern superimposed on the territorial distribution of liberalism and democracy, and matches the extent of the new electorate.

"These conclusions are clinched by a comparison of the minimum and maximum programmes of policy which the different parties drew up and endorsed at various times. In western countries the parliamentary socialist parties, committed to seeking votes in order to gain political representation, normally drew up minimum programmes of those reforms best calculated to win broad electoral support. Inevitably these were mostly concerned with widening of the franchise, social welfare legislation, an eight-hour day, and improvement of conditions of work. Such was the minimum programme which the Italian Socialist party drew up in 1895. Their more abstract ideological aims were relegated to ultimate or maximum programmes, which appealed more to the intellectuals and preserved something of the party's doctrinal character. Thus, when the French socialist groups combined in 1905,

they drew up a common programme which included a statement of ultimate collectivism, of the party's resolve to socialize the means of production and of exchange, and a protestation that it was 'not a party of reform but a party of class struggle and revolution': but it also included an assurance that 'in parliament, the socialist group must dedicate itself to the defence and extension of political liberties and the rights of workers, to the promotion and realization of reforms which will ameliorate the conditions of life and of the class struggle of the working classes'. The difference of emphasis between French and German socialism emerges if this statement is compared with the German Social Democrats' Erfurt Programme, which they adopted in 1891. It was a more thoroughgoing Marxist statement than its predecessor, the Gotha programme of 1875. It propounded orthodox Marxist philosophy as its very foundation, and gave this theoretical basis more prominence.

"But it added, as its immediate and practical aims, demands closely similar to those of Gotha, or of the Italian and French minimum programmes: including universal direct suffrage for men and women over twenty, freedom of expression and meeting, secular education, an eight-hour day, social welfare legislation, and progressive income tax.

"The more fundamental difference between all western socialism and Russian communism becomes clear if these programmes are compared with the Russian Social Democratic programme adopted in 1903. It too, in accordance with precedent, was divided into maximum and minimum aims. But it was not exposed to the Italian or French or German danger of exalting the minimum at the expense of the maximum, in order to gain electoral votes. In western countries since 1871 (and even since 1848) the whole notion of a minimum programme depended on its being attainable within the existing framework of capitalist society without revolution; the whole point of the maximum programme was to keep before men's eyes the doctrines and the ultimate aims of socialism, but to relegate them to a distinct category of aims unattainable without revolution. In Russia both minimum and maximum programmes were of necessity revolutionary. The minimum political demands of 1903 began with the revolutionary overthrow of the tsarist regime and its replacement by a democratic republic. The minimum economic demands were those normally included in the minimum demands of western socialists: an eight-hour day and six-day week; effective factory inspection; state insurance against sickness and old age; the confiscation of church lands. But these, too, in Russia before 1914, were revolutionary demands, and there was no essential difference between this minimum programme and the maximum programme of the proletarian socialist revolution. Indeed the most important decision taken in 1903... was not about programmes at all, but about the actual organization of the party as a militant force, tempered for the struggle against the whole existing order...

"These differences of programmes and of organization involve a still wider contrast. It was not merely an issue of whether socialism should be economic or political in its scope, whether it should concentrate on capturing or on

destroying existing states. To enter into competition with other parliamentary parties for winning votes, and to win from government concessions of value to the working classes, enmeshed every social democratic party, however vocal its protestations of ultimate proletarian purposes, in more nationalistic ways of thinking and behaviour. In universal suffrage what counts is the vote of the individual elector, whatever his class; and in restricted electorates majorities lie with the non-proletarian electors. The leaders of a parliamentary socialist party instinctively think in terms not of classes but of individual voters and of majorities. They find themselves thinking in general, national terms, rather than in narrow terms of class war. Their working-class supporters, benefiting increasingly from legislation in their interests passed and enforced by the national state, likewise think more and more in national and non-revolutionary terms, since they become aware that they have more to lose than their chains. The growth of social democracy and parliamentary labour parties brought about a nationalizing of socialism. This changing outlook was at variance with the older traditions of universal humanitarian socialism which were inherently internationalist in outlook, just as it was in conflict with the resolutely internationalist tenets of orthodox Marxism. The conflicts between socialist movements that had been domesticated or 'nationalized', and revolutionary movements that still thought exclusively in terms of class war and proletarian action, were fought out before 1914. They repeatedly arose in the many congresses of the First and Second Internationals, until in 1914 the supreme issue seemed to be socialism versus nationalism."<sup>603</sup>

According to this analysis, the "domestication" of socialism in western countries, its yoking to nationalist feeling, was a product of their progress towards universal suffrage, whereas the internationalist, revolutionary character of socialism in the East was a product of its failure to democratize. So the causal nexus was as follows: in the west: democracy => socialism => national socialism; in the east: autocracy => democracy => revolution => international socialism. This would suggest that the triumph of national socialism in Germany in the 1930s was a *natural* consequence of German historical development, and could well have happened elsewhere in the West, whereas the triumph of international socialism in Russia was an *unnatural* consequence of - in fact a *break* in - her natural development. This conclusion runs directly counter to western historians' usual claim that German fascism was a freakish departure from the normal western democratic development, whereas Soviet communism was a natural development of Tsarist "despotism".

Evidence for this thesis is provided by the fact that the major forms of Christianity in Eastern and Western Europe - that is, the "souls" of the eastern and western peoples - reacted quite differently to the progress of democracy and socialism. In the East, the Orthodox Church rejected democracy, and upheld autocracy, on principled, scriptural grounds: that the source of authority in both Church and State is the will of God, not the will of the people

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<sup>603</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-407, 408.

(Romans 13.1), and that the task of political authority is to incarnate the will of God in the life of the people - the ruler is permitted to carry out the people's will only to the extent that it is compatible with the will of God. The West, however, had become reconciled to the logical contradiction between "by the grace of God" and "by the will of the people" a long time since - in England by 1688, in France by 1789 and more solidly by 1848, and in Italy and in Germany by 1848. Western Christianity - Roman Catholicism more than Protestantism, since the latter, in itself a revolutionary teaching, was almost always on the side of the revolution - offered resistance to the march of democracy and socialism. But it was half-hearted and ineffective. By the end of the nineteenth century even the pope had become reconciled with democracy, and by the end of the twentieth, in accordance with Dostoyevsky's prophecy in *The Devils*, with socialism, too - as long as it was "with a human face".

To many, as we have seen, welfarism appeared to be a Christian product of socialism, or a socialist product of Christianity, a proof that Christianity and socialism were compatible. But this was to ignore both the nature of Christianity and the nature of socialism in its original and "purer" forms. Historically, the founders of socialism were certainly antichristian. Not only Marx and Engels, but before them Saint Simon, Fourier and Owen, were all antichristian theorists. For them, Socialism was much, much more than welfarism. It was and is a whole world-view based on atheism and materialism and directly opposed to Christianity. It stood for an omnipotent State that squeezed religion as far as possible out of the public arena. And this is what Socialist states, both welfarist and revolutionary, have tended to do. Moreover, even in non-Socialist but democratic states, the idea that the will of the people is supreme tends to squeeze out the idea that it is the will of God that is supreme. For Christians, on the other hand, the will of the people can never be the criterion of truth: the possibility always exists that "God is true, while every man is a liar" (Romans 3.4).

Richard Pipes writes: "Socialism is commonly thought of as a theory which aims at a fairer distribution of wealth for the ultimate purpose of creating a free and just society. Indisputably this is the stated program of socialists. But behind this program lurks an even more ambitious goal, which is creating a new type of human being. The underlying premise is the idea of Helvétius that by establishing an environment which makes social behaviour a natural instinct, socialism will enable man to realize his potential to the fullest. This, in turn, will make it possible, ultimately, to dispense with the state and the compulsion which is said to be its principal attribute. All socialist doctrines, from the most moderate to the most extreme, assume that human beings are infinitely malleable because their personality is the product of the economic environment: a change in that environment must, therefore, alter them as well as their behaviour.

"Marx pursued philosophical studies mainly in his youth. When, as a twenty-six-year-old émigré in Paris, he immersed himself in philosophy, he at once grasped the political implications of the ideas of Helvétius and his French

contemporaries. In *The Holy Family* (1844-45), the book which marked his and Engels's break with idealistic radicalism, he took his philosophical and psychological premises directly from Locke and Helvétius: 'The whole development of man...,' he wrote, 'depends on *education* and *environment*.' 'If man draws all his knowledge, sensations, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained from it, the empirical world must be arranged so that in it man experiences and gets used to what is really human... If man is shaped by his surroundings, his surroundings must be made human.'

"This, the *locus classicus* of Marxist philosophy, justifies a total change in the way society is organized - that is, revolution. According to this way of thinking, which indeed inexorably flows from the philosophical premises of Locke and Helvétius, man and society do not come into existence by a natural process but are 'made'. This 'radical behaviorism', as it has been called, inspired Marx in 1845 to coin what is probably his most celebrated aphorism: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point, however, is to change it.' Of course, the moment a thinker begins to conceive his mission to be not 'only' observing the world and adapting to it, but changing it, he ceases to be a philosopher and turns into a politician with his own political agenda and interests.

"Now, the world can conceivably be 'changed' gradually, by means of education and legislation. And such a gradual change is, indeed, what all intellectuals would advocate if their exclusive concern were with improving the human condition, since evolution allows for trial and error, the only proven road to progress. But many of those who want to change the world regard human discontent as something not to be remedied but exploited. Exploitation of resentment, not its satisfaction, has been at the center of socialist politics since the 1840s: it is what distinguished the self-styled 'scientific' socialists from their 'utopian' forerunners. This attitude has led to the emergence of what Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu called in 1902, in a remarkably prescient book, the 'politics of hatred'. Socialism, he noted, elevates 'hatred to the heights of principle', sharing with its mortal enemies, nationalism and anti-Semitism, the need "chirurgically" to isolate and destroy the alleged enemy.' Committed radicals fear reform because it deprives them of leverage and establishes the ruling elite more solidly in power: they prefer the most savage repression. The slogan of Russian revolutionaries - '*chem khuzhe, tem luchshe*' ('the worse, the better') spelled out this kind of thinking."<sup>604</sup>

Thus while Christian almsgiving is, or should be, based on love, socialist redistribution is often based on the politics of envy and hatred. Of course, individual Socialists may be - and very often are - motivated by real care for the poor, and enter Socialist politics with no other motive than to alleviate their lot. Nevertheless, the *philosophical* basis of Socialism is clearly anti-Christian.

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<sup>604</sup> Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899-1919*, London: Collins Harvill, 1990, pp. 135-137.

This is not to say that *minimal* socialism, i.e. welfarism, is incompatible with Christianity or Christian governance. On the contrary: it is difficult to see how any modern country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could have survived without a vast increase of the state budget and state activity to protect the masses from the consequences of modern urban civilization. Orthodox Russia was no exception to this rule. In practice, however, - and we see this in even the more moderate socialist parties, - it has proved impossible to "insulate" minimal socialism completely from the antichristian theories of maximal socialism.

Moreover, the "minimal" Socialism of welfarism, no less thoroughly, if more slowly, than "maximal", revolutionary Socialism, hastens those processes of equalization and homogenization that have come to dominate the modern world to such a harmful degree. These processes were sharply criticized by Constantine Leontiev. "True," he wrote, "the division of Germany [before 1871] sometimes hindered the unity of *order*, but it also hindered the unity of *anarchy*."<sup>605</sup>

"The unity of anarchy", in Leontiev's meaning, was the seemingly unstoppable tendency throughout Europe towards a democratic, egalitarian, atheist society: "Everything in that *assimilationist direction* from which nothing in the 19th century, neither war nor peace, neither friendship nor enmity, neither liberation nor the conquest of countries and nations, can save. And they will not stop until *the point of satiety with equality and homogeneity is reached*."<sup>606</sup>

For, as Fr. Basil Sakkas writes, "the technocratic civilization of Antichrist strives to attain two things: a) the peas which fill the tin can have to be a certain uniform size; (b) the men who dwell on earth have to become alike, like those canned peas ['peas in a pod', to use the English expression].

"In order to rule, Antichrist has no need of *individuals* who are free and conscious, but of 'atoms' that constitute cells, which in turn make up an amorphous, homogeneous and anonymous mass. He seeks to achieve this by various means, utilizing idealistic slogans such as 'Liberty', 'Equality', 'Brotherhood', etc., which, however, have as their basic principle the destruction of the idea of the hierarchy of values. By means of Judeo-Masonry, he aims at the equalization of all persons and all things. Since the family is the strength of the individual and of a conscientious society, it must be abolished slowly by degrees. By means of feminism, he aims first at the equalization of the two sexes, which would replace the hierarchical distinction between man and woman. Then he proposes a 'new couple' which would possess a hierarchical 'joint-rule' and equality between male and female, an equalization

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<sup>605</sup> Leontiev, "Fourth Letter from Athos", *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 37.

<sup>606</sup> Leontiev, "Natsional'naia politika kak orudie vseмирnoj politiki", *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo*, p. 527.

from the point of equal rights so that there would be no real head in the new family. He also institutes an equalization of vocations and the outward signs of distinction, and moreover, an equalization of external appearances; the distinction that exists in their dress and hair style must also be confounded. Unfortunately, there are few who recognize that the spirit of Antichrist brings about new formulas in the social structure that have already created dreadful spiritual consequences for the entire world. The family is also warred upon by the decay of morals. The mothers and fathers of tomorrow are often so spiritually and carnally depraved, they can only transmit to their children what they themselves possess. And yet one speaks of 'liberation'.

"The equalization of individuals is performed principally in the religious and spiritual domains. Until recently, each heresy claimed the truth exclusively for itself. Today, however, things are presented under a completely different light. Truth becomes nothing but a relative matter and, in reality, does not exist: it is necessary to destroy the spiritual faculties which God has given man. We do not oppose the cinema and the theatre and television from a spirit of pietism or puritanism, but we ascertain each day that a terrible influence is exercised by these spectacles which seek to inactivate the human mind, which itself has become exhausted and lulled and brings itself to a state of doubt and indifference towards God. Through these things, eternity had become something that is uncertain for man, and he limits his efforts to visible things which are the only things he accepts as real and certain. Thus, he joins with other men in their efforts to attain common and earthly ideals; the 'things that are unseen' constitute a utopia and an uncertainty as far as he is concerned.

"The natural consequence of this is for man to improve the conditions of his life on this earth, not in a *pacifist* manner but in a *pacifist* one. The Church becomes an obstacle for him since She constantly reminds him of the futility of this world and endeavours to orient his attention towards the heavens and the things that are to come. The Church demands sacrifices, purity, effort, affliction and rejects all overestimation of earthly things. Hence, the clouded mind is no longer able to discern the absoluteness of the Truth of the Gospels, and it seeks to appease its conscience by a compromise between the demands of religion and the demands of the materialistic world. It seeks to receive an assurance of everlasting life (for itself) just in case there really does exist an eternal life after death. Antichrist has already taken this metaphysical need of man into consideration and thus he has proposed an idealistic religion to him with high-sounding words and slogans: 'God is love, and therefore we must love all men and consider them as brothers aside from their religious beliefs.' Above all else, we must 'live in peace with one another with sentiments of mutual respect towards the ideas, customs, usages and traditions of others': we must turn our attention towards always doing good and we should come to aid of others who are in need and especially those who suffer; because 'it is of little importance what one believes, just so long as he is sincere in his convictions and his motives' and many other such words does he say which, at first sight, fascinate one.

“Since heresy strives by means of a half truth to conceal the other half, there is never mention made of the second coming of Christ, or of eternal Judgement, or of confessing the Faith ‘even to death’: nor are the many admonitions of the Gospel heeded, such as ‘strait is the gate and narrow is the way’ (Matthew 6.12), ‘we must through much affliction enter into the Kingdom of God’ (Acts 14.22); ‘in the world ye shall have tribulation’ (John 16.33); the saved shall ‘come out of great tribulation’ (Apocalypse 7.14); nor, finally, that ‘the whole world lieth in evil’ (I John 5.19, Galatians 1.14, Ephesians 5.16), a fact which one encounters on almost every page of the Sacred Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers.

“Obviously, the coming of the Antichrist is not discussed (II Thessalonians 2) nor that in the last days ‘evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived’ (II Timothy 3.13), nor that ‘many shall be deceived’ (Mark 13.6) ‘if it were possible, even the elect’ (Mark 13.22), nor that ‘in the last days, people shall more and more become egoists, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having *a form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof’ (II Timothy 3.2-3).”

#### *IV. THE EAST: REACTION*

## 41. THE REIGN OF TSAR ALEXANDER III

The character of the reign of the new tsar was largely determined by the way in which the last one had ended – in terror and death and regicide. Loris-Melikov captured most the terrorists, and on April 3 Zhelyabov, Perovskaya and three others were hanged. The People's Will disappeared; its immediate aim had been fulfilled, but not its further aim – of eliciting a revolution against the autocracy.

The new tsar, Alexander III, set his mind firmly against liberalism and constitutionalism. Loris-Melikov's project of a constitution, which Alexander II was about to sign at the time of his death, was quietly dropped, while Loris himself was sacked. Although the new tsar promised to work within the institutions created by his father, there was no promise of any new ones, let alone a constitution. And when Ignatiev proposed convening a *Zemsky Sobor* before his coronation, the tsar said that he was "too convinced of the ugliness of the electoral representative principle to allow it at any time in Russia in that form in which it exists throughout Europe".<sup>607</sup>

Alexander was here following the advice of his former tutor and the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev, who said: "If the measures proposed by Loris-Melikov are adopted, the only thing we can do is say 'Finis Russiae!' A constitutional form of government is being suggested for Russia! The example of Western Europe proves that the idea is based on false premises. If it took root in Russia it would at once be a misfortune and a catastrophe. What we are being asked to do is assent to the creation of one more 'chattering hall' at a time when the mortal remains of a generous Russian monarch, murdered by Russians in broad daylight, lie still unburied in the cathedral."

Instead of a constitution, Pobedonostsev, nicknamed "Torquemada", composed a conservative manifesto for the tsar, "On the Unshakeableness of the Autocracy", which declared: "We call on all our faithful subjects to serve us and the state in faith and righteousness, to the uprooting of the abominable rebellion that is devastating the Russian land, to the confirmation of faith and morality, to the good education of children, to the destruction of unrighteousness and theft, to the instilling of order and righteousness in the acts of the institutions given to Russia by her benefactor, our beloved parent." When the liberal ministers heard that Pobedonostsev had composed this manifesto, they resigned...

In 1881, as Norman Cohn writes, "the Okhrana was founded by imperial decree... 'for the protection of public security and order' ('Okhrana' means 'protection' in Russian). Previously the chief organ of the secret police had been the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery which was founded after the Decembrist revolt of 1825. The Okhrana had branches in all the principal towns

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<sup>607</sup> Krivosheev & Krivosheev, *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 90, 88.

of Russia, as well as a foreign service centred in Paris. Like the rest of the police forces, the Okhrana was subordinate to the Minister of the Interior.”<sup>608</sup>

The world-view of the new emperor was expressed in the advice he gave his heir, the Tsarevich Nicholas Alexandrovich: “You are destined to take from my shoulders the heavy burden of State power and bear it to the grave exactly as I have borne it and our ancestors bore it. I hand over to you the kingdom entrusted by God to me. I received it thirteen years ago from my blood-drenched father... Your grandfather from the height of the throne introduced many important reforms directed to the good of the Russian people. As a reward for all this he received a bomb and death from the Russian revolutionaries... On that tragic day the question arose before me: on what path am I to proceed? On that onto which I was being pushed by ‘progressive society’, infected with the liberal ideas of the West, or that which my own conviction, my higher sacred duty as Sovereign and my conscience indicated to me? I chose my path. The liberals dubbed it reactionary. I was interested only in the good of my people and the greatness of Russia. I strove to introduce internal and external peace, so that the State could freely and peacefully develop, become stronger in a normal way, become richer and prosper. The Autocracy created the historical individuality of Russia. If – God forbid! – the Autocracy should fall, then Russia will fall with it. The fall of the age-old Russian power will open up an endless era of troubles and blood civil conflicts. My covenant to you is to love everything that serves for the good, the honour and the dignity of Russia. Preserve the Autocracy, remembering that you bear responsibility for the destiny of your subjects before the Throne of the Most High. May faith in God and the holiness of your royal duty be for you the foundation of your life. Be firm and courageous, never show weakness. Hear out everybody, there is nothing shameful in that, but obey only yourself and your conscience. In external politics adopt an independent position. Remember: Russia has no friends. They fear our enormous size. Avoid wars. In internal politics protect the Church first of all. She has saved Russia more than once in times of trouble. Strengthen the family, because it is the foundation of every State.”<sup>609</sup>

Tsar Alexander avoided war, while gaining the respect of the European rulers, and increased the prosperity of all classes. He suppressed the revolution, giving emergency powers to local governors in troubled areas, reversing several of his father’s reforms and checking the power of the *zemstvos* and the press. “Alexander III instituted the [office of] land captain to oversee the activities of the township and village assemblies, and this official had the authority to act as judge for certain civil and lesser criminal cases that had formerly come before the elected representatives of the peasants. As the personification of autocracy in the localities, he was widely reviled...”<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>608</sup> Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, London: Serif, 1996, p. 84, note.

<sup>609</sup> Alexander III, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, 1998, vol. 1, p. 354.

<sup>610</sup> S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 20.

Above all, the tsar strengthened the Church and the family, putting special emphasis on family life. Almost all the Romanovs before him had done the opposite, having numerous affairs and illegitimate children. But he and his son, Nicholas II, were models of marital fidelity. This was necessary if the monarchy was to recover its authority among the people. For how would the people venerate their "little father-tsar" if he was a poor father and husband within his own family?<sup>611</sup>

Prince Sergei Trubetsky illustrated the link between family feeling and feeling for the monarchy during his childhood under the same Tsar Alexander: "Father and mother, grandfathers and grandmothers were for us in childhood not only sources and centres of love and unquestioned authority; they were enveloped in our eyes by a kind of aura which the modern generation does not know... Our fathers and grandfathers were in our children's eyes both patriarchs and family monarchs, while our mothers and grandmothers were family tsaritsas."

"Alexander II's murder," writes St. John Maximovich, "unleashed a storm of indignation in Russia, which helped strengthen the moral fibre of the people, as became evident during the reign of Alexander III..."<sup>612</sup>

"The murder of Alexander II," writes G.P. Izmistieva, "was seen by monarchical Russia as the culmination of the liberal 'inebriation' of earlier years, as the shame and guilt of all, God's judgement and a warning."<sup>613</sup> As St. Ambrose of Optina wrote on March 14: "I don't know what to write to you about the terrible present times and the pitiful state of affairs in Russia. There is one consolation in the prophetic words of St. David: 'The Lord scattereth the plans of the heathens, He setteth aside the devices of the peoples, and He bringeth to nought the plans of princes' (Psalm 32.10). The Lord allowed Alexander II to die a martyric death, but He is powerful to give help from on high to Alexander III to catch the evildoers, who are infected with the spirit of the Antichrist. Since apostolic times the spirit of the Antichrist has worked through his forerunners, as the apostle writes: 'The mystery of iniquity is already working, only it is held back now, until it is removed from the midst' (II Thessalonians 2.7). The apostolic words 'is held back now' refer to the powers that be and the ecclesiastical authorities, against which the forerunners of the Antichrist rise up in order to abolish and annihilate them upon the earth. Because the Antichrist, according to the explanation of the interpreters of Holy Scripture, must come during a time of anarchy on earth. But until then he sits in the bottom of hell, and acts through his forerunners. First he acted through various heretics who disturbed the Orthodox Church, and especially through the evil Arians, educated men and courtiers; and then he acted cunningly through the educated Masons; and finally, now, through the educated nihilists, he has begun to act blatantly and crudely, beyond measure. But their

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<sup>611</sup> In England, the purity of the family life of Victoria and Albert served a similar function.

<sup>612</sup> Archbishop John, cited in *Orthodoxy America*, June 1987, pp. 10-11.

<sup>613</sup> Izmistieva, "Dmitrij Andreevich Tolstoj", *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), 2006, p. 84.

illness will turn back upon their heads, as it is written in the Scriptures. Is it not the most extreme madness to work with all one's might, not sparing one's own life, in order to be hung on the gallows, and in the future life to fall into the bottom of hell to be tormented forever in Tartarus? But desperate pride pays no attention, but desires in every way to express its irrational boldness. Lord, have mercy on us!"<sup>614</sup>

It was not only the holy elders who saw in Russia the main obstacle to the triumph of "the mystery of iniquity". "The same withholding role in Russia," writes Mikhail Nazarov, "was seen by the founders of Marxism: '... It is clear to us that the revolution has only one truly terrible enemy - Russia'; the role of Russia is 'the role predestined from on high of the saviour of order'.

"In those years Marx wrote in the *New Rhine Newspaper* (the organ of the 'League of Communists'): 'Russia has become a colossus which does not cease to elicit amazement. Russia is the one phenomenon of its kind in history: the terrible power of this huge Empire... on a world scale'. 'In Russia, in this despotic government, in this barbaric race, there is such energy and activity as one would look for in vain in the monarchies of the older States'. 'The Slavic barbarians are innate counter-revolutionaries', 'particular enemies of democracy'.

"Engels echoed Marx: what was necessary was 'a pitiless struggle to the death with Slavdom, which has betrayed and has a turncoat attitude towards the revolution... a war of destruction and unrestrained terror'. 'A general war will pay back the Slavic barbarians with a bloody revenge.' 'Yes, the world war that is to come will sweep off the face of the earth not only the reactionary classes and dynasties, but also whole reactionary peoples - and this will be progress!'"<sup>615</sup>

The elders saw signs of the coming Antichrist not only in specific acts of terrorism, such as the murder of Alexander II, but also in the general weakening and softening of the power of the Orthodox Autocracy. Thus Constantine Leontiev wrote: "One great spiritual elder said: 'It is true that morals have become much softer. But on the other hand most people's self-opinion has grown, and pride has increased. They no longer like to submit to any authorities, whether spiritual or secular: they just don't want to. The gradual weakening and abolition of the authorities is a sign of the approach of the kingdom of the antichrist and the end of the world. It is impossible to substitute only a softening of morals for Christianity.'"<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> St. Ambrose, in Sergei Fomin & Tatiana Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow: "Rodnik", 1994, vol. II, p. 350.

<sup>615</sup> Nazarov, "Krovavaia mest' slavianskim varvaram" (Bloody revenge on the Slavic barbarians), address to the international scientific conference, 'The Jewish-Bolshevik coup of 1917 as the precondition of the red terror and forced starvations', <http://www.livejournal.com/users/rocornews/174447.html>.

<sup>616</sup> Leontiev, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 350.

## 42. RUSSIAN MARXISM

The tsar was helped by the fact that “the public reacted with horror,” as Richard Pipes writes, to the murder of his father, “and the radical cause lost a great deal of popular support. The government responded with a variety of repressive measures and counter-intelligence operations which made it increasingly difficult for the revolutionaries to function. And the ‘people’ did not stir, unshaken in the belief that the land which they desired would be given them by the next Tsar.

“There followed a decade of revolutionary quiescence. Russians who wanted to work for the common good now adopted the doctrine of ‘small deeds’ – that is, pragmatic, unspectacular activities to raise the cultural and material level of the population through the zemstvos and private philanthropic organizations.

“Radicalism began to stir again in the early 1890s in connection with the spurt of Russian industrialization and a severe famine. The Socialists-Revolutionaries of the 1870s had believed that Russia would follow a path of economic development different from the Western because she had neither the domestic nor the foreign markets that capitalism required. The Russian peasantry, being poor and heavily dependent on income from cottage industries (estimated at one-third of the peasant total income), would be ruined by competition from the mechanized factories and lose that little purchasing power it still possessed. As for foreign markets, these had been pre-empted by the advanced countries of the West. Russia had to combine communal agriculture with rural (cottage) industry. From these premises Socialist-Revolutionary theoreticians developed a ‘separate path’ doctrine according to which Russian would proceed directly from ‘feudalism’ to ‘socialism’ without passing through a capitalist phase.

“This thesis was advanced with the help of arguments drawn from the writings of Marx and Engels. Marx and Engels initially disowned such an interpretation of their doctrine, but they eventually changed their minds, conceding that there might be more than one model of economic development. In 1877, in an exchange with a Russian, Marx rejected the notion that every country had to repeat the economic experience of Western Europe. Should Russia enter the path of capitalist development, he wrote, then, indeed, nothing could save her from its ‘iron laws’, but this did not mean that Russian could not avoid this path and the misfortunes it brought. A few years later Marx stated that the ‘historical inevitability’ of capitalism was confined to Western Europe, and that because Russia had managed to preserve the peasant commune into the era of capitalism, the commune could well become the ‘fulchrum of Russia’s social rejuvenation’. Marx and Engels admired the terrorists of the People’s Will, and, as an exception to their general theory, Engels allowed that in Russia the revolution could be made by a ‘handful of people’.

“Thus, before a formal ‘Marxist’ or Social-Democratic movement had emerged in Russia, the theories of its founders were interpreted, with their sanction, when applied to an autocratic regime in an agrarian country, to mean a revolution brought about, not by the inevitable social consequences of matured capitalism, but by terror and coup d’état.

“A few Russians, led by George Plekhanov, dissented from this version of Marxism. They broke with the People’s Will, moved to Switzerland, and there immersed themselves in German Social-Democratic literature. From it they concluded that Russia had no alternative but to go through full-blown capitalism. They rejected terrorism and a coup d’état on the grounds that even in the unlikely event that such violence succeeded in bringing down the tsarist regime, the outcome would not be socialism, for which backward Russia lacked both the economic and cultural preconditions, but a ‘revived tsarism on a Communist base’.

“From the premises adopted by the Russian Social-Democrats there followed certain political consequences. Capitalist development meant the rise of a bourgeoisie committed, from economic self-interest, to liberalization. It further meant the growth of the industrial ‘proletariat’, which would be driven by its deteriorating economic situation to socialism, furnishing the socialist movement with revolutionary cadres. The fact that Russian capitalism developed in a country with a pre-capitalist political system, however, called for a particular revolutionary strategy. Socialism could not flourish in a country held in the iron grip of a police-bureaucratic regime: it required freedom of speech to propagate its ideas and freedom of association to organize its followers. In other words, unlike the German Social-Democrats, who, since 1890, were able to function in the open and run in national elections, Russian Social-Democrats confronted the prior task of overthrowing autocracy.

“The theory of a two-stage revolution, as formulated by Plekhanov’s associate, Paul Akselrod, provided for the ‘proletariat’ (read: socialist intellectuals) collaborating with the bourgeoisie for the common objective of bringing to Russia ‘bourgeois democracy’. As soon as that objective had been attained, the socialists would rally the working class for the second, socialist phase of the revolution. From the point of view of this strategy, everything that promoted in Russia the growth of capitalism and the interests of the bourgeoisie was – up to a point – progressive and favourable to the cause of socialism.”<sup>617</sup>

Plekhanov, writes Stephen Kotkin, “attacked the Populist argument that Russia could obviate capitalism because it possessed some supposed indigenous tendency (the peasant commune) toward socialism. Plekhanov went into European exile in 1880 (for what would turn out to be thirty-seven years), but his works in the 1880s – *Socialism and Political Struggle* (1883) and *Our Differences* (1885) – filtered back into Russia and made the case that historical

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<sup>617</sup> Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899-1919*, London: Collins Harvill, 1990, pp. 143-145.

stages could no be skipped. Only capitalism made socialism possible, and therefore Russia, too, would have to have a 'bourgeois revolution' first, before a socialist revolution, even if the proletariat had to help the bourgeoisie achieve the bourgeois revolution. This was Marx had said. Late in life, though, Marx did seem to admit that England's experience, from which he had generalized, might not be universal, that the bourgeoisie might not be uniquely progressive (in historical terms); and that Russia might be able to avoid the full-blown capitalist stage. This apparent heresy had emerged from Marx's reliance on the Russian economist Nikolai P. Danielson, who served as his confidant and supplied him with books on Russia. Still, the late Marx's quasi-Populist views on Russia were not widely known (they would not appear in Russian until December 1924). Plekhanov's Marxist critique of Populism held intellectual sway.

"Danielson himself led this dominance by collaborating on a Russian translation of *Das Kapital*, Marx's three-volume magnum opus, which appeared in the 1890s and attracted a fair audience of readers – including the future Stalin. In 1896, with publication of the third volume, the hesitant Russian censor finally recognized it as a 'scientific' work, meaning it could circulate in libraries and be offered for sale. By this time, Marxist political economy had appeared as an academic subject at some Russian universities, and even the turn of the century director of one of the empire's largest textile plants in Moscow collected a vast trove of Marxiana. Russia was then a country of 1 million proletarians and more than 80 million peasants. But Marxism replaced Populism as 'the answer' ..."<sup>618</sup>

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Marxism had little influence in Russia during the reign of Alexander III. And it was not from bomb-throwing *raznochintsy* and peasants that the real threat to the regime came – at this time. The real threat came, not from socialists, but from liberals, and not from the lower classes, but from the nobility who dominated local government.

Orlando Figes explains: "The power of the imperial government effectively stopped at the eighty-nine provincial capitals where the governors had their offices. Below that there was no real state administration to speak of. Neither the *uezd* or district town nor the *volost* or rural townships had any standing government officials. There was only a series of magistrates who would appear from time to time on some specific mission, usually to collect taxes or sort out a local conflict, and then disappear once again. The affairs of peasant Russia, where 85 per cent of the population lived, were entirely unknown to the city bureaucrats. 'We knew as much about the Tula countryside,' confessed Prince Lvov, leader of the Tula *zemstvo* in the 1890s, 'as we knew about Central Africa.'

"The crucial weakness of the tsarist system was the *under-government* of the localities. This vital fact is all too often clouded by the revolutionaries' mythic image of an all-powerful regime. Nothing could be further from the truth. For

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<sup>618</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 42-43.

every 1,000 inhabitants of the Russian Empire there were only 4 state officials at the turn of the century, compared with 7.3 in England and Wales, 12.6 in Germany and 17.6 in France. The regular police, as opposed to the political branch, was extremely small by European standards. Russia's expenditure on the police *per capita* of the population was less than half of that in Italy or France and less than one quarter of that in Prussia. For a rural population of 100 million people, Russia in 1900 had no more than 1,852 police sergeants and 6,874 police constables. The average constable was responsible for policing 50,000 people in dozens of settlements stretched across nearly 2000 square miles. Many of them did not even have a horse and cart. True, from 1903 the constables were aided by the peasant constables, some 40,000 of whom were appointed. But these were notoriously unreliable and, in any case, did very little to reduce the mounting burdens on the police. Without its own effective organs in the countryside, the central bureaucracy was assigning more and more tasks to the local police: not just the maintenance of law and order but also the collection of taxes, the implementation of government laws and military decrees, the enforcement of health and safety regulations, the inspection of public roads and buildings, the collection of statistics, and the general supervision of 'public morals' (e.g. making sure that the peasants washed their beards). The police, in short, were being used as a sort of catch-all executive organ. They were often the only agents of the state with whom the peasants ever came into contact.

"Russia's general backwardness - its small tax-base and poor communications - largely accounts for this under-government. The legacy of serfdom also played a part. Until 1861 the serfs had been under the jurisdiction of their noble owners and, provided they paid their taxes, the state did not intervene in the relations between them. Only after the Emancipation - and then very slowly - did the tsarist government come round to the problem of how to extend its influence to its new 'citizens' in the villages and of how to shape a policy to help the development of peasant agriculture.

"Initially, in the 1860s, the regime left the affairs of the country districts in the hands of the local nobles. They dominated the *zemstvo* assemblies and accounted for nearly three-quarters of the provincial *zemstvo* boards. The noble assemblies and their elected marshals were left with broad administrative powers, especially at the district level (*uezd*) where they were virtually the only agents upon whom the tsarist regime could rely. Moreover, the new magistrates (*mirovye posredniki*) were given broad judicial powers, not unlike those of their predecessors under serfdom, including the right to flog the peasants for minor crimes and misdemeanours.

"It was logical for the tsarist regime to seek to base its power in the provinces on the landed nobility, its closest ally. But this was a dangerous strategy, and the danger grew as time went on. The landed nobility was in severe economic decline during the years of agricultural depression in the late nineteenth century, and was turning to the *zemstvos* to defend its local agrarian interests against the centralizing and industrializing bureaucracy of St. Petersburg. In

the years leading up to 1905 this resistance was expressed in mainly liberal terms: it was seen as the defence of 'provincial society', a term which was now used for the first time and consciously broadened to include the interests of the peasantry. This liberal *zemstvo* movement culminated in the political demand for more autonomy for local government, for a national parliament and a constitution. Here was the start of the revolution: not in the socialist or labour movements but – as in France in the 1780s – in the aspirations of the regime's oldest ally, the provincial nobility..."<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, pp. 46-47.

### 43. THE JEWS UNDER ALEXANDER III

The organization that killed the Tsar, "The People's Will", consisted mainly of Jews – although only one Jewish woman, Hesia Helfman, took part in the actual murder.<sup>620</sup> This fact, in the words of Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), "clarified for people who were capable of at any rate some thought that these murders and blasphemies were not at all the expression of the people's will, but on the contrary, a shameful spitting at that will. Moreover, they proceeded not so much from an honourable predilection for false theories as from the hands of the natural enemies of the fatherland – people of another race and nation, who were being rewarded with a corresponding financial payment."<sup>621</sup>

Paradoxically, however, the Jews who joined the revolutionary movement and killed the Tsar were not religious Jews who believed in the Talmud, but atheists – and their atheism had been taught them in Russian schools by Russian teachers who had abandoned their own, Orthodox faith and adopted the faith of the revolutionary thinkers of the West.

But this distinction was lost on the ordinary people, who suffered in their everyday life from (mainly religious) Jews that exploited and deceived them, and believed that the (atheist) Jews who killed the Tsar must be of the same kind. Moreover, the violence of the act profoundly shocked them; for, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn explains, "that the deaths of the heirs or tsars of the previous century – Alexis Petrovich, Ivan Antonovich, Peter III, Paul – were violent remained unknown to the people. The murder of March 1, 1881 shocked the minds of the whole people. For the masses of the simple people, and especially the peasants, it was as if the foundations of their life were being shaken. But again, as the *narodovoltsy* had calculated, this could not fail to be reflected in some kind of explosion. And it was. But in an unpredictable way: in pogroms against the Jews in New Russia and Ukraine."<sup>622</sup>

On April 15 the first pogrom broke out in Elizavettgrad. It spread to Kiev and Kishinev and Odessa. The government reacted energetically: in Kiev 1400 people were arrested. However, there were not enough policemen for the scale of the disturbances, and "the government recognized that it had been insufficiently active. An official declaration proclaimed that in the Kiev pogrom 'measures to rein in the crowd had not been undertaken quickly and energetically enough'. In June, 1881 the director of the department of police, V.K. Plehve, in his report to the sovereign on the situation in Kiev province

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<sup>620</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 62

<sup>621</sup> Khrapovitsky, "Dorogie vospominania" (Treasured Reminiscences), *Tsarskij Vestnik* (Royal Herald), in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitskly), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Biography of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1971, volume 1, p. 26.

<sup>622</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, part 1, p. 185. In view of the notoriety of the pogroms in Russia, it should be pointed out that the earliest recorded pogroms in Russia – in Odessa in 1821, 1849, 1859 and 1871 – were not by Russians, but were in fact the work of the city's Greek community (Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 60).

named 'as one of the reasons "for the development of the disturbances and their not very speedy suppression" the fact that the military court "'was very condescending to the accused, and very superficial in approaching the affair'. Alexander III commented on the report: 'This is unforgiveable'."<sup>623</sup>

Many western historians have accused the Tsarist government of complicity in the pogroms. Now Tsar Alexander III did not like the Jews, and he thought that their sufferings were in punishment for their renunciation of Christ and complicity in His murder, in accordance with their words: "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27.25).<sup>624</sup> But in fact, as the pro-Semited writer David Vital admits, "Alexander did display genuine dismay and dissatisfaction when reports of the weak and ineffective conduct of the security forces were brought to him; and fury when he learned of cases of military officers and men having actually joined the mob. *His* instructions were to deal firmly with rioters, to see to it that their leaders were severely flogged; and to make clear to the civil and military authorities alike that their business was to restore and maintain order before all else.... All in all then, while much was murky in official Russia at this time, the grounds for positing a momentarily disoriented, intrinsically inefficacious government not so much stimulating as failing to cope with simmering, popular, generalized discontent seem solid enough."<sup>625</sup>

Again, Dominic Lieven writes: "... The pogroms were terrible but they were a long way from the systematic ethnic cleansing, let alone genocide, of whole peoples which were to be the strategies of supposedly more civilized European people towards the Jews. Moreover, all recent research emphasizes that the tsarist central government itself did not organize or instigate pogroms, though local authorities sometimes winked at them and more often were slow to stamp on them. Tsarist ministers did not connive in murder and were in any case deeply uneasy at outbreaks of mass violence and very scared that the 'dark people's' uncontrollable propensity for anarchic settling of scores might easily target the ruling classes themselves. On the other hand, it is the case that knowledge of their superiors' frequent antipathy to the Jews could encourage junior officials to believe that failure to stop pogroms could go unpunished..."<sup>626</sup>

"The reasons for the pogroms were earnestly investigated and discussed by contemporaries. Already in 1872, after the Odessa pogrom, the governor-general of the South-Western region had warned in a report that such an event could happen again in his region, for 'here hatred and enmity towards the Jews is rooted in history and only the material dependence of the peasants on them at the present, together with the administration's measures, holds back an explosion of discontent in the Russian population against the Jewish race'. The

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<sup>623</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>624</sup> Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 463.

<sup>625</sup> Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 288, 289.

<sup>626</sup> Lieven, *Empire*, London: John Murray, 2000, p. 277.

governor-general reduced the essence of the matter to economics: 'I have counted and estimated the commercial-industrial property belonging to the Jews in the South-Western region, and at the same time have pointed to the fact that the Jews, having taken eagerly to the renting of landowners' lands, have leased them out again to the peasants on very onerous terms'. And this causal nexus 'was generally recognized in the pogrom years of 1881'.

"In the spring of 1881 Loris-Melikov had also reported to the Sovereign: 'At the root of the present disturbances lies the profound hatred of the local population for the Jews who have enslaved them. But this has undoubtedly been used by evil-minded people.'"<sup>627</sup>

This was true: the "evil-minded" revolutionaries, both Russian and Jewish, used the hatred to their own end. And yet it is little wonder that conservative opinion, while deploring the pogroms, saw the root cause of the Jews' problems in the Jews themselves, in their economic exploitation of the peasants. When Loris-Melikov was succeeded in 1881 by Count N.P. Ignatiev, the latter, on the instructions of the emperor, sent him a memorandum on the causes of the pogroms. In it, writes Geoffrey Hosking, he outlined "his fears about domination by 'alien forces'. In it he linked the whole Westernizing trend with the Jews and the Poles... 'In Petersburg there exists a powerful Polish-Jewish group in whose hands are directly concentrated, the stock exchange, the *advokatura*, a good part of the press and other public affairs. In many legal and illegal ways they enjoy immense influence on officialdom and on the course of affairs in general.' They used this influence to mould public opinion in the interests of their favourite schemes: 'the broadest possible rights for Poles and Jews, and representative institutions on the western model. Every honest voice from the Russian land is drowned out by Polish-Jewish clamours that one must only listen to the 'intelligentsia' and that Russian demands should be rejected as old-fashioned and unenlightened.'"<sup>628</sup>

Among the most important causes of the pogroms, write M. and Yu. Krivoshein, Ignatiev "mentioned the changed economic condition of the peasants after the reform of 1861: having become personally free, but unskilled in financial operations, the peasants gradually fell into dependence on the local Jewish usurers and, in this way, peasant gardens, lands, cattle, etc. began to pass over to the latter. Explosions of popular anger followed.

"In his turn the very prominent banker Baron G.O. Ginzburg interceded before the emperor for the usurers who had been beaten up by the peasants, imploring him not to allow repressions against his co-religionists. The banker's reply was Count N.P. Ignatiev's speech in the name of Alexander III before a deputation of Jewish society:

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<sup>627</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>628</sup> Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 390. Ignatiev told the American charge d'affaires in 1882: "We have on the one hand 5,000,000 Jews, Russian subjects clamouring to be freed from all special restraints, and we have on the other 85,000,000 Russian subjects clamouring to have the 5,000,000 expelled from the Empire. What is to be done in such a case?" (in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 620)

“... ‘Your situation is not comforting, but it depends to a great extent on you to correct it. Living amidst a population that is foreign to you, you have drawn upon yourselves such hatred that for several months I was forced to apply force merely to protect you. Investigations have by no means confirmed your favourite ploy, that they are attacking you as proprietors. Still less can what has happened in the south be ascribed to religious intolerance. The Russian people, like the state, is very tolerant in matters of faith – it takes a lot to draw it out of its tolerance. In the East there live many people of other races amidst the Russian population who are not Christians. However, it is not necessary to employ armies there in order to defend them.

““While being profoundly sorrowful over the disorders that have taken place, and doing everything that depends on me to prevent them in the future, I warn you that I will not act in a one-sided manner. On reviewing the causes of the disorders, and having studied their details, it is impossible not to recognize that in many cases they have been elicited by the Jews themselves; lengthy cohabitation with the Jews has rooted the conviction in the local population that there is no law which the Jew would not be able to bypass.

““One can rely on the bayonet, but one cannot sit on it. Remember that you are being protected, but that it is impossible to tolerate a situation in which it is constantly necessary to protect the Jews from the consequences of popular anger. Try to search out for yourselves productive occupations, labouring with your own hands, abandon tavern-keeping and usury... I am willing and ready to assist you in everything that can accelerate your transition to agricultural, craft and factory work, but of course you will find in me a very powerful opponent if you, under the guise of crafts and other productive occupations, develop throughout the provinces of Russia the trades that you usually practise now.

““I will end the way I began: as long as you keep your *kahal* organization, your cohesion and your striving to take everything into your hands, while violating the laws of the country, you will in no way be able to count on privileges and a broadening of your rights or places of settlement, which will create fresh complications...”<sup>629</sup>

The importance of the *kahal* organization was especially emphasized by Archbishop Nicanor of Odessa and Kherson: “Religion is the basis of the powerful Jewish spirit. The more or less secret-open religious organization of the *kahal* is that mighty, many-cylindrical machine which moves the millions of Jews to secretly planned ends. Only a blind man could not see how terrible and threatening is this power! It is striving for nothing less than the enslavement of the world!... In the last century it has had horrific successes by relying on European liberalism, on equality before the law, etc. It is mixing up

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<sup>629</sup> Krivosheev Yu. & Krivosheev, V., *Istoria Rossijskoj Imperii, 1861-1894* (A History of the Russian Empire, 1861-1894), St. Petersburg, 2000, pp. 99, 106.

people of other faiths more and more closely, while it rules its own people like a machine. All the Jews are in essence like one man. We reason in a liberal way whether it is useful or harmful to ban bazaars on feast-days. But the secret Jewish power says to its own people: 'Don't you dare! Honour the Sabbath! Honour the law of your fathers! The law gives life and power to Jewry!' And look: not a single Jew dares to go out on Saturday from Nikolaev to Kherson or Odessa. The railway trains are empty, while the steamer services between these great cities stop completely. It is strange and offensive for the Christian people and such a great Kingdom as ours! But what a foreign power! And how bold and decisive it is. This is a religious power coming from the religious organization of the *kahal*."<sup>630</sup>

In May, 1882 the government issued new "temporary rules" which "forbade Jews to resettle or acquire property in rural areas, even within the Pale, while outside it the police were instructed to enforce restrictions on Jewish residence which had previously been widely flouted. In the following years Jews were barred from entering the *advokatura* and the military-medical professions, while in 1887 a *numerus clausus* was imposed on their admission to secondary and higher education in general (10 per cent in the Pale, 5 per cent outside and 3 per cent in the two capitals). They were also denied the vote in *zemstvo* and municipal elections. In 1891, at Passover, there was a mass expulsion of illegal resident Jews from Moscow, which deprived the city of two-thirds of its Jewish population."<sup>631</sup>

The Jewish radicals of the previous reign had seen themselves as *joining* Russian culture, whose famous writers had been their idols. Unfortunately, however, the pogroms served to radicalize Jewish youth still further and in an opposite direction, so that their radicalism was now nationalist rather than internationalist, and anti-Russian rather than pro-Russian. As Solzhenitsyn writes: "The general turning-point in Jewish consciousness in Russia after 1881-82 could not fail, of course, to be reflected to some extent also in the consciousness of the Jewish revolutionaries in Russia. These youths had first left Jewry, but afterwards many returned, 'the departure from "Jew street" and return to the people', 'our historical destiny is bound up with the Jewish ghetto, and from it comes our national essence'. Until the pogroms of 1881-82 'it absolutely never entered the head of any of us revolutionaries to think about the necessity' of publicly explaining the role of the Jews in the revolutionary movement. But the pogroms elicited 'amongst... the majority of my compatriots an explosion of discontent'. And so 'not only the *intelligent* Jews in general, but also some revolutionary Jews, who previously had felt not the slightest bond with their nationality... suddenly recognized themselves as obliged to devote their strength and abilities to their unjustly persecuted compatriots'. 'The pogroms brought out previously hidden feelings and made

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<sup>630</sup> Archbishop Nicanor, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 351. Of course, the *kahal*, that "state within a state", was supposed to have been abolished in the reign of Nicholas I. Evidently, the Jews had managed to get round that law...

<sup>631</sup> Hosking, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-393.

the youth more sensitive to the sufferings of their people, and the people more receptive to revolutionary ideas.”<sup>632</sup>

And yet there is reason to believe that the great wave of Jewish emigration from Russia to the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – about two million Jews emigrated to America alone before 1914<sup>633</sup> – was not elicited primarily by the pogroms. A more important factor, probably, was the introduction of a state monopoly on the sale of alcohol in 1896. As Solzhenitsyn writes: “There is no doubt about it: the introduction of the state wine monopoly turned out to be a very powerful blow at the economy of Russian Jewry. And right up to the World War itself, when it more or less came to an end, the state wine monopoly continued to be a favourite target of public displeasure – although only it introduced strict control over the quality of the spirits sold in the country and their purity. And although the state monopoly also removed the livelihood of Christian publicans..., it was nevertheless made out to be primarily an anti-Jewish measure: ‘The introduction of the state sale of wines in the Pale of Settlement at the end of the 90s deprived more than 100,000 Jews of their livelihood’, ‘the authorities counted on pushing the Jews out of their village localities’, and from that time ‘trade in alcohol did not have its former significance for the Jews’.

“And it is precisely from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the emigration of Jews from Russia intensified. Its statistical link with the introduction of the state sale of wines has not been established, but these 100,000 lost livelihoods point to it. In any case, the Jewish emigration (to America) did not increase substantially until 1886-87, jumped for a short time in 1891-92, and its long and massive rise began in 1897...”<sup>634</sup>

However, other means of exploiting the Christian peasantry remained. 18% of the Jews before the revolution, about one million people, were occupied in the sale of bread. And sometimes they would hoard the harvest and refuse to sell it so that the prices should fall. “It is not by accident that in the 90s of the nineteenth century *agricultural cooperatives* (under the leadership of Count Haydn and Bekhteev) arose for the first time in Russia, forestalling Europe, in the southern provinces. [This was envisaged] as a counter-measure to this essentially completely monopolistic hoarding of peasant bread.”<sup>635</sup>

The Jews were also heavily involved in the lumber, sugar, gold, oil and banking industries. And by 1900 they controlled one-third of the trade of Russia. With such a heavy involvement in the country’s economy, it is not surprising to learn that, of those Jews who emigrated between 1899 and 1907, only one per cent were educated.<sup>636</sup> The educated had no reason to leave: there were plenty of opportunities for them in Tsarist Russia. We might also have

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<sup>632</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>633</sup> Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1995, p. 370.

<sup>634</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-294.

<sup>635</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>636</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

expected that those who remained would be gradually assimilated. But no: the Jews chose emancipation (education), but not assimilation. They fought for equality of rights, but without the loss of their Jewishness.<sup>637</sup>

“From the beginning of the century a ‘Bureau for the Defence’ of the Jews in Russia was organized from prominent lawyers and publicists...

“In these years ‘the Jewish spirit was roused to struggle’, and in many Jews there was ‘a rapid growth in social and national self-consciousness’ – but national self-consciousness no longer in a religious form: with the ‘impoverishment at the local level, the flight of the more prosperous elements... among the youth into the cities... and the tendency to urbanization’, religion was undermined ‘among the broad masses of Jewry’ from the 90s, the authority of the rabbinate fell, and even the yeshbotniks were drawn into secularization. (But in spite of that, in many biographies in the *Russian Jewish Encyclopaedia* we read about the generation that grew up on the cusp of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: ‘he received a traditional Jewish religious education’.)

“However, as we have seen, *Palestinophilia* began to develop in an unexpected form and with a strength that was unexpected for many...”<sup>638</sup>

“Anti-Jewish manifestations - both abroad and in Russia - were being passionately discussed already in 1884 by Vladimir Soloviev, who was disturbed by them: ‘The Jews have always treated us in a Jewish way; but we Christians, by contrast, have not yet learned to treat Judaism in a Christian way’; ‘with regard to Judaism the Christian world *in its majority* has so far displayed either zeal not according to reason or a decrepit and powerless indifferentism’. No, ‘Christian Europe does not tolerate the Jews - unbelieving Europe does’.

“Russian society felt the growing importance of the Jewish question for Russia as much as half a century after the government. Only after the Crimean war did ‘embryonic Russian public opinion begin to become conscious of the presence of the Jewish problem in Russia’. But several decades would have to pass before the *primary importance* of this question was recognized. ‘Providence implanted the largest and strongest part of Jewry in our fatherland,’ wrote Vladimir Soloviev in 1891.

“But a year earlier, in 1890, Soloviev, finding incitement and support in a circle of sympathizers, composed the text of a ‘Protest’. [He wrote] that ‘the only reason for the so-called Jewish question’ was ‘forgetfulness of justice and love of man’, ‘a mindless attraction to blind national egoism’. – ‘The incitement of tribal and religious enmity, which is so counter to the spirit of Christianity... radically corrupts society and can lead to moral savagery...’ – ‘It is necessary

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<sup>637</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.

<sup>638</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

decisively to condemn the anti-Semitic movement' - 'already from the single feeling of national self-preservation'.<sup>639</sup>

"S.M. Dubnov recounts how Soloviev collected more than a hundred signatures, including those of Lev Tolstoy and Korolenko. But the editors of all the newspapers received a warning: don't publish this protest. Soloviev 'addressed Alexander III with an ardent letter'. However, he was warned through the police that if he insisted he would be administratively persecuted. And he abandoned the idea.

"As in Europe, the many-faceted growth of Jewish strivings could not fail to elicit in Russian society - alarm in some, sharp opposition in others, but sympathy in yet others... And in others - a political calculation. Just as in 1881 the People's Will revolutionaries had thought of the usefulness of playing on the Jewish question..., so, some time later, the Russian liberal-radical circles, the left wing of society, appropriated for a long time the usefulness of using the Jewish question as a weighty political card in the struggle with the autocracy: they tried in every way to re-iterate the idea that it was impossible to attain equality of rights for the Jews in Russia in any other way than by the complete overthrow of the autocracy. Everyone, from the liberals to the SRs and Bolsheviks, brought in the Jews again and again - some with sincere sympathy, but all as a useful card in the anti-autocratic front. And this card, without a twinge of conscience, was never let out of the hands of the revolutionaries, but was used right up to 1917..."<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> According to V.L. Velichko, Soloviev "by no means denied the faults of the Jewish people, but only demanded a man-loving and educational attitude to these faults. In a conversation with an anti-semite he once said: 'I do not deny the faults of the Jews, nor the necessity of removing them. But since the attempts to heal these weaknesses by means of enmity, mockery or restrictions has attained only the opposite result, it follows that we must act in a different way" (A.F. Losev, *Vladimir Soloviev i ego Vremia* (Vladimir Soloviev and his time), Moscow, 2009, p. 261). (V.M.)

<sup>640</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

## 44. RUSSIA AND BALKAN NATIONALISM

For both religious and historical reasons, Russia could never remain indifferent to, or detached from, events in the Balkans. In the tenth century Russia received her faith from the Greeks, with significant support from Bulgaria. For nearly five hundred years, until the council of Florence in 1438-39 and the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the rulers of Russia, although *de facto* independent of, and much more powerful than, the Byzantine Emperor, considered themselves *de jure* only junior partners of the Emperor, while the huge Russian Church remained only a single metropolitan district of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. After the fall of Constantinople, the Balkan Slavs and Greeks looked to the Russians as potential liberators from the Turkish yoke, and in 1562 Tsar Ivan IV received a *gramota* from the Ecumenical Patriarch Joasaph calling him “our Tsar”, ascribing to him authority over “Orthodox Christians in the entire universe”, and applying to him the same epithets, “pious, God-crowned and Christ-loving” as had been applied to the Byzantine Emperors. Forty years later another Ecumenical Patriarch, Jeremiah II, confirmed this, and raised the Russian Church to patriarchal status: Moscow “the Third Rome” been born...

The idea of the Third Rome has been subjected to much mockery and revilement as if it were just an excuse for nationalist ambition. But exactly the reverse is true: in acknowledging themselves to be the successors of the Byzantines, “the Second Rome”, the Russians took upon themselves an *internationalist* obligation: to fight for the protection of all Orthodox Christians throughout the inhabited world. Of course, this could have been an excuse for nationalist aggression, but in practice it involved, on the one hand, defensive wars against aggressive powers that invaded her territory from the west, such as the Swedes, the Germans, the Poles and the French., and on the other hand, since most non-Russian Orthodox lived within the spheres of influence of the major Muslim powers of Ottoman Turkey and Persia, almost continuous war along her southern frontiers to protect Orthodox Christians from the Muslims. In all cases, it involved the shedding of Russians’ blood for their fellow Orthodox Christians with no real gain for Russia, as in the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turks in 1877. To a large extent the history of Russia from the fifteenth century onwards can be seen as a slow, painful but inexorable advance to the fulfillment of the ideal of Christian Rome: the liberation of all fellow Orthodox Christians living under the yoke of heretical or pagan rulers.

The cost was enormous. It has been calculated that, quite apart from losses in terms of men killed, Russians taken into slavery by the Turks from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century inclusive numbered between three and five million, while the population of the whole of Russia in the time of Ivan the Terrible (16<sup>th</sup> century) numbered less than five million souls.<sup>641</sup> And yet losses of men killed

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<sup>641</sup> I.L. Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia* (The People’s Monarchy), Minsk, 1998, pp. 403-404. The slaves included some who have been numbered among the saints, such as St. John the Russian (enslaved in Turkey) and St. Paul of Cairo.

or driven into slavery abroad were only the beginning of the cost. Both the institution of serfdom and that of military service from youth until (virtually) death, were the results, not of the despotic cruelty of the tsars, but of sheer military necessity...

If the western nations' cynical attitude to Russian expansion was only to be expected, it was less to be expected, and harder to take, from the very Balkan Orthodox who benefited from this expansion through the gradual weakening of Ottoman power. None of them saw in Russia "the Third Rome", and so none of them felt obliged to coordinate their political and military initiatives with Russia, as the leader of the Orthodox world. Paradoxically, this was especially the case after the Russian advance to the gates of Constantinople in 1878, which established Serbia, Montenegro and Romania as independent states, and Bulgaria as semi-independent, all with increased territories.

In this period, the main client of Russia among the Balkan states was Bulgaria, and of Austro-Hungary - Serbia. The Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Julius Andrassy, was fearful of Russia and had already tried, in earlier years, to draw Serbia away from the Russian sphere of influence. Now he employed bribery - the offer of increased territory for Serbia in the south-east, at Bulgaria's expense, - to draw Serbia into dependence on Austria.

As Ian Armour writes, Andrassy "would only promote Serbia's territorial claims at the Congress if [the Serbian Prime Minister] Ristic accepted his conditions. These were formalised in a preliminary convention on July 8th, 1878: Serbia agreed to complete a railway line to its southern frontier within three years; and to conclude a commercial treaty with the Monarchy.

"The realisation of these goals took somewhat longer. The railway treaty, for instance, came a year and a half later, largely because Ristic had to overcome heavy opposition in the national assembly. This was due to the understandable fear that, if Serbia were connected by rail to Austria-Hungary in advance of the commercial treaty, it would rapidly be made totally dependent on exports to the Monarchy. The railway convention was nevertheless ratified in the course of 1880.

"With the commercial treaty the determination of the Austro-Hungarian government to bend Serbia to its will became painfully apparent. Andrassy by this time had stepped down as foreign minister, but his successor, Baron Haymerle, was a colourless Austrian diplomat groomed in the Andrassy stable; and, as his right-hand man in the foreign ministry, Haymerle had the Hungarian, Kallay. Ristic's attempts to wriggle out of the terms they wanted now prompted Haymerle and Kallay to activate Austria-Hungary's secret weapon - Prince Milan. By threatening economic reprisals they had little difficulty in winning over the Austrophile Milan, and Ristic was forced to resign in October 1880.

“The commercial treaty was thus signed on May 6th, 1881. By this instrument, Austria-Hungary was given what amounted to preferential treatment in Serbia: the treaty assured Serbian produce of a readier market in the Monarchy, but it also ensured the domination of the Serbian market by Austro-Hungarian manufactured goods. The overall effect was to stunt Serbia's economic growth for a generation. With the trade treaty went an even subtler form of control, a veterinary convention. Livestock, especially pigs, were Serbia's principal export, and the country possessed no processing plant of its own. Almost all these animals marched to their fate in Austria-Hungary. The veterinary convention contained a 'swine fever clause', which enabled the Monarchy to close the Hungarian frontier to Serbian oxen and swine on the slightest suspicion of infection. It was a powerful lever, to which the Austro-Hungarian government was to resort nine times between 1881 and 1906.

“The final touch was the secret political treaty of June 28th, 1881. This showed the extent to which the Hungarians' paranoia about Russian influence in Serbia had become the stock-in-trade of Habsburg policy since the *Ausgleich* [the creation of the Dual Monarchy in 1867]. As Haymerle put it to the Serbian foreign minister during the negotiations, 'we could not tolerate such a Serbia on our frontier, and we would, as a lesser evil, occupy it with our armies'. The treaty bound Serbia not to tolerate 'political, religious or other intrigues... against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy', including Bosnia. It obliged both states to observe benevolent neutrality if either was involved in war with a third party. Most startlingly, Serbia undertook, in Article IV, neither 'to negotiate nor conclude any political treaty with another government', unless Austria-Hungary approved...”<sup>642</sup>

These treaties, though unpopular with the Serbs, brought international recognition to Serbia, and King Milan's reign (1868-89) brought a degree of political continuity into Serbian politics.<sup>643</sup> In 1883, however, “the government's efforts to decommission the firearms of peasant militias in north-eastern Serbia triggered a major provincial uprising, the Timok rebellion. Milan responded with brutal reprisals against popular figures in Belgrade suspected of having fomented the unrest.

“Serbian political culture was transformed in the early 1880s by the emergence of political parties of the modern type with newspaper, caucuses, manifestos, campaign strategies and local committees. To this formidable new force in public life the king responded with autocratic measures. When elections in 1889 produced a hostile majority in the Serbian parliament (known as the Skupština), the king refused to appoint a government recruited from the dominant Radical Party, choosing instead to assemble a cabinet of bureaucrats.

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<sup>642</sup> Armour, “The Roots of Sarajevo: Austria-Hungary and Serbia, 1867-81”, *History Today*, February 27, 2014.

<sup>643</sup> Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 6.

The Skupština was opened by decree and then closed again by decree ten minutes later.”<sup>644</sup>

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The unity of the Orthodox commonwealth was not attainable simply through acceptance of Russia’s leadership by the Orthodox states, important and necessary though that was. The unity of the Orthodox commonwealth was, is and always will be attainable only through a profound unity *in the Orthodox faith*. And here the signs towards the end of the nineteenth century were not promising. Heretical western ideas deriving from the French revolution such as liberalism and democratism, socialism and nationalism were widespread among the Orthodox of all nations, while the older heresies such as Catholicism continued to make converts.

In this connection it was surely no coincidence that several Orthodox states had heterodox kings, such as the Catholic King Ferdinand of Bulgaria and the Lutheran King George of Greece. These were often imposed upon the Orthodox peoples by the Great Powers. And to their credit, many Orthodox refused to commemorate their heterodox kings at the Divine Liturgy.<sup>645</sup> But to a truly Orthodox people, who really appreciate the value of Orthodox kingship, God grants a truly Orthodox king - and there is little evidence that the majority of Orthodox in this period valued Orthodox kingship at its true value. So God did not grant them what they did not desire or value.

Only the Russians had truly Orthodox kings – because in Russia more than anywhere else, according to the witness of St. Theodosy of Minvody, who served in Jerusalem and Mount Athos as well as Russia, there still remained some remnants of true piety. The Serbs also had their native kings, but they were from two rival dynasties that were constantly warring against each other. But it was the Russian tsars who remained the sole guarantors of the Orthodox unity that still remained – and not only or chiefly through their military might, but through their lavish gifts to the Orthodox Churches throughout the world (notably in the Holy Land), through their support of missionary endeavours (in Persia, China, Japan and America) and through their acting as peace-makers among the quarrelling Orthodox Churches (notably the Greco-Bulgarian conflict).

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<sup>644</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>645</sup> Thus Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov writes: “In Austria-Hungary the Orthodox Serbs and Romanians did not pray for their emperor Franz-Joseph, who was not Orthodox. In exactly the same way the names of King George, a Lutheran, and King Ferdinand, a Catholic, were not commemorated in Orthodox Greece and Bulgaria. Instead, their Orthodox heirs to the throne were commemorated. This attitude to the authorities sometimes led to conflict with them. Thus in 1888 the Bulgarian Synod was dismissed by Ferdinand of Coburg, and the members of the Synod were expelled by gendarmes from the capital because they refused to offer prayer in the churches for the Catholic prince, who had offended the Orthodox Church by many of his actions. After this the government did not allow the Synod to assemble for six years...” (*Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, pp. 18-19)

In the late nineteenth century the Balkan states faced two intractable problems. The first was that the peasantry, the majority of the population in all countries, being no less oppressed by heavy taxes and indebtedness under the national regimes than it had been under the Turks, was becoming desperately poor. This led to peasant rebellions in several countries: in Serbia in 1883, in Bulgaria in 1899 and, most seriously, in Romania in 1907, where 120,000 troops were called out and 10,000 peasants were killed.<sup>646</sup> There was simply not enough land to support a rising population, and many thousands of able-bodied men - men who were greatly needed at home - were forced to emigrate, especially from Greece and Montenegro.

A second problem was increased nationalist passions throughout the region, and especially in Kosovo and Macedonia... Now strong national feeling had served the Orthodox Balkan nations well in preserving their integrity during the centuries of the Ottoman yoke; but it served them less well when that yoke was crumbling and patriotism turned into revanchism, hatred of neighbouring nations - and, worst of all, neighbouring *Orthodox* nations. The Treaty of Berlin, far from quenching nationalist passions, seemed only to stir them up to fever pitch, until the whole region exploded in a paroxysm of hatred and violence in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

The tragedy of Balkan nationalism consisted in the fact that it was rather a series of civil wars among the Orthodox Christians (plus the Albanians) *for the sake of territory and power* than a common war of all the Orthodox against the Turkish Muslims *for the sake of the Christian faith*. Between 1903 and 1908 these inter-Orthodox conflicts cost some eight thousand lives.<sup>647</sup> Moreover, even Orthodox clergy joined in the armed struggle. Thus the Kresna uprising against the Turks in 1878, which took place on the new frontier between Bulgaria and Macedonia, was led by a Bulgarian or Macedonian priest, Pop Georgievski-Berovski. This rebellion was quickly crushed, and for some years the Ottomans were able to restore peace to the region. However, open warfare was now replaced by the building up of secret societies in both Bulgaria and Greece. At least three different Bulgarian societies fought with each other for leadership of the Macedonian struggle for independence. They also fought with the Bulgarian government, trying to persuade or force it into entering into a war of liberation in Macedonia.

Peace could have been achieved between the Orthodox if they had recognized Russia as mediator in their quarrels. But nationalist pride would not allow any of them to recognize the Russian tsar as having the status of the Emperor of the Third Rome. The wars between the Orthodox Balkan states confirmed Leontiev's thesis that there was little to choose between Greek and

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<sup>646</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 2, p. 21.

<sup>647</sup> Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, London: Allen Press, 2015, p. 20.

Slavic nationalism, and Dostoyevsky's thesis that the Slavic states would continually intrigue against each other and hate each other, and seek recognition from Europe, ignoring Russia, but then, in their hour of need, they would turn for help to her, that "huge magnet, which, inexorably drawing them all to herself, will thereby preserve their integrity and unity".<sup>648</sup>

This failure of the Balkan Orthodox to work more than intermittently with each other and with Russia would lead to the most disastrous consequences over the following decades...

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Perhaps the root of the quarrels was the rivalry between Serbia and Bulgaria... The Serbian king failed to get on not only with his parliament, but also with his neighbour, the Bulgarian Prince Alexander von Battenburg. The crisis began in 1885, when a band of rebels seized control of Plovdiv, capital of Eastern Rumelia, thereby violating one of the articles of the Treaty of Berlin. Prince Alexander, who had been threatened with "annihilation" by a Macedonian secret society if he did not support the coup, promptly marched into Plovdiv (Philippopolis), took credit for the coup, and proclaimed himself the ruler of a united North and South Bulgaria. Now from a narrowly nationalist point of view, this was a triumph – one of the most galling decisions of the Treaty of Berlin had been reversed, and Bulgaria, though formally still not completely free of Ottoman suzerainty, was now *de facto* independent and united (if we exclude the disputed territories of Northern Dobrudja and Macedonia). However, from the point of view of the preservation of international peace, and still more of Pan-Orthodox unity, it was a disaster. The Bulgarians' violation of the Treaty of Berlin gave the Turks – still a formidable military power – a good legal excuse to invade Bulgaria, which could have dragged the Russian armies back into the region only eight years after the huge and costly effort of 1877-78, which in turn may have dragged other great powers into a major European war.

Seeing the dangers, Tsar Alexander III, - who is not undeservedly called "the Peacemaker", - decided not to support his irresponsible nephew, Prince Alexander, and to withdraw the Russian officers from the army of his ungrateful ally, Bulgaria. Another German prince, Ferdinand of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha, took Alexander's place. Alexander's decision was probably the right one, although "Foxy Ferdinand" was a homosexual and disliked throughout Europe. But it cost Tsar Alexander much - both in terms of an estrangement between Russia and Bulgaria, and in terms of his discomfiture at the hands of the British, who cynically decided to support the violation of the Berlin Treaty consisting in the Bulgarians' seizure of Eastern Rumelia...

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<sup>648</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer, Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), vol. 26, pp. 77-82.

But this was not the end of the sorry story. The Serbian King Milan now invaded Bulgaria, boasting that he was going “on a stroll to Sofia”.<sup>649</sup> Barbara Jelavich explains why this conflict took place: “Since the unified Bulgarian state would be larger and more populous than Serbia, Milan felt that he was entitled to compensation. He thus launched an attack in November 1885. Despite widely held convictions that the Bulgarian army, deprived of its higher officers by the Russian withdrawal, would be crushed, it in fact defeated the invaders. The Habsburg Empire had to intercede to save Milan. Peace was made on the basis of the maintenance of the former boundaries; Serbia had to accept the Bulgarian unification. The entire episode was an enormous blow to the king’s prestige.”<sup>650</sup>

Meanwhile, Ferdinand’s appointment delivered Bulgaria, according to Evans, “into the hands of the ruthless Stefan Stambolov (1854-95). The son of an innkeeper, Stambolov was a leading figure in the 1875-6 uprisings, an architect of the coup that brought Ferdinand to the throne, and regent until the new prince’s formal election. Stambolov tried to deal with continuing Russian interference, and the chronic economic problems that plagued the country, by establishing what in effect became a police state, arresting and imprisoning his opponents, muzzling the press, and billeting troops in villages that refused to pay their taxes.

“When the Minister of Finance was assassinated in 1891, Stambolov, convinced that Russian agents were responsible, threw more than 300 leading Russophiles into prison. His authoritarian stance as Prime Minister after 1887 brought repeated clashes with Ferdinand. In the mid-1890s the conflict came to a head. In 1891, Macedonians based in Salonika formed a secretive terrorist group called the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, or IMRG, dedicated to using violence to free Macedonia from Ottoman rule. It was soon dominated by Bulgarians, many of whom had fled Macedonia in the face of Ottoman oppression and taken up residence in Sofia. Stambolov’s foreign policy was based on the attempt to counter Russian influence by a rapprochement with the Ottomans (who were still nominally suzerains over Bulgaria). This aroused the violent hatred of the Macedonian refugees, and his position became increasingly precarious. In 1894, King Ferdinand judged the time right to dismiss him. Stambolov did not long survive his fall from power. On 15 July 1893 an assassin fired a gun at him as he was riding in his carriage through the streets of Sofia. Stambolov leapt from the carriage and returned fire with the revolver he always carried with him, but three more assassins jumped on him, threw him to the ground, and, knowing he always wore a bullet-proof vest, stabbed him repeatedly in the head. He tried to protect himself with his hands, but the assassins severed these at the wrists with their knives in the frenzy of their assault. Fatally wounded, Stambolov was taken home by his bodyguards after they had chased the assassins away. ‘Bulgaria’s people will forgive me everything,’ he is said to have remarked on his

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<sup>649</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 175.

<sup>650</sup> Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 2, p. 31.

deathbed, 'but they will never forgive that it was I who brought Ferdinand here.' It was rumoured that the assassination had been orchestrated by the king himself, but it was more likely that the IMRO was responsible for the attack. Macedonian jeers at Stambolov's public funeral a few days later were only stopped when his widow held up two jars containing his pickled hands. His grave was destroyed by a bomb less than a year later..."<sup>651</sup>

A reign of terror followed in which Macedonian terrorists threatened to overthrow the Bulgarian State...

How did the Turks react to their losses? Sultan Abdulhamid II, writes Evans, "turned in desperation to Germany for help. Soon German officers were training Ottoman troops, and German engineers were building a new railway to Baghdad, financed by German banks. All of this, however, undermined the sultan's authority within the empire, and his refusal to reintroduce the 1876 Constitution led to the emergence of conspiracies to try and oust him. Shortly after his accession, Abdulhamid had abandoned the policy of trying to create an Ottoman national identity. Perhaps reacting to the loss of a very large proportion of the empire's Christian population in the Balkans, and the migration of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the Caucasus and from the new Balkan states to Anatolia, he had substituted the policy with a new ideology of pan-Islamism. From now on the sultan's religious status as the Caliph was emphasized in Ottoman propaganda as the basis for the allegiance of his people. Increasingly, Abdulhamid put his empire's troubles down to an international conspiracy of the Christian world, and in particular to the Christian minority in Anatolia, mostly well-off traders and merchants whom the Treaty of Berlin had obliged him to protect. In 1892-3, Muslim crowds, egged on by officials who claimed the Armenians were trying to destroy Islam, began massacring the area's Armenian population. When Armenian nationalist groups retaliated, they were crushed by the Ottoman Army, after which local and regional officials encouraged further violence against them, aided by Kurdish irregulars sent in by the sultan.

"The worst atrocity occurred with the burning alive of more than 3,000 Armenians in the cathedral of Urfa in December 1895. A protest demonstration of Armenians in Constantinople was suppressed and was followed by widespread killings of Armenians in the capital. Foreign intervention, again urged by Gladstone, never became a reality. The massacres continued until 1897, by which time between 100,000 and 300,000 Armenians had been killed."<sup>652</sup>

Meanwhile, the Turks were struggling to hold on to Macedonia, where Serbs, Bulgars and Greeks began their savage proxy wars for possession of the territory.

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<sup>651</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 678-679.

<sup>652</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 688-689.

Macedonia, according to Stevan K. Pavlowitch, "has always been the centre of the Balkans which neighbouring states, and foreign powers interested in the peninsula, have vied with one another in trying to control. In modern times [the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries], it was the region that remained longest in Turkish hands. Serbs, Bulgars and Greeks had their various aspirations for its largely undifferentiated slavophone population. Out of this rivalry - at once nationalistic, cultural and ecclesiastical, as always in the Balkans - slowly began to emerge a separate Macedonian consciousness, recognised by none of the three contending nation-states, who were busy serbianising, bulgarianising and hellenising their outlying Macedonian territories."<sup>653</sup>

So who did the inhabitants of Macedonia think they were? Misha Glenny writes: "The question of the origins of the modern Macedonians, who feel themselves categorically to be a Slav people [with a large Albanian minority] distinct from Serbs or Bulgars, provokes more intellectual fanaticism than any other in the southern Balkans. One scholar, let us say from Skopje, will assume that this nation has existed for over a thousand years; the next, perhaps a well-meaning westerner, will claim that Macedonians first developed a separate identity from Bulgaria about one hundred years ago; a third, for the sake of argument a Serb, will swear that the Macedonians only emerged as a nation at the end of the Second World War; and a fourth, probably a Greek or Bulgarian, will maintain doggedly that they do not exist and have never done so..."

"... In contested regions like Macedonia, national identity or identities do not remain stable. They change over a few generations; they mutate during the course of a war; they are reinvented following the break-up of a large empire or state; and they emerge anew during the construction of new states. Balkan nationalism evokes such ferocious passions because, paradoxically, it is so labile..."<sup>654</sup>

"It has been argued that if the Serbs, too, like the Bulgars, had separated themselves from the Greek-dominated patriarchate of Constantinople at that time, they could have achieved considerable success in those areas where Macedonian Slavs had not yet taken sides. For it was not all that difficult to give inchoate national traits a definite mould with the systematic action of church and school.

"At first, the authorities of the autonomous principality of Serbia sympathised with Bulgarian aspirations. But they increasingly took fright after 1870 when, according to the statute granted to it, the autonomous Bulgarian Church began to expand. The sultan's firman established the authority of the Bulgarian exarch over a *millet* that was both territorial and ethnic. Broadly speaking, the dioceses of northern Bulgaria came within its jurisdiction, but upwards of two-thirds of the Orthodox Christian inhabitants of any other

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<sup>653</sup> Pavlowitch, "The Church of Macedonia: 'limited autocephaly' or schism?", *Sobornost*, 9:1, 1987, p. 42.

<sup>654</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 158.

district could vote to join the exarchate. The principle of one territorial bishop thus came to be infringed occasionally, with a patriarchal and an exarchal bishop residing in the same see...

"... [The exarchate] thrived as a legal institution for Bulgarian national aspirations, and it sent out its priests and teachers to proselytise the slavophones of Macedonia. As a result it came to control territories that were to become Serbian in 1878... The reaction to these successes took the form of occasional calls for a separate archbishopric of Ohrid, but especially of Serbian government efforts to join forces with the Greeks. The idea was to convince the patriarchate that it was in its own interest to take into account the feelings of a majority of the faithful in making appointments to European sees, and to appoint ethnic Serbs where appropriate. Such efforts were at first hampered by the Serbo-Turkish wars of 1876-8 and the subsequent unpopularity of the Serbs with the Porte. It was not until the 1880s that Serbia entered the fray in Macedonia, with a proselytising programme of its own.

"By 1885, the ecumenical patriarchate had accepted the principle of sending ethnic Serbs to certain dioceses, provided they were Ottoman citizens, politically loyal to the Porte, and properly qualified canonically. But such candidates were not available at first, and it would take another eleven years before diplomatic pressure got the patriarchate to accept, but also the Porte to agree to, the first such Serbian bishop (Raaka-Prizren, 1896), with two more by 1910 (Skopje, Veles-Debar). In these years at the turn of the century, with another set of slavophone bishops and priests who, furthermore, were fully canonical, whole districts chose to return from the exarchate to the patriarchate..."<sup>655</sup>

"Of the major rivals," writes Jelavich, "Serbia was in the weakest position. Until 1878 its chief attention had been directed toward Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Old Serbia, which covered part of the Kosovo vilayet. After the Habsburg occupation of the two provinces, Serbia could expand only southward. In the agreement of 1881 with Vienna, [King] Milan had received assurances of support for such a move. Serbia thus entered with enthusiasm into the struggle for Macedonian lands, and exerted great efforts to demonstrate that the Macedonian Slavs were Serbs. Studies were made of the local languages and customs, and statistics were collected. Serbia opened consulates in 1887 in Thessaloniki and Skopje, and soon afterward in Bitola and Priatina. A major propaganda campaign was launched inside Macedonia. From the beginning the efforts of the Serbs were hindered by their lack of an ecclesiastical organization equal to that of the Patriarchate and the Exarchate. They nevertheless made considerable advances before 1912."<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> Pavlowitch, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>656</sup> Jelavich, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

In 1895 a Greek secret society called *Ethniki Etairia* tried to revive the traditions of the revolutionary *Philiki Etairia*. Glenny writes: "Just as IMRO was preparing to destabilize Bulgaria, so did the Etairia become a virtual state within the Greek state. The Etairia included many Greek Macedonian émigrés in its ranks, but the main focus of its aspirations was Crete..."<sup>657</sup>

In 1896 the Cretans, whose slogan was "Freedom or Death!", rebelled against the Ottomans and called on the Free Greeks on the mainland to support them. They responded by landing an army onto the island. "The great powers, smelling another Eastern Crisis, attempted to mediate between Turkey and Greece by suggesting that Istanbul offer Crete autonomy. By the middle of 1897, the Greeks were still procrastinating and so the Sultan decided to declare war on Greece. Turkish troops massed in Epirus on Greece's northern border and soon put the Greeks to flight. [They were also defeated at Domokos in Thessaly, where around 45,000 troops were assembled on each side.<sup>658</sup>] Before long the Ottoman troops were marching on an open road to Athens. Once again the great powers stepped into the breach and imposed a peace-deal on the two sides.

"The outcome was at first glance advantageous to the Greeks, as Crete was at last given extensive autonomy. But this apparent victory masked hidden dangers. The Greek army had suffered a great setback at Epirus. The Athenian coffers were empty; and the state had incurred an enormous debt. As part of the peace treaty, Athens was forced to hand over control of its budget to a great-power commission. Furthermore, its network of agents in Macedonia had been destroyed.

"King George of Greece (1863-1913) had justified the military intervention in Crete by pointing out that 'Britain... had seized Cyprus; Germany had taken Schleswig-Holstein; Austria had laid claim to Bosnia and Herzegovina; surely Greece had a better right to Crete!' The argument was not unreasonable, but had the Etairia and King George reasoned more soberly they would have concluded that the Ottoman Empire would be forced to relinquish control of Crete at some future date. By succumbing to the romantic movement for the liberation of Crete and finding itself at war with the Ottoman Empire, Greece was too weak at the end of the nineteenth century to combat the influence of IMRO in Macedonia, and unable to respond when the Ottoman Empire allowed the Bulgarian Exarchate to establish three new bishoprics in Debar, Monastir (Bitola) and Strumitsa. This area extended like a long hand across the middle of Macedonia, marking out the dark shadows of a near future when the Greek Patriarchists and Bulgarian Exarchists would do battle for the souls of the villages..."<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>657</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>658</sup> Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 690.

<sup>659</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

"The Greek national leaders had long expected eventually to absorb the entire area. Their arguments were based chiefly on the historical association of Greece, both classical and Byzantine, with the region. In a time before serious ethnographic studies were made, these leaders could sincerely believe that the population was indeed Greek. Certainly, Greeks and Muslim Turks formed the majority of the city inhabitants. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction exercised by the Constantinople Patriarchate after the abolition of the Peć and Ohrid authorities in the eighteenth centuries had given the Greeks control over cultural as well as religious matters. They thereafter tended to count all the Orthodox who were under the control of the Patriarchate as Greeks.... The establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate [in 1870] was bitterly resented, because it ended the advantages previously held by the Greek churches. Even after it became apparent that the majority of the Christian people were Slavic, the Greek leaders continued to claim the area on a national basis; they argued that many of the inhabitants were what they called Slavophone Greeks, that is, individuals who were Slavic in language, but Greek in national sentiment.

"The Greek fears concerning the Exarchate," writes Pavlowitch, "were soon fully justified. Wherever two-thirds of a district voted for it, the Orthodox population could join this organization. This possibility naturally appealed to many Slavic-speaking people, for whom the attractions of a service in Church Slavonic were much greater than those of one in Greek. The areas under the jurisdiction of the Exarchate thus expanded rapidly; the San Stefano boundaries [i.e. those marked out by the Treaty of San Stefano between the Russians and the Turks in 1878] were not greatly different from the lines of this religious authority. In the 1890s the Exarchate was able to add more districts. If nationality was to be used as the basis assigning ownership, Bulgaria had the advantage at the end of the century. Most Bulgarian leaders and the Bulgarian people were passionately convinced Macedonia was indeed rightfully theirs."

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We must also not forget the Romanians, who from the beginning of the century, as Jelavich writes, "began to show a great interest in the Vlach population, which spoke a Romance language and was scattered throughout the area. Although Romania obviously could not advance claims for Macedonian territory, the issue could be used to gain compensation elsewhere. The Albanian position received very little recognition..."<sup>660</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

## **45. SOLOVIEV ON NATIONALISM AND CATHOLICISM**

The reign of Alexander III was an era of peace and stability during which the old authoritarian regime was not seriously threatened. At the same time it was not a period of intellectual stagnation; and two powerful thinkers set about examining the foundations of the Russian autocracy. The philosopher Vladimir Soloviev examined it particularly in relation to what he regarded as its weakest point, its tendency towards unenlightened nationalism, while the law professor and over-procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev, examined it in relation to the fashionable contemporary theories of liberal democracy and Church-State separation.

Soloviev was, for good and for ill, the most influential thinker in Russia until his death in 1900, and for some time after. In 1874, at the age of 23, he defended his master's thesis, "The Crisis of Western Philosophy", at the Moscow Theological Academy. Coming at a time when the influence of western positivism was at its peak, this bold philosophical vindication of the Christian faith drew the attention of many; and his lectures on Godmanhood in St. Petersburg were attended by both Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.<sup>661</sup>

Soloviev's strictly philosophical works cannot be considered Orthodox. His philosophy of "pan-unity" contained pantheistic elements; there is evidence that his lectures on Godmanhood were plagiarized from the works of Schelling<sup>662</sup>; and his theory of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, which was stimulated by three visions he supposedly had of her (one in the British Museum, another in Egypt), was both heretical in themselves and gave birth to other heresies.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> "It was a notable event," writes Rosamund Bartlett, "not because Tolstoy found the lecture interesting (he dismissed it as 'childish nonsense'), but because it was the only occasion on which he and Dostoyevsky were in spitting distance of each other. Strakhov was a friend of both the great writers, but he honoured Tolstoy's request not to introduce him to anyone, and so the two passed like ships in the night, to their subsequent mutual regret. Much later, Tolstoy described in letters the horrible experience of having to sit in a stuffy hall which was packed so full that there were even high-society ladies in evening dress perched on window ledges. As someone who went out of his way to avoid being part of the crowd, and who disdained having anything to do with polite society or fashion, his blood must have boiled at having to wait until the emaciated figure of the twenty-four-year-old philosopher decided to make a grand theatrical entrance in his billowing white silk cravat. Tolstoy certainly did not have the patience to sit and listen to some boy 'with a huge head consisting of hair and eyes' spout pretentious pseudo-profundities. After the first string of German quotations and references to cherubim and seraphim, he got up and walked out, leaving Strakhov to carry on listening to the 'ravings of a lunatic'" (*Tolstoy. A Russian Life*, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, p. 267).

<sup>662</sup> Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Biography of Blessed Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), volume 1, 1971, pp. 103-104.

<sup>663</sup> For Soloviev Sophia was the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. For some of his heretical followers, such as Protopriest Sergius Bulgakov, it was the Mother of God.

Having said that, his views on the history of philosophy are interesting and insightful. Thus in his master's thesis he followed Kireyevsky in arguing that western philosophy was the product of rationalism undermining faith: "its successive stages were the rationalization of faith (scholasticism), the total rejection of faith, and finally the total negation of all immediate knowledge - a conception that threw doubt on the substantiality of the external world and identified being with thought (Hegel)."<sup>664</sup>

However, Soloviev's social and political views are of greater interest than his metaphysics. He shared with the Slavophiles a fervent faith in the Divine mission of Russia<sup>665</sup>, but was fiercely critical of the nationalism of the later Slavophiles. He admired Peter the Great, but not Byzantine or Muscovite Orthodoxy and did not accept Khomiakov's and Kireyevsky's claim that Orthodoxy was exclusively the One True Church. He felt drawn to Roman Catholic universalism...

In his article "Three Forces" (1877), Soloviev identified three basic forces as having determined the whole of world history; in his time they were incarnate especially in Islam, the West and the Russian Orthodox Autocracy. Soloviev characterized Islam as being under the dominating influence of what he called the first force, which he defined as "the striving to subject humanity in all its spheres and at every level of its life to one supreme principle which in its exclusive unity strives to mix and confuse the whole variety of private forms, to suppress the independence of the person and the freedom of private life." Democracy he characterized as being under the dominating influence of the second force, which he defined as "the striving to destroy the stronghold of dead unity, to give freedom everywhere to private forms of life, freedom to the person and his activity; ... the extreme expression of this force is general egoism and anarchy and a multitude of separate individuals without an inner bond." The third force, which Soloviev believed was incarnate especially in the Slavic world, is defined as "giving a positive content to the two other forces, freeing them from their exclusivity, and reconciling the unity of the higher principle with the free multiplicity of private forms and elements."<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 375.

<sup>665</sup> Soloviev wrote: "A normal people that wishes to praise its nationality, in this very praise expressed its national ideal, that which is best for it, which it desires more than anything else. Thus the Frenchman speaks about beautiful France and the glory of France (la belle France, la gloire du nom français); the Englishman lovingly speaks about Old England (old England); the German goes higher, and, attaching an ethnic character to its national ideal, proudly says: die deutsche Treue [German faithfulness]. But what does the Russian people say in such cases, what does it praise Russia for? Does it call her beautiful or old, does it speak about the glory of Russia or Russia honourableness or faithfulness? You know that it says nothing of the sort, and, when wishing to express its finest feelings for the homeland, speaks only about Holy Russia. That is its ideal: not a liberal, not a political and not an aesthetic ideal, not even a formal-aesthetic ideal, but a moral-religious ideal." ("Love for the people and the Russian popular ideal", 1884).

<sup>666</sup> Soloviev, "Tri Sily" (Three Forces), *Sobranie Sochinenij* (Collected Works), St. Petersburg, 1911-1914, volume I, pp. 228-229. This article was republished in 1989 in *Novij Mir*.

As N.O. Lossky interprets him: "The relation between free theocracy and the past history of mankind can be established if we examine the 'three fundamental forces' which govern human evolution. One of these forces is *centripetal*: its purpose is to subordinate humanity to one supreme principle, to do away with all the manifoldness of particular forms, suppressing the freedom of personal life. The second force is *centrifugal*; it denies the importance of general unifying principles. The result of the exclusive action of the first force would be 'one master and a dead multitude of slaves': the extreme expression of the second force would be, on the contrary, 'general egoism and anarchy, a multitude of separate units without any inner bond.' The third force 'lends the positive content to the first two, relieves them of their exclusiveness, reconciles the unity of the supreme principle with the free multiplicity of particular forms and elements and thus creates the wholeness of the universal human organism giving it a peaceful inner life.'

"The third force, which is called upon to give human evolution its absolute content, can only be a revelation of the higher divine world; the nation which is to manifest this force must only serve as an *intermediary* between mankind and the world and be its free and conscious instrument. Such a nation must not have any specific limited task; it is not called upon to work out the forms and elements of human existence, but only to impart a living soul, to give life and wholeness to disrupted and benumbed humanity through its union with the eternal divine principle. Such a people has no need for any special prerogatives, any particular powers or outward gifts, for it does not act of its own accord, it does not fulfil a task of its own. All that is required of the people which is the bearer of the third divine force is that it should be free from limitedness and one-sidedness, should elevate itself over the narrow specialized interests, that it should not assert itself with an exclusive energy in some particular lower sphere of activity and knowledge, that it should be indifferent to the whole of this life with its petty interests. It must wholly believe in the positive reality of the higher world and be submissive to it. These qualities undoubtedly belong to the racial character of the Slavs, and in particular to the national character of the Russian people.'

"Soloviev hopes, therefore, that the Slavs and especially Russia, will lay the foundations of a free theocracy. He also tries to prove this by the following arguments of a less general nature. 'Our people's outer form of a servant, Russia's miserable position in the economic and other respects, so far from being an argument against her calling, actually confirms it. For the supreme power to which the Russian people has to introduce mankind is not of this world, and external wealth and order are of no moment for it. Russia's great historical mission, from which alone her immediate tasks derive importance, is a religious mission in the highest sense of this word.'"<sup>667</sup>

The problem with the Slavic world and Orthodoxy, Soloviev thought, was its nationalism. He ignored the distinction later made by Bishop Nikolai

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<sup>667</sup> Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London, 1952.

Velimirović between a national church, which is desirable, and a national faith, which is not – because it denies universalism. “Our faith is all-inclusive, universal, and not national. What then is national of ours? The church is national, that is, it is a covering letter of one and the same life-giving faith of different people. There are no distinctions whatsoever in the faith between different Orthodox peoples. The dogmas of the truth and the dogmas of conduct are the same in Orthodox Vladivostok, in Jerusalem, in Belgrade and in Athens. There are and there should be distinctions. It would be dangerous and ridiculous to call the dogmas of truth and conduct national.

“But our churches are national. There are differences in language, differences in customs and in the expression of the faith as well; hence a different organization of the churches is what by and large makes the Orthodox churches national or specifically organized and administratively independent...”<sup>668</sup>

Nevertheless, if Soloviev tended to ignore the ideal, he was not wrong in seeing nationalist particularism as having invaded and to some degree corrupted some of the Local Churches. Thus in 1885 he wrote with regard to the Bulgarian schism: “Once the principle of nationality is introduced into the Church as the main and overriding principle, once the Church is recognized to be an attribute of the people, it naturally follows that the State power that rules the people must also rule the Church that belongs to the people. The national Church is necessarily subject to the national government, and in such a case a special church authority can exist only for show...”<sup>669</sup>

Soloviev feared that Russia’s political ambitions in the Balkans and the Middle East were crudely imperialist and did not serve her own deepest interests, but rather the petty nationalisms of other nations. Thus in “The Russian Idea” (1888) he wrote: “The true greatness of Russia is a dead letter for our pseudo-patriots, who want to impose on the Russian people a historical mission in their image and in the limits of their own understanding. Our national work, if we are to listen to them, is something that couldn’t be more simple and that depends on one force only – the force of arms. To beat up the expiring Ottoman empire, and then crush the monarchy of the Habsburgs, putting in the place of these states a bunch of small independent national kingdoms that are only waiting for this triumphant hour of their final liberation in order to hurl themselves at each other. Truly, it was worth Russia suffering and struggling for a thousand years, and becoming Christian with St. Vladimir and European with Peter the Great, constantly in the meantime occupying its unique place between East and West, and all this just so as in the final analysis to become the weapon of the ‘great idea’ of the Serbs and the ‘great idea’ of the Bulgarians!

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<sup>668</sup> Velimirović, “A National Church but not a National Faith”, in *Sobrana Dela*, Himmelstar, 1986; translated in *The New Chrysostom*, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2011, pp. 136-137.

<sup>669</sup> Soloviev, “Golos Moskvyy” (The Voice of Moscow), 14 March, 1885; quoted in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*

“But that is not the point, they will tell us: the true aim of our national politics is Constantinople. Apparently, they have already ceased to take the Greeks into account – after all, they also have their ‘great idea’ of pan-hellenism. But the most important thing is to know: with what, and in the name of what can we enter Constantinople? What can we bring there except the pagan idea of the absolute state and the principles of caesaropapism, which were borrowed by us from the Greeks and which have already destroyed Byzantium? In the history of the world there are mysterious events, but there are no senseless ones. No! It is not this Russia which we see now, the Russia which has betrayed its best memories, the lessons of Vladimir and Peter the Great, the Russia which is possessed by blind nationalism and unfettered obscurantism, it is not this Russia that will one day conquer the second Rome and put an end to the fateful eastern question...”<sup>670</sup>

Soloviev believed passionately in freeing the Church from the shackles imposed on her by the State. In an 1885 article he wrote: “Enter into the situation of our churchman, Spiritual initiative on his own moral responsibility is not allowed. Religious and ecclesiastical truth is completely preserved in a state strongbox, under state seal and the guard of trustworthy sentries. The security is complete, but living interest is lacking. Somewhere far off a religious struggle is going on, but it does not touch us. Our pastors do not have opponents who enjoy the same rights they do. The enemies of Orthodoxy exist outside the sphere of our activity, and if they ever turn up inside it, then only with bound hands and a gag in their mouth.”<sup>671</sup>

If these shackles were removed, Russian Orthodoxy could not only be able to preach to the heterodox more honestly and freely: she could also fulfil her own needs. For “Russia left to herself,” he wrote, “lonely Russia, is powerless. It is not good for man to be alone: this word of God is applicable also to collective man, to a whole people. Only in union with that which she lacks can Russia utilize that which she possesses, that is, in full measure both for herself and for the whole world.”<sup>672</sup>

In union with whom was Russia to quench her loneliness? In the 1880s Soloviev was gradually coming to the view that the answer to this question was: the Roman papacy. A union between the Russian emperor and the Roman pope would both cut off Russia’s and Orthodoxy’s tendency towards nationalism and solve the problem of the union of the churches, which was much discussed in aristocratic and intellectual circles at the time. In 1884 Soloviev visited the Croatian Catholic Bishop Joseph Strossmayer, who, as we have seen, had been one of the principal opponents of the new dogma of papal

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<sup>670</sup> Soloviev, in N.G. Fyodorovsky, *V poiskakh svoego puti: Rossia mezhdru Evropoj i Aziej* (In Search of her own Path: Russia between Europe and Asia), Moscow, 1997, pp. 334-335.

<sup>671</sup> Soloviev, “Kak probudit’ nashi tserkovnie sily?” in Paul Valliere, “The Liberal Tradition in Russian Orthodox Theology”, in J. Breck, J. Meyendorff and E. Silk (eds.), *The Legacy of St Vladimir*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990, p. 103.

<sup>672</sup> Soloviev, “Evrejstvo i khristianskij vopros”, in Valliere, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

infallibility at the First Vatican Council and who was sympathetic to Soloviev's idea. On a second visit, Strossmayer told him that he had sent a copy of his French pamphlet *L'idée russe* to the pope, whose reaction had been: "beautiful", but "impossible". On returning to Russia, Soloviev found that there was an almost complete ban on his journalistic activities, and his attempt to meet the Tsar was foiled. For during his trip to Europe, as Mark Everitt writes, "Pobedonstsev had written to the Emperor to draw his attention to an article in the Moscow press which discussed *L'idée russe*: 'You will see to what pitch of insanity a learned and clever Russian can come, and the son of [the famous historian] Sergei Soloviev, too. Pride, reinforced by the veneration in which he is held by some ladies, has driven him on to this erroneous path.' The Emperor replied, 'It truly is frightfully sad, and particularly when you think of dear S. Soloviev' - the Emperor's own tutor in his youth. And that was the end of Soloviev's grand design..."<sup>673</sup>

Soloviev did manage to get his ideas published abroad in 1889, in *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle*. In view of their continuing relevance in our ecumenical age, it is worth examining them...

The Roman papacy was to be preferred above the Orthodox Church as the partner to the Russian empire because, in Soloviev's opinion, the Orthodox Church had become a group of national Churches, rather than the Universal Church, and had therefore lost the right to represent Christ. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church had a wealth of mystical contemplation, which had to be preserved. "In Eastern Christendom for the last thousand years religion has been identified with personal piety, and prayer has been regarded as the one and only religious activity. The Western church, without disparaging individual piety as the true germ of all religion, seeks the development of this germ and its blossoming into a social activity organized for the glory of God and the universal good of mankind. The Eastern prays, the Western prays and labours."

However, only a supranational spiritual power independent of the State could be a worthy partner of the State, forming the basis of a universal theocracy. For "here below, the Church has not the perfect unity of the heavenly Kingdom, but nevertheless she must have a certain real unity, a bond at once organic and spiritual which constitutes her a concrete institution, a living body and a moral individual. Though she does not include the whole of mankind in an actual material sense, she is nevertheless *universal* insofar as she cannot be confined exclusively to any one nation or group of nations, but must have an international centre from which to spread throughout the whole universe...

"Were she not one and universal, she could not serve as the foundation of the positive unity of all peoples, which is her chief mission. Were she not infallible, she could not guide mankind in the true way; she would be a blind

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<sup>673</sup> Everitt, "Vladimir Soloviev: A Russian Newman?" *Sobornost'*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1979. P. 36.

leader of the blind. Finally were she not independent, she could not fulfil her duty towards society; she would become the instrument of the powers of this world and would completely fail in her mission...

“If the particular spiritual families which between them make up mankind are in reality to form a single Christian family, a single Universal Church, they must be subject to a common fatherhood embracing all Christian nations. To assert that there exist in reality nothing more than national Churches is to assert that the members of a body exist in and for themselves and that the body itself has no reality. On the contrary, Christ did not found any particular Church. He created them all in the real unity of the Universal Church which He entrusted to Peter as the one supreme representative of the divine Fatherhood towards the whole family of the sons of Man.

“It was by no mere chance that Jesus Christ specially ascribed to the first divine Hypostasis, the heavenly Father, that divine-human act which made Simon Bar-Jona the first social father of the whole human family and the infallible master of the school of mankind.”

For Soloviev, wrote N.O. Lossky, “the ideal of the Russian people is of [a] *religious* nature, it finds its expression in the idea of ‘Holy Russia’; the capacity of the Russian people to combine Eastern and Western principles has been historically proved by the success of Peter the Great’s reforms; the capacity of national self-renunciation, necessary for the recognition of the Pope as the Primate of the Universal Church, is inherent in the Russian people, as may be seen, among other things, from the calling in of the Varangians. Soloviev himself gave expression to this characteristic of the Russian people when he said that it was ‘better to give up patriotism than conscience’, and taught that the cultural mission of a great nation is not a *privilege*: it must not dominate, but *serve* other peoples and all mankind.

“Soloviev’s Slavophile messianism never degenerated into a narrow nationalism. In the nineties he was looked upon as having joined the camp of the Westernizers. In a series of articles he violently denounced the epigones of Slavophilism who had perverted its original conception. In the article ‘Idols and Ideals’, written in 1891, he speaks of ‘the transformation of the lofty and all-embracing Christian ideals into the coarse and limited idols of our modern paganism... National messianism was the main idea of the old Slavophiles; this idea, in some form of other, was shared by many peoples; it assumed a pre-eminently religious and mystical character with the Poles (Towianski) and with some French dreamers of the thirties and forties (Michelet, Ventra, etc.). What is the relation of such national messianism to the true Christian idea? We will not say that there is a contradiction of principle between them. The true Christian ideal can assume this national messianic form, but it becomes then very *easily pervertible* (to use an expression of ecclesiastical writers); i.e., it can easily change into the corresponding idol of anti-Christian nationalism, which did happen in fact.’ ...

“Soloviev struggled in his works against every distortion of the Christian ideal of general harmony; he also struggled against all the attempts made by man to satisfy his selfishness under the false pretence of serving a noble cause. Such are for instance the aims of chauvinistic nationalism. Many persons believe, Soloviev tells us, that in order to serve the imaginary interests of their people, ‘everything is permitted, the aim justifies the means, black turns white, lies are preferable to truth and violence is glorified and considered as valor... This is first of all an insult to that very nationality which we desire to serve.’ In reality, ‘peoples flourished and were exalted only when they did not serve their own interests as a goal in itself, but pursued higher, *general* ideal goods.’ Trusting the highly sensitive conscience of the Russian people, Soloviev wrote in his article, ‘What is Demanded of a Russian Party?’ ‘If instead of doping themselves with Indian opium, our Chinese neighbors suddenly took a liking to the poisonous mushrooms which abound in the Siberian woods, we would be sure to find Russian jingos, who in their ardent interest in Russian trade, would want Russia to induce the Chinese government to permit the free entry of poisonous mushrooms into the Celestial empire... Nevertheless, every plain Russian will say that no matter how vital an interest may be, Russia’s honor is also worth something; and, according to Russian standards, this honor definitely forbids a shady deal to become an issue of national politics.’

“Like Tiutchev, Soloviev dreamed of Russia becoming a Christian world monarchy; yet he wrote in a tone full of anxiety: ‘Russia’s life has not yet determined itself completely, it is still torn by the struggle between the principle of light and that of darkness. Let Russia become a Christian realm, even without Constantinople, a Christian realm in the full sense of the word, that is, one of justice and mercy, and all the rest will be surely added unto this.’”<sup>674</sup>

Dostoyevsky disagreed with his friend on this point, considering the papacy to be, not so much a Church as a State. Nor did he agree with the doctrine of papal infallibility, which Soloviev also rejected.

As Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote in 1890, in his review of Soloviev’s book: “A sinful man cannot be accepted as the supreme head of the Universal Church without this bride of Christ being completely dethroned. Accepting the compatibility of the infallibility of religious edicts with a life of sin, with a wicked will, would amount to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of wisdom by admitting His compatibility with a sinful mind. Khomiakov very justly says that besides the holy inspiration of the apostles and prophets, Scripture tells us of only one inspiration – inspiration of the obsessed. But if this sort of inspiration was going on in Rome, the Church would not be the Church of Christ, but the Church of His enemy. And this is exactly how Dostoyevsky defines it in his ‘Grand Inquisitor’ who says to Christ: ‘We are not with Thee, but with him’... Dostoyevsky in his ‘Grand Inquisitor’ characterised the Papacy as a doctrine which is attractive exactly because of its worldly

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<sup>674</sup> Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1952, pp. 115-117.

power, but devoid of the spirit of Christian communion with God and of contempt for the evil of the world..."<sup>675</sup>

As a warning against the dangers of a Russian nationalism lacking the universalist dimension of the early Slavophiles and Dostoyevsky, Soloviev's critique had value. But his attempt to tear Russia away from Constantinople and towards Rome was misguided. It was opposed by many writers, but most effectively by Fr. Vladimir Guettée, a French historian of the Church and former Catholic who had become a Russian Orthodox priest. Soloviev received confession and communion from a uniate priest in 1896, but received the last rites from an Orthodox priest on his deathbed in 1900)...<sup>676</sup>

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Soloviev's papist sympathies had an unhealthy influence on other writers, such as D.S. Merezhkovsky, not to mention the many educated Russians who read French and Catholic writers more readily than Russian ones. Thus Merezhkovsky, according to Sergei Firsov, "found it completely normal to compare Roman Catholicism headed by the Pope and the Russian kingdom headed by the Autocrat. Calling these theocracies (that is, attempts to realise the City of God in the city of man) false, Merezhkovsky pointed out that they came by different paths to the same result: the western - to turning the Church into a State, and the eastern - to engulfing the Church in the State. 'Autocracy and Orthodoxy are two halves of one religious whole,' wrote Merezhkovsky, 'just as the papacy and Catholicism are. The Tsar is not just the Tsar, the head of the State, but also the head of the Church, the first priest, the anointed of God, that is, in the final, if historically not yet realised, yet mystically necessary extent of his power - 'the Vicar of Christ', the same Pope, Caesar and Pope in one.'"<sup>677</sup>

To the educated Russians like Soloviev who were being seduced by Catholicism, St. Ambrose of Optina (+1891) wrote the following letter: "In vain do some of the Orthodox marvel at the current propaganda of the Roman Church, at the feigned selflessness and activity of her missionaries and at the zeal of the Latin sisters of mercy, and incorrectly ascribe to the Latin Church such importance, as if by her apostasy from the Orthodox Church, the latter remained no longer such, and has the need to seek unification with the former. On rigorous examination, this opinion proves to be false; and the energetic Latin activity not only does not evoke surprise, but, on the contrary, arouses deep sorrow in the hearts of right-thinking people, who understand the truth.

"The Eastern Orthodox Church, from apostolic times until now, observes unchanged and unblemished by innovations both the Gospel and Apostolic

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<sup>675</sup> Khrapovitsky, "The Infallibility of the Pope according to Vladimir Soloviev", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 37, N 4, July-August, 1987, pp. 37, 43.

<sup>676</sup> Everitt, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>677</sup> Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune peremen (konets 1890-kh - 1918 g.)* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes (the end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2002, pp. 39-40.

teachings, as well as the Tradition of the Holy Fathers and resolutions of the Ecumenical Councils, at which God-bearing men, having gathered from throughout the entire world, in a conciliar manner composed the divine Symbol of the Orthodox Faith [the Creed], and having proclaimed it aloud to the whole universe, in all respects perfect and complete, forbade on pain of terrible punishments any addition to it, any abridging, alteration, or rearrangement of even one iota of it. The Roman Church departed long ago into heresy and innovation. As far back as Basil the Great, certain bishops of Rome were condemned by him in his letter to Eusebius of Samosata, 'They do not know and do not wish to know the truth; they argue with those who proclaim the truth to them, and assert their heresy.'

"The Apostle Paul commands us to separate ourselves from those damaged by heresy and not to seek union with them, saying, *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself* (Titus 3:10-11). The Catholic [universal] Orthodox Church, not two times, but multiple times tried to bring to reason the local Roman Church; but, despite all the just attempts at persuading the former, the latter remained persistent in its erroneous manner of thinking and acting.

"Already back in the seventh century, the false philosophizing that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son was conceived in the Western Church. At first, certain popes rose up against this new reasoning, calling it heretical. Pope Damasus proclaims in a Council resolution: 'He who thinks rightly about the Father and the Son but improperly about the Holy Spirit is a heretic' (*Encyclical* § 5). Other popes, such as Leo III and John VIII, also affirmed the same thing. But most of their successors, having been carried away by rights of domination and finding many worldly benefits in this for themselves, dared to modify the Orthodox dogma about the procession of the Holy Spirit, contrary to the decisions of the seven Ecumenical Councils, and also contrary to the clear words of the Lord Himself in the Gospel: *Which proceedeth from the Father* (John 15:26).

"But just as one mistake -- which is not considered a mistake -- always brings another one in its train, and one evil begets another, so the same happened with the Roman Church. This incorrect philosophizing that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son, having just barely appeared in the West, already then gave birth to other similar offspring, and instituted little by little other novelties, for the most part contradictory to the commandments of our Saviour clearly portrayed in the Gospel, such as: sprinkling instead of immersion in the mystery of Baptism, exclusion of laypersons from the Divine Chalice and the use of unleavened bread instead of leavened bread in the Eucharist, and excluding from the Divine Liturgy the invocation of the All-Holy and Life-Giving and All-Effectuating Spirit. It also introduced novelties that violated the ancient Apostolic rites of the Catholic Church, such as: the exclusion of baptized infants from Chrismation and reception of the Most-Pure Mysteries, the exclusion of married men from the priesthood, the declaration of the Pope as infallible and as the *locum tenens* of Christ, and so on. In this way, it

overturned the entire ancient Apostolic office that accomplishes almost all the Mysteries and all the ecclesiastical institutions--the office, which before had been preserved by the ancient holy and Orthodox Church of Rome, being at that time the most honored member of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church (*Encyclical* § 5, item 12).

“Nevertheless, the main heresy of the Roman Church is not in subject matter, but in action; there is the fabricated dogma of supremacy, or rather, prideful striving for dominance of the bishops of Rome over the four other Eastern Patriarchs. For the sake of this dominance, supporters of the Roman Church placed their pope above the canons and foundations of the Ecumenical Councils, believing in his infallibility. But history truthfully testifies as to just what this papal infallibility is. About Pope John XXIII, it was stated in the decision of the Council of Constance, which deposed this pope: ‘It has been proved that Pope John is an inveterate and incorrigible sinner, and he was and is an unrighteous man, justly indicted for homicide, poisoning, and other serious crimes; a man who often and persistently before various dignitaries claimed and argued that the human soul dies and burns out together with the human body, like souls of animals and cattle, and that the dead will by no means resurrect in the last day.’ The lawless acts of Pope Alexander VI and his sons were so monstrous that, in the opinion of his contemporaries, this pope was trying to establish on Earth the kingdom of Satan, and not the Kingdom of God. Pope Julius II revelled in the blood of Christians, constantly arming--for his own purposes--one Christian nation against another (*Spiritual Conversation*, No. 41, 1858). There are many other examples, testifying to the great falls and fallibility of popes, but there is no time to talk about them now. With such historical evidence of its impairment through heresy and of the falls of its popes, is it warranted for the papists to glory in the false dignity of the Roman Church? Is it just that they should abase the Orthodox Eastern Church, whose infallibility is based not on any one representative, but on the Gospel and Apostolic teachings and on the canons and decisions of the seven Ecumenical and nine Local Councils? At these Councils were God-inspired and holy men, gathered from the entire Christian world, and they established everything relating to the requirements and spiritual needs of the Church, according to the Holy Scriptures. So, do the papists behave soundly, who, for the sake of worldly goals, place the person of their pope above the canons of the Ecumenical Councils, considering their pope as more than infallible?

“For all the stated reasons, the Catholic Eastern Church severed its communion with the local Church of Rome, which had fallen away from the truth and from the canons of the catholic Orthodox Church. Just as the Roman bishops had begun with pride, they are also ending with pride. They are intensifying their argument that allegedly the Orthodox Catholic Church fell away from their local Church. But that is wrong and even ridiculous. Truth testifies that the Roman Church fell away from the Orthodox Church. Although for the sake of imaginary rightness papists promote the view that during the time of union with the Catholic Orthodox Church, their patriarch was first and senior among the five patriarchs, this was true only for the sake of Imperial

Rome, and not because of some spiritual merit or authority over the other patriarchs. It is wrong that they called their Church "Catholic", i.e. universal. A part can never be named the whole; the Roman Church before its fall from Orthodoxy, comprised only a fifth part of the one Catholic Church. Especially since it rejected the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils the Roman Church should not be called catholic, as it follows its own incorrect theorizing.

“To some, the sheer numbers and widespread distribution of adherents to the Latin Church is eye-catching, and therefore those who unreliably understand truth deliberate: should it not be for this reason that the Latin Church be called Ecumenical or Catholic? But this view is extremely erroneous, because nowhere in Holy Scriptures are special spiritual rights ascribed to great numbers and large quantity. The Lord clearly showed that the sign of the true Catholic Church does not consist in great numbers and quantity when he spoke in the Gospels, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom* (Luke 12:32). There is another example in Holy Scripture which does not favour quantity. Upon the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was divided in the presence of his son, and Holy Scripture presents ten tribes as having fallen away; whereas two, having remained faithful to their duty, had not fallen away. Therefore, the Latin Church in vain tries to prove its correctness by its multitude, quantity, and widespread distribution.

“At the Ecumenical Councils, a completely different indication of the Ecumenical Church was designated by the Holy Fathers, i.e. determined in council: to believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and not simply in a universal, or everywhere-present church. Although the Roman Church has followers everywhere in the world, since it did not maintain inviolate the catholic and apostolic decrees, but rather deviated towards innovation and incorrect philosophies, it does not at all belong to the One, Holy and Apostolic Church.

“Those well-disposed towards the Latins likewise extremely erroneously reason that, firstly, upon the falling away of the West from Orthodoxy, something as if became lacking in the Catholic Church. This loss was replaced long ago by all-wise Providence--it was the foundation in the North of the Orthodox Church of Russia. Secondly, they think that allegedly for the sake of the former seniority and size of the Roman Church, the Orthodox Church has need of union with it. However, we are speaking not of a human judgment, but a judgment of God. Apostle Paul clearly says, *What communion hath light with darkness?* (II Corinthians 6:14) – i.e., the light of Christ's truth can never be combined with the darkness of heresy. The Latins don't want to leave their heresy, and they persist, as the words of Basil the Great testifies about them what has been proven over many centuries, "They do not know the truth and do not wish to know; they argue with those who proclaim the truth to them and assert their heresy," as stated above.

“Instead of entertaining the above-mentioned thoughts, those supportive of the Latins, would be better off thinking about what is said in the psalms, *I have*

*hated the congregation of evil-doers (Psalm 25:5), and to pity those who, for the sake of domination and avarice and other worldly aims and benefits, scandalized almost the entire world through the Inquisition and cunning Jesuit intrigues, and even now outrage and abuse the Orthodox in Turkey through their missionaries. Latin missionaries don't care about converting to the Christian faith the native Turks, but they strive to pervert from the true path the Orthodox Greeks and Bulgarians, using for this purpose all sorts of unpleasant means and schemes. Is this not craftiness, and is this craftiness not malicious? Would it be prudent to seek unity with such people? For the same reason, should one be surprised at the feigned diligence and selflessness of such figures, i.e. the Latin missionaries and sisters of mercy? They are downright pitiable ascetics. They strive to convert and lead people, not to Christ, but to their pope.*

“What should we say in response to these questions: can the Latin Church and other religions be called the New Israel and ark of salvation? And how can one understand the Eucharist of this Church of Rome? Only the Church of the right-believing, undamaged by heretical philosophizing, can be called the New Israel. Holy Apostle John the Theologian says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all were not of us (I John 2:19)*. And Holy Apostle Paul says, *One Lord, one faith (Ephesians 4:5)*, i.e. one is the true faith, and not every belief is good--as those having separated themselves from the one true Church recklessly think, about whom Holy Apostle Jude writes, *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit (Jude 1:18-19)*. Therefore, how can these, who are alien to the spirit of truth, be called the New Israel? Or, how can they be called a haven of salvation for anyone, when both one and the other cannot be effectuated without the grace of the Holy Spirit?

“In the Orthodox Church, it is believed that the bread and wine in the mystery of the Eucharist are transubstantiated by the invocation and descent of the Holy Spirit. But the Latins, as mentioned above, considered this invocation unnecessary and excluded it from their Liturgy. Thus, he who understands - let him understand about the Eucharist of the Latins.

“And another question: if, as it is said, except for the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is called the Orthodox Church, salvation in other religions is doubtful, then why is this truth not preached openly in Russia? To this question the answer is very simple and clear. In Russia religious tolerance is allowed, and the heterodox occupy important posts along with the Orthodox: heads of educational institutions for the most part are heterodox; leaders of provinces and districts of cities are often heterodox; regimental and battalion commanders are not infrequently heterodox. Wherever a clergyman starts openly proclaiming that outside of the Orthodox Church there is no salvation, heterodox of religious rank take offense. From such a situation, Russian Orthodox clergy have acquired the habit and engrained characteristic

of talking about this subject evasively. For this reason, and from continual interaction with heterodox, but more from reading their works, perhaps some began to be lax in their thoughts about the hope of salvation and other religions.

“Despite the Orthodox Church’s spirit of meekness and the love of peace and patience of her pastors and followers, in the West there has been published during the preceding centuries by followers of different Christian creeds, and predominantly in our times, such a multitude of books against the teaching of the Eastern Church that not only would it be difficult to appraise their merit, it would be hard to enumerate them... Such books in general are filled with slanders, fables, blame, obvious inventions and lies, and especially poisonous mental cobwebs, with the obvious goal of forming in Europe a spirit hostile to the Eastern Church, and especially to our homeland, and, having shaken the faith of our Orthodox Church, to seduce her followers from the path of truth. But since they are published under tempting names, in agreeable forms, with such typographical neatness that they unconsciously lure the curiosity of readers, not a few of whom are found in our homeland, where these works penetrate by dark paths, and who, having a superficial understanding of the subjects of Christian doctrine, cannot help but be carried away by thoughts contrary to the truth. The writers of the Latin Church have now especially armed themselves against the Orthodox, proclaiming the supremacy of their pope and local Roman Church over all governments and local Churches and nations of the world. Predominantly at the current time those busy with this are the Jesuits in France, who, using the omnipresence of the French language, are intensifying some sort of feverish activity by means of works in that language to implant their manner of thought everywhere against the doctrine and hierarchical structure of the Eastern Church--not ashamed for this purpose to create the most heinous fictions, obvious lies and shameless distortion of historical truths. Many of the educated Orthodox, reading these works in the French language, and not reading their own in Russian about the Orthodox faith, can easily believe the fine-spun lies instead of the truth, which they do not know well...”<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> St. Ambrose, “A reply to one well disposed towards the Latin church. Regarding the unjust glorying of the Papists in the imaginary dignity of their church”.

## 46. POBEDONOSTSEV ON LIBERALISM AND DEMOCRACY

The relationship between Church and State in Russia since Peter the Great had leaned in a caesaropapist, absolutist direction, with the Tsar having too great a control over the decisions of the Church hierarchy from a canonical point of view. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this question became increasingly topical, with general agreement on the nature of the problem, but much less on its solution. The debate centred especially on the personality and policies of Pobedonostsev, who from April, 1880 to October, 1905 was over-procurator of the Russian Holy Synod. His policy of Orthodox conservative nationalism was dominant in Russia until the publication of the October manifesto in 1905, at which point he resigned... Since Pobedonostsev personified this policy of the supremacy of the Orthodox Autocracy perhaps even more than the tsars whom he served, and since his influence extended far beyond his role as over-procurator (he was instrumental in censoring Soloviev, among others), he was reviled more than any other figure by the liberal press. He was portrayed as standing for the complete, tyrannical domination by the State of every aspect of Russian life; and among the epithets the press gave him were "prince of darkness, hatred and unbelief", "state vampire", "the great inquisitor" and "the greatest deicide in the whole of Russian history".<sup>679</sup>

These were vile slanders; for Pobedonostev was a pious man who believed in the Church, and educated the future Tsar Nicholas on the necessity of his being a servant of the Church. And although he never tried to correct the uncanonical state of Church-State relations, and even expressed the view that Peter the Great's removal of the patriarchate was "completely lawful", his work as over-procurator was in fact very beneficial. Thus he did a great deal for the development of parish schools, an essential counter-measure to the spread of liberal and atheist education in the secular schools, for the spread of the Word of God in various languages throughout the empire, for the improvement in the lot of the parish priest and for an enormous (fourfold) increase in the number of monks over the previous reign.<sup>680</sup>

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the eighteenth century tsars from Peter the Great onwards succeeded, through the lay office of over-procurator, in making the Church dependent on the State to a large degree. Finally, through his decrees of November 13, 1817 and May 15, 1824 Alexander I made the Holy Synod into a department of State. Fortunately, the over-procurators of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were in general more Orthodox than those of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But this did not change the essentially uncanonical nature of the situation...<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> A.I. Peshkov, "Kto razoriaet - mal vo Tsarstvii Khristovym'" (He who destroys is least in the Kingdom of Christ), in K.P. Pobedonostev, *Sochinenia (Works)*, St. Petersburg, p. 3.

<sup>680</sup> Firsov, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>681</sup> Peshkov provides a certain, not very convincing correction to this point of view: "It is necessary to take into account that even in the Synod he did not have that *direct* administrative power which any minister in Russia's Tsarist government possessed in the department subject to him, since the Most Holy Synod was a collegial organ, whose decision-making required the

Some of the complaints about the State's interference in Church affairs were exaggerated - for example, the Petrine decree that priests should report the contents of confession if they were seditious. As Pobedonostsev himself pointed out, this had long been a dead letter. Others, however, were serious and had major consequences - as, for example, the tendency of over-procurators to move bishops from one diocese to another.

Firsov writes: "While K.P. Pobedonostsev was over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod, the transfer of hierarchs from see to see was finally turned into a kind of 'educational' measure. The paradox consisted in the fact that 'while exalting the position of bishops from an external point of view, he [Pobedonostsev] at the same time had to increase his control over them'. The over-procurator was quite unable to square this circle: he wanted an intensification of Episcopal activity and at the same time did not want to present the hierarchs with the freedom of action that was necessary for this. State control over the Church had to be kept up. It was precisely for this reason that the over-procurator so frequently moved Vladykos from see to see. According to the calculations of a contemporary investigator, 'out of 49 diocesan bishops moved in 1881-1894, eight were moved twice and eight - three times. On average in one year three diocesan bishops were moved and three vicars; four vicars received appointments to independent sees'. In 1892-1893 alone 15 diocesan bishops and 7 vicar bishops were moved, while 14 vicar-bishops were raised to the rank of diocesan. At times the new place of their service and the composition of their flock differed strikingly from the former ones. In 1882, for example, a hierarch was transferred to Kishinev from Kazan, then in his place came the bishop of Ryazan, and he was followed by the bishop of Simbirsk.

"One can understand that this 'shuffling' could not fail to affect the attitude of hierarchs to their archpastoral duties: they were more interested in smoothing relations with the secular authorities and in getting a 'good' diocese. One must recognise that serious blame for this must attach to the long-time over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod, K.P. Pobedonostev..."<sup>682</sup>

Nevertheless, the theoretical works of Pobedonostsev demonstrate a profound understanding of the importance of the Church in Russian life and indicate that, whether his views on Church-State relations were correct or not, he knew, as few others, what was truly in the Church's interests, considering that the State could not without profound damage to itself and the nation as a whole touch upon the religious consciousness of the people, upon which its own power depended; for the people will support only that government which

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unanimity of its members. As Pobedonostev himself emphasized, '*juridically* I have no power to issue orders in the Church and the department. You have to refer to the Synod.' In particular, when Metropolitan Isidore of St. Petersburg expressed himself against the publication in Russia of the New Testament in the translation of V.A. Zhukovsky, K.P. Pobedonostev had to publish it abroad, in Berlin..." (Peshkov, *op. cit.*, p. 7)

<sup>682</sup> Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

tries to incarnate its own "idea". Thus in an article attacking the doctrine of the complete separation of Church and State that was becoming popular in Europe and Russia he wrote: "However great the power of the State, it is confirmed by nothing other than the unity of the spiritual self-consciousness between the people and the government, on the faith of the people: the power is undermined from the moment this consciousness, founded on faith, begins to divide. The people in unity with the State can bear many hardships, they can concede and hand over much to State power. Only one thing does the State power have no right to demand, only one thing will they not hand over to it – that in which every believing soul individually and all together lay down as the foundation of their spiritual being, binding themselves with eternity. There are depths which State power cannot and must not touch, so as not to disturb the root sources of faith in the souls of each and every person..."<sup>683</sup>

The problem was: the faith of the people and the ideology of the State were no longer the same. "Political science has constructed a strictly worked out teaching on the decisive separation of Church and State, a teaching in consequence of which, according to the law that does not allow a division into two of the central forces, the Church unfailingly turns out to be in fact an institution subject to the State. Together with this, the State as an institution is, according to its political ideology, separated *from every faith* and indifferent to faith. Naturally, from this point of view, the Church is represented as being nothing other than an institution satisfying one of the needs of the population that is recognized by the State – the religious need, and the State in its most recent incarnation turns to it with its right of authorization, of supervision and control, with no concern for the faith. For the State as for the supreme political institution this theory is attractive, because it promises it complete autonomy, a decisive removal of every opposition, even spiritual opposition, and the simplification of the operations of its ecclesiastical politics."<sup>684</sup>

"If the issue consists in a more exact delineation of civil society from religious society, of the ecclesiastical and spiritual from the secular, of a direct and sincere separation, without cunning or violence – in this case everybody will be for such a separation. If, coming to practical matters, they want the State to renounce the right to place pastors of the Church and from the obligation to pay for them, this will be an ideal situation... When the question matures, the State, if it wishes to make such a decision, will be obliged to return to the person to whom it belongs the right to choose pastors and bishops; in such a case it will no longer be possible to give to the Pope what belongs to the clergy and people by historical and apostolic right..."

"But they say that we must understand separation in a different, broader sense. Clever, learned people define this as follows: the State must have nothing to do with the Church, and the Church – with the State, and so

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<sup>683</sup> Pobedonostev, *Moskovskij Sbornik: Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo* (Moscow Anthology: Church and State), op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>684</sup> Pobedonostsev, op. cit., p. 266.

humanity must revolve in two broad spheres in such a way that in one sphere will be the body and in the other the spirit of humanity, and between the two spheres will be a space as great as between heaven and earth. But is that really possible? It is impossible to separate the body from the spirit; and spirit and body live one life.

“Can we expect that the Church – I’m not talking just about the Catholic, but any Church – should agree to remove from its consciousness civil society, familial society, human society – everything that is understood by the word ‘State’? Since when has it been decreed that the Church exists in order to form ascetics, fill up monasteries and express in churches the poetry of its rites and processions? No, all this is only a small part of that activity which the Church sets as her aim. She has been given another calling: *teach all nations*. That is her business. The task set before her is to form people on earth so that people of the earthly city and earthly family should be made not quite unworthy to enter the heavenly city and the heavenly community. At birth, at marriage, at death – at the most important moments of human existence, the Church is there with her three triumphant sacraments, but they say that the family is none of her business! She has been entrusted with inspiring the people with respect for the law and the authorities, and to inspire the authorities with respect for human freedom, but they say that society is none of her business!

“No, the moral principle is one. It cannot be divided in such a way that one is a private moral principle, and the other public, one secular and the other spiritual. The one moral principle embraces all relationships – private, in the home and political; and the Church, preserving the consciousness of her dignity, will never renounce her lawful influence in questions relations both to the family and to civil society. And so in demanding that the Church have nothing to do with civil society, they only give her greater strength.”<sup>685</sup>

“The most ancient and best-known system of Church-State relations is the system of the established or State Church. The State recognizes one confession out of all as being the true confession of faith and supports and protects one Church exclusively, to the prejudice of all other churches and confessions. This prejudice signifies in general that all remaining churches are not recognized as true or completely true; but it is expressed in practice in various forms and a multitude of all manner of variations, from non-recognition and alienation to, sometimes, persecution. In any case, under the influence of this system foreign confessions are subject to a certain more or less significant diminution in honour, in law and in privilege by comparison with the native, State confession. The State cannot be the representative only of the material interests of society; in such a case it would deprive itself of spiritual power and would renounce its spiritual unity with the people. The State is the stronger and more significant the clearer its spiritual representation is manifested. Only on this condition is the feeling of legality, respect for the law and trust in State power supported and strengthened in the midst of the people and in civil life. Neither

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<sup>685</sup> Pobedonostsev, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

the principle of the integrity or the good of the benefit of the State, nor even the principle of morality are sufficient in themselves to establish a firm bond between the people and State power; and the moral principle is unstable, shaky, deprived of its fundamental root when it renounces religious sanction. A State which in the name of an unbiased relationship to all beliefs will undoubtedly be deprived of this central, centrifugal force and will itself renounce every belief – whatever it may be. The trust of the people for their rulers is based on faith, that is, not only on the identity of the faith of the people and the government, but also on the simple conviction that the government has faith and acts according to faith. Therefore even pagans and Mohammedans have more trust and respect for a government which stands on the firm principles of belief, whatever it may be, than for a government which does not recognize its own faith and has an identical relationship to all beliefs.

“That is the undeniable advantage of this system. But in the course of the centuries the circumstances under which this system received its beginning changed, and there arose new circumstances under which its functioning became more difficult than before. In the age when the first foundations of European civilization and politics were laid, the Christian State was a powerfully integral and unbroken bond with the one Christian Church. Then in the midst of the Christian Church itself the original unity was shattered into many kinds of sects and different faiths, each of which began to assume to itself the significance of the one true teaching and the one true Church. Thus the State had to deal with several different teachings between which the masses of the people were distributed. With the violation of the unity and integrity in faith a period may ensue when the dominant Church, which is supported by the State, turns out to be the Church of an insignificant minority, and herself enjoys only weak sympathy, or no sympathy at all, from the masses of the people. Then important difficulties may arise in the definition of the relations between the State and its Church and the churches to which the majority of the people belong.

“From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there begins in Western Europe a conversion from the old system to the system of the *levelling* of the Christian confessions in the State – with the removal, however, of sectarians and Jews from this levelling process. [However,] the State recognizes Christianity as the essential basis of its existence and of the public well-being, and belonging to this or that church, to this or that *belief* is obligatory for every citizen.

“From 1848 this relationship of the State to the Church changes essentially: the flooding waves of liberalism break through the old dam and threaten to overthrow the ancient foundations of Christian statehood. The freedom of the State from the Church is proclaimed – it has nothing to do with the Church. The separation of the State by the Church is also proclaimed: every person is free to believe as he wants or not believe in anything. The symbol of this doctrine is the *fundamental principles* (*Grundrechte*) proclaimed by the Frankfurt parliament in 1848/1849. Although they soon cease to be considered valid legislation, they served and serve to this day as the ideal for the

introduction of liberal principles into the most recent legislation of Western Europe. Legislation in line with these principles is everywhere now. Political and civil law is dissociated from faith and membership of this or that church or sect. The State asks nobody about his faith. The registration of marriage and acts of civil status are dissociated from the Church. Complete freedom of mixed marriages is proclaimed, and the Church principle of the indissolubility of marriage is violated by facilitating divorce, which is dissociated from the ecclesiastical courts...

“Does it not follow from this that the unbelieving State is nothing other than a utopia that cannot be realized, for lack of faith is a direct denial of the State. Religion, and notably Christianity, is the spiritual basis of every law in State and civil life and of every true culture. That is why we see that the political parties that are the most hostile to the social order, the parties that radically deny the State, proclaim before everyone that religion is only a private, personal matter, of purely private and personal interest.

“[Count Cavour’s] system of ‘a free Church in a free State’ is based on abstract principles, theoretically; at its foundation is laid not the principle of faith, but the principle of religious indifferentism, or indifference to the faith, and it is placed in a necessary bond with doctrines that often preach, not tolerance and respect for the faith, but open or implied contempt for the faith, as to a bygone moment in the psychological development of personal and national life. In the abstract construction of this system, which constitutes a fruit of the newest rationalism, the Church is represented as also being an abstractly constructed political institution..., built with a definite aim like other corporations recognized in the State...

“... In fact, it is impossible for any soul that has preserved and experienced the demands of faith within its depths to agree without qualification with the rule: ‘all churches and all faiths are equal; it doesn’t matter whether it is this faith or another’. Such a soul will unfailingly reply to itself: ‘Yes, all faiths are equal, but my faith is better than any other for myself.’ Let us suppose that today the State proclaims the strictest and most exact equality of all churches and faiths before the law. Tomorrow signs will appear, from which it will be possible to conclude that the relative power of the faiths is by no means equal; and if we go 30 or 50 years on from the time of the legal equalization of the churches, it will then be discovered in fact, perhaps, that among the churches there is one which in essence has a predominant influence and rules over the minds and decisions [of men], either because it is closer to ecclesiastical truth, or because in its teaching or rites it more closely corresponds to the national character, or because its organization and discipline is more perfect and gives it more means for systematic activity, or because activists that are more lively and firm in their faith have arisen in its midst...

“And so a *free State* can lay down that it has nothing to do with a *free Church*; only the free Church, if it is truly founded on faith, will not accept this decree and will not adopt an indifferent attitude to *the free State*. The Church cannot

refuse to exert its influence on civil and social life; and the more active it is, the more it feels within itself an inner, active force, and the less is it able to adopt an indifferent attitude towards the State. The Church cannot adopt such an attitude without renouncing its own Divine calling, if it retains faith in it and the consciousness of duty bound up with it. On the Church there lies the duty to teach and instruct; to the Church there belongs the performance of the sacraments and the rites, some of which are bound up with the most important acts and civil life. In this activity the Church of necessity enters ceaselessly into touch with social and civil life (not to speak of other cases, it is sufficient to point to questions of marriage and education). And so to the degree that the State, in separating itself from the Church, retains for itself the administration exclusively of the civil part of all these matters and removes from itself the administration of the spiritual-moral part, the Church will of necessity enter into the function abandoned by the State, and in separation from it will little by little come to control completely and exclusively that spiritual-moral influence which constitutes a necessary, real force for the State. The State will retain only a material and, perhaps, a rational force, but both the one and the other will turn out to be insufficient when the power of faith does not unite with them. And so, little by little, instead of the imagined equalization of the functions of the State and the Church in political union, there will turn out to be inequality and opposition. A condition that is in any case abnormal, and which must lead either to the real dominance of the Church over the apparently predominant State or to revolution.

“These are the real dangers hidden in the system of complete Church-State separation glorified by liberal thinkers. The system of the dominant or established Church has many defects, being linked with many inconveniences and difficulties, and does not exclude the possibility of conflicts and struggle. But in vain do they suppose that it has already outlived its time, and that Cavour’s formula alone gives the key to the resolution of all the difficulties of this most difficult of questions. Cavour’s formula is the fruit of political doctrinarism, which looks on questions of faith as merely political questions about the equalization of rights. There is no depth of spiritual knowledge in it, as there was not in that other famous political formula: *freedom, equality and brotherhood*, which up to now have weighed as a fateful burden on credulous minds. In the one case as in the other, passionate advocates of freedom are mistaken in supposing that there is *freedom in equality*. Or is our bitter experience not sufficient to confirm the fact that freedom does not depend on equality, and that equality is by no means freedom? It would be the same error to suppose that the very *freedom* of belief consists in the *leveling* of the churches and faiths and depends on their leveling. The whole of recent history shows that here, too, freedom and equality are *not* the same thing.”<sup>686</sup>

Although a belief in liberal democracy was almost universal by now in the West, in some major countries it was not obviously a success. Thus in France and Italy governments succeeded each other with bewildering rapidity.

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<sup>686</sup> Pobedonostsev, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-275, 276-277.

In his article "The New Democracy", Pobedonostsev expounded the view that modern democracy differed essentially from ancient democracy. In the ancient city-states, he said, the suffrage was far from universal, and the *de facto* rulers were those who were best suited to govern the State. In modern democracy, by contrast, the new aristocracy of the *nouveaux riches* buys power by bribing and manipulating the masses. "In broadening its foundation, the newest democracy places universal suffrage as the goal closest to its heart. This is a fatal error, one of the most striking in the history of mankind. The political power which democracy tries to attain so passionately is splintered in this form into a multitude of particles, and each citizen acquires *an infinitely small* part of this right."<sup>687</sup>

"History witnesses that the most essential and fruitful and stable measures and transformations for the people have proceeded from the central will of statesmen or from a minority enlightened by a great idea and deep knowledge. By contrast, with the broadening of the suffrage a lowering of State thought and a vulgarisation of opinion in the mass of the electors has taken place. This broadening in large States has either been introduced with the secret aim of concentrating power, or has itself led to dictatorship. In France universal suffrage was removed at the end of the last century with the cessation of the terror; but afterwards it was restored twice in order confirm the absolute rule in it of the two Napoleons. In Germany the introduction of universal suffrage was undoubtedly aimed at confirming the central power of the famous ruler [Bismarck] who acquired great popularity by the huge successes of his politics. What will happen after him, God only knows. "The game of collecting votes under the banner of democracy has become a common phenomenon in our time in almost all the European States, and it would seem that its lie has been displayed before all. However, nobody dares to rise up openly against this lie. The unfortunate people bears the burden, while the newspapers - the heralds of what is supposed to be public opinion - drown the cries of the people with their own shouts: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' But for the unprejudiced mind it is clear that the whole of this game is nothing other than a struggle and fight of parties and a juggling with numbers and names. The votes - in themselves negligible quantities - receive a price in the hands of skilful agents. Their value is realized by various means and first of all by bribery in the various forms - from small cash and material payments to the handing out of profitable posts in excise and financial administration and in the civil service. Little by little a whole contingent of voters is formed, voters that are accustomed to sell their votes or their agents. It reaches the point, for example in France, where serious citizens, right-thinking and hard-working, turn away in huge numbers from the elections, feeling the complete impossibility of struggling with the gang of political agents. Besides bribery, violence and threats are put into play, and electoral terror is organized, by means of which the gang puts forward its

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<sup>687</sup> Pobedonostsev, "Novaia Demokratia" (The New Democracy), in *Sochinenia* (Works), St. Petersburg: "Nauka", 1996, p. 277.

candidate by force: we know the stormy pictures of electoral meetings at which weapons are taken up and killed and wounded remain on the field of battle."<sup>688</sup>

In the new democracy, "the great lie of our age", reasoned argumentation is not needed to convince a mainly uneducated electorate. More important is the slick *slogan*. "The art of making generalizations serves for them [political activists pushing for power] as a most handy weapon. Every generalization comes about through a process of *abstraction*: out of a multitude of facts, some that do not serve the purpose are put aside completely, while others that do are grouped together and out of them a general formula is extracted. It is evident that the whole worthiness, that is, truthfulness and reliability, of this formula depends on the degree to which the facts from which it is drawn are of decisive importance, and the degree to which the facts which have been set aside as unsuitable are unimportant. The speed and facility with which general conclusions are drawn in our time are explained by the extremely cavalier way in which suitable facts are selected and generalized in this process. Hence the huge success of political orators and the striking influence of the general phrases on the masses into which they are cast. The crowd is quickly diverted by platitudes dressed up in loud phrases; it does not think to check them, for it is not able to do that: in this way unanimity in opinions is formed, a seeming, spectral unanimity. Nevertheless, it produces a striking result. This is called the voice of the people, with the addition - the voice of God. A sad and pitiful error! The facility with which [the people] is diverted by platitudes leads everywhere to the extreme demoralization of social thought, and to the weakening of the political *nous* of the whole nation. Present-day France presents a vivid example of this weakening. But even England is infected with the same illness."<sup>689</sup>

"The basic principle of democracy is the citizens' *equality*. But this word alone explains nothing. It is good if this equality is an equality of the right to serve one's country: each man is obliged to carry out this service according to his abilities and means, and participates to the degree that he is needed in administrative activity. That is how this concept was understood in the ancient democracies, especially in small States in which people could know each other, and public matters were discussed in the square. For the sake of self-preservation amidst the endless wars with neighbours, it was necessary to summon the best people to the government, and the best people were the most capable. Rome, which from the very beginning became a conquering republic, had to follow this same path, and its Senate became a gathering of the best people, who held in their hands the destinies of the State.

"But in modern democracies equality means the right of each and everyone to rule the affairs of his country - the right of a whole population of a large country to take part in the administration. On this is based the existing system of elections according to universal suffrage: in big States this leads to the

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<sup>688</sup> Pobedonostev, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-279.

<sup>689</sup> Pobedonostsev, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.

preponderance of the masses, who belong to the least educated class and do not have a clear idea of State affairs, or of the people who are capable of administering them. It is evident that under this order the *worthiness* and ability of the elected person loses its significance: this is the essential difference between the new democracy and the old, and it is this that threatens destruction for the former. At the same time one should bear in mind that this mechanism of democracy is called to function in an epoch of an exceptional and unheard-of increase in the complexity of human affairs and relationships. Even one hundred years ago people did not dream of the present development of trade, industry and mechanisation, or of the present development of literature and the press with its huge significance, or of the present speed of communications, news and rumours of every kind. One can imagine how complicated all the functions of governmental and financial power, and the conditions in which they have to work, have become, and the innumerable quantity of facts and new ideas which the legislative power now has to reckon with.

"In this condition of society democracy has a *frightening* task which it cannot cope with. On taking up the supreme power, it must take upon itself the affairs of the supreme power, and the most important of these is the choosing of men for posts and responsibilities. Everything depends on this; if it fails in this, every law, whatever it may be, loses its significance, and the fundamental order of the whole State institution is deprived of trust and wavers. For the people the government is an abstract idea insofar as it is not incarnated in agents of power who are in direct contact with the people and its justified needs: if these agents are chosen haphazardly or for wrong reasons, then the whole of their activity becomes a burning subject of rumours that disturb the opinion of the people, and a weapon in the hands of all opponents of firm authority, whatever it may be.

"And so we see that from the time that the historical idea of people being called to State service in accordance with their estate and social position has lost all significance in democracy, service appointments have become a weapon in the hands of political parties which strengthen themselves by handing out posts. At the same time the number of posts increases exponentially, and this does not benefit, but burdens the people, since they serve not so much the general good as their own interests. But amidst general dissatisfaction, a passionate striving grows among the people to get well-paid and profitable posts. Everybody can see a picture of this fall in the new democracies in France, in Italy and in the United States. This fall is particularly evident in the higher and in the elective posts that have a political significance, sometimes even governors and members of legislative assemblies. Elective posts have a *representative* significance; *administrative* posts, by contrast, must in their essence be foreign to any such significance. But from the time of the French revolution the idea of this distinction has been completely muddled in the new democracy, and the contrary idea has become popular that administrative posts serve as a reward for people who have served this or that powerful party or who have this or that variety of opinions. Moreover, people do not

ask whether the person is capable or not capable of carrying out the particular duties of his post. In the past everyone thought and believed that the ruler must be better than those whom he rules, and the experience of history has confirmed that all the achievements of civilization have been attained by the desires of the most capable people *in spite of* the opposition of the environment in which they had to work. But in the new democracy, in spite of this undoubted truth, the opinion has become entrenched that even a large State can be successfully administered by anyone, even someone unworthy. All this leads to demoralization, thanks to which *the private interests* of a party or company of people acquires a preponderant significance in society at the cost of the public interest.

"A natural consequence of all this is the complete collapse of legislative assemblies or democratic parliaments [in contemporary France and Italy, for example]. According to the democratic theory the elected representative of the people is called to vote, not for what he recognizes to be useful for the people or reasonable and just, but for what the people of the party which has elected and sent him considers to be best and needed, even if this does not agree with his personal opinion. Thus the election of representative is turned into a *game* of parties, which is just as passionate as any competitive game - a game governed by intrigue, false promises and bribery. Thus even the legislature falls into the hands of unenlightened, indiscriminating, and often avaricious people, or people who are indifferent to everything that is not bound up with the interests of the party.<sup>690</sup> Little by little all the people of straight thinking, honourable spirit and higher culture withdraw from participating in this game, especially when each of them has in his hands the work of his own special calling. Parliament is turned into a machine pushing out of itself a mass of laws that have not been thought through or worked out, which contradict each other and are *completely unnecessary*, which do not protect freedom, but constrict it in the interests of one part or one company.

"Everybody to a greater or lesser degree feels and recognizes that the present democratic system of legislation is completely incoherent and based on a lie; and when a lie lies at the base of this institution, what is society to expect if not destruction? Democracy itself, we can say, has lost faith in its parliament, but is forced to be reconciled with it, because *it has nothing to replace it with*, and because everything that stood before has been destroyed, while democracy rejects in principle every idea of dictatorship. It is obvious to all that the falsely constructed building is wavering, is already shaking. But when and how it will fall, and what will arise on its ruins - that is the task of the sphinx that stands on the threshold of the twentieth century."<sup>691</sup>

Pobedonostsev was right in what he rejected; but for all his good works and correct analyses he failed to provide a positive programme for the renewal of

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<sup>690</sup> As in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta, *H.M.S. Pinafore: I always voted at my Party's call / And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.* (V.M.)

<sup>691</sup> Pobedonostsev, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-283.

the empire. That was probably too much to ask of any man, however powerful. There is some truth in the remark made about him: "Like frost he inhibits any further decay, but nothing will grow under him..."<sup>692</sup> But there is more truth in the thought that, by inhibiting decay, he allowed new generations to grow up in Orthodoxy. The great glory of the twentieth century - and the basis for the hope in the resurrection of Russia in the twenty-first century - are the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. And the great majority of them grew up during the lives of the reactionary Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II, and their reactionary teacher, Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev...

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<sup>692</sup> Edvard Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, London: Arrow, 1992, p. 12.

## **47. TOLSTOY AND THE VOLGA FAMINE**

Orlando Figes has dated the beginning of the Russian revolution to the Volga Famine of 1891, in that, “unable to cope with the situation, the government called on the public to help. It was to prove a historic moment, for it opened the door to a powerful new wave of public activity and debate which the government could not control and which quickly turned from the philanthropic to the political...”<sup>693</sup>

The most famous public figure to turn from philanthropist to preacher to oppositional politician as a result of the famine was the famous novelist, Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy. “Tolstoy blamed the famine on the social order, the Orthodox Church and the government: ‘Everything has happened because of our sin. We have cut ourselves off from our own brothers, and there is only one remedy – to repent, change our lives, and destroy the walls between us and the people.’”<sup>694</sup> Of course, there was more than a grain of truth in this message. But it was compromised by the fact that, already for over a decade, Tolstoy had abandoned his profession of a novelist, for which everyone admired him, for that of a false prophet who undermined the faith of millions in the true meaning of the Gospel. In a series of publications, Tolstoy showed himself to be a disciple of Schopenhauer, whom he called “the greatest genius among men”, and came to believe with him and Solomon that all is vanity in the face of death. But the greatest influence on him was the rationalism of western civilization; believing that dogma was true only if it agreed with reason, understood in a narrow, positivist sense, he denied all the dogmas of the Christian Faith, including the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, and every miraculous element in the Bible. The only part of the Gospel that he clung to was the Sermon on the Mount – but interpreted in a perverse way that led him to denounce property as theft, sexual activity as evil even in marriage, and all governments, armies and penal systems as unnecessary evils that only engendered further evils. While preaching poverty and love, he failed to practice what he preached in his own life, to the great distress of his wife and family; and while his work in relieving the effects of the Volga famine of 1891-92 was undoubtedly good, the use he made of the publicity he received from it was no less undoubtedly evil.

One of Tolstoy’s most characteristic teachings was his doctrine of non-resistance to evil, which influenced Gandhi in his campaign of civil disobedience to the British authorities in India. Carried through to its logical conclusion, this teaching undermined the attempts of the Russian government – indeed, any government – to prevent terrorism, at a time when there were many political assassinations throughout the world. It also directly contradicted the teaching of St. Paul that the tsar or political ruler “is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil” (Romans 13.14).

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<sup>693</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, p. 4.

<sup>694</sup> Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Tolstoy's theory was refuted by Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin, who was professor of law in Moscow University until his expulsion from Russia by the Bolsheviks in 1922. Ilyin argued that while it is necessary first to use spiritual means against evil, if these fail then physical force can be applied. "It is right to push away from the brink of a precipice an absent-minded wayfarer; to snatch the bottle of poison from an embittered suicide; to strike at the right moment the hand of a political assassin aiming at his victim; to knock down an arsonist in the nick of time; to drive out of a church shameless desecrators; to make an armed attack against a crowd of soldiers raping a child."<sup>695</sup>

According to Nicholas Lossky, "Ilyin says that Tolstoy calls all recourse to force in the struggle with evil 'violence' and regards it as an attempt 'sacrilegiously' to usurp God's will by invading another person's inner life which is in God's hands. Ilyin thinks that Tolstoy's doctrine contains the following absurdity: 'When a villain injures an honest man or demoralizes a child, that, apparently, is God's will; but when an honest man tries to hinder the villain, it is not God's will.'

"Ilyin begins the constructive part of his book by pointing out that not every application of force should be described as 'violence'; for it is an opprobrious term and prejudices the issue. The name 'violence' should only be given to arbitrary, unreasonable compulsion proceeding from an evil mind or directed towards evil (29f.). In order to prevent the irremediable consequences of a blunder or of an evil passion a man who strives after the good must in the first instance seek mental and spiritual means to overcome evil by good. But if he has no such means at his disposal, he is bound to use mental or physical compulsion and prevention. 'It is right to push away from the brink of a precipice an absent-minded wayfarer; to snatch the bottle of poison from an embittered suicide; to strike at the right moment the hand of a political assassin aiming at his victim; to knock down an incendiary in the nick of time; to drive out of a church shameless desecrators; to make an armed attack against a crowd of soldiers raping a child.' (54). 'Resistance to evil by force and by the sword is permissible not when it is possible, but when it is necessary because there are no other means available': in that case it is not only a man's right but his duty to enter that path (195f.) even though it may lead to the malefactor's death.

"Does this imply that the end justifies the means? No, certainly not. The evil of physical compulsion or prevention does not become good because it is used as the only means in our power for attaining a good end. In such cases, says Ilyin, the way of force and of the sword 'is both obligatory and unrighteous' (197). 'Only the best of men can carry out that unrighteousness without being infected by it, can find and observe the proper limits in it, can remember that it is wrong and spiritually dangerous, and discover personal and social antidotes for it. By comparison with the rulers of the state happy are the monks, the scholars, the artists and thinkers: it is given to them to do clean work with clean hands. They must not, however, judge or condemn the soldiers and politicians,

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<sup>695</sup> Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, Berlin, 1925.

but be grateful to them and pray that they may be cleansed from their sin and made wise: their own hands are clean for doing clean work only because other people had clean hands for doing dirty work' (209). 'If the principle of state compulsion and prevention were expressed by the figure of a warrior, and the principle of religious purification, prayer and righteousness by the figure of a monk – the solution of the problem would consist in recognizing their necessity to each other' (219)."<sup>696</sup>

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Now Tolstoy became famed as an opponent of the government especially during the Volga famine of summer, 1891, which was caused by severe frosts in the winter followed by drought in the spring. "In the central agricultural provinces south and southeast of Moscow and from there toward the Volga basin a combination of factors made it very difficult to improve agricultural productivity or to derive wealth from other occupations: a dense rural population, the absence of large urban markets or seaports, and a preponderance of very small allotments trapped most householders in a vicious circle of underproduction, noninvestment, and over-taxation which demoralized many and stimulated the most energetic to leave and find employment elsewhere. It was here and along the Volga basin that the famine of 1891, with its attendant epidemics, was most severe."<sup>697</sup> Moreover, the situation there was "exacerbated by the policy to finance industrialization by borrowing, which in turn had to be paid for by selling grain abroad."<sup>698</sup> Covering an area twice the size of France, the famine together with the consequent cholera and typhus had killed half a million people by the end of 1892. On November 17, the government appointed the Tsarevich Nicholas as president of a special commission to provide help to the suffering, and was forced to appeal to the public to form voluntary organizations.

At the height of the crisis, in October 1891, Elder Ambrose of Optina died; and with his passing it seemed as if the revolutionary forces, which had been restrained for a decade, came back to life. Tolstoy, who had been impressed by St. Ambrose but whom Ambrose sadly called "very proud", now joined the relief campaign. "With his two eldest daughters," writes Figes, "he organized hundreds of canteens in the famine region, while Sonya, his wife, raised money from abroad. 'I cannot describe in simple words the utter destitution and suffering of these people,' he wrote to her at the end of October 1891. According to the peasant Sergei Semenov, who was a follower of Tolstoy and who joined him in his relief campaign, the great writer was so overcome by the experience of the peasants' sufferings that his beard went grey, his hair became thinner and he lost a great deal of weight. The guilt-ridden Count blamed the famine crisis on the social order, the Orthodox Church and the government. 'Everything has happened because of our own sin,' he wrote to a friend in

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<sup>696</sup> Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1952, pp. 388-389.

<sup>697</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 358.

<sup>698</sup> Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 471.

December. 'We have cut ourselves off from our own brothers, and there is only one remedy – by repentance, by changing our lives, and by destroying the walls between us and the people.' Tolstoy broadened his condemnation of social inequality in his essay 'The Kingdom of God' (1892) and in the press. His message struck a deep chord in the moral conscience of the liberal public, plagued as they were by feelings of guilt on account of their privilege and alienation from the peasantry. Semenov captured this sense of shame when he wrote of the relief campaign: 'With every day the need and misery of the peasants grew. The scenes of starvation were deeply distressing, and it was all the more disturbing to see that amidst all this suffering and death there were sprawling estates, beautiful and well-furnished manors, and that the grand old life of the squires, with its jolly hunts and balls, its banquets and its concerts, carried on as usual.' For the guilt-ridden liberal public, serving 'the people' through the relief campaign was a means of paying off their 'debt' to them. And they now turned to Tolstoy as their moral leader and their champion against the sins of the old regime. His condemnation of the government turned him into a public hero, a man of integrity whose word could be trusted as the truth on a subject which the regime had tried so hard to conceal."<sup>699</sup>

Exploiting his fame and aristocratic birth, Tolstoy denounced the government, not only for the Samaran famine, but for almost everything else. As A.N. Wilson writes, he "defied his own Government's censorship by printing appeals in *The Daily Telegraph* [of London]. Rumours began to reach the Tolstoys that the Government was thinking of taking action against him... The Minister for the Interior told the Emperor that Tolstoy's letter to the English press 'must be considered tantamount to a most shocking revolutionary proclamation': not a judgement that can often have been made of a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*. Alexander III began to believe that it was all part of an English plot and the *Moscow Gazette*, which was fed from the Government, denounced Tolstoy's letters as 'frank propaganda for the overthrow of the whole social and economic structure of the world'."<sup>700</sup> If such a characterization may seem absurdly exaggerated when made of the apostle of non-violence, it must be remembered that Tolstoy's words could well have been interpreted as a call for world revolution, and that he did more for the revolutionary cause than a thousand professional conspirators.

In this connection it is ironic that "while Lev Lvovich Tolstoy organized famine relief in the Samara district in 1891-92, there was one very conspicuous absentee from his band of helpers: Lenin, who was at that time in 'internal exile' there. According to a witness, Vladimir Ulyanov (as he still was) and a friend were the only two political exiles in Samara who refused to belong to any relief committee or to help in the soup kitchens. He was said to welcome the famine 'as a factor in breaking down the peasantry and creating an industrial

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<sup>699</sup> Figes, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>700</sup> Wilson, *Tolstoy*, London: Atlantic Books, 2012, p. 402.

proletariat'.<sup>701</sup> Trotsky, too, took the line that it was improper to do anything to improve the lot of the people while the autocracy remained in power. When they themselves seized power, the chaos and desolation were immeasurably worse. One thinks of the crop failure on the Volga in 1921 when somewhere between one and three million died, in spite of the fact that they allowed in foreign aid. By the time of the 1932-33 famine in the Ukraine, the Soviet Union was enjoying the munificent protection of Comrade Stalin. His policy was to allow no foreign aid, and no Government intervention. At least five million died..."<sup>702</sup>

Lenin said that Tolstoy was "the mirror of the Russian revolution". However, this is only part of the truth: to a significant degree, Tolstoy was also the *father* of the revolution.<sup>703</sup> His first (unrealised) literary project was to write a novel on the Decembrists, the failed revolutionaries of 1825, one of whom, Sergei Volkonsky, had been his relative. His last, *Resurrection*, published in 1899, was a sustained attack on the existing order and the Orthodox Church; it inspired the failed revolution of 1905. No wonder that throughout the Soviet period, while other authors were banned and their works destroyed, the Jubilee edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Works* (1928) continued to sell in vast numbers...

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<sup>701</sup> The famine "performs a progressive function," he said, and would "cause the peasants to reflect on the fundamental facts of capitalist society". (V.M.)

<sup>702</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

<sup>703</sup> Lenin also said of Tolstoy, on the one hand, that he was a "spirited man" who "unmasked everyone and everything," but on the other hand, he was also a "worn-out, hysterical slave to power," preaching non-resistance to evil. As for Dostoyevsky's works, he called them "vomit-inducing moralization," "penitential hysteria" (on *Crime and Punishment*), "malodorous" (on *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Devils*), "clearly reactionary filth... I read it and threw it at the wall" (on *The Devils*)."

## **48. RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC MIRACLE**

In order to catch up with the West, Russia needed to industrialize, which required investment. But investment, writes Hosking, "would have to be attracted from abroad. That meant stabilizing the ruble and ceasing to depend on *assignats*, which in turn entailed balancing the state budget by cutting expenditure and raising tax revenue. Inevitably these goals had to be attained at the expense of the peasants.

"At a time when landowners were being massively compensated for land 'lost' during the emancipation, balancing the budget was more than usually tricky, and the difficulty explains the stingy treatment of the peasants in 1861. On the other hand, the establishment of a single official budget, published annually and audited, raised public confidence in the state finances. The abolition of the liquor tax farm and its replacement by an excise tax eliminated the last major source of personal tribute and finally laid down a clear demarcation line between private profit and public taxation. The creation of a State Bank in 1860 helped to improve Russian credit ratings, as did the discipline it imposed on joint-stock banks set up subsequently. The state did not, however, facilitate the promotion of corporate enterprise in general by issuing a model charter for a limited company. Right up to the 1917 each joint-stock company had individually to seek permission from the tsar before it could begin trading – a process which could take years and involve substantial bribes to key officials.

"All the same, a railway boom did take place. Track mileage increased sevenfold during the 1860s and doubled again in the following decade. Railways came to the Black Sea coast and the Caucasus region. Most daring of all was the Trans-Siberian Railway, an undertaking embarked upon with considerable misgivings, in view of the colossal investment needed. For all its shortcomings, by the time it was completed in 1903 it had begun the process of opening up the largest single underexploited area in the world. It also promoted communications with Manchuria, Korea and China, which other European powers were starting to penetrate by seaborne routes, while its offshoot into the Transcaspian strengthened control of central Asia and boosted trade with Persia and the Ottoman Empire. All these developments linked Russia's grain-growing regions and mineral deposits with Asiatic countries where Russia could still assume the role of the more advanced power, selling manufactures as well as raw materials and agricultural products.

"In spite of much incompetence and corruption among their owners and managers, the new railways were the decisive impetus for an impressive expansion of industrial output in the late 1880s and 1890s, and again in 1907-1914.<sup>704</sup> They made it possible to transport heavy goods of all kinds more

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<sup>704</sup> "The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the connection with the Chinese Eastern Railway, led to an immediate boom in trade, with volumes nearly trebling between 1895 and 1914. This was supported by new entities like the Russo-Chinese Bank, set up to

easily, and they provided a market for mines and manufactures, whether in rails, locomotives, signaling equipment, or rolling stock. From 1883 to 1913 total industrial output rose by an annual average of 4.5 or 5 percent, a rate comparable with that of the United States, Germany, and Japan at their peak periods of sustained growth.

“This industrialization was more abrupt than in most European countries, since Russia, as a latecomer, was in a position to launch its new enterprises using the latest technology. This usually meant building very large factories, mills, and mines to achieve economies of scale. The Putilov Works in St. Petersburg, which produced ships, locomotives, and heavy machine-tools, was one of the largest factories in Europe, and the capital city had many other up-to-date industrial giants, in shipbuilding, railways, machine tools, metallurgy, and chemical and electrical products. Other areas of the empire had their own specialities: textiles in Poland and around Moscow; coal, iron, and steel in Ukraine; oil in the Caucasus; ports and consumer industry in the Baltic.

“The speed of Russia’s industrialization meant that it lacked the intermediate ‘proto-industrial’ and consumer-oriented forms common in western and central Europe. Instead cottage industry and heavy industry existed side by side, with very little between them. Peasants either made domestic articles for a local market at home, or they went into the city to work in a factory. In the latter eventuality, they were seldom able to take wives and children with them, and so families became divided for long periods. Men lived on their own, renting a bunk in the corner of a room or among fellow male workers in crowded barracks and dormitories. They had to adapt abruptly to urban life, with its dangers and temptations as well as to industrial discipline.

“The industrial upsurge required substantial foreign investment, which had to be attracted by projecting an image of financial stability. Finance Ministers I.Ia. Vyshegradskii (1887-1892) and S. Iu. Vitte (1892-1903) balanced the budget by ruthless levying of taxes, including the new liquor excise, which in effect replaced the poll tax, and by imposing a high tariff on imports of industrial products – the latter measure also being intended to protect Russian infant industries. In this way it proved possible to stabilize the ruble sufficiently to place it on the gold standard in 1897, a development which much increased the confidence of foreign investors.”<sup>705</sup>

It was not only industrialists who made money in the new Russia. T. John Jamieson cites the example of the novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s grandfather, Zakhar Shcherbak, “a peasant born in Ukraine as a serf three years

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finance economic expansion in the Far East. As the Russian Prime Minister, Pyotr Stolypin, told the Duma, the Russian parliament, in 1908, Russia’s east was a region pregnant with prospects and resources. ‘Our distant and inhospitable frontier territory is rich in gold, wood, furs and immense spaces suitable for agriculture.’ Although sparsely populated now, he warned, these spaces could not remain empty for long. Russian needed to seize the opportunities currently open to it.” (Frankopan, *op. cit.*, p. 300).

<sup>705</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 355-357.

before Alexander II's 1861 manifesto of liberation. The family migrated south. Zakhar obtained a little education and applied himself. By 1900 he owned more than 5,000 acres with 20,000 sheep. His land bordered a railroad which transported his crops to market. He lived well, but so did his workers: during harvest, they ate meat five times a day. His son Roman affected English tastes, wore tweed suits, and owned one of the nine Rolls Royces to be found in Russia. Bear in mind that the foundation of the 'economic miracle' is supposed to have been industrial, not agricultural. The Shcherbak fortune was built on agriculture, and without mechanization."<sup>706</sup>

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However, all this came at a steep spiritual price. The life of major cities, and especially industrial cities, has never, at any time in world history, been conducive to the spiritual life. The new industrial proletariat of Russia, torn from its roots in countryside and church, soon fell prey to the propaganda of the revolutionaries. And on their return to their villages at harvest time they would bring this propaganda back with them to infect the peasants.

As for the Church, "the secularism of the intelligentsia, the growing movement for civil rights, the rise of socialism, and the ecclesiastical perception that rural life was being corrupted by migrant workers returning to their villages all served to create a sense of beleaguement..."<sup>707</sup>

All this would produce bitter fruits in the abortive revolution of 1905...

Contemporary historians see a major reason for the fall of the Tsarist regime in its supposed failure to modernize. The Russian economic boom, which continued into the first decades of the twentieth century, shows that this was false. The Crimean War had revealed that the Russian tsardom was behind in certain crucial areas of science and technology. By the eve of the First World War, while it had not caught up with the West, it was not falling further behind.

And the State had played an exceptionally large part in this process. According to Paul Johnson, "in Russia the predominance of the state in every area of economic life was becoming the central fact of society. The state owned oilfields, gold and coal mines, two-thirds of the railway system, thousands of factories. There were 'state peasants' in the New Territories of the east. Russian industry, even when not publicly owned, had an exceptionally high dependence on tariff barriers, state subsidies, grants and loans, or was interdependent with the public sector. The links between the Ministry of Finance and the big banks were close, with civil servants appointed to their boards. In addition, the State Bank, a department of the Finance Ministry, controlled savings banks and credit associations, managed the finances of the

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<sup>706</sup> Jamieson, "The Economic Miracle of Late Imperial Russia", in Peter Koltypin (ed.), *Imperial Russia - Aid to the United States and the World*, Stratford, CT: Birch Tree Publishing, 2019, p. 128.

<sup>707</sup> S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, p. 21.

railways, financed adventures in foreign policy, acted as a regulator of the whole economy and was constantly searching for ways to increase its power and expand its activities. The Ministry of Trade supervised private trading syndicates, regulated prices, profits, the use of raw materials and freight-charges, and placed its agents on the boards of all joint-stock companies. Imperial Russia, in its final phase of peace, constituted a large-scale experiment in state collective capitalism, and apparently a highly successful one. It impressed and alarmed the Germans: indeed, fear of the rapid growth in Russia's economic (and therefore military) capacity was the biggest single factor in deciding Germany for war in 1914. As Behmann-Hollweg [the German Chancellor] put it to Riezle, 'The future belongs to Russia' ..."<sup>708</sup>

The real failure of the Russian regime was that, in striving, and to a large extent succeeding in catching up with the West, or at any rate not falling further behind, it had imported aspects of Western modernity – specifically, liberalism, socialism and atheism – that would undermine and eventually destroy all her other achievements. Russia needed to modernize in her material development; she did not need to westernize. In fact, westernization would be her death...

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<sup>708</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990. Pp. 14-15.

## 49. THE QUESTION OF KOSOVO

In the Turkish vilayet of Kosovo, situated between Serbia in the north, Albania in the south, Macedonia in the east and Montenegro in the west, the proportion of Muslims (including some Muslim Slavs) to non-Muslims (mainly Orthodox Serbs, but including about 11,000 Catholics) was about 60:40 by the 1870s.<sup>709</sup> As a result of the Slav-Ottoman war of 1876-78, Serbia extended her territory to include the Niš region. But also in 1878, as we have seen, the Albanians formed the League of Prizren, the beginning of an all-Albanian independence movement.

Let us examine the beginning of this movement... In June, 1878, a group of leading Albanians met in Prizren to organize themselves. "Most of the delegates to the League of Prizren," writes Glenny, "were Muslims, but there were a few Catholics and one or two members of the Orthodox Church. They were united only by the disaster threatened by the slow collapse of the Ottoman Empire and by their language - Albanian.

"Just over three-quarters of a million Albanians lived in the Ottoman Empire. One of the oldest communities on the peninsula, they had adapted remarkably to the Empire's peculiar social environment. The Albanians were concentrated in present-day Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. But the population extended deep into Greece, into Montenegro and even into Bulgaria and Thrace. Albanian fighters were the shock troops of the Ottoman army and the regime's most effective mercenaries; their trading communities established influential colonies in cities as far apart as Bucharest, Istanbul and Cairo. The influence of Albanians who trained as influential bureaucrats to the Sultan was out of all proportion to the numbers culled by the *devşirme*. At least thirty were appointed to the highest office in the Empire, the Grand Vizier.

"There had been cultural cross-fertilization between the Albanians and their neighbours: Turks, Greeks, Montenegrins, Serbs and Vlachs had all borrowed from and contributed to aspects of Albanian folklore, cuisine and social habits. The Albanian mountain warriors of the north shared many customs with their Montenegrin neighbours, most infamously the *gjakmarje*, the vendetta or blood revenge, which itself was based on the concept of *besa* or honour. To the south, the Greek Orthodox Albanians benefited particularly from the growth of Hellenism. Like the Bulgarians, many Albanians acquired an education in Greek schools. Nonetheless, the Albanians, whose language formed a separate branch of the Indo-European family, remained a mystery to most of their neighbours.

"With such a high proportion of Muslims, the Albanians were important allies for the authorities in Istanbul. Geography determined that the Albanians had a crucial role to play in resisting the expansionist urges of Greeks, Montenegrins, Serbs and Bulgarians, provided the Porte could manipulate

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<sup>709</sup> Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1998, p. 194.

them with sufficient dexterity. To assist its own survival, the Porte had to prevent the Albanians from following the example of their neighbours and forming their own national movement. The key to Albanian unity was language. Religion, geography and class divided them dramatically, so that during the great Ottoman reform the men of the Tanzimat insisted that the Albanians stick to their *millet* affiliation. Alone among the Balkan nations, the Albanians were forbidden from teaching in their own tongue.

“The League of Prizren sent a message to [Disraeli, earl of] Beaconsfield on the opening day of the Berlin Congress, urging him to defend Albanian interests at the meeting as ‘a bulwark against the Slavs in the Balkans’. The League was not taking any chances. The Treaty of San Stefano had completely ignored the Albanians and there was no reason to think it would be otherwise in Berlin. Instead, the League busied itself by organizing a huge ‘people’s army’ to resist encroachments on Albanian land. The League was in effect preparing to wage a defensive war against the Montenegrins, Bulgarians and Greeks. But it was also warning Istanbul: the *millet* system was dead and the Albanian national movement was born. In a gesture of profound symbolism, the League invoked the *besa*, whereby all Albanians foreswore blood revenge in order to concentrate their energy on furthering the national struggle.

“Within months of the Congress, Albanians were plunged into four very different and difficult armed conflicts. Tens of thousands of men from the north, where a man’s gun was his ‘best friend’, responded to the League’s call to form the ‘people’s army’ to defend territories awarded to Montenegro. These forgotten little wars, which were more or less unknown to the world even as they were happening, claimed several thousand lives. Demonstrating courage and tactical skill, the Albanians warded off the equally tough Montenegrin forces in four districts until 1880. They thus achieved the distinction of securing the only revision to the Treaty by force of arms.

“The Montenegrins then invoked the Treaty, and the great powers awarded them the port of Ulquin (now Ulcinj in Montenegro) in exchange for the four districts. The people’s army, several thousand strong, wheeled south to Ulquin and again defeated the Montenegrins. Austria-Hungary and Montenegro pressured Istanbul into sending troops against the Albanians. The great powers reinforced their request by threatening to occupy the Ottoman port of Smyrna (Izmir), which finally forced the Sultan’s hand: a Turkish army was sent to deliver Ulquin to Montenegro. And at that moment, with their entry into modern history, the Albanians felt as though the whole world was ranged against them. This sense of national victimhood would haunt them, just as the Bulgarians, too, had begun to curse the Berlin settlement. The Albanians were particularly disgusted that the Ottoman authorities had succumbed to great power pressure. Âli Paşa Gucija, one of the Albanian tribal leaders, had no hesitation in spitting on the Sultan personally: ‘Until this moment I had you in place of a father, but since you have separated me from you, yielding me to Montenegro, I have ceased to be yours any longer... Therefore, now that you have abandoned me and you don’t have me with you any more, if you come to

force me to submit to Montenegro, I will see myself as between two enemies who want to fight against me at any cost.' Muslim Albanians concluded that the protection offered by the Ottoman Empire was worthless. Only an independent sovereign state, they reasoned, could save them from being swallowed up by their neighbours..."<sup>710</sup>

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In 1881 the Albanian League army was crushed by the Turks, and conditions in Kosovo descended into squalor, with deteriorating relations between the Kosovans and the Turkish administrators.<sup>711</sup>

At this point, when Serbs and Albanians might have been expected to unite against the Turks, a major deterioration in relations between the Serbs and Albanians of Kosovo took place. "The prime cause of this," writes Noel Malcolm, "was the mass expulsion of Muslims from the lands taken over by Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro in 1877-78. Almost all the Muslims... were expelled from the Morava valley region: there had been hundreds of Albanian villages there, and significant Albanian populations in towns such as Prokuplje, Leskovac and Vranje. A Serbian schoolmaster in Leskovac later recalled that the Muslims had been driven out in December 1877 at a time of extreme cold: 'By the roadside, in the Gudelica gorge and as far as Vranje and Kumanovo, you could see the abandoned corpses of children, and old men frozen to death.' Precise figures are lacking, but one modern study concludes that the whole region contained more than 110,000 Albanians. By the end of 1878 Western officials were reporting that there were 60,000 families of Muslim refugees in Macedonia, 'in a state of extreme destitution', and 60-70,000 Albanian refugees from Serbia 'scattered' over the vilayet of Kosovo. Albanian merchants who tried to stay on in Niš were subjected to a campaign of murders, and the property of those who left was sold off at one per cent of its value. In a petition of 1879 a group of Albanian refugees from the Leskovac area complained that their houses, mills, mosques and tekkes had all been demolished, and that 'The material arising from these demolitions, such as masonry and wood, has been sold, so that if we go back to our hearths we shall find no shelter.'

"This was not, it should be said, a matter of spontaneous hostility by local Serbs. Even one of the Serbian army commanders had been reluctant to expel the Albanians from Vranje, on the grounds that they were a quiet and peaceful people. But the orders came from the highest levels in Belgrade: it was Serbian state policy to create an ethnically 'clean' territory..."<sup>712</sup>

Hardly surprisingly, the Muslim refugee victims of Serbian ethnic cleansing, on arriving in Kosovo, were hostile to the local Serbs; and now for

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<sup>710</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-154.

<sup>711</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-228.

<sup>712</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-229.

the first time the Albanians began to believe "that Serbia – and the Serbs of Kosovo who were claimed as an 'unredeemed' part of the Serbian population – represented a threat to their existence".<sup>713</sup> So Serbs began to emigrate from the province. By 1912 the Serbian proportion of the population had dropped to about 25% or less...<sup>714</sup>

Meanwhile, the Kosovo myth in its modern, revanchist form was being born in Serbia. From about the 1860s Serbian poets and politicians began to put forward the ideology of a Greater Serbia, a unitary state that included all the lands populated by Serbs, even if they were in a minority. In their sights were Kosovo, on the one hand, and the Serb-populated lands of Austro-Hungary, on the other.

Not in vain did a Habsburg diplomatic circular of 1853 declare: "The claim to set up new states according to the limits of nationality is the most dangerous of schemes. To put forward such a pretension is to break with history; and to carry it into execution in any part of Europe is to shake to its foundations the firmly organized order of states, and to threaten the Continent with subversion and chaos..."

In 1889, on the five-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Serbia's foreign minister, Čedomil Mijatovic, told the Royal Academy that "an inexhaustible source of national pride was discovered on Kosovo. More important than language and stronger than the Church, this pride unites all Serbs in a single nation..."<sup>715</sup>

That national pride should be considered "stronger than the Church" was a danger sign. Nothing on earth is stronger than the Divine-human institution of the Church, which, as the Lord says, "will prevail against the gates of hell", whereas national pride can be crushed, and nations themselves can disappear completely... To say that any person or nation or institution is "stronger than the Church" is equivalent to idolatry...

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<sup>713</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. xlvi.

<sup>714</sup> Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>715</sup> Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

## **50. TSAR NICHOLAS II AND THE AUTOCRATIC IDEAL**

Tsar Alexander III died peacefully and in full consciousness on October 20, 1894, his head cradled by perhaps the greatest saint of the age, Fr. John of Kronstadt. On his deathbed he uttered these prophetic words to his son and heir, the Tsarevich Nicholas: "From the height of the throne your grandfather carried out many important reforms, directed to the good of the Russian people. As a reward for this, he received a bomb and death from Russian revolutionaries... On that tragic day the question stood before me: which path was I to follow? Was it the one towards which I was being urged by so-called progressive society, infected with the liberal ideas of the West, or was it the one recommended by my own convictions, by my own conscience? I chose my path. The liberals called it reactionary. I was interested only in the good of my people and the greatness of Russia. I strove to give it internal and external peace, that the state might freely and calmly develop, becoming strong, rich and prosperous in an orderly way. Autocracy has created Russia's historical individuality. If autocracy falls, God forbid, Russia will collapse with it. The fall of the time-honoured Russian government will inaugurate an era of civil strife and bloody internecine wars. I adjure you to love everything that serves the good, the honour and the dignity of Russia. Guard autocracy, remembering at the same time that you bear the responsibility for the fate of your subjects before the throne of the Most High. May faith in God and in the sanctity of your royal duty be the foundation of your life. Be firm and courageous and never show any weakness. Listen to everyone - there is nothing shameful in that - but hearken only to yourself and to your own conscience. In foreign policy, preserve and independent position. Remember - Russia has no friends. They fear our vastness. Avoid war. In domestic policy, first and foremost protect the Church. She has often saved Russia in times of misfortune. Strengthen the family, for it is the foundation of any state."<sup>716</sup>

On his father's death, Tsar Nicholas II carried out the testament of his father, defending autocracy and Russia to the death... I

In May 1896 he was anointed and crowned in the Dormition cathedral in Moscow in a ceremony that the future Field-Marshal and President of Finland, Carl Gustaf Mannerheim, who took part in it, standing for four hours in his full-dress Imperial Chevalier Guard uniform at the bottom of the steps leading up to the imperial throne, described as "indescribably magnificent".<sup>717</sup>

Tsar Nicholas became the ruler of the largest and most variegated empire in world history. It included within its borders a great number of races and religions - 104 nationalities speaking 146 languages. It extended from the Baltic

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<sup>716</sup> *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, Saint John the Forerunner Monastery, Meta Potamos, Cyprus: Metapotamos Publications, 2019, pp. 61-62.

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_Gustaf\\_Emil\\_Mannerheim?fbclid=IwAR0QiG7dRgJbVKrm-dU7KahKksqVAXcDgYP4LPEzyS-cfqEaf8-5OMZLMAs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Gustaf_Emil_Mannerheim?fbclid=IwAR0QiG7dRgJbVKrm-dU7KahKksqVAXcDgYP4LPEzyS-cfqEaf8-5OMZLMAs).

Sea to the Pacific Ocean, from the Arctic tundra to the sands of Central Asia. It had the largest army in the world and perhaps the fastest-growing economy, with all the complex social problems that invariably attend rapid economic growth.

The influence of the Russian Empire extended well beyond its borders. The Orthodox Christians of Eastern Europe and the Middle East looked to it for protection, as did the Orthodox missions in Persia, China, Japan, Alaska and the United States, while its potential to become the world's most powerful nation was generally recognized – and feared.

On his father's death, Tsar Nicholas II declared himself unprepared for the role, and many historians since then have foolishly taken him at his humble word, not realizing that "a humble person is not weak, but actually strong, because God's power manifests itself and acts through him; the proud man is weak, for he rejects God's all-powerful grace and is left with only his human powers, which are, of course, immeasurably weaker and less significant than God's all-powerful grace."<sup>718</sup>

K.G. Kapkov writes: "He did not raise himself above others, but at the same time he was filled with calmness, composure and dignity. The main thing that He inspired was awe, not fear. I think his eyes were the reason. Yes I'm sure it was his eyes, so beautiful were they. The most delicate blue shade, they looked straight in the face. With the kindest, tender and loving expression. How could you feel fear? His eyes were so clear that he seemed to open his whole soul to your sight. A simple and pure soul that was completely not afraid of your testing look... This was his greatest charm and, at the same time - a great political weakness..."<sup>719</sup>

It has been argued by many historians that Tsar Nicholas II was a weak man, pushed around by circumstances and the people closest to him. A close study of his reign does not confirm his estimate; nor was it shared by several of the politicians and statesmen who knew him well – for example, the Prime Minister of France and Winston Churchill. Thus the tsaritsa "once remarked to her close friend Lily Dehn on this topic with some bitterness, 'He is accused of weakness. He is the strongest – not the weakest. I assure you, Lili, that it cost the Emperor a tremendous effort to subdue the attacks of rage to which the Romanoffs are subject. He has learnt the hard lesson of self-control, only to be called weak; people forget that the greatest conqueror is he who conquers himself... I wonder they don't accuse him of being too good: that, at least, would be true!'

"Aide-de-camp S. Fabritsky also notes: 'Emperor Nicholas II had an even-tempered and tranquil disposition. He was also a man of rare steadiness and refinement, all of which made him seem weak to those who did not know him

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<sup>718</sup> Archbishop Averky (Taushev), *The Struggle for Virtue: Asceticism in a Modern Secular Society*.

<sup>719</sup> Kapkov, "The Spiritual World of Nicholas II and his Family".

well. In the midst of the greatest currents of his reign and the infinitely painful times when his wife or children were ill, His Majesty always remained cool, with a seemingly perfect internal equilibrium, and many observers interpreted this as heartlessness.

“The Emperor’s compassion and sense of justice were extraordinary. In all his decisions he was always impelled by a desire not to injure anyone, even accidentally, and thus almost never acted rashly or in haste. This, however, engendered rumours to the effect that he was an indecisive man who dislike resolute people.”<sup>720</sup>

Prince N. D. Zhevakhov, deputy procurator of the Holy Synod, said: “He was, first and foremost, a seeker of God, a man who surrendered completely to the Will of God, a deeply religious Christian of high spirituality, who stood incommeasurably higher than those who surrounded him and with whom he Tzar was in communion. Only the boundless humility and the moving delicacy, of which even the enemies unanimously witnessed, did not allow the Emperor to emphasize his moral advantages over others. Only ignorance, spiritual blindness or malicious intent could attribute to the Sovereign all that later resulted in the form of malicious slander. ”

The Tsar was unparalleled in Russian history for his mercifulness. Even as a child he often wore patched clothing while spending his personal allowance to help poor students to pay for their tuition. He frequently pardoned criminals, even revolutionaries, and gave away vast quantities of his own land and money to alleviate the plight of the peasants. “Countless hospitals, orphanages, and institutions for the blind, as well as innumerable extraordinary petitions for economic aid from every corner of the empire, were based on the personal contributions of the tsar. The result was that before the end of the year, sometimes even before the beginning of autumn, Nicholas found himself in the difficult position of having empty pockets!”<sup>721</sup>

Since Tsar Nicholas has probably been more slandered and misunderstood than any ruler in history, it is necessary to begin with a description of his character. “Nicholas Alexandrovich,” writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, “was born on May 6/19, 1868 on the day of the memorial of Job the Much-Suffering. Later he used to say that it was not *by chance* that his reign and his suffering would become much-suffering. In complete accord with the will of his father, Nicholas Alexandrovich grew up ‘as a normal, healthy Russian person’... From childhood he was able first of all ‘to pray well to God’. His biographers would unanimously note that faith in God was the living condition of his soul. He did not make a single important decision without fervent prayer! At the same time, being a young man and not yet Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich externally lived in the same way that almost all worldly young people of his time and his level of education. He loved sport, games, military

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<sup>720</sup> *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, p. 93.

<sup>721</sup> *The Romanov Royal Martyrs*, p. 96.

activities, and acquired a fashionable for that time habit of smoking. He had an affair with the ballerina Kseshinskaya – which, however, he decisively cut short after an open and firm explanation with his father. He read a great deal, both spiritual and scientific and artistic literature (he loved L. Tolstoy's *War and Peace*), he loved amateur dramatics and various 'shows' in the circle of his family and friends, he was keen on amusing tricks. But all this was *to a degree*, without extremes, and never going to the service of the passions. He had a strong will, and with the help of God and his parents he was able to control and rule himself. In sum, he preserved a wonderful clarity, integrity and purity of soul. The direct gaze of his deep, grey-blue eyes, which often flashed with welcoming humour, penetrated into the very soul of his interlocutors, completely captivating people who had not yet lost the good, but he was unendurable for the evil. Later, when his relations with the Tsar were already hostile, Count S.Yu. Witte wrote: 'I have never met a more educated person in my life than the presently reigning Emperor Nicholas II'. Nicholas Alexandrovich was distinguished by a noble combination of a feeling of dignity with meekness (at times even shyness), extreme delicacy and attentiveness in talking with people. He was sincerely and unhypocritically *simple* in his relations with everybody, from the courtier to the peasant. He was organically repelled by any self-advertisement, loud phrases or put-on poses. He could not endure artificiality, theatricality and the desire 'to make an impression'. He never considered it possible for him to show to any but the very closest people his experiences, sorrows and griefs. It was not cunning, calculated concealment, but precisely humility and the loftiest feeling of personal responsibility before God for his decisions and acts that led him to share his thoughts with almost nobody until they had matured to a point close to decision. Moreover, like his father, he put these decisions into effect in a quiet, unnoticed manner, through his ministers and courtiers, so that it *seemed* as if they were not his decisions... Later only his wife, Tsarina Alexandra Fyodorovna, knew the hidden life of his soul, knew him to the end. But for others, and especially for 'society', Nicholas Alexandrovich, like his crown-bearing forbear, Alexander I, was and remained an *enigma*, 'a sphinx'. It would not have been difficult to decipher this enigma if there had been the desire, if people had looked at his deeds and judged him from them. But 'educated' society did not have this desire... However, there was a great desire to represent him as 'the all-Russian despot', 'the tyrant' in the most unflattering light. And so sometimes spontaneously, at other times *deliberately*, a slanderous, completely distorted image of Tsar Nicholas II was created, in which by no means the least important place was occupied by malicious talk of the 'weakness' of his will, his submission to influences, his 'limitations', 'greyness', etc. One could test the Russian intelligentsia, as if by litmus paper, by their attitude to the personality of Nicholas Alexandrovich. And the testing almost always confirmed the already clearly established truth that in the whole world it was impossible to find a more despicable 'cultural intelligentsia' in its poverty and primitiveness than the Russian!... However, the personality of Nicholas II was not badly seen and understood by those representatives of the West who were *duty-bound* to understand it! The German chargé in Russia, Count Rechs, reported to his government in 1893: '... I consider Emperor

Nicholas to be a spiritually gifted man, with a noble turn of mind, circumspect and tactful. His manners are so meek, and he displays so little *external* decisiveness, that one could easily come to the conclusion that he does not have a strong will, but the people around him assure me that he has a very definite will, which he is able to effect in life in *the quietest* manner.' The report was accurate. Later the West would more than once become convinced that the Tsar had an exceptionally strong will. President Emile Lubet of France witnessed in 1910: 'They say about the Russian Tsar that he is accessible to various influences. This is profoundly untrue. The Russian Emperor himself puts his ideas into effect. His plans are maturely conceived and thoroughly worked out. He works unceasingly on their realization.' Winston Churchill, who knew what he was talking about when it came to rulers, had a very high opinion of the statesmanship abilities of Nicholas II. The Tsar received a very broad higher juridical and military education. His teachers were outstanding university professors... and the most eminent generals of the Russian army. Nicholas Alexandrovich took systematic part in State affairs, and was president of various committees (including the Great Siberian railway), sitting in the State Council and the Committee of Ministers. He spoke English, French and German fluently. He had an adequate knowledge of Orthodox theology..."<sup>722</sup>

Under the Tsar's leadership Russia made vast strides in economic and social development. He changed the passport system introduced by Peter I and thus facilitated the free movement of the people, including travel abroad. The poll tax was abolished and a voluntary programme of hospitalisation insurance was introduced, under which, for a payment of one rouble per year, a person was entitled to free hospitalisation. The parity of the rouble was increased greatly on the international markets during his reign. In 1897, a law was enacted to limit work hours; night work was forbidden for women and minors under seventeen years of age, and this at a time when the majority of the countries in the West had almost no labour legislation at all. As William Taft, President of the United States, commented in 1913, "the Russian Emperor has enacted labour legislation which not a single democratic state could boast of". In only twelve years, from 1900 to 1912, infant mortality (infants under one year) went down in Russia from 252 per 1000 live births to 216..<sup>723</sup>

General V.N. Voeikov writes: "In order to understand how Russia flourished in the last twenty years before the war, we must turn to statistics. From 1892 to 1913 the harvest of breads increased by 78%; the quantity of horned cattle increased between 1896 and 1914 by 63.5%; the mining of coal increased between 1891 and 1914 by 300%; oil industrialization - by 65%. At the same time the state budget provided the possibility of increasing its contribution to popular education to the Ministry of Popular Education alone

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<sup>722</sup> Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 377-379.

<sup>723</sup> Robert Tombs, *The English and their History*, London: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 485.

by 628% from 1894 to 1914; while the railway network increased in length between 1895 and 1915 by 103%, etc.”<sup>724</sup>

The reign of Tsar Nicholas II gave an unparalleled opportunity to tens of millions of people both within and outside the Russian empire to come to a knowledge of the truth of Orthodoxy and be saved thereby. Moreover, the strength of the Russian Empire protected and sustained Orthodoxy in other parts of the world, such as the Balkans and the Middle East, as well as the missionary territories of Japan, China, Alaska, the United States and Persia.

During the reign of Nicholas II, the Church reached her fullest development and power. “By the outbreak of revolution in 1917... it had between 115 and 125 million adherents (about 70 per cent of the population), around 120,000 priests, deacons and other clergy, 130 bishops, 78,000 churches [up by 10,000], 1,253 monasteries [up by 250], 57 seminaries and four ecclesiastical academies.”<sup>725</sup>

The Tsar considered it his sacred duty to restore to Russia her ancient traditional culture, which had been abandoned by many of the "educated" classes in favour of modern, Western styles. He encouraged the building of churches and the painting of icons in the traditional Byzantine and Old Russian styles. Traditional church arts were encouraged, and old churches were renovated. The Emperor himself took part in the laying of the first cornerstones and the consecration of many churches.

Moreover, he took a very active part in the glorification of new saints, sometimes urging on an unwilling Holy Synod. Among those glorified during his reign were: St. Theodosius of Chernigov (in 1896), St. Isidore of Yuriev (1897), St. Seraphim of Sarov (1903), St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk (1909), St. Anna of Kashin (1910), St. Joasaph of Belgorod (1911), St. Hermogenes of Moscow (1913), St. Pitirim of Tambov (1914), St. John (Maximovich) of Tobolsk (1916) and St. Paul of Tobolsk (1917). He himself, with his family, became the first in rank of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, the glory of the twentieth century and the foundation of the future resurrection of Holy Russia.

The Tsar promoted the education of children within the framework of church and parish. There they were taught the faith, unlike in the state, *zemstvo* schools, administered by the liberals, where they were infected with western influences. As a result, the number of parish schools, which were more popular among the peasants than the state schools, grew to 37,000. By contrast, the

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<sup>724</sup> Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, p. 271. For more statistics, see Arsène de Goulevitch, *Czarism and Revolution*, Hawthorne, Ca., 1962.

<sup>725</sup> Mikhail V. Shkarovskii, “The Russian Orthodox Church”, in Edward Action, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914-1921*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 416. On December 1, 1901 the Tsar decreed that every military unit having its own clergy should have its own church in the form of a separate building (A.S. Fedotov, “Khramy vo imia svyatogo blagovernago velikago kniazia Aleksandra Nevskago v XIX-XX vv.”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 5 (1818), March 1/14, 2007, p. 13).

schoolteachers of the *zemstvo* schools raised a whole generation of children in radicalism, which was undoubtedly one of the main causes of the revolution. They had the advantage of having more money than the church schools, and not all the church-parish schools were of the highest quality in view of the fact that some Church teachers had also been infected by liberal ideas. Overall, "enrolment in rural schools increased fourfold between 1881 and 1914 while the number of teachers from peasant families grew from 7,369 to 44,607 between 1880 and 1911. The census of 1897 found that 20.1 per cent of the population of European Russia was literate, but the gender gap was significant, with only 13.1 per cent of women being able to read and write compared with 29.3 per cent of men. Urban literacy stood at 45.3 per cent while rural literacy stood at 17.4 per cent, though both rose steadily in the years up to 1914. In that year only one-fifth of children of school age were actually in school. Doubtless this was because many peasants considered that schooling was not needed beyond the point when sons became functionally literate. As far as daughters were concerned, a widespread attitude was articulated by a villager in 1893: 'If you send her to school, she costs money; if you keep her at home, she makes money.' Nevertheless, by 1911 girls comprised just under a third of primary school pupils and the spread of schooling meant that by 1920 42 per cent of men and 25.5 per cent of women were literate..."<sup>726</sup>

Christian literature flourished under Tsar Nicholas; excellent journals were published, such as *Soul-Profiting Reading*, *Soul-Profiting Converser*, *The Wanderer*, *The Rudder*, *The Russian Monk*, *The Trinity Leaflets* and the ever-popular *Russian Pilgrim*. The Russian people were surrounded by spiritual nourishment as never before. And so Archpriest Michael Polsky put it, "In the person of the Emperor Nicholas II the believers had the best and most worthy representative of the Church, truly 'The Most Pious' as he was referred to in church services. He was a true patron of the Church, and a solicitor of all her blessings."<sup>727</sup>

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The pressures on the tsar from the right and the left were impossible to reconcile. The liberals ultimately wanted him to hand over his power to them. The conservatives, on the other hand, as Lieven writes, expected him "to be pope, king, and dictator rolled into one... No human being could fulfill those expectations..."<sup>728</sup>

Sebastian Sebag Montefiore confirms this judgement: "It is unlikely that even Peter or Catherine could have solved the predicaments of revolution and world war faced by Nicholas II in the early twentieth century."<sup>729</sup> And yet he came much closer to doing just that than is generally recognized: if he had been allowed to reign just two months longer, then the planned Spring Offensive of

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<sup>726</sup> S.A. Smith, *Russia and the Revolution*, Oxford University Press, p. 33.

<sup>727</sup> Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 117.

<sup>728</sup> Lieven *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 93.

<sup>729</sup> Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2016, p. xxvii.

1917, in the opinion of many military experts, would have brought him victory in the world war and averted the revolution that eventually killed him.

It must also be remembered that although the tsar was an autocrat, he lived in an era when monarchy was already falling out of fashion and it was no longer possible, as it had been (almost) in the time of Louis XIV or Peter the Great, for one man to impose his will on a whole nation.

In this connection the words of Catherine the Great are worth remembering: "It is not as easy as you think... In the first place my orders would not be carried out unless they were the kind of orders which could be carried out; you know with what prudence and circumspection I act in the promulgation of my laws. I examine the circumstances, I take advice, I consult the enlightened part of the people, and in this way I find out what sort of effect my law will have. And when I am already convinced in advance of general approval, then I issue my orders, and have the pleasure of observing what you call blind obedience. *And that is the foundation of unlimited power.* But believe me, they will not obey blindly when orders are not adapted to the customs, to the opinion of the people, and if I were to follow only my own wishes not thinking of the consequences..."<sup>730</sup>

If it was difficult even for the great Catherine to obtain obedience to her commands, it was much more difficult for her successor a century later, when the poison of English liberalism and French radicalism had penetrated everywhere. Europe was still a continent of monarchies (France was the only major exception), and the pomp and circumstance of monarchy was developed as never before. But the heart of true monarchism – sincere, heartfelt deference and obedience to the will of the monarch as the anointed of God – was hard to find. There were many "monarchists" but few real believers in monarchy, who demonstrated their faith in their works. Even the ministers of the monarch often forged their own policies that deviated from those of the monarch. Hence the need the monarch often felt to carry through his policies in other ways, circumventing his ministers. In such cases, the minister in question might well feel offended and even offer his resignation. Even after the abortive revolution of 1905, Tsar Nicholas still had the power to sack his ministers and often exercised that power. But such acts could have harmful consequences: the sacked minister might not go quietly, but would continue to oppose the will of his sovereign "from the back benches", as it were. Of course, government in the late nineteenth century was an exceedingly complex task, and no monarch could govern efficiently without extensive consultation and delegation of power to ministers and permanent officials who naturally knew more than he did on many matters (although he knew much). However, as government became more complex, so the need to have a single head coordinating and unifying all its branches became greater. In constitutional monarchies, this could be an appointed or elected Prime Minister. But in an Orthodox autocracy

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<sup>730</sup> Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, London: Phoenix, 2002, p. 580.

it could only be the autocrat himself; the final responsibility rested with him alone...

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The great internal issues of Nicholas' reign, as of the reigns of all the tsars since at least 1801, were twofold. The first was the peasants' demand for land, *all* the land, which in accordance with their "peasant socialism" they considered theirs by right. Tsar Nicholas went a long way, in his agrarian reforms, to satisfying the peasants' land hunger; but as a believer in private property, he could not accept the peasants' and the Cadet Party's demand that he simply acquiesce in the seizure of what was left of the landowners' land. This cost him dear in the abortive revolution of 1905, and it was the Bolsheviks' exploitation of this issue that swept them to power in 1917.

The second was the demand by the liberals - who included the great majority of the educated classes - for a constitution that effectively transferred power from the tsar to the liberals. Although the liberals insisted that they could do a much better job of governing the country than the hated autocracy, the evidence of 1917, when they had their chance and "blew" it, proves the opposite... At no time did they enjoy the confidence of the masses of the people, so it was inevitable that their moment of power should be short and inglorious, a mere prelude to the catastrophic reigns of Lenin and Stalin.

As early as January 17, 1895 the tsar directly addressed this issue in an address to representatives of the nobility, of the *zemstva* and other city groups. "I shall maintain the principle of autocracy," he said, "just as firmly and unflinchingly as it was preserved by my unforgettable reposed father." And he called the desire for constitutionalism "senseless dreams". As he explained to the Tsarevich's tutor, Pierre Gilliard: "I swore at my accession to guard intact the form of government that I received from my father and to hand it down as such to my successor. Nothing can relieve me of my oath; my successor alone will be able to modify it at his accession."

As Robert Service writes, "this was not a passing idea. Before the Great War he had told Sophia Buxhoeveden: 'Alexei won't be bound. He'll repeal what's unnecessary. I'm preparing the way for him.'"<sup>731</sup>

But the issue would not go away; as support for the autocracy ebbed away in all classes in 1905, a semi-constitutional order was created, and when the Tsar courageously persisted in defending what power he had left, the autocracy itself was swept away, leading to the worst of all possible outcomes for Russia and the world in 1917: defeat in the Great War and the nightmare of Soviet power...

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<sup>731</sup> Service, *The Last of the Tsars*, London: Pan, 2017, p. 10.

The dangers of constitutionalism had been explained many years before by Nicholas' grandfather, Tsar Alexander II. As Lieven writes, Alexander "explained to Otto von Bismarck, who was then Prussian minister in Petersburg, that 'the idea of taking counsel of subjects other than officials was not in itself objectionable and that great participation by respectable notables in official business could only be advantageous. The difficulty, if not impossibility, of putting this principle into effect lay only in the experience of history that it had never been possible to stop a country's liberal development at the point beyond which it should not go. This would be particularly difficult in Russia, where the necessary political culture, thoughtfulness and circumspection were only to be found in relatively small circles. Russia must not be judged by Petersburg, of all the empire's towns the least Russian one... The revolutionary party would not find it easy to corrupt the people's convictions and make the masses conceive their interests to be divorced from those of the dynasty. The Emperor continued that 'throughout the interior of the empire the people still see the monarch as the paternal and absolute Lord set by God over the land; this belief, which has almost the force of a religious sentiment, is completely independent of any personal loyalty of which I could be the object. I like to think that it will not be lacking too in the future. To abdicate the absolute power with which my crown is invested would be to undermine the aura of that authority which has dominion over the nation. The deep respect, based on innate sentiment, with which right up to now the Russian people surrounds the throne of its Emperor cannot be parcelled out. I would diminish without any compensation the authority of the government if I wanted to allow representatives of the nobility or the nation to participate in it. Above all, God knows what would become of relations between the peasants and the lords if the authority of the Emperor was not still sufficiently intact to exercise the dominating influence.' ...

"... After listening to Alexander's words Bismarck commented that if the masses lost faith in the crown's absolute power the risk of a murderous peasant war would become very great. He concluded that 'His Majesty can still rely on the common man both in the army and among the civilian masses but the "educated classes", with the exception of the older generation, are stoking the fires of a revolution which, if it comes to power, would immediately turn against themselves.' Events were to show that this prophecy was as relevant in Nicholas II's era as it had been during the reign of his grandfather..."<sup>732</sup>

It is impossible to understand the superiority of Orthodox autocracy to all other systems of government, especially at moments of crisis, unless we adopt a religious point of view. For the question here is not: what is the will of the king, or of the ruling class, or even of the people as whole, but what is in accordance with truth and conscience - in other words, what is *the will of God*, Whose mercy and justice encompasses all human beings everywhere, and takes into account the consequences of present events far into the future, and Whose will is not necessarily that we should have peace and prosperity in this life but

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<sup>732</sup> Lieven, *Nicholas II*, London: Pimlico, 1993, pp. 142, 143.

rather salvation and eternal joy in the age to come. When put in that way, it is obvious that no individual human being or human collective has anything like the far-seeing wisdom needed to answer such a question. The only hope, therefore, is that God will communicate His will to a king directly - or indirectly, through another man (say, a prophet or priest). This does not mean that the will of God cannot be expressed through a democratic election. But it seems intuitively more likely - and this is certainly what Holy Scripture and Tradition lead us to believe - that He will communicate His will more clearly and decisively through one man chosen by Him and anointed for that very purpose than through millions of voters who do not know their right hand from their left and have no special training or knowledge of politics and who, besides, are constantly changing their minds. *Vox populi*, contrary to the popular saying, is not (usually) *Vox Dei*.

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Tsar Nicholas inherited the ideal of Autocracy from his father. In his tribute-obituary to Tsar Alexander III, the revolutionary-turned-monarchist Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov well summarized that ideal as follows:-

“How much confusion falls away with one look at this grand reign! How many forgotten truths it reveals! Monarchy is not dictatorship, not simple absolutism... Monarchy - in its autocratic ideal - can sometimes do that which dictatorship does, and can, if necessary, act by rejecting popular will. But in itself it stands higher than whatever will of the people there might be. Monarchy is the idea of subordination of interests and desires to *higher truth*.

“In monarchy the nation seeks sanctification of all the manifestations of its complex life through subordination to the truth. Personal authority is needed for this, as *only a man has a conscience, and only a man answers before God*. Unlimited authority is needed, for any restriction on the power of the Tsar by people would free him from answering to his conscience and to God. Surrounded by restrictions, he would already be subject not to truth, but certain interests, one or another earthly power.

“However, the unlimited and individual nature of decision are not the essence of monarchy, but only a necessary condition so that all social interests, their conflicts and their struggles, may be brought to agreement before an authority of the same *truth* that is above them all.

“This is why the bearer of the ideal came into the world, according to the conviction expressed by all the world in recent days, as a Tsar of truth and peace. He should have been namely such, *for the essence of monarchy is in the reconciling power of higher truth*.

“The monarch does not break the social structure of life; he neither destroys any differences created by its diversity, nor does he dismantle the great or the small, but everything he directs so that the development of all classes, all

groups and all institutions should in no way violate truth. And thereby he gives the nation that unity which was vainly sought in “representation” and now is to be achieved in suicidal equalization.

“The monarch does not destroy self-initiative, advice, the work of popular thought, and he doesn’t negate the popular will when it exists. He is *higher* than all this. He is given not for destruction, but for *direction*. For him there is neither the wise man nor the fool, neither the strong nor the powerless, neither the majority nor the minority. For him there is only *conscience* and *truth*. He should see everything, but will support only that in which there is truth.

“Emperor Alexander III showed that monarchy in its true essence is not anything transitional, obsolete or compatible only with one phase of cultural development, but is an *eternal* principle, always possible, always necessary, and the highest of all political principles. If at any time this principle becomes impossible for some nation, then it is not because of the condition of its culture, but because of the moral degeneration of the nation itself. Where people want to live according to *truth*, autocracy is necessary and always possible under any degree of culture.

“Being the authority of *truth*, monarchy is impossible without religion. Outside of religion, personal authority gives only dictatorship or absolutism, but not monarchy. Only as the instrument of God’s will does the autocrat possess his personal and unlimited authority. Religion in monarchy is needed not only for the people. The people should believe in God so they may desire to subject themselves to truth – yet the autocrat needs faith all the more so, for in matters of state power, he is the intermediary between God and the people. The autocrat is limited neither by human authority nor popular will, but he does not have *his* will and *his* desires. His autocracy is not a privilege, but a simple concentration of human authority, and it is a grave struggle, a great service, the height of human selflessness and a cross, not a pleasure. Therefore monarchy receives its full meaning only in *heredity*. There is no future autocrat if there is no will, no wish to choose between the lot of the Tsar and the ploughman, but it is already appointed him to deny himself and assume the cross of authority. Not according to desire or the calling of one’s capabilities, but according to God’s purpose does he stand at his post. And he should not ask himself whether he has the strength, but rather he should only believe that if God chose him, the hesitations of man have no place.

“It is in the greatness of subordination to the will of God that sanctification of our political life is given in the ideal of monarchy.

“In those epochs when this ideal is alive and universal, one does not need to be a great man for the dignified passage of the autocrat’s vocation. Not all warriors are heroes, but in a well-organized army even the ordinary man finds the strength to heroically conquer and heroically die. And so it is in everything else. But with the advance of the age of demoralization and the neglect of the ideal, only a great chosen one may resurrect it in human hearts. There is

nowhere for him to learn, for everything about him does not help him, but only hinders. He must draw upon everything from within himself, and not just in that measure necessary for the execution of his duty, but in that which is needed to enlighten all his surroundings. Indeed, what help would it be to the world if Alexander III confined himself only to giving Russia thirteen years of prosperity? The bearer of the ideal is sent not so that we would enjoy prosperity, remaining unworthy of it, but to awaken within us the aspiration to be worthy of the ideal.”<sup>733</sup>

Tsar Nicholas strained every sinew of heart, mind and will to fulfill the ideal of Autocracy as he inherited it from his father. Tragically, the people were not found worthy of that ideal, and so it was taken away from them. The leaders in this rejection of the ideal were the liberal constitutionalists, who opposed the Tsar at every turn, even at the height of the world war, trying to destroy the autocracy by claiming that the Tsar and the government appointed by him should be responsible, *not to God, but to themselves*. It followed that there was no idea of subordination to a higher truth: in fact, truth did not come into the matter at all, only the purely formal concept of rule by the people through the ballot box. Logically, therefore, the liberal destruction of the autocratic ideal led to religious apostasy and *atheism*, which is precisely what happened in 1917...

If it is objected that the anointed king may be evil or blind to the truth for some reason or other, then the Orthodox supporter of autocracy replies: of course, where men are involved, there is sin, and therefore the possibility of error. But the possibility of error is surely increased many times if the masses make the decision – which they may then weaken by their divisions or overthrow at the next election. Solomon asked wisdom from God and was granted it, in spite of the fact that he did not live a spotless life. But when do the teeming masses ask for wisdom from God?

In any case, if the king defies the will of God, God can remove him as He removed Saul – unless, of course, He judges that the people are not worthy of having a better king, or need chastisement. But if they are worthy, then He can and will provide them with a true autocrat, a king whom God declares to be, like David, “after My own heart”, a king who, though sinful like all men, still loves God and strives to know and do His will, putting *truth and conscience* above all things. The question then becomes: will the people continue to be worthy of such a king? And will they honour and obey him?

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<sup>733</sup> Tikhomirov, in Mark Hackard, “Autocrator”, *The Soul of the East*, February 14, 2016, <http://souloftheeast.org/2014/02/14/autocrator>.

## **51. THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE**

After the prescribed period of mourning for his father was over, Tsar Nicholas was crowned and anointed by the Metropolitan of Moscow at the Dormition cathedral in the Kremlin on May 14, 1896. A few days later, a terrible tragedy took place when at Khodynka Field the barriers holding back the crowds who came to receive gifts from their new Tsar were broken and about 1000 people were crushed to death. The Tsar, appalled, went to visit the wounded in hospital and was very generous to the families of the deceased. And he wanted to cancel a ball that was scheduled at the French embassy that evening. But he was dissuaded not to cancel it, because the French might be offended.

French goodwill was indeed important to the Russians. In the years just preceding the First World War, Russia was part of an international alliance system, of which perhaps the most important link was also the most surprising – that between Russia and France. After all, Russia was the last Great Power representing True Christianity and the last truly monarchical power, while France was famous for its revolutionism and republicanism, and was ruled from behind the scenes by the fiercely anti-Christian and anti-monarchist Grand Orient of Paris...

For most of the nineteenth century, France had been at or near the centre of European politics. The revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848 had all begun in Paris, and Napoleon III had briefly aspired to emulate the glory of his more famous relative of the same name. However, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and the bloody Paris Commune that followed, had deflated the nation and pared down her ambition and rebelliousness, while hurting her pride and leaving a lasting sense of bitterness. Republicanism was now accepted on all sides, even by the Catholics, as the form of her government, and world leadership in any sphere but the arts, some sciences and tourism was no longer a realistic aim for her politicians.

However, as Charles Emmerson writes, "By any standards, France was still a great country and a first-rank power. The French navy was amongst the world's largest, its army was the equal of any, though parity with Germany was becoming harder to maintain. France had amassed the world's second largest empire, from Indochina to Guyana, reaching into every continent on earth, even Antarctica. This empire was still expanding – not least in north Africa. While France had no continent or sub-continent to itself, as Britain did in India and Australia, it had Algeria, relatively sparsely populated yet close to the fatherland. The empire was a source of pride for many, and of wealth for some. It was also an increasingly important source of troops. At the Bastille Day march past at Longchamp in July 1913, [President] Poincaré presented the flag to twenty-five colonial regiments, from Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Indochina, Madagascar, Chad and Gabon. French investments around the world were second only to those of Britain. In Russia, in particular, French

investment was dominant. And while London was the undisputed clearing house for the international gold standard, France had been instrumental in forming a Latin Monetary Union with Paris in a leading role, making the currencies of several European currencies interchangeable.

“If French industry was far smaller than that of either Germany or of Britain, it was nonetheless technologically advanced, pioneering both moving pictures (the Lumière brothers, Pathé) and the European automobile industry (Michelin, Renault, Peugeot). The Germans might have their lumbering Zeppelins, portrayed in French magazines as both ugly and dangerous, but the French were masters of the aeroplane, more graceful, more manoeuvrable, and faster. A Frenchman had already been the first to cross the Channel in 1909, and first to fly to Rome in 1911, sailing above the Vatican and an awestruck Pope. The year 1913 saw a Frenchman be the first to land a plane in the Holy Land, French pilots flying than any man had ever flown, and a Frenchman perform the first loop (which was then performed for adoring crowds at the Ghent world fair). Like French pilots, French engineers – educated in the *École Polytechnique* or the *École Centrale* – had a daring and a flair of which their German counterparts could only dream....

“Besides these material considerations of its power and influence France was, more to the point, still a great civilization. It was the French language, not English, that was the *lingua franca* of society and diplomacy, if not commerce. French cooking was deemed the standard of elegance, and French chefs the most capable exponents of the art. French fashion set the trends for the world. France’s universities, though perhaps less famous than Oxford and Cambridge, and without quite the same status at home as German universities, nonetheless housed great philosophers, Henri Bergson being the most famous, the advocate of intuition and the prophet of ‘*l’élán vital*’ – the vital force of life. France produced great mathematicians, including Raymond Poincaré’s cousin Henri. Over the preceding twelve years, French scientists, authors and humanitarians had been awarded no fewer than fifteen Nobel prizes, close to the German total of seventeen, and far ahead of the British total of six, let alone the American three.

“Above all, France still had Paris...”<sup>734</sup>

And yet France was worried and insecure. The cause was simple: Germany. France could never reconcile herself to the loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, and dreamed publicly of winning them back. But Germany was a larger country in terms of population, and the gap was becoming wider. Moreover, her industry outstripped France’s.

So France needed allies. In 1892 Tsar Alexander III had signed an alliance with France, which Tsar Nicholas confirmed in a visit to Paris, and which remained the backbone of France’s security. And in 1903 a loser, but still

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<sup>734</sup> Emmerson, 2013. *The World before the Great War*, London: Vintage, 2013, pp. 41-43.

important alliance with Britain had been agreed in the Entente Cordiale. A weakness of this three-nation group was the imperial rivalry between Britain and Russia. But the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, strongly supported by France, would remove that problem...

However, the anti-Christian and anti-monarchist Grand Orient of France, whose influence on French politics was increasing all the time (in 1901 Masons founded the Radical party and the party of the Radical Socialists), were cooler about the Franco-Russian alliance. Their main aim was to effect a reconciliation between the French and German centres of Continental Masonry, a task made much more difficult by the nationalist passions on both sides.

“Evidence of this,” writes O.F. Soloviev, “is provided by articles in the secret GOF journal, *L’Acacia*, which in many ways reflected the intentions of the leadership of the Great Lodge and Great Orient of France. The main editor and author of the editorial articles, writing under the name ‘Hiram’, was the well-known journalist S. Limousène (1840-1909), who touched on the influence of Franco-German relations on world politics. This brother was simultaneously in the lodges of the three French ‘obediences’ and was in close contact with their leaders, which gave an additional weight to his utterances and thoughts.

“At the beginning of 1904 *L’Acacia* published an article by Limousène entitled ‘The Question of Alsace-Lorraine. Germany, France, Russia and Masonry’, whose central thesis was that the reconciliation of the first two countries would have to come one day ‘because of the necessity of agreeing for the sake of joint resistance to the Russian invasion’, for the State structures of Russia and France were ‘socially incompatible’. In the words of the author, the French were sympathetic only to the representatives of the Russian ‘intelligentsia and revolutionaries’. Moreover, [the Russians] have, he said, a different mentality from ours, conditioned by life in ‘the conditions of the most terrible and despotic regime, which is without any intellectual culture and unusually corrupted’. Moreover, even the Russians who are close [to us] in spirit believe in the inevitability of revolution, which will engender still more serious excesses and internal struggle than the revolution in France in 1789. In the end reaction will gain the upper hand thanks to ‘the masses of muzhiks’ – after all, the village population of Russia is much more backward than the French at the end of the 18th century. The result will be the expansion of Russia into Western Europe. But so far France helps Russia materially in the capacity of a friend and ally, which has allowed Moscow to build strategic railways while modernizing her weapons. There followed leisurely reflections on the striving of Russia to realize ‘the dream of world hegemony that was cherished already by Peter I’.

“The objections that Nicholas II was a peace-loving person and the initiator of the Hague conference were declared to be unsustainable in view of Russia’s predatory politics in Manchuria, which ‘will unfailingly lead to war with Japan’. Besides, such a liberal monarch had destroyed representative institutions in Finland, although he had sworn to preserve them. He was also

weak-willed and indecisive, like the executed French King Louis XVI. In a word, such an order was not only distinguished by despotism, but also disorganized the country. 'The genuine politics of Western Europe would have to consist in the dividing up of this colossus as long as it has not yet become too strong. It would have to use a possible revolution in order to re-establish Poland as a defensive rampart for Europe, while the rest of Russia would have to be divided into three or four states. Balance of power politics will remain the only fitting politics in the given conditions until the rise of the United States of Europe, which France will assist.' In conclusion, the article noted that sooner or later, and without fail, 'France will have to be reconciled with Germany'.<sup>735</sup>

However, France was not reconciled with Germany. And in spite of an almost entirely Masonic cabinet at the beginning of World War I, nationalist passions continued to keep not only the two governments, but even their Masonic lodges, at loggerheads. In other respects, though, the article was remarkably farsighted, from the future dominance of Russia (albeit Soviet, not Tsarist Russia) to the importance of that quintessentially Masonic project, the United States of Europe.

In one important respect, however, the article was quite wrong: in its estimate of the character of Tsar Nicholas II. He was neither weak-willed nor a war-monger nor a despot. But he was absolutely determined to uphold the traditional Orthodox world-view and bring it unharmed into the twentieth century.

The Grand Orient knew that, and was determined to stop him. That is why the alliance between the Russian autocracy and the French republic was indeed unnatural. Nevertheless, it endured, largely because of the aggressive behaviour of the most powerful state in Europe – Germany.

There were also important economic reasons for the alliance.

"As the new century dawned," writes Niall Ferguson, "no diplomatic relationship was more solidly founded than the Franco-Russian alliance. It remains the classic illustration of an international combination based on credit and debit. French loans to Russia by 1914 totaled more than 3 billion roubles, 80 per cent of the country's total external debt. Nearly 28 per cent of all French overseas investment was in Russia, nearly all of it in state bonds.

"Economic historians used to be critical of the Russian government's strategy of borrowing abroad to finance industrialization at home. But it is very hard to find fault with the results. There is no question that the Russian economy industrialized with extraordinary speed in the three decades before 1914. According to Gregory's figures, net national product grew at an average

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<sup>735</sup> Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veka* (Masonry in the World Politics of the 20th Century), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, pp. 41-42.

rate of 3.3 per cent between 1885 and 1913. Annual investment rose from 8 per cent of national income to 10 per cent. Between 1890 and 1913 per capita capital formation rose 55 per cent. Industrial output grew at an annual rate of 4-5 per cent. In the period 1898-1913 pig iron production rose by more than 100 per cent; the railway network increased in size by some 57 per cent; and raw cotton consumption increased by 82 per cent. In the countryside too there was progress. Between 1860 and 1914 agricultural output grew at an average annual rate of 2 per cent. That was significantly faster than the rate of growth of population (1.5 per cent per annum). The population grew by around 10 per cent between 1900 and 1913; but total national income very nearly doubled..."<sup>736</sup>

Nevertheless, the Russians had no wish to antagonize Germany, with which they had important trade relations. In fact the two countries had more in common with each other than either had with any other great power (if we exclude Germany's relationship with Austria). Both had ancient monarchies that were hampered, as the monarchs saw it, by recently created representative institutions, and royal families related to each other by generations of inter-marriage. Both had conservative rural nobilities with strong links to the army. Both had problems with minorities that they tried to cure by Russification and Germanization programmes respectively...

Moreover, there was always a significant faction in the Foreign Ministry that valued friendship with Germany above the alliance with France. The potential for conflict between Russia and the German-Austrian alliance had been dramatically decreased by the agreement made with Austria in 1897 to preserve the status quo in the Balkans. And in 1899 the Tsar made it clear to the German Foreign Minister, von Bulow, that there was no reason for conflict between the two countries if Russia's interest in the Balkans was respected: "There is no problem that finds the interests of Germany and Russia in conflict. There is only one area in which you must recognize Russian traditions and take care to respect them, and that is the Near East. You must not create the impression that you intend to oust Russia politically and economically from the East, to which we have been linked for centuries by numerous national and religious ties. Even if I myself handle these matters with somewhat more scepticism and indifference, I still would have to support Russia's traditional interests in the East. In this regard I am unable to go against the heritage and aspirations of my people."<sup>737</sup>

"The formation of the Franco-Russian alliance," writes Christopher Clark, "did not in itself make a clash with Germany inevitable, or even likely. The alliance soon acquired an anchorage in the popular culture of both countries, through the festivities associated with royal and naval visits, through postcards, menus, cartoons and merchandising. But the divergences in French and Russian interests remained an obstacle to close collaboration: throughout

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<sup>736</sup> Ferguson, *The Pity of War. 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 43-44.

<sup>737</sup> Tsar Nicholas, in Lieven, *Nicholas II*, London: Pimlico, 1993, p. 94.

the 1890s, French foreign ministers took the view that since the Russians were unwilling to fight for the return of Alsace-Lorraine, the alliance with St. Petersburg should impose only minimal obligations on France. The Russians, for their part, had no intention of allowing the alliance to alienate them from Germany; on the contrary, they saw it as placing them in a better position to maintain good relations with Berlin. As Vladimir Lamzdorf, chief assistant to the Russian foreign minister, put it in 1895, the purpose of the alliance was to consolidate Russia's independence of action and to guarantee French survival, while at the same time restraining her anti-German ambitions. During the first decade of the alliance, Russian policy-makers – chief among them the Tsar – were preoccupied not with Central or south-eastern Europe, but with the economic and political penetration of northern China. More importantly, the shared suspicion of Britain that had helped to bring about the Franco-Russian Alliance also prevented it – for a time at least – from acquiring an exclusively anti-German orientation. Russia's interest in securing informal control over Manchuria brought St. Petersburg into conflict with British China policy and ensured that relations with London would remain far more tense for the foreseeable future than those with Berlin..."<sup>738</sup>

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<sup>738</sup> Clark, *Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 131.

## 52. RUSSIA TURNS EAST (2)

Apart from the alliance with France, Russia's most important foreign policy decision around the turn of the century was the turning towards the Far East, which meant that her priorities now lay as much in Asia as in Europe... But why was Russia so interested in the *Far East*? The highest motive, Christian mission, certainly played a part. Russia had been baptizing the Asiatic peoples within and beyond her frontiers for some centuries. And among the greatest achievements of the late Russian Empire were the missions of St. Macarius (Nevsky) of the Altai, St. Nicholas of Japan, and St. Innocent of Alaska. Nor was this ideal confined to churchmen. Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov said that Russia's role as a great power "was manifested not only in the creation of a great empire but also in the fulfillment of the great cultural achievement of liberating the Balkan peoples and summoning them to free political life, and also bringing civil order and civilization to vast areas of northern and central Asia."<sup>739</sup>

Again, as Orlando Figes points out, Dostoyevsky had spoken of Russia's "civilizing mission in Asia": "Inspired by the conquest of Central Asia, Dostoevsky, too, advanced the notion that Russia's destiny was not in Europe, as had so long been supposed, but rather in the East. In 1881 he told the readers of his *Writer's Diary*: 'Russia is not only in Europe but in Asia as well... We must cast aside our servile fear that Europe will call us Asiatic barbarians and say that we are more Asian than European... This mistaken view of ourselves as exclusively Europeans and not Asians (and we have never ceased to be the latter)... has cost us very dearly over these two centuries, and we have paid for it by the loss of our spiritual independence... It is hard for us to turn away from our window on Europe; but it is a matter of our destiny... When we turn to Asia, with our new view of her, something of the same sort may happen to us as happened to Europe when America was discovered. With our push towards Asia we will have a renewed upsurge of spirit and strength... In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves [the words 'slave' and 'Slav' are etymologically identical], while in Asia we shall be the masters. In Europe we were Tatars, while in Asia we can be Europeans. Our mission, our civilizing mission in Asia will encourage our spirit and draw us on; the movement needs only to be started.' This quotation is a perfect illustration of the Russians' tendency to define their relations with the East in reaction to their self-esteem and status in the West. Dostoevsky was not actually arguing that Russia is an Asiatic culture; only that the Europeans thought of it as so. And likewise, his argument that Russia should embrace the East was not that it should seek to be an Asiatic force: but, on the contrary, that only in Asia could it find new energy to reassert its Europeanness. The root of Dostoevsky's turning to the East was the bitter resentment which he, like many Russians, felt at the West's betrayal of Russia's Christian cause in the Crimean War, when France and Britain had sided with the Ottomans against Russia to defend their own imperial interests. In the only

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<sup>739</sup> Sazonov, in Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 121.

published very he ever wrote (and the qualities of ‘On the European Events of 1854’ are such that one can see why this was so) Dostoevsky portrayed the Crimean War as the ‘crucifixion of the Russian Christ’. But, as he warned the Western readers of his poem, Russia would arise and, when she did so, she would turn toward the East in her providential mission to Christianize the world.

*Unclear to you is her [Russia’s] predestination!  
The East – is hers! To her a million generations  
Untiringly stretch out their hands...  
And the resurrection of the ancient East  
By Russia (so God had commanded) is drawing near.”<sup>740</sup>*

Tsar Nicholas, writes Montefiore, “saw the East as ripe for Russian expansion in the race for empire. China was disintegrating – though, locally, a resurgent Japan was keen to win its own empire. Just after Nicky’s accession, Japan had defeated China in the First Sino-Japanese War. In one of his earliest decisions, Nicky, advised by Prince Alexei Lobanov-Rostovsky, the elderly grand seigneur who became foreign minister after Giers died, helped force Japan to give up some of its gains.

“Kaiser Wilhelm encouraged Nicky ‘to cultivate the Asian Continent and defend Europe from the inroads of the Great Yellow Race’, while both power would seize Chinese ports. Soon afterwards, Will sent Nicky his sketch showing Christian warriors fighting ‘the Yellow Peril’.

“Finance Minister [Count Sergei] Witte, already the maestro of the Trans-Siberian Railway, planned to expand into Manchuria in northern China through his policy of *penetration pacifique*: he persuaded and bribed the Chinese to let Russia build an Eastern Chinese Railway into Manchuria. At almost the same time, Lobanov agreed with Japan to share influence in Korea...”<sup>741</sup>

However, Witte, a man of talent and energy, was distrusted by the conservatives. Thus N.V. Muraviev, the Minister of Justice said that Witte, “thanks to his wife Matilda, a pure-blooded Jewess, has concluded a close union with the Jews and is confusing Russia... In his hands are special organs of his secret police... He is preparing, if there were to be a change of reign, to take power into his own hands. He has... influence everywhere.”<sup>742</sup>

Witte’s foreign policy was frankly secular and imperialist, being closer to that of General A.A. Kireev: “We, like any powerful nation, strive to expand our territory, our ‘legitimate’ moral, economic and political influence. This is in the order of things...”<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>740</sup> Figes, *Natasha’s Dance*, London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 415-416.

<sup>741</sup> Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London: Vintage, 2016, p. 501.

<sup>742</sup> Vladimir Gubanov (ed.), *Nikolai II-ij i Novie Mucheniki* (Nicholas II and the New Martyrs), St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 705.

<sup>743</sup> Kireev, in Niall Ferguson, *The War of the Worlds*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 70.

“As the main architect of Russia’s industrialization,” writes Richard Pipes, “[Witte] was eager to ensure foreign markets for her manufactured goods. In his judgement, the most promising export outlets lay in the Far East, notably China. Witte also believed that Russia could provide a major transit route for cargo and passengers from Western Europe to the Pacific, a potential role of which she had been deprived by the completion in 1869 of the Suez Canal. With these objectives in mind, he persuaded Alexander III to authorize a railway across the immense expanse of Siberia. The Trans-Siberian, begun in 1886, was to be the longest railroad in the world. [Tsar] Nicholas, who sympathized with the idea of Russia’s Far Eastern mission, endorsed and continued the undertaking. Russia’s ambitions in the Far East received warm encouragement from Kaiser Wilhelm II, who sought to divert her attention from the Balkans, where Austria, Germany’s principal ally, had her own designs.

“In the memoirs he wrote after retiring from public life, Witte claimed that while he had indeed supported a vigorous Russian policy in the Far East, he had in mind exclusively economic penetration, and that his plans were wrecked by irresponsible generals and politicians. This thesis, however, cannot be sustained in the light of the archival evidence that has surfaced since. Witte’s plans for economic penetration of the Far East were conceived in the spirit of imperialism of the age: it called for a strong military presence, which was certain sooner or later to violate China’s sovereignty and come into conflict with the imperial ambitions of Japan...”<sup>744</sup>

Witte succeeded in persuading the Tsar to his point of view. Thus “before 1904,” writes Dominic Lieven, “Nicholas’s priorities in terms of foreign policy were clear. Unlike Russians of so-called pan-Slav sympathy, he did not believe that his country’s manifest destiny lay in the Balkans, nor did he feel that Petersburg must necessarily support the Balkan Slavs just because they were people of the same race and religion. The Emperor was determined that, should the Ottoman Empire collapse, no other power must steal Constantinople, thereby barring Russia’s route out of the Black Sea and assuming a dominant position in Asia Minor. To avoid such a possibility in 1896-7 he was even willing to contemplate very dangerous military action. But, above all, Nicholas was intent on developing Russia’s position in Siberia and the Far East. Particularly after 1900, his personal imprint on Russia’s Far Eastern policy became very important.”<sup>745</sup>

Up to this time, Russia’s eastward expansion had been largely peaceful, and had been accompanied by the one true justification of imperialism – missionary work. However, already before 1900 Russia had begun to act in relation to Far Eastern races in a similar spirit to the other imperialist western powers. Thus at the railway station in Khabarovsk, on the Siberian-Chinese border, “foreign visitors were reminded of British India: ‘Instead, however, of British officers

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<sup>744</sup> Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899-1919*, London: Collins Harvill, 1990, pp. 12-13.

<sup>745</sup> Lieven, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

walking up and down with the confident stride of superiority while the Hindus ... give way ... there were Russian officers clean and smart promenading while the... cowering and cringing... Koreans made room for them... The Russian... is the white, civilized Westerner, whose stride is that of the conqueror.'

"Chinese workers were indispensable when it came to the bigger jobs too, not least railway construction and shipbuilding. In 1900 nine out of ten workers in the Vladivostok shipyards were Chinese. Yet Russian administrators felt no compunction about expelling surplus Asians in order to maintain Russian dominance... As Nikolai Gondatti, the governor of Tomsk, explained in 1911: 'My task is to make sure that there are lots of Russians and few yellows here...'"<sup>746</sup>

Russia was now caught up in imperialist rivalry with other western powers. Thus when Germany took Kiaochow from China in 1898 (formally speaking, it was leased from China, but in effect this was a land grab), the Russians were furious. "Military action against Germany, the Russian government admitted to itself, was not really an option. The new foreign minister, Muraviev, proposed that instead Russia send warships to take over the nearby Chinese port of Port Arthur. Witte opposed the idea; sending ships and troops ran absolutely counter to his plan to create a sphere of influence in Manchuria by promising friendly diplomatic support and loans. It made his previous inroads look dishonest, it would be expensive, and it would instantly alert the British to Russia's intentions. Initially Nicholas listened to Witte. But Muraviev went behind Witte's back, asked for a private audience and convinced the emperor to send the ships because the 'yellow races' understood only force. The Russians sailed into Port Arthur weeks later. 'Thank God we managed to occupy Port Arthur... without blood, quietly and almost amicably!' Nicholas wrote to his brother George. 'Of course, it was risky, but had we missed those docks now, it would be impossible later to kick out the English or the Japanese without a war. Yes, one has to look sharp, there on the Pacific Ocean lies the whole future of the development of Russia and at last we have a fully open warm water port...'"<sup>747</sup>

Retribution for the unlawful seizure of Port Arthur would come soon...

Meanwhile, in 1900, the Boxer Uprising against western influence broke out in China. Among the victims of the Uprising were 222 Chinese Orthodox from the Russian Spiritual Mission in Peking were martyred. To some, the preaching of the Gospel in the greatest and most inaccessible of the pagan empires, China, and its first-fruits in the form of the Chinese martyrs, indicated that *the end was coming*, in fulfillment of the Lord's words: "This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, *and then the end will come* (Matthew 24.14)..."<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>747</sup> Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>748</sup> "The First Chinese Orthodox Martyrs", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 29, N 1, January-February, 1979, pp. 14-18; *The True Vine*, N 8, Winter, 1991, pp. 42-51.

The Boxers, backed by Chinese troops, “besieged the embassies in Peking and then spread along Russia’s Manchurian Railway. Nicky joined Germany, Britain, America and Japan in sending an expeditionary force to relieve the embassies, but he was quick to withdraw. ‘The happiest day of my life will be when we leave Peking and get out of that mess.’ Yet it was just starting: he had to protect ‘Witte’s kingdom’ and railway in Manchuria. Now the Boxers attacked the Russian headquarters in Harbin. In June, Nicholas sent 170,000 troops into Manchuria – the end of Witte’s *penetration pacifique*. ‘I’m glad,’ wrote [War Minister Alexei Nikolayevich] Kuropatkin, ‘this will give us an excuse for seizing Manchuria.’<sup>749</sup>

“This run of opportunistic successes – intervention against Japan in 1895, annexation of Port Arthur and now expansion into Manchuria – encouraged the imperial ambitions of Nicholas, who forced the Chinese to sign over Manchuria for many years and planned to seize Korea as well. ‘I don’t want Korea for myself,’ he explained, ‘but neither can I countenance the Japanese setting foot there. Were they to try, that would be a *casus belli*.’

“These adventures, Witte rudely told the tsar, were ‘child’s play which will end disastrously’. Nicholas resented him and made his own private plans. As he told his secret adviser, his father’s friend Prince Meshchersky: ‘I’m coming to believe in myself.’”<sup>750</sup>

That Russia’s conquest of Manchuria was pure commercial imperialism is affirmed by Lieven: Russia poured troops into Manchuria “to protect Witte’s precious railway. Once in possession of Manchuria Petersburg was disinclined to retreat, at least until absolute security could be guaranteed to its railway and the Chinese would concede Russia’s economic domination of the province. This Peking was unwilling to do. Its stand was strongly backed by Britain, the USA and Japan, all of which demanded free access for foreign trade to Manchuria. The signatories of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, clearly directed against Russia, in January 1902 further stiffened Chinese resolve.”<sup>751</sup>

And so Russia entered the twentieth century dangerously isolated in the Far East.

Moreover, a related event had undermined her moral standing. During the Boxer rebellion, certain Russian military commanders in Blagoveshchensk on

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<sup>749</sup> “On July 11, 1900, the Russian government warned the Chinese ambassador in St. Petersburg that troops would have to be sent into Manchuria to protect Russian assets in the area. Three days later, hostilities broke out when the Russians ignored a Chinese threat to fire on any troopships that sailed down the River Amur. Within three months, all Manchuria was in the hands of 100,000 Russian troops. ‘We cannot stop halfway,’ wrote the Tsar. ‘Manchuria must be covered with our troops from the North to the South.’ Kuropatkin agreed: Manchuria must become ‘Russian property’.” (Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51). (V.M.)

<sup>750</sup> Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

<sup>751</sup> Lieven, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

the Amur had driven some thousands of Chinese out of the city and into the river, which showed that Russia had begun to be infected by the racist and imperialist spirit of the pseudo-Christian West.

The Church now began to speak out. Thus Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), although a monarchist, “was profoundly saddened by this event and foretold that it was precisely there, in the Far East, that we were bound to await the special punishment of God. The text of this prophecy has unfortunately not been found, but Vladyka Anthony himself spoke about it in his sermon before the service at the conclusion of peace with Japan [in 1905]. Pointing to the fact that the unsuccessful war with Japan was God’s punishment for the apostasy of Russian society from the age-old foundations of Russian life, Vladyka Anthony said: ‘... I will speak about the fact that it is not only the traitors of the fatherland that are guilty before God, I will say what I said five years ago, when I foretold that it would be precisely there, in the Far East, that we had to expect a particular punishment of God. But I will speak not with evil joy, as do our enemies, but with sadness and with shame, as a Christian and a Russian priest. In Blagoveshchensk, on the Amur, five years ago, we permitted a cruel action to take place. Several thousand Chinese, who were in service to Russian citizens, for the general security of the latter, were deceitfully led out of the city and forced into the river, where they found inescapable death... It was not for this that the Lord opened up before us the confines of the Far East, from the Volga to the sea of Okhotsk, so that we amazed the foreigners by our heartlessness. On the contrary, it is there, in the East, and not in the West, that lies the missionary and even messianic calling of our people. Russians did not want to understand this calling – not simple people, of course, but people who consider themselves enlightened, who, following the example of their western enlighteners, would not allow themselves the slightest rudeness in relation to any European rascal, but do not consider humble, straightforward and industrious inhabitants of the East even to be people. We were bound to reveal to them Christ, we were bound to show them the Russian breadth of spirit, Russian love of man, Russian trustfulness, but we showed them only animal self-preservation that does not stop before anything. This is our first guilt, for God even in the Old Testament imputed the sinful fall of a people’s military commanders to the whole people.’”<sup>752</sup>

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<sup>752</sup> Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago*, volume 2, New York, 1957, pp. 140-141.

### 53. THE HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE

Notwithstanding his misguided policy in the Far East, Tsar Nicholas was a peacemaker by nature, and early in his reign he suggested that all nations come together in order to cut their military forces and submit to general arbitration on international disputes. "The preservation of universal peace," he wrote, "and the reduction in weapons that weigh on all the peoples is, in the present situation, a goal to which the efforts of all governments should strive." Military expenses were an ever-increasing burden on the peoples, disrupting their prosperity. "Hundreds of millions are spent on the acquisition of terrible means of destruction which, while considered the last word in science today, must lose all value tomorrow in view of new inventions... Thus as the weapons of each state grow, they answer less and less to the goals put forward by governments."

The Tsar's proposal was well-timed; for powerful peace movements were developing in many countries, and the burden of military expenditure was indeed increasing.<sup>753</sup> So the Hague Peace Conference was convened on May 18, 1899, and was attended by representatives of 26 nations. Several useful resolutions were passed by the 1899 conference and its follow-up in 1907. Thus, as Sir Richard Evans writes, they "laid down an important series of ground rules for limiting the damage caused by war. They banned the killing of prisoners and civilians, and declared that an occupying force was the guardian of the cultural heritage of the areas it conquered, and should not loot or destroy cultural artefacts."<sup>754</sup>

"However," writes O.F. Soloviev, "at the very beginning Germany made clear her lack of desire even to consider the central question of disarmament, in spite of the intentions of the other participants. Kaiser Wilhelm II made a sensational speech in Wiesbaden in which he declared that the best guarantee of peace was 'a sharpened sword'.<sup>755</sup> Then, for the sake of consensus, the

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<sup>753</sup> Before his "Appeal to the Rulers" of 1898 the Tsar is reported to have read the massive book by the Warsaw financier Ivan Stanislavovich Bloch, *Is War Now Possible?*, which was uncannily accurate in his forecast of the destructive consequences of a major European war (Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War 1914-18*, London: Penguin, 1998, pp. 8-11).

<sup>754</sup> Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 687.

<sup>755</sup> "'I'll go along with the conference comedy,' said the Kaiser, 'but I'll keep my dagger at my side during the waltz.' For once his uncle in Britain agreed with him. 'It is the greatest nonsense and rubbish I ever heard of,' said Edward. Germany went to the conference intending to wreck it if it could do so without taking all the blame. Its delegation was headed by Georg zu Münster, the German ambassador to Paris, who strongly disliked the whole idea of the conference, and included Karl von Stengel, a professor from Munich, who published a pamphlet shortly before the proceedings started in which he condemned disarmament, arbitration and the whole peace movement. The directions that Holstein in the German Foreign Office gave the delegates said: 'For the state there is aim superior to the protection of its interests... In the case of great powers these will not necessarily be identical with the maintenance of peace, but rather with the violation of the enemy and competitor by an appropriately combined group of stronger states.'

"One member of the German delegation, a military officer, made an unfortunate impression when he gave an exceedingly belligerent speech in which he boasted that his country could easily afford its defence expenditure and that furthermore every German saw military service

remaining delegates, at the suggestion of the Frenchman L. Bourgeois (1851-1926), a former president of the council of ministers and a Mason, limited themselves to accepting an evasive formula on the extreme desirability of 'limiting the military burdens which now weigh on the world for the sake of improving both the material and the moral prosperity of mankind'.

"After this the attention of delegates was concentrated on the third commission, which discussed problems of arbitration under the presidency of the same Bourgeois, with [Jacques] Decan [a member of the Grand Orient of Belgium], as secretary. As a result of these efforts, which were supported by other governments, success was obtained in paralysing the attempts of the Germans completely to exclude the application of arbitration procedures in the regulation of conflicts. In the preamble to the convention on 'the peaceful resolution of international conflicts', which was unanimously accepted, it was noted that the conference had been convened on the initiative of 'the most august monarch', Nicholas II, whose thoughts it was necessary to strengthen by an agreement on the principles of right and justice, on which 'the security of states and the prosperity of peoples' rested. The first article of the first section 'On the Preservation of Universal Peace' made the following provision: 'With the aim of averting, if possible, the turning to force in the mutual relations between states, the signatory powers agree to apply all their efforts to guarantee a peaceful resolution of international disagreements.'... Decan in his report to the commission was apparently the first to use the term 'League of Nations' to apply to the union of state approving of similar documents. Later the term was more and more widely used long before the creation, after the First World War, of an international organization of that name."<sup>756</sup>

The example provided by the Tsar at The Hague was infectious. Thus "in 1907, on the initiative of the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, a conference of the world's then forty-four nations, including all the great empires, met to discuss outlawing aerial bombardment. Twenty-seven of the nations agreed, including the United States and Britain. Germany was one of the seventeen that wanted to retain the right to make war from the air. All forty-four powers did agree, however, to limit aerial bombardment to military targets. These were defined as mostly naval dockyards and military installations. By implication, residential and built-up areas would not be bombed..."<sup>757</sup>

Even these limited agreements were not fulfilled, being violated by the zeppelin airships that blitzed London in 1915. As J.R. Nyquist observes, somewhat caustically: "In 1899 and 1907 Czar Nicholas II put together

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'as a sacred and patriotic duty, to the performance of which he owes his existence, his prosperity, his future.'" (Margaret Macmillan, *The War that Ended Peace*, London: Profile, 2014, pp. 279-280, 281) (V.M.)

<sup>756</sup> Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike* (Masonry in World Politics), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, pp. 33-34.

<sup>757</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Challenge to Civilization: A History of the Twentieth Century, 1952-1999*, London: HarperCollins, 1999, p. 910.

conferences at the Hague to prohibit dum-dum bullets, asphyxiating gases, and the launching of projectiles or explosives from the air. Within two decades these agreements proved their worthlessness, especially during World War One. In the course of the war, Czar Nicholas and his entire family were murdered..."<sup>758</sup>

As for the more ambitious idea of "universal peace" brought about by an international arbitration procedure or "League of Nations", this was a non-starter. None of the Great Powers – including Russia – was willing to give up sovereignty in this area. Already in 1899, the tsar found himself having to fend off some undesirable suggestions on arms limitation<sup>759</sup>, and within six months he had evidently cooled towards the idea of arbitration – he sent large numbers of troops into Manchuria without presenting his dispute with China to the court. Nor did the British think of arbitration before launching their war against the Boers. The fact was, "no European government would accept the idea of arms reduction."<sup>760</sup>

It was not only the nationalists that hindered the attempts of tsars and statesmen to stop the arms race and prevent war. Socialist workers also consistently placed national pride above the international solidarity of the working class. Thus the Second International's numerous attempts to force governments to reduce armaments and stop fighting were undermined by the conflicting nationalisms of French and German workers, Bulgarian and Serb workers, Austrian and Italian and Czech workers.<sup>761</sup>

Only the Russian socialists appeared to have no difficulty in placing class above nation – perhaps, paradoxically, because so many of them were Jews... On the eve of the First World War, the assassination of the great French socialist and internationalist Jean Jaurès symbolised the failure of socialism in the face of nationalism. But when the nationalists had exhausted themselves, the path would be open for the only completely consistent internationalist – because he hated all nations equally – Vladimir Lenin....

Especially resistant to any idea of disarmament were the Serbs. In 1898 a Serb journalist told the British ambassador: "The idea of disarmament does not

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<sup>758</sup> Nyquist, *Origins of the Fourth World War*, Chula Vista, Co.: Black Forest Press, 1999, p. 99.

<sup>759</sup> Thus Miranda Carter writes: "When, a couple of months before the Hague peace conference took place in May 1899, the British ambassador in St. Petersburg raised the issue of the four new battleships Russia had commissioned, Nicholas replied that it wasn't the right moment for 'exchanging views about a mutual curtailment of naval programmes'. By then, the tsar's enthusiasm had waned when, according to the British Russia expert Donald Mackenzie Wallace, it had been pointed out to him that the proposed alternative to war – an arbitration court – would undermine the intrinsic superiority of the Great Powers, since small countries would have just as much muscle as big ones; and that there were thirty outstanding disputes with other Asian powers which Russia would almost certainly lose in arbitration. Nor did he like being hailed as a hero by European socialists" (*The Three Emperors*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 252).

<sup>760</sup> Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>761</sup> Macmillan, *op. cit.*, chapter 10.

please our people in any way. The Serbian race is split up under seven or eight different foreign governments, and we cannot be satisfied so long as this state of things lasts. We live in the hope of getting something for ourselves out of the general conflagration, whenever it takes place.”

As Niall Ferguson writes, “this was Serbian foreign policy: a kind of nationalist version of Lenin’s dictum: ‘the worse, the better.’”<sup>762</sup>

The Tsar’s initiative was a noble and well-intentioned one, as the American President Warren Harding officially acknowledged in 1921; and it was not without long-term consequences that are discernible today. But the Tsar was like a lamb among wolves in the world of international politics...

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<sup>762</sup> Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 147.

## **54. THE YOUNG LENIN AND STALIN**

Although Russia in 1900 was a powerful nation rapidly increasing in strength both economically and militarily, serious discontent was brewing within the country. Niall Ferguson writes: "Though living standards were almost certainly rising (if the revenues from excise duties are any guide), this was no cure for a pervasive sense of grievance, as any student of the French *ancien régime* could have explained. A disgruntled peasantry, a sclerotic aristocracy, a radicalized but impotent intelligentsia and a capital city with a large and volatile populace: these were precisely the combustible ingredients the historian Alexis de Tocqueville had identified in 1780s France. A Russian revolution of rising expectations was in the making..."<sup>763</sup>

"Russian society," writes Orlando Figes, "had been activated and politicized by the famine crisis [of 1891], its social conscience had been stung, and the old bureaucratic system had been discredited. Public mistrust of the government did not diminish once the crisis had passed, but strengthened as the representatives of civil society continued to press for a greater role in the administration of the nation's affairs. The famine, it was said, had proved the culpability and incompetence of the old regime, and there was now a growing expectation that wider circles of society would have to be drawn into its work if another catastrophe was to be avoided. The *zemstvos*, which had spent the past decade battling to expand their activities in the face of growing bureaucratic opposition, were now strengthened by widespread support from the liberal public for their work in agronomy, public health and education. The liberal Moscow merchants and industrialists, who had rallied behind the relief campaign, now began to question the government's policies of industrialization, which seemed so ruinous for the peasantry, the main buyers of their manufactures. From the middle of the 1890s they too supported the various projects of the *zemstvos* and municipal bodies to revive the rural economy. Physicians, teachers and engineers, who had all been forced to organize themselves as a result of their involvement in the relief campaign, now began to demand more professional autonomy and influence over public policy; and when they failed to make any advances they began to campaign for political reforms. In the press, in the 'thick journals', in the universities, and in learned and philanthropic societies, the debates on the causes of the famine – and on reforms needed to prevent its recurrence – continued to rage throughout the 1890s, long after the immediate crisis had passed.

"The socialist opposition, which had been largely dormant in the 1880s, sprang back into life with a renewed vigour as a result of these debates. There was a revival of the Populist movement (later rechristened Neo-Populism), culminating in 1901 with the establishment of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Under the leadership of Viktor Chernov (1873-1952), a law graduate from Moscow University who had been imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress for his role in the student movement, it embraced the new Marxist sociology

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<sup>763</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 14-15.

whilst still adhering to the Populist belief that all the workers and peasants alike - what it called the 'labouring people' - were united by their poverty and their opposition to the regime. Briefly, then, in the wake of the famine, there was growing unity between the Marxists and the Neo-Populists as they put aside their differences about the development of capitalism (which the SRs now accepted as a fact) and concentrated on the democratic struggle...

"Marxism as a social science was fast becoming the national creed: it alone seemed to explain the causes of the famine. Universities and learned societies were swept along by the new intellectual fashion. Even such well-established institutions as the Free Economic Society fell under the influence of the Marxists, who produced libraries of social statistics, dressed up as studies of the causes of the great starvation, to prove the truth of Marx's economic laws. Socialists who had previously wavered in their Marxism were now completely converted in the wake of the famine crisis, when, it seemed to them, there was no more hope in the Populist faith in the peasantry. Petr Struve (1870-1944), who had previously thought of himself as a political liberal, found his Marxist passions stirred by the crisis: it 'made much more of a Marxist out of me than the reading of Marx's *Capital*'. Martov also recalled how the crisis had turned him into a Marxist: 'It suddenly became clear to me how superficial and groundless the whole of my revolutionism had been until then, and how my subjective political romanticism was dwarfed before the philosophical and sociological heights of Marxism.' Even the young Lenin only became converted to the Marxist mainstream in the wake of the famine crisis.

"In short, the whole of society had been politicized and radicalized as a result of the famine crisis. The conflict between the population and the regime had been set in motion..."<sup>764</sup>

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The increasing radicalization of Russian society soon took an organized form. In 1897 the "Universal Jewish Workers' Union in Russia, Poland and Lithuania", otherwise known as the Bund, was founded. In 1898 the Russian Social-Democratic Party was founded, with the active participation of the Bund.<sup>765</sup> The Russian-Jewish revolutionary underground had received its first organizational impulse...

However, the government was less harassed at this time by revolutionaries than by the local councils, or *zemstva*, whose 70,000 teachers, doctors, statisticians and agronomists, collectively known as the "Third Element" (as opposed to the first two elements, the administrators and elected deputies), inculcated liberal ideas in the young. The Interior Minister Plehve called them "the cohorts of the *sans-culottes*"; he believed that, coming themselves from a

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<sup>764</sup> Figes, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-162.

<sup>765</sup> V.F. Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo ot Petra I do nashikh dnei* (The Russian Intelligentsia from Peter I to our days), Moscow, 1997. p. 363.

peasant or lower-class background, they were trying to use their position in the *zemstva* to stir up the peasantry.

In 1899 *zemstvo* leaders formed a discussion group called *Beseda* (Symposium). The next year the government ordered the dismissal of those *zemstvo* deputies who were becoming involved in political questions. In 1901 a confidential memorandum published by Witte in Germany called for the abolition of the *zemstva* as being incompatible with autocracy... Nevertheless, in the same year, writes Sir Geoffrey Hosking, "a Union of Liberation was set up to coordinate the efforts of *zemstvo* and professional people. It had to hold its founding congress in Switzerland, but it soon began to campaign inside Russia, especially after reverses in the Japanese war threw doubt on the strength and competence of the autocracy. The Union issued pamphlets and held 'liberation banquets', at which the demand was ever more insistently raised that the autocracy be replaced by a constitutional monarchy with a parliament elected by universal, direct, equal, and secret ballot."<sup>766</sup>

Although the Liberationists were liberals, they veered more and more to the left and to the socialists. For it was commonly accepted that since nothing could be worse than the autocracy on the right, there were "no enemies on the left". An example of this tendency was Peter Struve who on the one hand founded the journal *Osvobozhdenie* (*Liberation*) in Germany in 1902, and on the other hand was the author of the founding manifesto of the Social-Democratic Party, which declared: "The Russian proletariat can win political freedom for itself only by itself, and it will overthrow the autocracy, so as then with greater energy to continue the struggle with capitalism and the bourgeoisie until the final victory of Socialism..."<sup>767</sup>

The liberal, liberationist virus infected all generations, and the young first of all. Thus in 1899, the university students in St. Petersburg and other major cities went on strike. "If," writes Richard Pipes, "one wishes to identify events that not merely foreshadowed 1917 but led directly to it, then the choice has to fall on the disorders that broke out at Russian universities in February, 1899. Although they were soon quelled by the usual combination of concessions and repression, these disorders set in motion a movement of protest against the autocracy that did not abate until the revolutionary upheaval of 1905-6. This First Revolution was also eventually crushed but at a price of major political concessions that fatally weakened the Russian monarchy. To the extent that historical events have a beginning, the beginning of the Russian Revolution may well have been the general university strike of February 1899."<sup>768</sup>

It is significant that this disorder should have begun with those who had not yet completed their education and had not yet received the wisdom that

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<sup>766</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 368.

<sup>767</sup> Struve, in I.P. Yakovy, *Imperator Nikolaj II i Revoliutsia* (Emperor Nicholas II and the Revolution), Moscow, 2010, p. 70.

<sup>768</sup> Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

experience of life gives. There is much in the revolution that resembles the rebellion of an adolescent against his parents. In a healthy society such a rebellion is frowned upon and checked; for it overturns the normal order. The tragedy of these years was that grey hairs were no longer seen as a sign of wisdom, and the elders followed the younger, not daring to seem "behind the times".

Thus S.S. Oldenburg writes: "Society did not respond in any way to his Majesty's reconciliatory moves [towards the students]. It continued to sympathize with the strike. Only the editor of *New Times*, A.S. Suvorov, was bold enough to write against it: 'If the government had let the young people's strike take its natural course, that is, if it had said, 'If you don't want to study, then don't study', then it would not have harmed itself in its higher education, but would have put the young students in a difficult position, leaving them without education and without the support of the field of social activity which they were counting on.' Almost the whole of the rest of the press hurled itself at *New Times* for these lines..."<sup>769</sup>

The Tsar himself, after receiving a report on the strikes, apportioned blame both to the students and to the police and to the university administrators. And he did not forget the role that society had played: "To our sorrow, during the disturbances that have taken place, local society has not only not supported the efforts of the state authorities,... but in many instances has assisted the disorders, stirring up the excited youths with their approval and permitting themselves to interfere in an inappropriate way in the sphere of state directives. Such disturbances cannot be tolerated in the future and must be put down without any weakening by strict government measures."<sup>770</sup> However, the pattern was set of agitators being supported by the press and society. From now on, the Tsar had increasingly to govern without the support of the newspaper-reading public, while the universities now became hot-houses of revolutionary agitation to such an extent that many students were no longer interested in academic studies but only in politics.

An important role in teaching the young to rebel was played by foreign revolutionaries. As General V.N. Voeikov writes: "In his *Notes of a Revolutionary*, Prince Kropotkin gives a completely clear indication under whose direction 'developed' our Russian youth abroad. Thanks to his sincerity, we can form an accurate picture of who in Switzerland worked on the leaders of our revolutionary movement: the centre of the Internationale was Geneva. The Geneva sections gathered in a huge Masonic temple 'Temple Unique'. During the large meetings the spacious hall accommodated more than two thousand people, which served as an indicator of the quantity of young people thirsting for enlightenment. The French émigré-communards taught the workers for free; they went on courses in history, physics, mechanics, etc. Time

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<sup>769</sup> Oldenburg, *Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II-go* (The Reign of Tsar Nicholas II), Belgrade, Washington, 1981, vol. I, p. 147.

<sup>770</sup> Tsar Nicholas, in Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

was also given to participation in sections that sat during the evenings in side-rooms of this temple of science."<sup>771</sup>

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"In 1887 a group of the terrorists was hanged for seeking to kill the new tsar Alexander III, among them A.I. Ul'ianov, son of Il'ia and brother of the 17-year-old Vladimir Il'ich, who after 1901 would be known to the world as Lenin. Vladimir was devastated by the loss of his brother and threw himself into student protests at Kazan University. Within months he had been expelled. Initially, Vladimir was attracted, like his brother, to the terrorism of the People's Will, though he moved rather quickly towards Marxism over the next two years. Marxism entailed the rejection of terror as an instrument of revolution, yet Lenin's Marxism would always bear some of the élan of the Russian terrorist tradition with its commitment to the violent overthrow of the state. In other ways, too, his Marxism was marked by the Russian revolutionary tradition represented by such men as Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Sergei Nechaev, or Petr Tkachev, with its emphasis on the need for a disciplined revolutionary vanguard, its belief that willed action (the 'subjective factor') could speed up the 'objectively' determined course of history, its defence of Jacobin methods of dictatorship, and its contempt for liberalism and democracy (and indeed for socialists who valued these things)."<sup>772</sup>

Lenin was a hereditary nobleman of mixed Russian, Chuvash and Jewish origin. He lived on party funds and income from his mother's estate. Choosing to work in the underground<sup>773</sup>, he had very little direct knowledge of the way ordinary people lived, and cared even less. "According to Gorky, it was this ignorance of everyday work, and the human suffering which it entailed, which had bred in Lenin a 'pitiless contempt, worthy of a nobleman, for the lives of the ordinary people..."

"Life in all its complexity is unknown to Lenin. He does not know the ordinary people. He has never lived among them."<sup>774</sup>

Lenin was imprisoned in 1895 and in 1897 "sentenced to three years' administrative exile in Siberia for his involvement with the revolutionary Union of Struggle. He found life in Shushenskoe, in the Minusinsk district, remarkably pleasant..."<sup>775</sup> In 1900 he returned, becoming the editor of a

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<sup>771</sup> Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, p. 127.

<sup>772</sup> Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 43.

<sup>773</sup> For, as he argued in *What is to be Done?* (1902), in the conditions of Tsarist Russia it was impossible for the party to live openly among the people, but had to be an underground organization with strictly limited membership. "In an autocratic state the more we confine the membership of such a party to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult it will be to wipe out such an organization" (in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 678).

<sup>774</sup> Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 386.

<sup>775</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 49.

revolutionary newspaper originally founded by Plekhanov - *Iskra*, meaning "spark"...

For a revolutionary, Lenin lived a relatively simple, even ascetic life, and had only one known affair - with Inessa Armand. But, as Oliver Figes writes, "asceticism was a common trait of the revolutionaries of Lenin's generation. They were all inspired by the self-denying revolutionary Rakhmetev in Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is To Be Done?* By suppressing his own sentiments, by denying himself the pleasures of life, Lenin tried to strengthen his resolve and to make himself, like Rakhmetev, insensitive to the sufferings of others. This, he believed, was the 'hardness' required by every successful revolutionary: the ability to spill blood for political ends. 'The terrible thing in Lenin,' Struve once remarked, 'was that combination in one person of self-castigation, which is the essence of all real asceticism, with the castigation of other people as expressed in abstract social hatred and cold political cruelty..."

"The root of this philistine approach to life was a burning ambition for power. The Mensheviks joked that it was impossible to compete with a man, such as Lenin, who thought about revolution twenty-four hours every day. Lenin was driven by an absolute faith in his own historical destiny. He did not doubt for a moment, as he had once put it, that he was the man who was to wield the 'conductor's baton' in the party. This was the message he brought back to Russia in April 1917. Those who had known him before the war noticed a dramatic change in his personality. 'How he had aged,' recalled Roman Gul', who had met him briefly in 1905. 'Lenin's whole appearance had altered. And not only that. There was none of the old geniality, his friendliness or comradely humour, in his relations with other people. The new Lenin that arrived was cynical, secretive and rude, a conspirator "against everyone and everything", trusting no one, suspecting everyone, and determined to launch his drive for power.'..."

Lenin hated his own country. "I spit on Russia", he said once; and his actions showed his contempt for Russians of all classes. Lenin's revolution was not carried out for the sake of Russia or the Russians: its motivation was irrational, demonic, universal hatred... Still less was it carried out for the sake of truth. As Victor Sebastyen says, "In his ideas and polemics Lenin constantly created images of an alternative reality, appealing not so much to facts, as to emotions. This is the politics of post-truth, in which real facts and truth are substituted by their emotional fictions and utopian surrogates."<sup>776</sup>

In trying to understand Lenin, it is more important to study the violence of his Bakunist actions rather than the gradualism of his Marxist theory, which he violated in the end. For as he himself said: "Practice is a hundred times more important than theory"<sup>777</sup>, and in the last analysis, we must agree with I.P.

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<sup>776</sup> Sebastyen, in Natalia Golitsyna, "Biurokrat, dictator, liubovnik" (Bureaucrat, dictator, lover), *Radio Svoboda*, April 1, 2017.

<sup>777</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, XX, 102, XIV, 326.

Goldenberg that Lenin was the successor of Bakunin more than Marx, and that his tactics were those of “the universal apostle of destruction” ...<sup>778</sup>

For, as Paul Johnson writes, “Lenin was obsessed by force, almost to the point of lip-smacking at the scent of it...”

“The truth is, Lenin was too impatient to be an orthodox Marxist. He feared the predicament foreseen by Engels when he had written, ‘The worst thing that can befall a leader of an extreme party is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the moment is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents... he is compelled to represent not his party or his class, but the class for whom conditions are ripe for domination.’ Russia was a semi-industrialized country, where the bourgeoisie was weak and the proletarian element small, and the objective conditions for the revolution not nearly ripe. It was the dilemma which led Lenin into heresy. If ‘proletarian consciousness’ had not yet been created, was it not the task of Marxist intellectuals like himself to speed up the process? In 1902, in *What is to be Done?*, he first used the term ‘vanguard fighters’ to describe the new role of a small revolutionary elite. He drew an entirely novel distinction between a revolution created by a mature ‘organization of workers’, in advanced capitalist countries like Germany and Britain, and ‘an organization of revolutionaries’, suitable for Russian conditions. The first was occupational, broad, public: in short, a mass proletarian party. The second was quite different: ‘an organization of revolutionaries must contain primarily and chiefly people whose occupation is revolutionary activity... This organization must necessarily be not very broad and as secret as possible.’ As such it had to forgo the ‘democratic principle’ which required ‘full publicity’ and ‘election to all posts’. Working within the framework of an autocracy like Russia that was impossible: ‘It must be strictest secrecy, restricted choice of members, and training of professional revolutionaries.’ Once these qualities are present, something more than democracy is guaranteed: complete comradesly confidence among revolutionaries.’ But in the same passage he points out grimly that revolutionaries know ‘by experience in order to rid itself of an unworthy member and organization of genuine revolutionaries recoils from nothing’. If comrades must, when needs be, murder each other – a point Dostoyevsky had already made in *The Devils* – was not this ‘comradely confidence’ a fantasy? Was it not, indeed, belied by what happened to the organization the moment Lenin joined it, and still more when he took it over?

“Rosa Luxemburg, the most gifted as well as one of the most orthodox of the German Marxists, recognized Lenin’s heresy for what it was: so serious as to destroy the whole purpose and idealism of Marxism. She attributed it to Lenin’s faults of character, both personal and national: ‘The “ego”, crushed and pulverised by Russian absolutism,’ she wrote, ‘reappeared in the form of the “ego” of the Russian revolutionary’ which ‘stands on its head and proclaims itself anew the mighty consummator of history’. Lenin, she argued, was in

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<sup>778</sup> Goldenburg, in Robert Service, *Lenin*, 2000, p. 267.

effect demanding absolute powers for the party leadership, and this would intensify most dangerously the conservatism which naturally belongs to every such body.' Once granted, such powers would never be relinquished. When Lenin insisted that 'consciousness' had to be brought to the proletariat from without, by 'vanguard fighters', and the revolution pushed forward before it was ripe by 'vanguard fighters', he was in fact contradicting the whole 'scientific' basis of Marxist theory. She denounced the idea as elitist and non-Marxist and said it would lead inevitably to 'military ultracentralism'.<sup>779</sup>

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The ultimate perfecter of socialism of the "military ultracentralist" type was the Georgian Joseph Djughashvili, better known as Stalin, who also grew up in this period. Like Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov and Nechaiev, Stalin was a seminarian. The largest section in the radical university student population was constituted by seminarians and sons of priests, so in 1879 "the government curbed entry from seminaries."<sup>780</sup>

In 1894, as Alan Bullock writes, Stalin became "one of the 600 students at the Russian Orthodox theological seminary in Tiflis. The Tsarist authorities had refused to allow a university to be opened in the Caucasus, fearing that it would become a centre for nationalist and radical agitation. The Tiflis seminary served as a substitute, and was attended by many young men who had no intention of entering the priesthood..."

"... The official policy of Russification made the seminary a stronghold of Georgian nationalism. A student expelled for his anti-Russian attitude in 1886 had assassinated the Principal, and only a few months before Stalin's admission a protest strike of all the Georgian pupils led to the seminary's closure by the police and the expulsion of eight-seven students..."

"... [Stalin's] daughter Svetlana wrote after his death: 'A church education was the only systematic education my father ever had. I am convinced that the seminary in which he spent more than ten years played an immense role, setting my father's character for the rest of his life, strengthening and intensifying inborn traits.'

"My father never had any feeling for religion.<sup>781</sup> In a young man who had never for a moment believed in the life of the spirit or in God, endless prayers and enforced religious training could only produce contrary results... From his experiences at the seminary he came to the conclusion that men were intolerant, coarse, deceiving their flocks in order to hold them in obedience;

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<sup>779</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 55-56.

<sup>780</sup> Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire 1552-1917*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 329.

<sup>781</sup> Nevertheless, Stalin did well in almost all subjects at the seminary in his early years there. He was especially distinguished in ecclesiastical singing (Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power. 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 22) (V.M.)

that they intrigued, lied and as a rule possessed numerous faults and very few virtues.'

"One form which Stalin's rebellion took was spending as much time as possible reading illicit books obtained from a lending library in the town and smuggled into the seminary. Besides Western literature in translation, and the Russian classics – also forbidden – Stalin became acquainted with radical and positivist ideas which he is said to have picked up from reading translations of Darwin, Comte and Marx, as well as Plekhanov, the first Russian Marxist.

"Growing discontented with the vague romantic ideals of Georgian nationalism [led by Chavchavadze], Stalin organized a socialist study circle with other students, including Iremashvili, and according to the latter soon began to show intolerance towards any member who disagreed with him. He found a natural attraction in the Marxist teaching of the inevitability of class war and the overthrow of an unjust and corrupt social order. The attraction was as much psychological as intellectual, appealing to the powerful but destructive emotions of hatred and resentment which were to prove so strong force in Stalin's character, and offering a positive outlet for an ambition and abilities which would otherwise have been frustrated. As Robert Tucker wrote, the gospel of class war legitimized his resentment against authority: 'it identified his enemies as history's'."<sup>782</sup>

One of Stalin's friends at seminary was Gutsa Parkhadze, who wrote: "We youngsters had a passionate thirst for knowledge. Thus, in order to disabuse the minds of our seminary students of the myth that the world was created in six days, we had to acquaint ourselves with the geological origin and age of the earth to be able to prove them in argument; we had to familiarize ourselves with Darwin's teachings. We were aided in this by Lyles' *Antiquity and Men*, and Darwin's *Descent of Man*, the latter in a translation edited by Sechenov. Comrade Stalin read Sechenov's works with great interest.

"We gradually proceeded to a study of class society, which led us to the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In those days, the reading of Marxist literature was punishable as revolutionary propaganda. The effect of this was particularly felt in the seminary, where even the name of Darwin was always mentioned with scurrilous abuse. Comrade Stalin brought these books to our notice. The first thing we had to do, he would say, was to become atheists."<sup>783</sup>

Another member of Stalin's group was Lado Ketshoveli, who was a ringleader in the revolt that led to the closing down of the seminary. He founded the first underground Marxist press in Transcaucasia, and in 1902 was arrested and shot dead by guards after shouting from his cell window: "Down with the autocracy! Long live freedom! Long live socialism!"

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<sup>782</sup> Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13, 14.

<sup>783</sup> Emilian Yaroslavsky, *Landmarks in the Life of Stalin*, Moscow, 1940, pp. 12-13.

“To Stalin he still remained, many years afterwards, the exemplar of a revolutionary fighter and his influence no doubt helped to precipitate Stalin’s break with the seminary. By his fifth year the school authorities regarded Stalin as a hardened troublemaker, and he was expelled in May 1899 on the ground that ‘for unknown reasons’ he failed to appear for the end-of-year examinations. Iremashvili, who had accompanied him to the seminary, wrote later that he took with him ‘a grim and bitter hatred against the school administration, the bourgeoisie and everything in the country that represented Tsarism’.”<sup>784</sup>

The inspector of the seminary at the time of Stalin’s expulsion was Prince David Abashidze, the future organizer of the Georgian Catacomb Church and hieroconfessor, who as Schema-Archbishop Anthony died in 1942 in Kiev...

The strong representation of the priestly caste in the revolutionary movement was a striking sign of the times...<sup>785</sup> It is obviously dangerous and unjust to draw any general conclusions about the nature of seminary education from Stalin’s example alone. Nevertheless, the fact that so many former seminarians, sons of priests and even priests joined the revolutionary movement – another important example is Gapon in the 1905 revolution – indicated that something was wrong in the Church. The seminaries themselves – especially those in Pskov, Volhynia and Tambov – became regular trouble-spots throughout the first decade of the century, with strikes, violence and even some shootings of teachers.<sup>786</sup>

Could the radicalism at the bottom of the hierarchy have had something to do with liberalism at the top? Could the lack of zeal of the leaders of the Church be influencing the followers to look for certainty elsewhere? If so, then only a revival of zeal for the truth of Christianity would be able to quench zeal for the falsehood of the revolution...

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<sup>784</sup> Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 16. For some anecdotes of Stalin’s behaviour at the seminary, see I.V. Alexandrov, “Fotoletopisets”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, N 10 (1869), May 15/28, 2009, pp. 12-15.

<sup>785</sup> T.G. Leontiev, “Vera i Bunt: dukhoventstvo v revoliutsionnom obschestve Rossii nachala XX veka” (Faith and Rebellion: the clergy in the revolutionary society of Russia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), *Portal-Credo.Ru*, 2015.

<sup>786</sup> See the diary entries of the future hieromartyr, Bishop Arseny, in *Pis’ma Vladyki Germana* (The Letters of Vladyka Herman), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 2004, pp. 17-23. In 1907 a student at Tambov seminary shot the inspector, Archimandrite Simeon Kholmogorov, who was paralyzed for life before receiving the crown on martyrdom.

## **55. OPTINA DESERT AND THE FUTURE OF RUSSIA**

A shining exception to the general picture of declining spirituality in the monasteries and seminaries of Russia was Optina Desert.

In spite of the suppression of the Decembrist rebellion by Tsar Nicholas I, revolutionary ideas and the poison of westernism spread relentlessly through Russian society from that time. And the liberalizing reforms of Alexander II, regardless of their intrinsic merits or faults, brought Russia closer to the West. At the same time, however, a revival of the Eastern Orthodox teaching and practice of eldership (*starchestvo*) and hesychasm had also been taking place. Its aim was exactly the opposite of the revolution, that is, the bringing of men into submission to the all-holy Will of God and the lawful authorities that are established by God. The fount and origin of this revival was the great monastic founder St. Paisius Velichkovsky, several of whose Russian disciples spread the word north from Romania into Russia. Besides his personal influence on his disciples, Paisius also translated the *Philokalia*, a collection of patristic texts on prayer and the spiritual life, into Slavonic; the first edition was published with the help of Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg in 1793.

Ivan Mikhailovich Kontzevich has identified the essence of eldership with the gift of prophecy<sup>787</sup>, and the gifts of clairvoyance, of foretarcheseeing the future and accurately assessing the present that we associate with Old Testament prophecy are certainly part of this New Testament charisma. But a study of the lives of the holy elders and their discussions with the thousands of people of all classes, ages and conditions who poured into Optina seeking advice and consolation shows that eldership was much more than that. It can be summarized as the knowledge of the will of God for every individual supplicant and the ability to guide him to accept and fulfill that will to the end of eternal salvation. The future confessor of the faith E. Poselyanin described it as follows: "The business of saving souls is a difficult one. The unceasing struggle with self, that is, the struggle of the spirit with a nature infected with original sin, and a continuous watch over self, necessary for success in this struggle, are not yet enough. A vast knowledge of human nature and its relations with the external world, of the spiritual benefit and harm which may be derived from contact with the world, and of the way by which grace is obtained is needed. To aid the soul in its exercises, and to preserve its balance, continuous guidance is necessary. Such guidance makes uninterrupted progress toward perfection possible, without the spiritual fluctuations and vicissitudes common to people who have no guide. There is needed someone who knows the soul, its dispositions, abilities and sins, a person with spiritual experience and wisdom who can guide the soul, encouraging it in times of laziness and sadness and restraining it in times of immoderate elation, one who knows how to humble pride, foresee danger and treat sin with penance. Quick and safe is the way of the man who has subjected himself to such guidance

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<sup>787</sup> Kontzevich, *Optina Pustyn' i ee Vremia* (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1977.

because he practices then the great virtues: obedience and humility. Revelation of thoughts, which is the condition sine qua non of starchestvo, is a powerful means of progress, terrible to the enemy of our salvation. The unrevealed thought troubles and depresses the soul; revealed, it falls away and does no harm."<sup>788</sup>

"The path of guidance by an elder," wrote Fr. Clement Sederholm in 1875, "has been recognized throughout all ages of Christianity by all the great desert dwellers, fathers and teachers of the Church as being the most reliable and surest of all that are known to the Church of Christ. Eldership blossomed in the ancient Egyptian and Palestinian communities; it was afterwards planted on Athos, and from the East it was brought to Russia. But in the last centuries, in view of the general decline of faith and asceticism, it has gradually fallen into neglect, so that many have even begun to reject it. In the times of St. Nilus of Sora, the way of eldership was already scorned by many; and by the end of the past century [that is, the 18<sup>th</sup>] it had become almost entirely unknown. For the restoration of this form of monastic life, which is founded upon the teaching of the Holy Fathers, much was done by the famous and great Archimandrite of the Moldavian monasteries, Paisius Velichkovsky. With great labor he gathered together on Athos and translated from Greek into Slavonic the works of the ascetic writers, which set forth the patristic teaching on monastic life in general and the spiritual relationship to an elder in particular. At the same time in Niamets and in the other Moldavian monasteries under his rule, he exhibited in practice the application of this teaching. One of the disciples of Archimandrite Paisius, Schemamonk Theodore, who lived in Moldavia almost 20 years, transmitted this teaching to Hiero-schemamonk Father Leonid and through him and his disciple, the Elder Hiero-schemamonk Macarius, it was planted in the Optina monastery.

"The abbot of Optina at that time, Fr. Moses, and his brother, the Skete superior Fr. Anthony, who laid the beginning of their monastic life in the Bryansk forest in the spirit of the ancient great desert dwellers, wished for a long time to introduce eldership into the Optina Monastery. By themselves, however, they could not fulfill this task; they were burdened by many difficult and complicated occupations in conjunction with the development and governance of the Monastery. Furthermore, although in general the combining of the duties of the abbacy and eldership in one person was possible in the ancient times of simplicity of character, as we have already mentioned, in our times it is very hard and even impossible. However, when Fr. Leonid settled in Optina, Fr. Moses, knowing and taking advantage of his experience in the spiritual life, entrusted all the brothers who live in the Optina Monastery to his guidance, as well as all others who would come to live in the Monastery.

"From that time the entire order of the monastic life at the Optina monastery changed. Without the counsel and blessing of the Elder nothing of importance

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<sup>788</sup> Posleyanin, *Russkie Podvizhniki 19-go veka* (Russian Ascetics of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century), St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. 221-222.

was undertaken in the Monastery. Every day, especially in the evening, the brotherhood came to his cell with their spiritual needs. Each one hastened to reveal before the Elder how he had transgressed during the course of the day in deed, word or thought, in order to ask for counsel for the resolution of problems that had arisen, consolation in some sorrow that he had met, help and strength in the internal battle with the passions and with the invisible enemies of our salvation. The Elder received all with fatherly love and offered all a word of experience instruction and consolation."<sup>789</sup>

Nor was it only monks who sought the instruction of the Optina elders: people from all walks of life from generals to peasants poured in their thousands through the gates of the monastery. The influence of the Optina elders, together with that of other Russian elders from other great monasteries in the same tradition such as Valaam, Sarov, Glinsk, Kiev and the Rossikon (St. Panteleimon's on Mount Athos), and holy bishops such as Theophan the Recluse, Ignaty Brianchaninov, Innocent of Kherson, Philaret of Kiev and Philaret of Moscow, constituted a powerful spiritual antithesis to the influence of westernism in nineteenth-century Russia. Nor was Optina's significance confined to pre-revolutionary Russia: many of the confessor bishops and priests of the early Soviet period had been trained by the Optina elders. No less than fourteen Optina startsy or elders have been glorified as saints. The most recent was St. Nektary, who died in exile from the Sovietized monastery in 1928. After the first two great startsy, or elders, Lev (Nagolkin) and Macarius (Ivanov), the most famous and influential was Macarius' disciple Ambrose (Grenkov). St. Lev's disciples included the famous Bishop of the Black Sea and the Caucasus, St. Ignaty Brianchaninov. St. Macarius had an important influence on Nikolai Gogol and the Slavophile writer Ivan Kireyevsky, while St. Ambrose's influence would extend wider still, including the famous writers Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

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Among the spiritual sicknesses coming from the West and identified by the holy elders was indifferentism, what we would now call ecumenism, that is, an increased tolerance for Christian heresies to the extent of placing them on a par with Orthodoxy. As we have seen, the first ecumenical dialogue with the American Episcopalians had begun, and while the Church leaders stood firm in Orthodoxy, the spirit of Anglican indifferentism was infectious.

Thus in the 1850s St. Ambrose of Optina wrote: "Now many educated people bear only the name of Orthodox, but in actual fact completely adhere to the morals and customs of foreign lands and foreign beliefs. Without any torment of conscience they violate the regulations of the Orthodox Church concerning fasts and gather together at balls and dances on the eves of great Feasts of the Lord, when Orthodox Christians should be in church in prayerful

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<sup>789</sup> Sederholm, *Elder Leonid of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1990, pp. 49-52.

vigil. This would be excusable if such gatherings took place on the eves of ordinary days, but not on the eves of Feasts, and especially great Feasts. Are not such acts and deeds clearly inspired by our enemy, the destroyer of souls, contrary to the commandment of the Lord which says: carry out your ordinary affairs for six days, but the seventh (festal) day must be devoted to God in pious service? How have Orthodox Christians come to such acts hated by God? Is it not for no other reason than indiscriminate communion with believers of other faiths?..."

In 1863 St. Theophan the Recluse described how western indifferentism had begun already centuries before: "Have you heard of the indulgences of the Pope of Rome? Here is what they are: special treatment and leniency, which he gives, defying the law of Christ. And what is the result? From all of this, the West is corrupt in faith and in its way of life, and is now getting lost in its disbelief and in the unrestrained life with its indulgences.

"The Pope changed many doctrines, spoiled all the sacraments, nullified the canons concerning the regulation of the Church and the correction of morals. Everything has begun going contrary to the will of the Lord, and has become worse and worse.

"Then along came Luther, a smart man, but stubborn. He said, The Pope changed everything as he wanted, why shouldn't I do the same? He started to modify and to re-modify everything in his own way, and in this way established the new Lutheran faith, which only slightly resembles what the Lord commanded and the holy apostles delivered to us.

"After Luther came the philosophers. And they in turn said, Luther has established himself a new faith, supposedly based on the Gospel, though in reality based on his own way of thinking. Why, then, don't we also compose doctrines based on our own way of thinking, completely ignoring the Gospel? They then started rationalizing, and speculating about God, the world and man, each in his own way. And they mixed up so many doctrines that one gets dizzy just counting them.

"Now the westerners have the following views: Believe what you think best, live as you like, satisfy whatever captivates your soul. This is why they do not recognize any law or restriction and do not abide by God's Word. Their road is wide, all obstacles removed. But the broad way leads to perdition, according to what the Lord says..."<sup>790</sup>

And again he wrote: "'If any man shall say to you, here is Christ; or lo, He is there, believe him not.' (Mark 13.21). Christ the Lord, our Saviour, having established upon earth the Holy Church, is well pleased to abide in it as its Head, Enlivener and Ruler. Christ is here, in our Orthodox Church, and He is not in any other church. Do not search for Him elsewhere, for you will not find

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<sup>790</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, *Sermon on the Sunday after Nativity*, December 29, 1863.

Him. Therefore, if someone from a non-Orthodox assemblage comes to you and begins to suggest that they have Christ - do not believe it. If someone says to you, 'We have an apostolic community, and we have Christ,' do not believe them. The Church founded by the Apostles abides on the earth - it is the Orthodox Church, and Christ is in it. A community established only yesterday cannot be apostolic, and Christ is not in it. If you hear someone say, 'Christ is speaking in me,' while he shuns the [Orthodox] Church, does not venerate or know its pastors, and is not sanctified by the Sacraments, do not believe him. Christ is not in him: rather, another spirit is in him, one that appropriates the name of Christ in order to divert people from Christ the Lord and from His Holy Church. Neither believe anyone who suggests even some small thing alien to the [Orthodox] Church. Recognize all such people to be instruments of seducing spirits and lying preachers of falsehood."<sup>791</sup>

The danger of religious indifferentism was especially noted by St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, a disciple of the Optina Elder Lev: "You say, 'heretics are Christians just the same.' Where did you take that from? Perhaps someone or other calling himself a Christian while knowing nothing of Christ, may in his extreme ignorance decide to acknowledge himself as the same kind of Christian as heretics, and fail to distinguish the holy Christian faith from those offspring of the curse, blasphemous heresies. Quite otherwise, however, do true Christians reason about this. A whole multitude of saints has received a martyr's crown, has preferred the most cruel and prolonged tortures, prison, exile, rather than agree to take part with heretics in their blasphemous teaching.

"The Ecumenical Church has always recognised heresy as a mortal sin; she has always recognised that the man infected with the terrible malady of heresy is spiritually dead, a stranger to grace and salvation, in communion with the devil and the devil's damnation. Heresy is a sin of the mind; it is more a diabolic than a human sin. It is the devil's offspring, his invention; it is an impiety that is near idol-worship. Every heresy contains in itself the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, whether against the dogma or the action of the Holy Spirit."<sup>792</sup>

"The reading of the Fathers clearly convinced me that salvation in the bosom of the Orthodox Russian Church was undoubted, something of which the religions of Western Europe are deprived since they have not preserved whole either the dogmatic or the moral teaching of the Church of Christ from her beginning."<sup>793</sup>

St. Ignaty was especially fierce against the heresy of Papism: "Papism is the name of a heresy that seized the West and from which there came, like the branches from a tree, various Protestant teachings. Papism ascribes to the Pope the properties of Christ and thereby rejects Christ. Some western writers have

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<sup>791</sup> St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year*, Moscow, 2010, p. 40.

<sup>792</sup> Brianchaninov, *Pis'ma*, no. 283; translated as "Concerning the Impossibility of Salvation for the Heterodox and Heretics", *The Orthodox Word*, March-April, 1965, and *Orthodox Life*, January-February, 1991.

<sup>793</sup> Brianchaninov, "Lamentation", in *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 2003, p. 20.

almost openly pronounced this rejection, saying that the rejection of Christ is a much smaller sin than the rejection of the Pope. The Pope is the idol of the papists; he is their divinity. Because of this terrible error, the Grace of God has left the papists; they have given themselves over to Satan – the inventor and father of all heresies, among which is Papism. In this condition of the darkening [of the mind], they have distorted several dogmas and sacraments, while they have deprived the Divine Liturgy of its essential significance by casting out of it the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of the offerings of bread and wine, at which they are transmuted into the Body and Blood of Christ... No heresy expresses so openly and blatantly their immeasurable pride, their cruel disdain for men and their hatred of them."

St. Ignaty was pessimistic about the future of Russia: "It is evident that the apostasy from the Orthodox faith is general among the people. One is an open atheist, another is a deist, another a Protestant, another an indifferentist, another a schismatic. There is no healing or cure for this plague."

"What has been foretold in the Scriptures is being fulfilled: a cooling towards the faith has engulfed both our people and all the countries in which Orthodoxy was maintained up to now."

"Religion is falling in the people in general. Nihilism is penetrating into the merchant class, from where it has not far to go to the peasants. In most peasants a decisive indifference to the Church has appeared, and a terrible moral disorder."<sup>794</sup>

"The people is being corrupted, and the monasteries are also being corrupted," said the same holy bishop to Tsar Alexander II in 1866, one year before his own death.<sup>795</sup>

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow feared "storm-clouds coming from the West", and advised that rizas should not be made for icons, because "the time is approaching when ill-intentioned people will remove the rizas from the icons."<sup>796</sup>

Another pessimist was St. Makary of Optina, who wrote: "The heart flows with blood, in pondering our beloved fatherland Russia, our dear mother. Where is she racing headlong, what is she seeking? What does she await? Education increases but it is pseudo-education, it deceives itself in its hope. The young generation is not being nourished by the milk of the doctrine of our Holy Orthodox Church but has been poisoned by some alien, vile, venomous spirit, and how long can this continue? Of course, in the decrees of God's Providence

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<sup>794</sup> Brianchaninov, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 339, 340.

<sup>795</sup> *Zhizneopisanie Sviatitelia Ignatia Brianchaninova*, p. 485. In the last decade of his life the holy hierarch composed notes for an agenda of a Council of the Russian Church that would tackle the grave problems facing her. See <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1968>.

<sup>796</sup> Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 349.

it has been written what must come to pass, but this has been hidden from us in His unfathomable wisdom..."<sup>797</sup>

Visions from above seemed to confirm that apocalyptic times were approaching. Thus in 1871 the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count Alexander Petrovich Tolstoy, had the following vision:

"It was as if I were in my own house standing in the entrance-hall. Beyond was a room in which on the ledge between the windows there was a large icon of the God of Sabaoth that gave out such blinding light that from the other room (the entrance-hall) it was impossible to look at it. Still further in was a room in which there were Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich Konstantinovskiy and the reposed Metropolitan Philaret. And this room was full of books; along the walls from ceiling to floor there were books; on the long tables there were piles of books; and while I certainly had to go into this room, I was held back by fear, and in terror, covering my face with my hand, I passed through the first room and, on entering the next room, I saw Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich dressed in a simple black cassock; on his head was a skull-cap; in his hands was an unbent book, and he motioned me with his head to find a similar book and open it. At the same time the metropolitan, turning the pages of this book said: 'Rome, Troy, Egypt, Russia, the Bible.' I saw that in my book 'Bible' was written in very heavy lettering. Suddenly there was a noise and I woke up in great fear. I thought a lot about what it could all mean. My dream seemed terrible to me - it would have been better to have seen nothing. Could I not ask those experienced in the spiritual life concerning the meaning of this vision in sleep? But an inner voice explained the dream even to me myself. However, the explanation was so terrible that I did not want to agree with it."

St. Ambrose of Optina gave the following interpretation of this vision: "He who was shown this remarkable vision in sleep, and who then heard the very significant words, very probably received the explanation of what he had seen and heard through his guardian angel, since he himself recognized that an inner voice explained the meaning of the dream to him. However, since we have been asked, we also shall give our opinion..."

"...The words 'Rome, Troy, Egypt' may have the following significance. Rome at the time of the Nativity of Christ was the capital of the world, and, from the beginning of the patriarchate, had the primacy of honour; but because of love of power and deviation from the truth she was later rejected and humiliated. Ancient Troy and Egypt were notable for the fact that they were punished for their pride and impiety - the first by destruction, and the second by various punishments and the drowning of Pharaoh with his army in the Red Sea. But in Christian times, in the countries where Troy was located there were founded the Christian patriarchates of Antioch and Constantinople, which

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<sup>797</sup> St. Makary, *Letter 165 to Monastics*, in Fr. Leonid Kavelin, *Elder Macarius of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1995, pp. 309-310.

flourished for a long time, embellishing the Orthodox Church with their piety and right dogmas; but later, according to the inscrutable destinies of God, they were conquered by barbarians - the Muslims, and up to now have borne this heavy slavery, which restricts the freedom of Christian piety and right belief. And in Egypt, together with the ancient impiety, there was from the first times of Christianity such a flowering of piety that the deserts were populated by tens of thousands of monastics, not to speak of the great numbers of pious laity from whom they came. But then, by reason of moral licentiousness, there followed such an impoverishment of Christian piety in that country that at a certain time in Alexandria the patriarch remained with only one priest.

"... After the three portentous names 'Rome, Troy, Egypt', the name of 'Russia' was also mentioned - Russia, which at the present time is counted as an independent Orthodox state, but where the elements of foreign heterodoxy and impiety have already penetrated and taken root among us and threaten us with the same sufferings as the above-mentioned countries have undergone.

"Then there comes the word 'Bible'. No other state is mentioned. This may signify that if in Russia, too, because of the disdain of God's commandments and the weakening of the canons and decrees of the Orthodox Church and for other reasons, piety is impoverished, then there must immediately follow the final fulfillment of that which is written at the end of the Bible, in the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian.

"He who saw this vision correctly observed that the explanation given him by an inner voice was terrible. Terrible will be the Second Coming of Christ and terrible the last judgement of the world. But not without terrors will also be the period before that when the Antichrist will reign, as it is said in the Apocalypse: 'And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and death shall flee from them' (9.6). The Antichrist will come during a period of anarchy, as the apostle says: 'until he that restraineth be taken away from the midst' (II Thessalonians 2.7), that is, when the powers that be no longer exist."<sup>798</sup>

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St. Ambrose's identification of "him that restraineth" the coming of the Antichrist with the Russian Tsardom had long roots in the patristic writings. St. John Chrysostom, Blessed Theophylact and others identified him with the Roman emperor, whose successor, as being the emperor of "the Third Rome", Russia, was the Russian Tsar. Metropolitan Philaret had restated the political teaching of Orthodoxy with exceptional eloquence in the previous reign. And now St. Theophan the Recluse wrote: "The Tsar's authority, having in its hands the means of restraining the movements of the people and itself relying on Christian principles, does not allow the people to fall away from them, but will restrain it. And since the main work of the Antichrist will be to turn everyone away from Christ, he will not appear as long as the Tsar is in power. The latter's

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<sup>798</sup> St. Ambrose of Optina, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Sergiev Posad, 1908, part 1, pp. 21-22.

authority will not let him show himself, but will prevent him from acting in his own spirit. That is what he that restraineth is. When the Tsar's authority falls, and the peoples everywhere acquire self-government (republics, democracies), then the Antichrist will have room to manoeuvre. It will not be difficult for Satan to train voices urging apostasy from Christ, as experience showed in the time of the French revolution. Nobody will give a powerful 'veto' to this. A humble declaration of faith will not be tolerated. And so, when these arrangements have been made everywhere, arrangements which are favourable to the exposure of antichristian aims, then the Antichrist will also appear. Until that time he waits, and is restrained."

St. Theophan wrote: "When these principles [Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality] weaken or are changed, the Russian people will cease to be Russian. It will then lose its sacred three-coloured banner." And again: "Our Russians are beginning to decline from the faith: one part is completely and in all ways falling into unbelief, another is falling into Protestantism, a third is secretly weaving together beliefs in such a way as to bring together spiritism and geological madness with Divine Revelation. Evil is growing: evil faith and lack of faith are raising their head: faith and Orthodoxy are weakening. Will we come to our senses? O Lord! Save and have mercy on Orthodox Russia from Thy righteous and fitting punishment!"<sup>799</sup>

And again, he wrote: "Do you know what bleak thoughts I have? And they are not unfounded. I meet people who are numbered among the Orthodox, who in spirit are Voltaireans, naturalists, Lutherans, and all manner of free-thinkers. They have studied all the sciences in our institutions of higher education. They are not stupid nor are they evil, but with respect to the Church they are good for nothing. Their fathers and mothers were pious; the ruin came in during the period of their education outside of the family homes. Their memories of childhood and their parents' spirit keeps them within certain bounds. But what will their own children be like? What will restrain them within the needed bounds? I draw the conclusion from this that in one or two generations our Orthodoxy will dry up."

As St. Ignaty Brianchaninov wrote: "We are helpless to arrest this apostasy. Impotent hands will have no power against it and nothing more will be required than the attempt to withhold it. The spirit of the age will reveal the apostasy. Study it, if you wish to avoid it, if you wish to escape this age and the temptation of its spirits. One can suppose, too, that the institution of the Church which has been tottering for so long will fall terribly and suddenly. Indeed, no-one is able to stop or prevent it. The present means to sustain the institutional Church are borrowed from the elements of the world, things inimical to the Church, and the consequence will be only to accelerate its fall. Nevertheless, the Lord protects the elect and their limited number will be filled."<sup>800</sup>

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<sup>799</sup> St. Theophan, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 346, 347.

<sup>800</sup> Sokolov, L.A. *Episkop Ignatij Brianchaninov* (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov), Kiev, 1915, vol. 2, p. 250. Italics mine (V.M.).



## CONCLUSION. CHRISTIAN AND ANTI-CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

Is there, or can there be, such a thing as Christian socialism? Let us first look at the evidence that such a thing might exist...

“Dostoyevsky was to all appearances,” writes N.O. Lossky, “a supporter of a type of ‘Christian socialism,’ but he says nothing specific about its economic and legal structure. He has only one mystical-economic position announced by him in the name of some kind of interlocutor of his, the ‘paradoxalist,’ and it is a position he obviously approves of. ‘A nation should be born and rise, in its vast majority, on the soil from which the bread and trees grow.’

“In the land, in the soil, there is something sacramental. If you want humanity to be reborn for the better, almost making men from beasts, then endow them with land, and you shall achieve your aim. At the very least we have the land and the commune...

“Besides notions of each man’s connection to the land, Dostoyevsky also has many considerations concerning a just social order, but they all concern only the moral and religious conditions for the appearance and *preservation* of such an order; on its actual structure he provides no information.

“Dostoyevsky did not deny the necessity of a certain ideal of just social organization. Without a doubt, he had such an ideal or was searching for it. In which direction? To all appearances and as in his youth, in the direction of socialism, though neither revolutionary nor atheist, but Christian. As has been said, he hoped like the populists, that a perfected order would evolve from the Russian village commune. He considered it necessary that every worker, and especially his wife and children, keep their ties to the land and have a garden, whether personal or communal. Especially valuing freedom, he was confident that the social ideals developed by Russia and deriving from ‘Christ and individual self-perfection’ would be ‘more liberal’ than those of Europe. (*Ibid*)...

“Looking at how difficult this process of developing a new system is and what kind of special knowledge, both theoretical and practical, it demands, we fully understand why Dostoyevsky has no defined teaching on it. As a religious thinker and moralist, he confidently spoke of the religious and moral bases of a just order, but as a man of extraordinary intellect, he understood perfectly well that to elaborate a concrete doctrine on a new economic system and its legal forms was a matter for politico-economic specialists and practical social agents. Besides that, the actualization of these problems was premature in his time. Only fifty years after his death, due to the extreme primacy of technology, the rationalization of production, and the ever-decreasing number of workers

needed for physical labour, the development of a new economic system became urgently necessary..."<sup>801</sup>

Dostoyevsky's concept of "Russian socialism" is very close to his concept of the Church. "The main mistake of the Russian intelligentsia, he wrote, was that "they do not recognize the Church in the Russian people." "I am not talking about church buildings and not about the clergy, I am talking about our 'Russian socialism', the aim and outcome of which is the Universal Church of the whole of the people, which is being realized on earth insofar as the earth can accommodate it."<sup>802</sup>

So "Russian socialism" is "the Universal Church". In this Church, which would be led by the Tsar as the incarnation of the people's ideal, there would be no capital punishment. "The Tsar is not a force external to the people. The Tsar is the incarnational of the people itself, of the whole of its idea, its hopes and its beliefs."<sup>803</sup> He is the father, and the people are his children. The tsar's power must be as undivided as is a father's; he must be an autocrat. But he governs the people through love and for the sake of the salvation that the whole family is striving for.

This was an idea, however idealistic and utopian, that appeared to have found its time. For some two months after Dostoyevsky's death in 1881, and only three months after the above words were written, Vladimir Soloviev, a friend of Dostoyevsky, gave a lecture that was greeted with great enthusiasm, in which he took up this Dostoyevskyan theme, arguing that the new Tsar should forgive those who murdered his father (on March 1, 1881). "The Tsar can forgive them, and if he really feels his bond with the people, he must forgive them. The Russian people does not recognize two truths... But if the tsar is the personal expression of the whole of the people's essence, and first of all, of course, of its spiritual essence, then what the people considers to be the supreme norm of life and activity must be placed by the tsar as the supreme principle of life."<sup>804</sup>

Tsar Alexander III agreed in placing Orthodoxy, the people's ideal, as the supreme principle of the life of the state. But he did not agree with pardoning regicides, for which he could have cited - and his conservative counselors did cite - the words of St. Paul: "He [the emperor] is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Romans 13.4)... For the Church is separated from the State precisely because the State can exercise those powers of physical coercion that are not permitted for the clergy - or the laity, who do not have a "license to kill".

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<sup>801</sup> Lossky, translation adapted from Mark Hackard's in "Dostoevsky on Socialism (pt. 1)", May 30 2014, "The Soul of the East", <http://souloftheeast.org/2014/05/30/dostoevsky-on-socialism-pt-i/>.

<sup>802</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, January, 1881.

<sup>803</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, January, 1881.

<sup>804</sup> Soloviev, *Byloe*, 1906, N. 3, p. 52.

But this was an idea very close to Dostoyevsky's heart, which he also developed in his greatest work, *The Brothers Karamazov*. While castigating the false church of Catholicism, which engendered the inquisition and the false and atheist kind of socialism, he believed that the courts should approximate to the Church's judgement of criminals – that is, to mercy, and non-violent means of healing. As Ivan Karamazov puts it: "If judgement belonged to society as the church" - here again "church" is not identified with the priesthood, but with the whole people – "then it would know whom to return from excommunication and unite to itself again."<sup>805</sup>

But if Dostoyevsky's true ideal, his "Russian socialism", is the Orthodox Church, then the greatest enemy of his ideal is the false church of Roman Catholicism, which will deceive the people by corrupting the true teaching of Christ, replacing it with western socialism and the cult of pseudo-mysticism and false authority.

This is the theme of the most famous part of *The Brothers Karamazov*, "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor", a "poem" penned by the rationalist atheist (or at any rate, agnostic) Ivan Karamazov. Its context in the novel was the chapter entitled "Revolt" in which Ivan presents his main reason for rejecting Christianity: the impossibility of justifying the innocent and "unavenged" suffering of children.

"When in December 1879 Dostoyevsky read the 'Legend' to the students of St. Petersburg University, he wrote a brief introduction in which he explained his view of the poem: 'An atheist who is suffering in his unbelief writes during a spell of misery a curious, fantastic poem, in which he portrays Christ in conversation with one of the foremost priests of the Catholic Church – the Grand Inquisitor. The author's sufferings are so intense because in this priest he sees a true and genuine servant of Christ, even though the priest has a Catholic world outlook which has clearly grown remote from the orthodoxy of the old Apostolic faith. The Grand Inquisitor is really an atheist. What the poem is saying is that if the Christian faith is combined and corrupted with the objectives of this world, then the meaning of Christianity will perish. Human reason will abandon itself to unbelief, and in place of the great idea of Christ a new Tower of Babel will be built. Where Christianity had an exalted view of mankind, under the new order of things mankind will be viewed as a mere herd, and behind the appearance of *social* love there will arise an open contempt for humanity.'

"The stage is set in the fearsome era of the Inquisition and the religious persecution that accompanied it. After fifteen hundred years Christ has returned to earth. In Seville he strolls around performing miracles and being greeted by the people with great acclaim. On the orders of the Grand Inquisitor, an old man of ninety, the most powerful cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, He is, however, placed under arrest and thrown into prison. When

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<sup>805</sup> Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, I, 5.

night comes, He is visited by the Grand Inquisitor, who delivers him a stark reprimand. Indeed, he even threatens to have Him burnt at the stake. Christ has created an obstacle to the necessary mission of the Catholic Church here upon earth. Christ remains silent as the Grand Inquisitor makes his accusations..."<sup>806</sup>

His main accusation is that Christ has made Christianity too difficult for the ordinary man, that His calling on man to follow His commandments in freedom, while attainable by a few, is unattainable by the many, and that therefore out of compassion for the many His teaching needs to be modified – which is what the Catholic Church, following the advice of the devil, has done.

Christ should have accepted the devil's temptations in the wilderness. He should have accepted, for example, to turn the stones into bread, for "if for the sake of the bread from heaven thousands and tens of thousands will follow you, what is to become of the millions and scores of thousands of millions of creatures who will not have the strength to give up earthly bread for the bread of heaven?" Similarly, He should have hurled Himself from the Temple and allowed the angels to bear Him up, thereby captivating the majority, not through truth alone, but through the temptation of a cheap miracle. And He should have bowed down to Satan in order to gain dominion over the kingdoms of this world, for the majority worships worldly power.

But the Catholic Church, thinking of the salvation of the many, has accepted all three temptations, ruling the masses through *miracle, mystery and authority*, while claiming that this teaching of there is in fact Christ's. The Grand Inquisitor accepts that this is a deception, that his and his Church's teaching is not Christ's. But he has agreed to take on the burden and the suffering of this deception out of love for the many, thereby correcting Christ's work and making it more compassionate.

The Legend, writes Walicki, "was intended to be a parable of the just kingdom the socialists were crying to establish on earth. The Grand Inquisitor exchanges freedom for bread, and takes away freedom in order to bestow happiness on his 'pitiful children'. However, an indispensable condition of this happiness is total and herdlike depersonalization. Knowing that men are weak, the Inquisitor lifts from them the burden of freedom, conscience, and personal responsibility; he replaces freedom by authority, and consenting, free unity by a unity based on compulsion. The Church transformed into State unites 'all in one unanimous and harmonious ant heap.' When Christ descends to earth in order to be among his people once more, the Inquisitor tries to have him arrested and burned as a heretic. Christ listens in silence to his long monologue and then kisses him on the mouth as a sign of his forgiveness; the Inquisitor lets him go but begs him never to return to disturb the tranquil happiness men have achieved without him."<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>806</sup> Geir Kjetsa, *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, London: Macmillan, 1987, pp. 339-340.

<sup>807</sup> Walicki, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

However, Dostoyevsky was not speaking only of a future socialist republic, but precisely of the Catholic Church and its future union with socialism, with the Pope, as Peter Verkhovensky, becoming the socialist "king". Although not an exact prophecy, this accurately identified the general trend in Catholicism in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For there has been an increasing tendency for the papacy, if not to identify with the revolution (although its "liberation theologians" did precisely that in Central and South America in the 1980s), at any rate to accept many of its premises and strive to work with it rather than against it. Thus the papacy has fitted easily into the modern liberal-socialist structure of the European Union, and Pope Francis I has recently met with Castro in Cuba and called for a single world government...

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In theory, therefore, there could be such a thing as a truly Christian socialism. Nevertheless, Dostoyevsky was adamant that socialism as it was propagated in his time was anything but Christian, and was in fact atheist and instilling atheism in the people. Indeed, both he and Nietzsche could be said to have been preoccupied above all with one question: when "God is dead" among the people, who or what will take his place? And their answers were similar: when God is dead, then the only thing that can take his place is the self, and the purely egoistic "virtues" of godless humanity. The difference between Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche was that while Dostoyevsky feared and fought against such an outcome, Nietzsche welcomed it, even "made a virtue" out of it.

If Russian socialism, for Dostoyevsky, is the Orthodox Church, what did the Church itself say about the non-Russian and non-Orthodox kind of socialism? A stout fighter against German socialism in particular was the future Archbishop and Martyr Hilarion (Troitsky), who wrote: "One of the more prominent misunderstandings which have arisen in this area is the misunderstanding about socialism. On the one hand, they aver that Christ was a socialist; and on the other, that socialism is entirely in agreement with Christianity... In publicistic literature one may constantly encounter attempts to reconcile pagan socialism and Christianity..."

"V.A. Kozhevnikov [who "knows socialism from its very sources, much far better than the majority of our woeful socialists"] states that, as far as the relationship of socialism to Christianity goes, there is not even partial truth: 'Here everything is in content contrary to Christian truths, and is in form offensive to Christian sensibilities.'

"In vain do some think that socialism is merely a theory of economics. No, socialism replaces everything with itself; it is founding its own religion. In the resolutions of the various socialist assemblies and the discourses of socialist leaders one finds clearly and definitely expressed the demand for a revolution

in all human thought. 'Socialism is not and cannot be a mere economic science, a question concerning the stomach only... In the final analysis, socialists are striving to bring about revolution throughout the entire juridical, moral, philosophical, and religious superstructure' (*Vandervelde*). 'Is socialism merely an economic theory?' we read in the socialistic catechism of Bax and Kvelch; 'In no way! Socialism envelops all the relations of human life.' According to Bax, in religion socialism is expressed as atheistic humanism.

"If socialism looks upon itself as a world-view, what, then, is this world-view? It is, first of all, a consistent materialism. A materialistic understanding of history, as acknowledged by the socialists themselves, comprises the essence of the entire theory of their teaching, its cornerstone, according to the expression of Bernstein. 'One must seek the basic reasons of all social changes and revolutions not in the heads of men and not in their views on eternal righteousness and justice, but in changes in the means of production and distribution' (Engels). If socialism is so closely bound up with materialism, how can it bear any relationship to religion? Crudely distorting the moral and educational significance of religion, the materialistic criticism of Marx and Engels sees religion as the mere 'handiwork of man', the product of ignorant imagination or profit motives; and God Himself as a reflection of economic relations. Even in the Christian God they dare to see an 'anthropological idealization of a capitalism which thirsts for power and satisfaction.' Religion is called forth, in the words of Engels, 'by the dark, primordial ideas of man concerning his personal nature and that which surrounds him,' and is defined in its permutations 'by class, and consequently economic, relations'. Religion seemed to Marx to be a superstition which has outlived its time, 'a dead question for the intelligentsia, but an opium for the people.' According to this, Marx considered 'freedom of conscience from the charms of religion' to be 'the assistance of the people toward real happiness'.

"True, there are thinkers who maintain that socialism is not inescapably bound up with materialism, but they are not real socialists. Such thinkers try to impart to socialism a philosophical and ethical, even a Christian, coloration. Schtaudinger tries to convince his 'brother socialists' that 'the basic ideas of Christ are the same as ours; His idea of unity is our God. His idea of the existence of this unity is our Christ. And although we deny all dogmas, in principle our ethics are Christian.'

"Dyed-in-the-wool socialists staunchly refuse to accept the recommended 'deepening' of the bases of socialism, which, in their opinion, is entirely unsuitable. Bebel rains down mockery upon the invitation that 'everyone study, and philosophize, and work on oneself'. Conrad Schmidt distances himself from Kantian humanism, because in it there is no agitational power, there are only old metaphysical ideas, monastic asceticism, and morals more appropriate to angels. In the experiments at 'deepening' socialism, Plekhanov sees 'an opium to lull the proletariat to sleep'. Mering sees it as 'turbid waters in which to catch an unclean fish'. Menger does not understand the reason for loud speeches about unneeded lofty philosophical principles, when we are facing 'our own

ethics, which overturn every religious foundation and are a guarantee even against the rebirth of religious consciousness'. Dietzgen long ago proposed 'to jettison all that is majestic in morality', because 'the special logic of the proletariat delivers us from all philosophical and religious mysticism'. Similar thoughts are expressed by Kautsky, Lenin and Axelrod. We are fed up, says Axelrod, with the boring and monotonous pestering of the critics, teachers, the various perfecters of socialism; it is time for them to cease! To take their path would mean to fall into a dreadful muddle and a demoralization of mind, to take from socialism its living, revolutionary aspect, in other words, its essence, and to replace it again with the reactionary, religious character of the whole philosophical mentality.

"I think that everyone can now see that socialism, as a distinct world-view, is in essence the adversary of all idealism, of all the immutable principles of morality, and the enemy of all religion. Reducing everything in the world to matter, the socialist world-view leaves no place for the divine Principle.

"Such is the theoretical relationship of socialism to religion. In practice, socialists often resort to compromise to gain tactical advantage, which in the language of morality one must call a betrayal of what is true and right... One must of necessity direct serious attention to religion, as Engels puts it, 'that greatest of conservative powers'. 'We will never succeed in earning trust if we begin to demand that the government take violent measures against the Church,' admits Kautsky. What to do? 'In order to overcome the mistrust of the workers and infiltrate them more quickly, in our own ranks there is arising the aspiration to suppress our fundamental views and, in the name of temporary success, to sacrifice clarity of thought and the sensibilities of our own comrades'. This Anton Pannekoek openly and cynically admits. And so we see how socialists 'adapt'. According to the Erfurt program, religion is a personal matter. According to the 'workers' catechism', social-democracy demands neither atheism nor theism. Schtampfer maintains that 'the theses of socialism are concerned neither with God nor the afterlife; it is slander to say that it is the sworn enemy of our Church'. One can be both a Christian and a social-democrat (Kautsky). In all these and similar statements, there is absolutely no sincerity. The Erfurt program does not satisfy the more consistent socialists; they demand that an inimical relationship with the Church be stressed more emphatically. In actual fact, the socialists are waging war against religion, but, in accordance with their tactical ploys, they take refuge behind a personal struggle against 'clericalists', and this struggle is justified by the fact that the 'clericalists' (1) have pretensions to political power, (2) are fanatics, (3) foster ignorance, and (4) support the capitalist class. Yet all of this is, of course, a mere sham; the socialists are in reality inimical to all religion, are against God.

"But is not such hypocrisy, such falsehood, immoral, scandalously immoral? To this the socialists answer us thus: 'Mere moral means have nothing to recommend them to us. You will not get far in politics with them' (Bebel). 'In each party perfidious tricks are unavoidable, and the laws of traditional morality here recede completely into the background' (Menger). What can you

do with party tactics? But these tactics are such as would move Jesuits to ecstasy. The more direct and (if one can speak of honesty among them) honest socialists, however, let the cat out of the bag and openly state their enmity towards religion. On August 22nd, 1901, the French Social-Revolutionary Party resolved: 'Citizens, the members of the Party vow that under no circumstances will they carry out any religious acts whatever in conjunction with representatives of any denomination' (freedom of conscience!!!). On December 31st, 1878, Bebel, in the presence of the entire Reichstag, declared: 'In the area of religion, we aspire to atheism'; and on September 16th, 1878, he expressed 'a firm trust that socialist will lead to atheism'. This same blasphemer Bebel calls himself the enemy of all religion, 'of which people of high quality have no need'. At the Gall Assembly, Liebknecht expressed the hope that 'the basic principles of socialism will overcome religious forms of popular ignorance'. According to Todt, 'He who is himself not an atheist and does not commit himself with all zeal to the dissemination of atheism is not fit to be called a socialist'. Lafarge is indignant 'that religious principles are still not utterly extirpated from the minds of the learned', but is comforted by the hope that in the future socialism would completely erase faith in God from men's souls....

"It is understood that in the socialist world-view there will also be no place for belief in the immortality of the soul. The denial of immortality is one of the main conditions for the success of socialism, 'because with the weakening of belief in heaven, socialist demands for heaven on earth will be strengthened' (Bebel). Dietzgen advises that one prefer 'a comfortable world here' to the other world. On February 3rd, 1893, a certain Catholic deputy asked the social-democrats of the German Reichstag the question as to whether they believed in the afterlife. They answered unanimously in the negative. One socialist newspaper, *Neue Zeit*, suggested that 'the threats of hell be mocked, and that pointing to heaven be disdained'.

"The perfection of the 'modern socialist movement' is not in Christian life on earth, nor in eternal blessedness in heaven. Both the former and the latter are relegated to the archives. 'Our ideal is not poverty, nor abstinence, but wealth, and wealth immeasurable, unheard of. This wealth is the good of all humanity, its holy object, its Holy of holies, toward the possession of which all our hopes are directed' (*Dietzgen*).

"But enough! Enough of these mindless words! I hope my readers will forgive me for setting down these blasphemies of the socialists and offending their Christian sensibilities with them. I have only wanted to show what moral ugliness socialism is, what an abyss of falsehood lies within it, and, therefore, how mistaken is any attempt to reconcile socialism and the divine Christian Faith."<sup>808</sup>

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<sup>808</sup> Troitsky, "Christianity and Socialism", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 48, N 3, May-June, 1998, pp. 37, 38-41, 43.

