

THE AGE OF RATIONALISM
(1658-1789)

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

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Poor human reason, when it trusts in itself, substitutes the strangest absurdities for the highest divine concepts.
St. John Chrysostom.

The new philosophy [science] calls all in doubt.
John Donne, The First Anniversarie (1611).

Knowledge is power.
Francis Bacon, Meditationes Sacrae.

Progress in science follows the laws of repulsion – every step forward is made by reaction against the delusions and false theories prevailing at the time... Forward steps in art are made by attraction, through the artist's admiration and desire to follow the example of the predecessors he admires most.
Boris Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago (1957).

It appears from all this that the person of the king is sacred, and that to attack him in any way is sacrilege. God has the kings anointed by the prophets with the holy unction in like manner as He has his bishops and altars anointed... Kings should be guarded as holy things, and whosoever neglects to protect them is worthy of death... The royal power is absolute... The prince need render account of his acts to no one.
Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, Politics Taken from the Word of Scripture (1679).

Since the day a popular assembly condemned Jesus Christ to death the Church has known that the rule of the majority can lead to any crime.
Jacques Bénigne Bossuet.

The economic capital of the new civilization was Antwerp... its typical figure, the paymaster of princes, was the international financier.
R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (1926).

*How small, of all that human hearts endure,
that part which laws or kings can cause or cure.*
Samuel Johnson.

The Wars of these Times are rather to be Waged with Gold than with Iron.
William Paterson, founder of the Bank of England (1694).

*Lo, thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And Universal Darkness buries All.*
Alexander Pope, Dunciad.

[A Tory is] one that believes God, not the people, to be the origin of all civil power.
John Wesley.

*What is Whiggery?
A levelling, rancorous, rational sort of mind
That never looked out of the eye of a saint
Or out of a drunkard's eye.*
W.B. Yeats, "The Seven Sages" (1933).

*By God's dispensation it has fallen to me to correct both the state and the clergy; I am to
them both sovereign and patriarch; they have forgotten that in [pagan] antiquity these
[roles] were combined... I have conquered an empire, but have never been able to conquer
myself.*
Tsar Peter the Great.

*We became citizens of the world, but ceased in certain respects to be citizens of Russia.
The fault is Peter's.*
Nikolai Karamzin (1810).

*The post-Petrine Russian state and its capital, St. Petersburg, more closely resembled
European absolutism than ancient Muscovy.*
Stephen Kotkin, Stalin (2014).

*The good of the people must be the great purpose of government. By the laws of nature
and of reason, the governors are invested with power to that end. And the greatest good of
the people is liberty. It is to the state what health is to the individual.*
Diderot, Encyclopedia.

*Liberty can consist only in the ability to do what everyone ought to desire, and in not
being forced to do what should not be desired.*
Catherine the Great of Russia, Nakaz.

*If we can gain something by being honest, we will be it; and if we have to deceive, we shall
be cheats.*
King Frederick the Great of Prussia.

*Whatever I feel to be right is right, what I feel to be wrong is wrong; the best of all
casuists is the conscience... Reason deceives us only too often and we have earned all too
well the right to reject it, but conscience never deceives.*
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract.

This right of opposition, mad though it is, is sacred.
Diderot, Refutation of Helvétius.

*[The American Revolution is] a Rebellion, of such implacable madness and Fury,
originating from such trivial Causes...*
Ambrose Serle, Secretary to the Colonies.

*I love the cause of liberty, but the madness of the multitude is but one degree better than
submission to the Tea Act.*
James Allen of Philadelphia.

Those people who treat politics and morality separately will never understand either.
Rousseau, Emile.

We have it in our power to begin the world over again...
Thomas Paine (1776).

We have no government capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion... Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.
American President John Adams.

The State, it seems to me, is not made for religion, but religion for the State.
Abbé Guillaume Raynal (1780).

*Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity, and law-giving through its majesty, may seek to exempt themselves from it. But they then awaken just suspicion, and cannot claim the sincere respect which reason accords only to that which has been able to sustain the test of
free and open examination.*
Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the fourth volume in my series *A Universal History from the Point of View of Orthodox Christianity*. It traces the history of the Age of Reason or Enlightenment, when “educated” men ceased believing in the revealed wisdom of the past and began to look forward to a utopian future based exclusively on science and technology. Their optimism was based on a false understanding and use of *reason*, whose products were now considered to supersede completely all Biblical and Christian revelation. In fact, while the lower classes continued to believe in Christianity, the “educated” classes ceased to believe in it almost completely; the unreason of rationalism and scientism, - the false worship and radical misunderstanding of science’s nature and bounds, - became widespread and fashionable. However, this age was not religionless (no age is truly religionless), even among the educated classes: apart from the secular religions of humanism and scientism, they also increasingly confessed the religion of Freemasonry, which spread from England to most of Europe and America from the early eighteenth century, becoming the dominant faith of the French intellectuals on the eve of the French revolution.

The second half of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries was a time of extraordinary change in Europe. In Russia the Orthodox autocracy faltered and was transformed into a form of absolutism by Peter the Great. In England, meanwhile, the Divine Right monarchy of the Stuarts was transformed into the constitutional monarchy of William and Mary and the Hanovers. And Freemasonry was born in its organized form. Hardly less important was the rapid development of science and the scientific world-view propagated systematically and corporately for the first time by the Royal Society, which was founded immediately after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy.

The first “enlightened” person may be said to have been the Dutch Jew Spinoza, who was sceptical about free will and the Holy Scriptures and confessed *Deus sive Natura* - “God or Nature”, an atheistic kind of pantheism. The scepticism of the Dutch Jews infected England after many of them migrated to England under Cromwell’s protection, and the Enlightenment began in England in the first half of the eighteenth century. It then acquired a more extreme expression among the French philosophers Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and others in the second half of the century. This period marks the beginning of modern history; for in it the foundations were laid of that Anglo-Saxon form of liberal imperialism and globalism that has come to dominate the world at the time of writing (the early twenty-first century). In three major periods of war and conquest (against France in 1759-1815, against Germany in 1914-1945, and against the Soviet Union in 1945-1991) Anglo-Saxon liberalism established itself as the global civilization we all live in, voluntarily or involuntarily, today. With the exception of Orthodox, pre-revolutionary Russia, with which it never fought an open war (except the Crimean), all its main competitors have also been the offspring of Enlightenment or Counter-Enlightenment philosophy.

Until 1917, therefore, the main theme of world history was the struggle between Russia and the West. Since 1917, the new (or renewed) competitors to Anglo-Saxon westernism have been Islam and China, which have come to operate outside its basic parameters and categories. So the only hope for a real liberation from Anglo-Saxon westernism and globalism resides in a revival of Orthodox Russia – that Russia which began to falter precisely in the period covered by this book...

The Enlightenment was the third major turning-point in modern western history after the Humanist Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. No authority, whether pagan or patristic, scholastic or scriptural, was now immune from the dark, burning but unenlightening flame of graceless reason. In the face of the assault of this new “enlightened” religion, Orthodox Russia faltered, but did not fall: if, from the time of Peter the Great, the noble class became largely westernized, absorbing the new ideas through a cluster of Masonic lodges, the common people remained in general faithful to Orthodoxy and worthy of the mercy of God. The book ends with the creation of the first state founded on Enlightenment principles, the United States of America, bringing us to the eve of the third major turning-point of post-Orthodox western history, the French revolution of 1789.

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

**I. WEST: SCIENCE, REASON AND CONSTITUTIONAL
MONARCHY**

1. THE SUN KING

If the liberalism of Northern Europe and North America was the wave of the future, and would in time conquer almost the whole world, nevertheless the seventeenth century was, in political and cultural terms, the century of absolutism. But the development of absolutism was different in different countries. If we compare the English monarchy in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries with the French one in the same period, we see a striking contrast. In England a powerful monarchy becomes steadily stronger, defeating the most powerful despotism of the day in the Spanish Armada, only to be gradually overcome by the wealthier classes and reduced, finally, to the position of symbolic head of an essentially aristocratic society. The vital changes here were the rejection of the papacy and the dissolution of the monasteries, which caused both the temporary increase in the monarchy's power and its longer-term descent into impotence, especially after Charles I's loss of the power of taxation. In France, on the other hand, the reverse took place: a weak monarchy besieged by a semi-independent nobility within, and the united Hapsburg domains of Germany, Italy and Spain from without, gradually recovered to reach a pinnacle of fame and power under the sun king, Louis XIV, the longest reigning monarch in European history (1643-1715), who succeeded where his contemporary, the English King Charles I failed, in imposing an absolutist, Divine-right rule over his people.

In this age of religious warfare, the two kingdoms took different approaches to the vital question of internal religious unity. In England, the monarchy adopted the Anglican middle ground. In France, on the other hand, the monarchy took the Catholic side and persecuted the Protestants (known as Huguenots). The most tolerant French king, Henry IV, had been Protestant, but realized he could not rule in that way and so converted to Catholicism; he famously said that Paris was worth a mass. In England, the Protestant aristocracy first persecuted and then tolerated the diminished and tamed Catholic minority; but the latter's eventual absorption within the State left a permanent traditionalist stamp on the English national character. In France, on the other hand, while the Catholic monarchy first persecuted, then tolerated and finally expelled the Huguenot minority (400,000 of them), the latter's heritage, together with Catholic philosophers such as Descartes, left a rationalist stamp on the French national character.

The fruit of the absolutist theories of Machiavelli and Bodin was the reign of Louis XIV - a true despot. His reign was dominated by war - civil war and international war. It began with a series of civil wars against the nobility, the law courts and the people between 1648 and 1653 that is called the *Frondes*. They were waged amidst an international war with Spain that had begun in 1638, while the later war of the Spanish succession lasted until 1713. From a psychological point of view, the insecurity of Louis' early years may have instilled in him a desire to gain control over his surroundings through absolute rule and war. (We see something similar in the lives of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great.)

"The Fronde," writes A.C. Grayling, was "a civil insurrection against the government of the infant King Louis XIV and his chief minister, Cardinal Mazarin.

It was prompted by the burden of taxes that had been raised to pay for the military expenses of France's participation in the Thirty Years War and war with Spain. The Fronde was a dangerous affair, because the aristocracy sided with the *parlements* (especially of Paris) in defending the feudal liberties of the latter, which meant in effect that the country had risen against the Crown, in what was a straightforward rebellion. Cardinal Mazarin, a much hated figure, triggered the uprising by arresting the leaders of the *parlement* of Paris when they refused to pay a new tax. Their arrest brought the citizens of Paris on to the streets; there were barricades, and as turmoil spread through the country it became increasingly violent, turning into a civil war. The troubles continued until the early months of 1653, making nearly five years of unrest and uncertainty in all.

“The sequence of events constituting the Fronde (the word means ‘sling’; the *frondeurs* used slings to hurl stones as did the Old Testament's David) need not be recounted; the important point is its outcome, namely, an eventual victory for the monarchy in the person of Louis XIV, and his determination – highly successful as it proved – to assert absolute rule over France.

“In this respect France and the way it was governed in the second half of the seventeenth century represents a step backward, moving against the current... that was running elsewhere, notably in England. The absolute monarchy of Louis XIV brought great prestige and power to France; it became the leading country in succession to Spain, by then much enfeebled, and it so far impressed its culture and language on the world that all the ruling classes of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals spoke French, and French remained the language of international diplomacy into our own era...”¹

The period of the Fronde was brought to an end, writes Tim Blanning, on June 4, 1654, “when Louis was crowned in the Cathedral of Rheims. On his entry to the city, the Bishop of Soissons greeted him with the assurance that all his subjects prostrated themselves ‘before you, Sire, the Lord's Anointed, son of the Most High, shepherd of the flock, prince of the Church, the first of all kings on earth, chosen and appointed by Heaven to carry the sceptre of the French, to extend far and wide the honour and renown of the Lily [*fleur de lys*], whose glory outshines by far that of Solomon from pole to pole and sun to sun, making France a universe and the universe our France.” In 1661, when Louis was twenty-three, Cardinal Mazarin died. Now, as he told his Council, “it is time that I govern myself”. From that time he had complete control executive and legislative control over the kingdom.

“With this subordination of law-making to the royal will, we seem to have arrived at arbitrary tyranny, or ‘despotism’ as contemporaries called it. Yet advocates of absolute monarchy were careful to maintain that there was a difference in kind between the legitimate exercise of untrammelled authority and the capricious behaviour of a tyrant. The King of France, it was argued, enjoyed a legislative monopoly that could not be challenged by any other human individual or institution, but he was also subject to divine law, whether revealed explicitly in

¹ Grayling, *The Age of Genius*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 277-279.

Scripture or implicitly in the form of natural law. For example, the Ten Commandments obliged the king to respect the true religion ('Thou shalt have no other gods before Me'), to respect the lives of his subjects ('Thou shalt not kill'), to respect their property ('Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not covet...'), and to respect contracts and the due process of law ('Thou shalt not bear false witness...'). Bishop Bossuet, Louis XIV's most eloquent mouthpiece on religious matters, maintained that, 'Royal authority is sacred... God established kings as his ministers and reigns through them over the nation... The royal throne is not the throne of a man but the throne of God himself', but he denied that this implied that the King could do as he pleased. 'It is one thing for a government to be absolute, and another for it to be arbitrary. It is absolute with respect to constraint – there being no power capable of forcing the sovereign, who in this sense is independent of all human authority. But it does not follow from this that the government is arbitrary, for besides the fact that everything is subject to the judgement of God... there are also [constitutional] laws in empires, so that whatever is done against them is null in a legal sense and there is always an opportunity for redress.' The laws to which Bossuet was referring were the 'fundamental laws' of the kingdom. Three could be defined quite precisely: the Salic law of succession, which excluded women, bastards and heretics from the throne; the integrity of the royal domain, which no king might alienate; and the maintenance of the Catholic faith. More shadowy were the '*maximes du royaume*', a totality of laws, customs and principles which did not have full status as fundamental laws but which shared in their limiting nature. There was plenty of scope for uncertainty and disagreement here, especially when the *frondeur* spirit of the Parlements began to revive in the following century..."²

Louis' absolutism, then, was not technically, *de jure* despotic insofar as it was limited by the Catholic religion, whose rights he restored in 1693, and by the fundamental laws. But *de facto* he was indeed a despot. As a future Prime Minister of France, François Guizot, wrote: "By the very fact that this government had no other principle than absolute power, and reposed upon no other base than this, its decline became sudden and well merited. What France, under Louis XIV, essentially lacked, was political institutions and forces, independent, subsisting of themselves, and, in a word, capable of spontaneous action... The ancient French institutions, if they merited that name, no longer existed: Louis XIV completed their ruin. He took no care to endeavour to replace them by new institutions; they would have cramped him, and he did not choose to be cramped. All that appeared conspicuous at that period was will, and the action of central power. The government of Louis XIV was a great fact, a fact powerful and splendid, but without roots..."

"No system can exist except by means of institutions. When absolute power has endured, it has been supported by true institutions, sometimes by the division of society into strongly distinct castes, sometimes by a system of religious institutions. Under the reign of Louis XIV institutions were wanting as to power as well as to liberty... Thus we see the government helping on its own decay. It was not Louis

² Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815*, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 208, 209-210.

XIV alone who was becoming aged and weak at the end of his reign: it was the whole absolute power. Pure monarchy was as much worn out in 1712 as was the monarch himself: and the evil was so much the more grave, as Louis XIV had abolished political morals as well as political institutions..."³

"Controlled, disciplined, sensuous, haughty, mysterious, magisterial and visionary, pious and debauched, Louis created the new Palace of Versailles and with it a complex court hierarchy and ritual designed to remove the nobles from their feudal ambitions and regional power centres and concentrate their interests in the person of the king. Versailles itself was designed not only to house the king, court and entire nobility, but also to represent Louis himself: 'I am Versailles,' he said, just as '*l'état, c'est moi*'. The nobility competed for a glance, a word with the king: once when the king asked a noble when his baby was due, the nobleman answered, 'Whenever your Majesty wishes it'."⁴

"As we know," writes John Julius Norwich, Louis XIV "liked to think of himself as the sun - the dazzling light that irradiated all around him. Light there may have been; but there was very little warmth. Let no one imagine that life at Versailles was *fun*; it was for the most part bitterly cold, desperately uncomfortable, poisonously unhealthy [there was no sanitation], and of a tedium probably unparalleled. The most prevalent emotion was fear: fear of the king himself, fear of his absolute power, fear of the single thoughtless word or gesture that might destroy one's career or even one's life. And what was one's life anyway? A ceaseless round of empty ceremonial leading absolutely nowhere, offering the occasional mild entertainment but no real pleasure; as for happiness, it was not even to be thought of. Of course there were lavish entertainments - balls, masques, operas - how else was morale to be maintained? But absentees were noted at once, and the reasons for their absence made the subject of exhaustive enquiries. Social death - or worse - could easily result..."⁵

*

As long as Louis XIV lived, there was no opposition to his absolutist rule. The secret of his success consisted in three factors: (i) the retention of the absolutist faith of Catholicism as the country's official religion, (ii) the retention, in accordance with the monarchy's Concordat with the Vatican, of its control of the Church's appointments and lands, and (iii), last but not least, the monarchy's retention of the power of general taxation - although the venal use of it contributed greatly to the regime's ultimate fall in 1789.⁶

In relation to the nobility, Louis had already strengthened his position as a result of the sufferings of his early years, during the Fronde. For he was outraged, as

³ Guizot, *The History of Civilization in Europe*, London: Penguin, 1847, 1997, pp. 140-141.

⁴ Montefiore, *Titans of History*, p. 257. However, he wrote to his grandson when he was leaving to become king of Spain: "Never favour those who flatter you most, but hold rather to those who risk your displeasure for your own good."

⁵ Norwich, *France. From Gaul to De Gaulle*, London: John Murray, 2019, pp. 162-163.

⁶ Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, London: Profile, 2012, chapter 23.

Grayling writes “at having been subjected to profound indignities by it; he and his mother, Anne of Austria, had experienced hunger, fear and cold while in hiding during the worst of the uprising. As soon as he could he established his court at Versailles, away from the Parisian mob, and he weakened the aristocracy by making it waste its time, energy and money in pointless attendance at Court. He also diluted the aristocracy by creating thousands of new nobles, much to the old nobles’ disdain. In the event, his doing so only provided extra food for Madame Guillotine during the Terror which followed the Revolution of 1789, itself the long-term consequence of the absolutism that Louis practised.”⁷

“The position of the French nobility,” writes Jasper Ridley, “had greatly changed during the previous hundred years. In the sixteenth century the great noble houses of Guise and Bourbon, with their power bases in eastern and south-west France, had torn the kingdom apart by thirty years of civil war; and the fighting between the nobility and the State had started up again in the days of the Fronde, when Louis XIV was a child. But when he came of age, and established his absolute royal authority, he destroyed the political power of the nobles by bribing them to renounce it. He encouraged them to come to his court at Versailles, to hold honorific and well-paid sinecure offices – to carve for the King at dinner, or to attend his *petit levée* when he dressed in the morning, and hand him his shirt, his coat and his wig. He hoped that when the nobles were not engaged in these duties at court, they would be staying in their great mansions in Paris. He wished to prevent them as far as possible from living on their lands in the country, where they could enrol their tenants in a private army and begin a new civil war.

“The King governed France through middle-class civil servants, who were mostly lawyers. The provincial Parlements had limited powers, most of which were judicial rather than legislative; but the King could veto all their decrees. The government was administered by the intendants, who had absolute authority in their districts, and were subject only to the directives of their superiors, the *surintendants*, who were themselves subject only to the King’s Council, where the King presided in person, and might either accept or reject the advice given to him by his councillors.

“The nobles had the privilege of having their seigneurial courts in which they exercised a civil and a criminal jurisdiction over their tenants; but the presiding judges in the seigneurial courts were the same middle-class lawyers who presided in the King’s courts, which could on appeal override the decisions of the seigneurial courts.”⁸

As for the lower nobility, their energies were channelled into army service, in accordance with their medieval conception of themselves as the warrior class. War was a constant feature of Louis’ reign, together with a crippling burden of taxation. But this did not disturb the nobility, who paid no taxes...

⁷ Grayling, *The Age of Genius*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, p. 279.

⁸ Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 62.

Having gained control over the nobles, Louis proceeded to wage war for the rest of his reign. For, as Philip Bobbitt writes, "once Louis was secure from internal challenges,... he began to make war on the settlements of Westphalia in order that he might become the arbiter of Europe... Louis's domination of Europe was largely based on the fact that by 1666 he was able to maintain a force of almost 100,000 men, which he would soon triple.⁹ This, however, would have been fruitless without the centralized civilian structure put into place during this period by Louis's ministers."¹⁰ So unremitting was the aggression of Louis against neighbouring states that he must be considered the forerunner of Napoleon and Hitler. (Napoleon considered him "the only King of France worthy of the name"). As his most determined opponent, the Dutch King William, said, Louis' aim in Europe was to establish "a universal monarchy and a universal religion".¹¹

The other major estate of the land that needed to be controlled for real despotism to be established was the Church. A parish priest of St. Sulpice said that Louis "was so absolute that he passed above all the laws to do his will. The priests and nobility were oppressed; the parlements had no more power. The clergy were shamefully servile in doing the king's will."¹²

In the sphere of religion, Louis had two aims. The first was to make the Catholic Church in France a national, Gallican Church under his dominion, and not the Pope's. (This, it will be recalled, is what William the Conqueror had tried to do with the English Church after 1066).

"For thirty years," writes Norman Davies, "Louis was a true Gallican – packing the French bishoprics with the relatives of his ministers, authorising the Declaration of the Four Articles (1682), and provoking in 1687-8 an open rupture with the Papacy. The Four Articles, the purest formulation of Gallican doctrine, were ordered to be taught in all the seminaries and faculties of France:

1. The authority of the Holy See is limited to spiritual matters.
2. The decisions of Church Councils are superior to those of the Pope.
3. Gallican customs are independent of Rome.
4. The Pope is not infallible, except by consent of the universal Church.

But then, distressed by his isolation from the Catholic powers, Louis turned tail. In 1693 he retracted the Four Articles, and for the rest of his life gave unstinting support to the ultramontane [extreme papist] faction..."¹³

Nevertheless, write Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, "through the ensuing vicissitudes of French history, 'Gallicanism', with its adherence to 'Conciliar' authority, was to characterise the Church in France. By its very nature, it was potentially inimical to the Papacy. Pursued to its logical conclusion, 'Gallicanism'

⁹ By 1693 his army numbered 320,000 men. (V.M.)

¹⁰ Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 123.

¹¹ Robert Massie, *Peter the Great*, London: Phoenix Press, 2001, p. 193.

¹² M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 467.

¹³ Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1996, pp. 620, 621.

would effectively demote the Pope to what he had originally been – merely the Bishop of Rome, one among numerous bishops, enjoying some kind of nominal or symbolic leadership, but not any actual primacy or power. In short, the Church was decentralised.

“The opposing position, which advocated the Pope’s supremacy over bishops and councils, became known as ‘Ultramontane’, because it regarded authority as residing with the Papacy in Rome, ‘on the other side of the mountains’ from France...”¹⁴

Louis’ second aim was to destroy the protected state within the state that Henry IV’s Edict of Nantes (1598) had created for the Protestant Huguenots. In this way he would have “one faith, one king, one law”. In 1685 he revoked the Edict, subjecting France’s approximately one million Huguenot Protestants to a reign of terror. For this, Bossuet hailed him as a “New Constantine”...

*

Louis XIV died in 1715; his was the longest reign in European history. “It was the end of an epoch: there can have been few people in France who remembered the reign of his father. It was also, from the cultural point of view, a Golden Age: the age of France’s greatest playwrights, Corneille, Racine and Molière; of philosophers like Pascal and moralists like La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère; of diarists like Saint-Simon and letter-writers like Madame de Sévigné; of painters like Poussin and Claude, of architects like Mansart, of gardeners like Le Nôtre. But there was a downside too: even Louis’s younger contemporary the Duc de Saint-Simon wrote that when he died ‘the provinces, in despair at their own ruin and prostration, trembled with joy. The people, bankrupt, overwhelmed, disconsolate, thanked God with scandalous rejoicing for a release for which it had forsworn all hope’, and a popular prayer went into circulation: ‘Our Father who art in Versailles, thy name is no longer hallowed; thy kingdom is diminished; thy will is no longer done on earth or on the waves. Give us our bread, which is lacking...’ By the time Voltaire wrote his *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* in 1751, few historians had a good word to say about the Sun King. Even Versailles itself had been a dangerous mistake: the emasculation of the nobility by bringing it wholesale to the palace and reducing it to impotence had twice – for the first time in 1690 and then again in 1709 – reduced his kingdom to the point where he himself had to watch, while his gold and silver, his plate and even his throne were melted down into bullion...”¹⁵

Lord Norwich, aristocratic Francophile that he is, argues that the brilliance of the civilization, and the fact that “in all its history Europe had never seen such majesty, such splendour; nor would it ever be seen again,”¹⁶ outweighs these defects. But I beg to differ. “Civilization” is a far lower value than true religious culture. For “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his

¹⁴ Baigent and Leigh, *The Inquisition*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 195.

¹⁵ Norwich, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-174.

¹⁶ Norwich, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

own soul?" Compared with the external lack of glamour, but wealth of sanctity, of the Orthodox autocracy of Merovingian France one thousand years before, Louis XIV's despotism was poor indeed. The difference between Orthodox autocracy and Catholic absolutism of the French kind is that while the former welcomes the existence of truly independent institutions, such as the Church, and institutions with limited powers of self-government, such as provincial councils or guilds, the latter distrusts all other power bases and tries to destroy them. The result is that, as the absolutism weakens (as weaken it must), institutions spring up to fill the power vacuum which are necessarily opposed to the absolutist power and try to weaken it further, leading to revolution. The art of true monarchical government consists, not in ruling without support from other institutions, but in ruling with their support and with their full and voluntary support of the monarchy. Moreover, the supremacy of the monarchy must be recognised *de jure*, and not merely *de facto*. When the majority of the people ceases to believe that their monarch has the right to rule them, or when he believes that his right to rule is limited by nothing except his own will, then his regime is ultimately doomed, however dazzling the external trappings of its power. The Sun king's despotism bewitched Europe, and for centuries the influence of French culture was paramount throughout the western world (and to a considerable extent in the Orthodox East as well). But the terrible atheist revolution of 1789 was already latent in Louis' assumption of sole and absolute power after the death of Cardinal Mazarin in 1661...

2. THE RESTORATION OF THE ENGLISH MONARCHY

Oliver Cromwell died in September, 1658. In May, 1659, the Rump parliament dissolved by him in 1653 was reassembled, and his son Richard Cromwell was forced to resign as Protector. But the Rump, as Kate Loveman writes, “was widely seen as unrepresentative. Thomas Rugg, a London barber, wrote in his journal, ‘The nation was much in perplexity for want of a government that would do just and good things, for the parliament did not please the people.’”¹⁷

“The parliament did not please the people...” It is often assumed that government by the people is the government that best pleases and benefits the people. But it is by no means necessarily so...

Meanwhile, General Monck, leader of the English army in Scotland and a canny politician, decided that traditional forms of government had to be restored in England. At first, however, he sided with the Rump, which, under pressure from Monck, was restored on December 26 and immediately appointed him as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. “However, on 11 February, Monck suddenly changed his position and demanded that parliament speedily hold new elections. In a letter to the Rump, he stated that the strength of feeling among ‘the generality of the nation’ (a reference to the declarations sent to him from around the country) had shown him that there was no other way ‘to keep the nation in peace’. That night saw rejoicing in the city, for the immediate threat of armed conflict was averted. The first steps on a road to resolution had been taken, with new elections offering a chance to install an authoritative, representative government.

“The Rump had fallen but, still, the restoration of Charles II was not inevitable. Some of those who had demanded a new parliament had done so because it was too risky to call openly for a return to monarchy. However, for other campaigners the call for a new parliament to settle the government had meant just that. Now people in and outside parliament were debating what might come next. In early March, 1660, Samuel Pepys, a junior government clerk, recorded in his diary: ‘Great is the talk of a single person, and that it would now be Charles, George or Richard again’ – meaning that the next head of state would be Charles II, George Monck or Oliver Cromwell’s son Richard (who had ruled as Lord Protector in 1658-59). As the momentum gathered behind Charles, observers judged that much of this support was pragmatic and born out of motives such as a desire to end uncertainty. Ralph Josselin noted cynically that the nation had been ‘looking more to Charles Stuart’ but ‘out of love to themselves not him’.

“Charles Stuart, who had been living in exile in the Netherlands, now seized the opportunity to present himself as a unifying figure – indeed as the only plausible solution to strife in the three kingdoms. In April, he issued a declaration from Breda in the Netherlands.

¹⁷ Loveman, “Putting the Realm Back Together”, *BBC History Magazine*, November, 2019, p. 44.

David Starkey writes: “The Declaration of Breda... was intended to serve both as a manifesto for his restoration and as a blueprint for a comprehensive settlement after the turmoil of twenty years of civil war and unrest. And it shows that the lessons of those years had been well learnt. Its principal argument in favour of monarchy was that the proper rights and power of the king were the guarantor of the rights of everybody else, and without the king’s rights nothing and no one was safe. As Cromwell had found, only monarchy could tame a fractious army and a power-hungry parliament. But as Charles now argued, only a Stuart monarchy had the legitimacy to guarantee known laws and a stable line of succession...

“Most importantly, the Declaration stated that there would be no bloody reprisals or the restoration of the Stuart monarchy as it had existed under Charles I. Instead, the restoration would not be the victory of the royalist cause, but a continuation of strong government as it had existed under Cromwell. Finally, the Declaration of Breda promised to bind up the wounds of a bleeding nation. It offered pardon to all, save effectively those directly participating in the late king’s execution. But most strikingly and unthinkably for the heir of Charles I, it also offered liberty of worship. ‘We do declare a Liberty to tender consciences; and that no Man shall be disquieted or called in Question for Differences of Opinion in matter of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom.’”¹⁸

The timing was now right for a restoration of the monarchy; for the English revolution had gradually run out of steam. It was not only that a nation as convivial and traditionalist as the English could not live forever without Christmas revels and the “smells and bells” of traditional religion and the pomp and majesty of traditional kingship. “As the millenium failed to arrive,” writes Sir Christopher Hill, “and taxation was not reduced, as division and feuds rent the revolutionaries, so the image of his sacred majesty loomed larger over the quarrelsome, unsatisfactory scene... The mass of ordinary people came to long for a return to ‘normality’, to the known, the familiar, the traditional. Victims of scrofula who could afford it went abroad to be touched by the king [Charles II] over the water: after 1660 he was back, sacred and symbolic. *Eikonoklastes* was burnt by the common hangman together with *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*... The men of property in 1659-60 longed for ‘a king with plenty of holy oil about him’.”¹⁹

And so, “twenty months after Oliver Cromwell’s death Charles II sat once more on his father’s throne. The intervening period had shown that no settlement was possible until the Army was disbanded. Richard Cromwell lacked the prestige with the soldiers necessary if he was to prolong his father’s balancing trick; but after his fall no Army leader proved capable of restoring the old radical alliance, and nothing but social revolution could have thwarted the ‘natural rulers’ determination to get rid of military rule. Taxes could be collected only by force: the men of property refused to advance money to any government they did not control. The foreign situation helped to make Charles’s restoration technically unconditional: there was a general fear that the peace of November 1659 which

¹⁸ Starkey, *Crown and Country*, London: Harper Press, 2011, p. 355.

¹⁹ Hill, *God’s Englishman*, London: Penguin, 1970, p. 245.

ended 24 years of war between France and Spain would be followed by an alliance of the two countries to restore the Stuarts...

“In April 1660, a new parliament known as the Convention, was elected. Edward Montagu, earl of Manchester, who a decade and a half earlier had opposed the king’s trial and execution, was appointed Speaker of the House of Lords. Overwhelmingly pro-royalist, the Convention first undertook to debate the question of the restoration of the monarchy. The parliament that only eleven years earlier had helped kill the king now debated the return of his son, Charles II.

“On 30 April, the Convention MPs processed to hear a sermon in St. Margaret’s, Westminster. Preached by the Presbyterian Richard Baxter, who, a few years previously, had been so shocked by the religious anarchy of the New Model Army, it was entitled ‘A Sermon of Repentance’. It argued that both the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians had sinned by fighting each other to establish their exclusive vision of the Church. Instead they should unite in as comprehensive a national Church settlement as possible. His call was heeded, and the next day both sides joined together to vote for the recall of the king... ”²⁰

But was there real repentance – that absolutely necessary of any true restoration after revolution? Hardly; for just as there was no real revenge on any but the direct participants in regicide, so there was no repentance from those who sympathized with them, to the extent that the statue of the chief regicide, Cromwell, still stands outside the British parliament. For many profited from the new England created by Cromwell, and were anxious to hold on to their gains...

We have seen that the men of property in 1660 had longed “for a king with plenty of holy oil about him”... And yet the king’s legitimacy or holiness was a secondary consideration for them. Their first priority was that he should suppress the radicals, preserve order and let them make money in peace. A Divine Right ruler was not suitable because he might choose to touch their financial interests, as Charles I had done. A constitutional ruler was the answer – that is, a ruler who would be bound to pursue their interests.

Now Charles II was not, of course, a constitutional monarch *de jure*, nor did he believe in constitutionalism personally. He admired the absolutism of his cousin, Louis XIV, he allowed the cult of his father, Charles the martyr, and he converted to Catholicism on his deathbed. For, as he said to the French ambassador, “no other creed matches so well the absolute dignity of kings”.²¹

He was right: the religion in which one man, rather than God, has absolute rule is well suited to despotic, absolutist political regimes.

Nevertheless, in spite of himself, Charles II did provide the necessary transition to the constitutional monarchy that the landowning aristocrats wanted because he

²⁰ Starkey, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-356.

²¹ Robert Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 255.

did their will in most things. He did this partly because his years of wandering as a fugitive in Europe and England (including even hiding in a famous oak from his pursuers) had taught him caution and a flexibility and capacity for compromise that his father had lacked. And partly because he saw that the country had changed irrevocably in the last twenty years, and that any attempt to turn the clock back to 1640 would simply result in another civil war with a similar outcome to the last one.

For, as Hill writes, “the seventeenth was the decisive century in English history”²²; and the vital changes in that decisive century had been made by Oliver Cromwell and the English Parliament, not by the Stuart kings.

Since he would have to make political compromises, it was only understandable that Charles should think he could make spiritual and moral compromises, too. And so, as Robert Tombs writes, Charles “did not take religion too seriously – he was more or less Catholic, the clearest repudiation of Puritanism – and was indulgent to others as to himself: ‘God will never damn a man for allowing himself a little pleasure’ (which in his case included fathering at least fourteen illegitimate children). All this – which outraged Puritans – was politics as well as personality: he wanted to defuse religious conflict by favouring an inclusive Church of England, with tolerance for law-abiding Dissenters and a lessening of petty moral persecution... Notwithstanding inevitable disillusionment, few restorations have been so successful as what Daniel Defoe called ‘his lazy, long, lascivious reign’.

“In August 1660 Charles pushed through an Act of General Pardon, Indemnity and Oblivion, which recognized changes in ownership of land and gave an amnesty covering the Civil War and republican period. Excluded were surviving regicides: nine were executed, and efforts made to hunt down the rest. Pepys went to see General Harrison hanged, drawn and quartered – ‘he looking as cheerfully as any man could do in that condition.’ John Evelyn ‘met their quarters mangld & cut & reeking as they were brought from the Gallows in baskets’. Otherwise revenge was symbolic. Cromwell’s body was dug up, hanged and beheaded (the head, by a long and circuitous route, is now somewhere in the chapel of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge). There was no attempt to turn the clock back far: Charles I’s anti-absolutist concessions of 1641 were kept; confiscated royal lands were left with their new owners; former parliamentarians stayed in office – they made up nearly half of Charles’s Privy Council and formed the majority of JPs. This, said disgruntled loyalists, was indemnity for the king’s enemies, and oblivion for his friends. True, but safer and wiser than the attitude of the French Bourbons restored after the Revolution, who ‘had learned nothing and forgotten nothing’.

“However, the king’s friends were not willing to let go of everything: they would not let the detested Roundheads continue to run their parishes and towns. A series of statutes – an Act of Uniformity (1662), imposing the use of the Book of Common Prayer; a Corporations Act (1661), which excluded religious dissenters from town government; a Test Act (1672), requiring all public employees to take

²² Hill, *God’s Englishman*, p. 13.

public oaths of allegiance and Anglican orthodoxy; and the Conventicles Act (1664), banning private Nonconformist worship. Thus, non-Anglicans were forced to conform to the Church of England or give up public office. About 1,000 ministers (one in six) gave up their livings, and about 2,000 clergy and teachers were ejected. Charles's attempts to circumvent this legislation [for his Breda Declaration had promised religious toleration for all] were blocked. Intended to restore unity, these acts on the contrary created a permanent religious schism in England, the long-term legacy of the Civil War. Disillusioned by the failure of the godly revolution, Dissenters went underground and turned inwards. This was the atmosphere in which John Bunyan, imprisoned for illegal preaching, wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), one of the greatest and most popular works of Puritan piety – a work not of revolution but of individual salvation and stubborn righteousness. There was no attempt to silence Dissenters politically, however – they had the same right to vote and sit in Parliament. Some leading Anglicans were moving away from rigidity and compulsion towards what opponents called 'Latitudinarianism' – a more tolerant and rational religion. Even in oppressed Ireland and divided Scotland there were signs of greater tolerance, for which the king deserves some credit..."²³

The king himself, however, was by no means universally popular – especially among the sectarians. As Hill writes, "Within a few years not only Bristol Baptists were looking back nostalgically to 'those halcyon days of prosperity, liberty and peace... those Oliverian days of liberty'. An unsentimental civil servant like Samuel Pepys, soon to be accused of papist leanings, recorded in July 1667 that: 'Everybody do now-a-days reflect upon Oliver and commend him, what brave things he did and made all the neighbour princes fear him.' Cromwell's former ambassador in France, Lockhart, whom Charles II also employed, 'found he had nothing of that regard that was paid him in Cromwell's time'. George Downing made a similar remark about the attitude of the Dutch to him, and the Ambassador of the Netherlands in 1672 told Charles II to his face that of course his country treated him differently from the Protector, for 'Cromwell was a great man, who made himself feared by land and by sea'. The common people were muttering similar things. 'Was not Oliver's name dreadful to neighbour nations?'...

"And if we look on another 20 years, it becomes clear that the reigns of Charles II and James II were only an interlude... After 1688 the policies of the 1650s were picked up again. The revolution of 1688 itself was so easily successful because James II remembered all too clearly that he had a joint in his neck. The lesson of January 1649 for the kings of Europe did not need repeating for another 144 years. The follies of James, and William III's own semi-legitimate claim to royalist loyalty, meant that the Liberator did not need to retain the large army which brought him to power: a settlement very like that which Oliver sought in vain was arrived at, with a strong executive but ultimate control by Parliament and the taxpayers. Parliament became again a permanent part of the constitution. Taxes could not be levied without the approval of the representatives of the men of property in the House of Commons; they could not be anticipated without the goodwill of bankers and the moneyed interest. All attempts to build up an independent executive, with

²³ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-253.

its own judicial system or subservient judges, strong enough to coerce the 'natural rulers' had failed – Laud's and James II's no less than the Major-Generals'. In 1649 and again in 1653 London juries acquitted John Lilburne against all the authority of the central government: in 1656 the republican Bradshaw demanded trial by a jury of 'men of value', and Cromwell, 'seeming to slight that', spoke against juries. By the end of the century juries were no longer accountable to the government for their verdicts; judges had become independent of the crown, dependent on Parliament. There was to be no administrative law in England, no more torture. The gentry and town oligarchies henceforth dominated local government, Parliamentary elections and juries.

“For James I customs had been one of many sources of revenue: by the end of the century customs dues were raised or lowered in the interests of the national economic policy which the commercial classes now dictated. At the restoration the Navigation Act had been re-enacted, and the power of the East India Company confirmed: imperial trade, and especially re-exports, were expanding rapidly. Sprat in 1667 could assume as a truism learnt in the preceding twenty years that 'the English greatness will never be supported or increased... by any other wars but those at sea'. But it was only after 1688 that governments came to assume that 'trade must be the principal interest of England'...

“Parliament now determined foreign policy, and used the newly mobilized financial resources of the country, through an aggressive use of sea power, to protect and expand the trade of a unified empire. England itself had by then been united under the dominance of the London market; separate courts no longer governed Wales and the North, 'canonization' was no longer a danger. William III's political and economic subjugation of Ireland was thoroughly Cromwellian: the Union with Scotland in 1707 was on the same lines as that of 1652-60. By the end of the century industrial freedom had been won, monopolies had been overthrown, government interference with the market, including the labour market, had ended. The anti-Dutch policy was sponsored by the Stuart Kings, who had their own reasons for disliking the Dutch republic. The policy of colonial expansion into the western hemisphere, first against Spain, then against France, enjoyed more support among the gentry, and gradually won over a majority in the House of Commons as Dutch and Spanish power declined and French increased. After 1688 there was no opposition between the two policies, for the Netherlands had been effectively subordinated to England, and all the power of the English state could be concentrated on the battle with France for the Spanish empire and the trade of the world. The two foreign policies fused as the landed and moneyed interests fused. England emerged from the seventeenth-century crisis geared to the new world of capitalism and colonial empire.”²⁴

“In his essay *Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*, Francis Bacon had prophetically written: 'The wealth of both Indies seems in great part an accessory to the command of the seas.' English strategy after the Revolution was based on a conscious use of sea power on a world scale that was new in execution if not in

²⁴ Hill, *God's Englishman*, pp. 245-248.

conception. In 1649-50 Ireland was kept free from foreign intervention, and Blake blockaded Prince Rupert's fleet in Kinsale. In March 1650 Blake followed Rupert to Portugal and shut him up in the Tagus for six months, finally capturing or destroying most of his ships. In September 1652 Blake's victory over a French fleet ensured the Spanish capture of Dunkirk. In 1654-5 - performing the unique feat of keeping at sea throughout the winter - the English admiral frustrated French designs on Naples, and brought Portugal to accept a virtual English protectorate. The forcing of treaties on Tetuan and Tunis introduced a new type of gunboat diplomacy, of which the next three centuries were to see a great deal. In 1656-7 Spain was effectively blockaded. The English navy cleaned up privateering, from Algiers to Dunkirk, in a way that no other power could: Blake in the Mediterranean, Penn in the Caribbean, Goodson in the Baltic, were phenomena hitherto unknown, presaging Britain's future. English merchants were now protected in the Mediterranean and Baltic in a way that would have been quite impossible for early Stuart governments..."²⁵

²⁵ Hill, *God's Englishman*, p. 161.

3. THE ANGLO-DUTCH WARS

However, the English had a rival, another Calvinist and mercantile nation: the Dutch, who were more advanced than they both in the practice of capitalism and in seamanship. The war between the Dutch and the English in the 1660s may be called the first purely trade war in history. It was a direct result of the creation of modern capitalism by the Dutch, and its eager imitation by the English. For its causes were not the traditional ones of dynastic rivalry or religion, nor even of piracy in the simple sense: it was rather a question of which global corporation would become dominant in this or that part of the world – or throughout the whole world.

For, as Peter Ackroyd writes, “When parliament resumed once more in the spring of 1664 one of its first measures was a declaration or ‘trade resolution’ against the Dutch, complaining that ‘the subjects of the United Provinces’ had invaded the king’s rights in India, Africa and elsewhere by attacking English merchants and had committed ‘damages, affronts and injuries’ closer to home. It was believed that the Dutch wished to establish a trade monopoly throughout the known world, which was as dangerous as the ‘universal monarchy’ sought by Louis XIV.

“The republic was therefore seen as a threat to English ships and to English commerce, but of course its very existence as a republic could be interpreted as an essential menace to the kingdom of England. The religion of the enemy was Calvinist in temper, and it was feared that the Dutch would support the cause of their co-religionists in England; they could thereby sow dissension against the king and the national faith. The ‘trade resolution’ was an aspect of the Anglican royalism asserted both by Lords and Commons. The fervour of the Commons, in particular, was matched by their actions. They agreed to raise the unprecedented sum of £2.5 million to assist the king in his persecution of hostilities.

“The formal declaration of war came, in February 1665, after months of preparation. The cause seems to have been largely popular, as far as such matters can be ascertained, particularly among those merchants and speculators who would benefit from the embarrassment of Dutch trade; one of these was the king’s brother, James, duke of York. He led the Royal Africa Company that specialized in the business of slavery, and he invested in other commercial ventures. The conflict has therefore been described as the first purely commercial war in English history. As one hemp merchant, Captain Cocke, put it, ‘the trade of the world is too little for us two, therefore one must go down’.”²⁶

The war went badly for the English. “Overseas trade had been seriously set back by the war on the high sea, and the Baltic trade shrunk away almost to nothing; woollen manufacture, the staple of England’s exports, was similarly depressed. A war fought for trade had become a war fatal to trade.”²⁷

²⁶ Ackroyd, *The History of England. Vol. III. Civil War*, London: Macmillan, 2014, pp. 391-392.

²⁷ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

Then came the two great disasters: the Great Plague of 1665, which killed about 100,000 Londoners, and then, after another defeat at the hands of the Dutch, the Great Fire of London of 1666, which destroyed five-sixths of the city.

Was the cause God's wrath on the inordinate commercial ambitions of the English, and especially on their slave-trading? Or on their sexual morals, which had markedly deteriorated since the restoration of the monarchy? Or on the beginnings of religious indifferentism or ecumenism in the form of Latitudinarianism, with its connotations of "the broad way" ...

Certainly, Charles' reign was redolent of Babylonian luxury and corruption, a kind of Belshazzar's feast. "An entry from Evelyn's diaries conveys the mood and atmosphere of the triumphant court with its 'inexpressible luxury, and prophanesse, gaming and all dissolution, and as if it were total forgetfulness of God'. The king was 'sitting and toying with his concubines', among them the duchess of Portsmouth, with a 'French boy singing love-songs, in that glorious gallery, whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at a large table, a bank of at least two thousand in gold before them'..."²⁸

Perhaps the disasters of 1665 and 1666 were a stern warning to England that the new capitalist revolution - led, after the "Glorious Revolution" of 1689, from London, - while bringing riches on an unprecedented scale, would also bring disaster to many. In any case, the English Babylonians did not see the writing on the wall; they still had some way to go before reaching the peak of their power and prosperity. For, as Niall Ferguson writes, "the same London that suffered the last great bubonic plague outbreak of 1665 (and the Great Fire the following year) was about to become the central hub of an extraordinary commercial empire, a humming hive of scientific and financial innovation, the pivotal city of the world for roughly two centuries..."²⁹

What cannot be denied is that Charles' reign, while to be welcomed as restoring the monarchical principle and restraining the revolutionary passions, saw a lamentable decline in religion. Such a decline is often to be observed in history at times of increased wealth and prosperity. And the Laodicean, docile, materialistic Anglicanism that came to dominate England's religious life for the next three centuries and more was in sharp contrast with the more vibrant (although still, of course, heretical) Anglicanism of the earlier period. Quarrels between the Protestant (Anglican) parliament and the Catholic-leaning monarchy continued in imitation of the similar quarrels in the reign of Charles I; but in spite of much talk of "popish plots", there was no real threat of civil war...

"The Anglican Church was now supreme under the leadership of the cleric who in 1663 was consecrated as archbishop of Canterbury; Gilbert Burnet wrote of Archbishop Sheldon that 'he seemed not to have a deep sense of religion, if any at

²⁸ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 451.

²⁹ Ferguson, *Doom. The Politics of Catastrophe*, London: Allen Lane, 2021, pp. 383-384.

all, and spoke of it most commonly as of an engine of government and a matter of policy'. The bishops, for example, had been returned to their seats in the House of Lords where they could exert a strong influence upon national legislation; yet it was also true that parliament, and not the Church, had taken control of the nature and direction of the national religion."³⁰

In any case, after a failed peace conference at Breda in 1667, the Dutch resumed their winning ways. In June, "they launched a raid into the Thames estuary; they broke the defences of the harbour at Chatham and proceeded to burn four ships before towing away the largest ship of the fleet, the *Royal Charles*, and returning with it undamaged...

"As a result, England lost much of the West Indies to France and the invaluable island of nutmeg, Run, part of Indonesia, to the Dutch. In return, however, it retained New Netherlands; this was the colonial province of the Netherlands that included the future states of New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Connecticut..."³¹

"If you can't beat 'em, join 'em", and it made sense for the Protestant, mercantilist and capitalist English and Dutch to make peace and join forces against the Catholic and absolutist Louis XIV. But Charles II did not share his subjects' sympathies, and was rather attracted to French absolutism. So in 1670 he signed the secret Treaty of Dover with Louis, whereby in exchange for Charles' conversion to Catholicism, Louis would provide him with a subsidy and 6000 soldiers against his internal enemies if need be. Moreover, they agreed to attack the Netherlands together - Louis by land and Charles by sea.

The result, the Third Anglo-Dutch war of 1672-74, was as unsuccessful for the English as the Second had been, and so parliament forced the king to end it. Logic now dictated that the English and the Dutch should make peace and join forces against the rising Catholic power of France under Louis XIV, whose expansionist nature was already evident. This is what eventually happened in the Glorious Revolution of 1689. In the meantime, the Anglo-Dutch wars had important consequences for the development of science and technology.

"In England," writes Grayling, "carpentry, shipbuilding, the manufacture of canvas, nails, pitch, the protection and management of oak woodlands, and much besides, already established in the previous century, now advanced by bounds. A long list of services and industries flourished in specific response to the needs of the navy that England maintained from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, under the management of Robert Blake during the Commonwealth and Samuel Pepys after the Restoration. By the closing decade of the century, when the Dutch fleet was put under Royal Navy command by William III, the British navy was the largest in the world."³²

³⁰ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

³¹ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

³² Grayling, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

The end of war was, as usual, good for commerce. A sign of the times was the rapid increase in coffee-shops, which spread rapidly throughout Europe from Venice. The first in England was opened in 1652, by 1660 there were 63 in London, but the real increase came after the war. Charles II considered them hotbeds of sedition, and so ordered their closure in December 1675. But the order was unpopular, so he rescinded it – which said as much about the decline of royal power as about the popularity of coffee-drinking.³³

The excise returns after the war “rose markedly in such staple items as beer, ale, tea and coffee, which in turn indicates a sharp rise in consumption. The increase in revenue had a significant effect upon royal income, too, which began to rise. Contemporary reports also suggest that the ‘middling classes’ were now indulging their taste for imported ‘luxuries’ and that the labouring poor were purchasing such items as knitted stockings, earthenware dishes and brass pots. The ‘commercial revolution’ of the eighteenth century had its origins three or four decades earlier. The successful colonization of portions of North America and of the West Indies, undertaken in the reigns of the early Stuart kings and under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, now found its fruit in the ever-increasing rate of trade. By 1685 the English had the largest merchant fleet in the world, and their vessels were filled with the merchandise of sugar, tobacco and cotton on their way to the great emporium of London.

“Other evidence supports this picture of material advantage. By 1672, for example, stagecoaches ran between London and all the principal towns of the kingdom; it was reported that ‘every little town within twenty miles of London swarms with them’. The ubiquity of the stagecoach is the harbinger of the reforms of transport in the next century, with the further development of turnpike roads and canals; the country was slowly quickening its pace while at the same time finding its unity.

“It is now a commonplace of economic history that the ‘agricultural revolution’ of the eighteenth century in fact began in the middle of the seventeenth century. The introduction of new crops, and the steady spread of ‘enclosures’ designed to achieve cohesion and efficiency of farming land, were already changing the landscape of England. The abundance of grain, for example, was such that in 1670 cereal farmers were allowed to export their crop without any regard to its price in the domestic market.”³⁴

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The last years of Charles’ reign were marked by a sharp conflict with Parliament over his right to appoint his successor. In order to protect themselves from arbitrary detention by the king, the MPs passed the famous *Habeas Corpus Act* of

³³ Joseph Maria Casals, “Coffee Brews Trouble in London”, *National Geographic History*, March/April, 2018, p. 11.

³⁴ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

1679.³⁵ The Earl of Shaftesbury, a Presbyterian, led the movement to stop King Charles' brother and appointed heir, the Catholic James II, from coming to the throne.

As Tombs writes, "Two Exclusion Bills were presented to Parliament, one in May 1679, another in October 1680. This prolonged 'Exclusion Crisis' of 1679-81 helped to define English political culture: the derogatory terms 'Whig' and 'Tory' (from *whiggamore*, Scottish Presbyterian rebels, and *tóraigh*, Irish Catholic rebels) were now applied to the king's opponents and supporters. Some of their fundamental ideas were taking shape – for the Whigs, theories about resistance: for the Tories, about legitimacy. In Scotland, an archbishop was lynched by a psalm-singing mob. Charles repeatedly dissolved or prorogued Parliament. He told the French ambassador that 'his one and only interest was to subsist'. The French, however, were also funding the crypto-republican opposition to give themselves leverage over Charles.

"Few could have missed the sense that the 1640s were being replayed, and hardly anyone wanted another civil war. It became increasingly clear that Oates's 'Popish Plot', the catalyst of the crisis, was an invention. Parliament was summoned to Oxford in 1681, away from the London mob, and MPs arrived with armed bodyguards. The public began to rally to the king. The French ambassador, Paul Barillon, who was flirting with the Whigs, reported a dramatic scene when on 28 March 1681, as the Lords were assembling, Shaftesbury handed Charles a letter urging him to make his illegitimate but Protestant son James, Duke of Monmouth, his heir. The king publicly responded: 'My Lords, let there be no self-delusion. I will never yield, and will not let myself be intimidated. Men become ordinarily more timid as they grow old; as for me, I shall be... bolder and firmer, and I will not stain my life and reputation in the little time that, perhaps, remains for me to live. I do not fear the dangers and calamities which people try to frighten me with. I have the law and reason on my side. God men will be with me.' The Oxford crowds shouted, 'Let the king live, and the Devil hang up all Roundheads'. Charles appealed publicly for loyalty: 'We cannot but remember that Religion, Liberty and property were all lost and gone when monarchy was shaken off.' Shaftesbury fled abroad in 1682, Locke drafted a *Treatise of Government* asserting the right to resist monarchs – a 'scenario of civil war' which later became a Whig sacred text. In the 'Rye House Plot' in 1683, republicans planned to assassinate Charles and James as they returned from Newmarket races. In another half-baked conspiracy, the Earl of Essex (son of the Civil War commander), Lord William Russell (heir of the Earl of Bedford) and Algernon Sidney (son of the Earl of Leicester) planned to seize the king, take power with Scottish support, subjugate Ireland, and go to war with Holland. When they were caught, Essex committed suicide and the other two were executed. Algernon Sidney declared on the scaffold that he was willing to die for 'the Good Old Cause' – a name that stuck. He was long revered as a Whig martyr.

³⁵ "The Whig leaders had good reasons to fear the King moving against them through the courts (as indeed happened in 1681) and regarded *habeas corpus* as safeguarding their own persons. The short-lived Parliament which made this enactment came to be known as the *Habeas Corpus Parliament* – being dissolved by the King immediately afterwards." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habeas_corpus)

“Moderates, however, denounced Whig designs: ‘more wicked’, said one MP, ‘than their malice could invent to accuse the papists of’. There was a grass-roots backlash against Whigs and Dissenters. So when Charles died suddenly on 6 February 1685, aged fifty-five, his brother’s succession was assured. Charles has been much criticized, but one modern historian pays him a tribute that few British rulers could claim: ‘He was a king under whom most people in the three kingdoms were happy to live.’ In the long run, the monarchy won the Civil War. But the great divide had not been healed...”³⁶

³⁶ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258.

4. THE ROYAL SOCIETY, FRANCIS BACON AND THE POWER OF SCIENCE

Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Lord High Chancellor of England from 1617 to 1621, had had a distinguished career by any standards. But his main claim to fame was not his career as a public servant, but as the first philosopher of science... In 1621 he was imprisoned for bribery and corruption. This brought his public career to an end, but gave him time to write his scientific work, and especially his philosophy of science. But of course he lived in a religious age, and therefore for him the book of Nature, which scientists read, did not exclude the book of God, the Bible, which theologians read; and God was the Author of both of them. For "it is true," he wrote, "that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion. For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."³⁷

Bacon misleadingly compared science to the knowledge of essences that Adam had before the fall – "the pure knowledge of nature and universality, a knowledge by the light whereof man did give names unto other creatures in Paradise, as they were brought to him".³⁸ "This light should in its very rising touch and illuminate all the border-regions that confine upon the circle of our present knowledge; and so, spreading further and further should presently disclose and bring into sight all that is most hidden and secret in the world."³⁹ "God forbid that we should give out a dream of our own imagination for a pattern of the world: rather may He graciously grant to us to write an apocalypse or true vision of the footsteps of the Creator imprinted on His creatures."⁴⁰

"Bacon", according to John Henry, "wanted to kindle 'a light in nature', not by 'striking out some particular invention' but by inventing a method, a set of procedures, that would enable mankind to 'disclose and bring into sight all that is most hidden and secret in the world'."⁴¹ As J.M. Roberts writes, he was "a visionary, glimpsing not so much what science would discover as what it would become: a faith. 'The true and lawful end of the sciences', he wrote, 'is that human life be enriched by new discoveries and powers.' Through them could be achieved 'a restitution and reinvigorating (in great part) of man to the sovereignty and power... which he had in his first creation.' This was ambitious indeed – nothing less than the redemption of mankind through organised research; he was here, too, a prophetic figure, precursor of later scientific societies and institutes."⁴²

³⁷ Bacon, "Atheism", in *Essays*, 27.

³⁸ Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book I, 1, 3.

³⁹ Bacon, *The Interpretation of Nature*, proemium.

⁴⁰ Bacon, *The Great Instauration*, "The Plan of the Work".

⁴¹ Henry, *Knowledge is Power. How Magic, the Government and an Apocalyptic Vision Helped Francis Bacon to Create Modern Science*, London: Icon Books, 2017, p. 176. p. 18,

⁴² Roberts, *The Triumph of the West*, London: Phoenix Press, 1985, p. 160.

Now the spirit of true religion is the spirit of the humble receiving of the truth by revelation from God; it does not preclude active seeking for truth, but recognizes that it will never succeed in this search if God does not help the truth-seeker. For Wisdom “goes about seeking those worthy of her, and She graciously appears to them in their paths, and meets them in every thought” (Wisdom 6.16). “Without Me,” said the Light of the world, “you can do nothing’ (John 15.5).

In science, on the other hand, while here also there are humble seekers for truth, there is also a proud Faustian spirit, a striving for *power over nature*, rather than the simple contemplation of it, which is incompatible with the true religious spirit. We have seen this already in such men as Bruno. And it was not absent from Bacon, who thought that the “pure knowledge of nature and universality” would lead to *power* (“knowledge is power”, in his famous phrase) and to “the effecting of all things possible”.⁴³

Bertrand Russell writes: “The way in which science arrives at its belief is quite different from that of medieval philosophy. Experience has shown that it is dangerous to start from general principles and proceed deductively, both because the principles may be untrue and because the reasoning based upon them may be fallacious. Science starts, not from large assumption, but from particular facts discovered by observation or experiment. From a number of such facts a general rule is arrived at, of which, it is true, the facts in question are instances. Science thus encourages abandonment of the search for absolute truth, which belongs to the future ‘Technical truth’ is a matter of degree: a theory from which more successful inventions and predictions spring is truer than one which gives rise to fewer. ‘Knowledge’ ceases to be a mental mirror of the universe, and becomes merely a practical tool in the manipulation of matter.”⁴⁴

So scientific knowledge “becomes merely a practical tool in the manipulation of matter”. A startling confession from a famous advocate of scientific method... Knowledge is indeed power (under the All-Powerful One), but if the aim is power before knowledge, then the knowledge obtained is likely to be corrupted and corrupting, and linked with magic and the occult. Michael Hoffman writes of “the Illuminist and master-chemist Comenius in his 1668 book *The Way of Light*, dedicated to the first scientific organization in Western history, Britain's august Royal Society. In it, Comenius addressed the first formal scientists as ‘illuminati; and outlined their scientific purpose, ‘...which is to secure ... the empire of the human mind over matter.’”

Such an “empire” was the goal of the occult society of the Rosicrucians. (Bacon was a Rosicrucian, and most members of the Royal Society were Freemasons.⁴⁵) “In a key Rosicrucian description of the ‘City of Utopia’ it is shown to be dominated by science and mechanics and more ominously, by the medical dissection of

⁴³ Bacon, *New Atlantis*.

⁴⁴ Russell, *Religion and Society*, London: Oxford University Press, 1947, pp. 13-15.

⁴⁵ Philip Darrell Collins and Paul David Collins, *The Ascendancy of the Scientific Dictatorship*, Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2004, p. 21.

cadavers, in other words by the hyper-analytical obsession of Rationalism with dead matter and measurement.

“The ‘utopian’ city of the Rosicrucians is before us today: New York and Los Angeles-Babylon the Great. And it was planned in 1668 and long before...”⁴⁶

So important was this scientific power that no human authority, clerical or otherwise, was to be allowed to interfere with or limit it. Hence Bacon’s demand in *New Atlantis* for complete intellectual freedom for scientists. And yet, contrary to the prevailing ethos of the Renaissance, Bacon played down the role of individual genius. He wanted a collective body to take the place of individual genius and really give it power...

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That collective body came into existence a generation after Bacon’s death... “The Royal Society,” writes Ackroyd, “may be deemed the jewel of Charles II’s reign. At the end of November 1660, a group of physicians and natural scientists announced the formation of a ‘college for the promoting of physic-mathematical experimental learning’; they were in part inspired by Francis Bacon’s vision of ‘Solomon’s House’ in *The New Atlantis*, and they shared Bacon’s passion for experimental and inductive science. They were men of a practical and pragmatic temper, with a concomitant interest in agriculture as well as navigation, manufactures as well as medicine. All questions of politics or religion were excluded from the deliberations of the Fellows, and indeed their pursuit of practical enquiry was in part designed to quell the ‘enthusiasm’ and to quieten the spiritual debates that had helped to foment the late civil wars. They met each week, at Gresham College in Bishopsgate, where papers were read on the latest invention or experiment. It was in their company that Sir Isaac Newton first propounded his revolutionary theories of light.

“The last four decades of the seventeenth century in fact witnessed an extraordinary growth in scientific experiment to the extent that, in 1667, the historian of the Royal Society, Thomas Sprat, could already celebrate the fact that ‘an universal zeal towards the advancement of such designs has not only overspread our court and universities, but the shops of our mechanicks, the fields of our gentlemen, the cottages of our farmers, and the ships of our merchants’.

“An inquiring and inventive temper was now more widely shared, whereby the whole field of human knowledge became the subject of speculation. The Fellows of the Royal Society debated a method of producing wind by means of falling water; they explored the sting of a bee and the feet of flies; they were shown a baroscope that measured changes in the pressure of the air and a hygroscope for detecting water in the atmosphere; they set up an enquiry into the state of English agriculture and surveyed the methods of tin-mining in Cornwall. They conducted experiments on steam, on ventilation, on gases and on magnetism, thermometers,

⁴⁶ Hoffman, *Secret Societies and Psychological Warfare*, 2018.

pumps and perpetual motion machines were brought before them. The origins of the industrial and agricultural 'revolutions', conventionally located in the eighteenth century, are to be found in the previous age. In the seventeenth century, providentially blessed by the genius of Francis Bacon at its beginning, we find a general desire for what Sprat described as 'the true knowledge of things'.⁴⁷

Why at that time? One hypothesis, put forward by Melvyn Bragg, is that the killing of the king in 1649 was a kind of liberation that let loose a great wave of scientific inquiry. "After all, if you could kill a king, one who had ruled by Divine Right, the representative of God on earth, then all things were possible. The new knowledge suggested by Francis Bacon and spurred by many thinkers in Europe burst out in force in the seventeenth century, with the language to service it and the confidence to overthrow the old order and argue for the new. Most of all, it set out to discover by experiments the secrets of that other great book – Nature."⁴⁸

Ackroyd hints at another hypothesis: that the scientific revolution was partly a reaction to the "enthusiasm" of the preceding religious and political revolutions, which did not favour natural philosophy. Similarly, John Henry argues that the Royal Society in its early years was itself "a victim of the wide distrust of natural philosophy that had grown during the Civil War period"⁴⁹. So its foundation was an attempt to build trust in the scientific enterprise as opposed to "natural philosophy", which included theology.

Thomas Sprat, author of *The History of the Royal Society* (1667), considered that the Fellows of the Society "have attempted to free [knowledge] from the Artifice, and Humours, and Passions of Sects; to render it an Instrument, whereby Mankind may obtain a Dominion over Things, and not onely over one another's judgments."⁵⁰ For, as Francis Bacon famously said, "Knowledge is power".⁵¹

Indeed, the Baconian tone of the Society, as Henry noted, was "unmistakable. The members openly profess, not to lay the Foundation of an English, Scotch, Irish, Popish, or Protestant philosophy, but a 'Philosophy of Mankind'. The Royal Society was an Assembly engaged 'on a design so public, and so free from suspicion of mean or private interest.' Only by pursuing the Baconian method can the failures of former ages in which intellectual achievements had been blighted by 'Interest of Sects, the violence of Disputations... the Religious controversies, the Dogmatical Opinions,... the want of a continual race of Experimenters.'"⁵²

This is extraordinarily ambitious, and suggests that the real reason for the rise of science was not the inquisitiveness of individual scientists, not knowledge, but the *power* that knowledge brings when it is collectively organized. A collective

⁴⁷ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, pp.404-405.

⁴⁸ Bragg, "Interrogating Nature – to reveal God's Way?", *Oxford Today*, vol. 23, no 3, 2010, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Henry, *Knowledge is Power. How Magic, the Government and an Apocalyptic Vision Helped Francis Bacon to Create Modern Science*, London: Icon Books, 2017, p. 176.

⁵⁰ Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁵¹ Bacon, *Meditationes Sacrae*.

⁵² Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-179.

body, dispassionate and above suspicion and religious partisanship, that through the Baconian method will attain “a Philosophy of Mankind”! A philosophy of mankind that will ultimately control mankind! Plato’s Philosopher King in collective form! Or a “scientific dictatorship” over all kinds of knowledge, which Michael Shermer defines as “a scientific worldview that encompasses natural explanations for all phenomena, eschews supernatural and paranormal speculations, and embraces empiricism and reason as twin pillars of a philosophy of life appropriate for an Age of Reason.”⁵³

“So, continues Henry, “fellows of the Society ‘exact no extraordinary praeparations of Learning: to have sound Senses and Truth, is with them a sufficient Qualification. Here is enough business from Minds of all sizes... from the most ordinary capacities, to the highest and most searching Wits’. The Society’s method, therefore, like Bacon’s, ‘places all its wits nearly on a level’. They even developed schemes that could be seen as examples of the ‘machinery’ for gathering information, which Bacon envisaged. Leading members of the Society drew up questionnaires, or lists of desiderata, for distribution to sea-captains and other travellers, with a view to compiling consistent information about foreign lands, their flora and fauna and so on, for inclusion in natural and experimental histories.

“Even in the case of experiments, it was declared to be the ‘work of the Assembly’, not of the experimenter himself, to ‘judge, and resolve upon the matter of Fact – which is to say, to decide upon what fact was actually revealed by the experiment... [Sprat] made it plain that the experimental results of the Society were not described in accordance with one person’s biased view of things. They were decided by the Assembly...

“Given the nature of the procedure, the experimental results of the Society established not theories but matters of fact that were ‘out of all reasonable dispute’...”⁵⁴

“Not theories but matters of fact”. And yet true science never establishes matters of indisputable fact, but at best hypotheses that can always be disputed. And the advance of science consists largely in the overthrow of hypotheses – hopefully of a less sound hypothesis by a sounder one. So for all its humble protestations, the Royal Society, basing itself on Bacon’s scientific utopia, constituted in its Assembly a new secular, infallible pope that ruled authoritatively on all matters of truth and falsehood. We may compare its role with that of the World Health Organization today...

Fr. Steven Allen writes: “Just as Pico de Mirandola’s *Oration on the Dignity of Man* can be said to be the manifesto of the Renaissance in general, and Machiavelli’s *The Prince* is the classic statement of Renaissance politics, one could say that Francis Bacon’s utopian novel, *New Atlantis*, and his works on the role of science and technology in society, such as the *New Organon*, form the charter of

⁵³ Shermer, “The Shamans of Scientism”, *Scientific America*, May 13, 2002.

⁵⁴ Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 180, 181.

modern scientism, the idea that man can perfect life on earth by scientific and philosophic advancement. The article on Bacon in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy sums up his influence thus: 'He died in 1626, leaving behind a cultural legacy that, for better or worse, includes most of the foundation for the triumph of technology and for the modern world as we currently know it.'

"Bacon, a classic 'Renaissance Man' – statesman, philosopher, jurist, scientist, author – lived during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I of England. There are various theories about his involvement with occult sects such as the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians, but one need not prove his formal connection to these groups to understand his fundamental idea, stated in his *Meditationes Sacrae*, that 'knowledge itself is power.' The real power in a "Baconian" society is held by those who know the secrets of science. In *New Atlantis*, the real power in Bensalem, the utopian island realm, is not in the hands of the government, but in the hands of a secret society of scholars who form the college of 'Salomon's House,' and who deliberately withhold knowledge from the purported rulers of the society. The 'Father' of 'Salomon House' states, 'And this we do also: we have consultations, which of the inventions and experiences which we have discovered shall be published, and which not; and take all an oath of secrecy for the concealing of those which we think fit to keep secret; though some of those we do reveal sometime to the State, and some not.'

"This idea is completely consonant with an idea we saw earlier in our study of the Renaissance, that science is linked to occult knowledge, and that it is employed in order to have power over the society. What is being proposed in *New Atlantis* – or, rather, depicted – is that a secret oligarchy with the keys to scientific knowledge and technology should hold also the keys to political power, which they dole out, as they will, to the State, which is no longer the true governing power, but rather an 'interface,' as we might say today, for the real governing power, which is occult and irresponsible, that is, hidden and without accountability. It is rather obvious how this applies to our situation today, in which only the extremely fatuous still believe that our political institutions are not puppets manipulated by an irresponsible oligarchy through technocratic methods of control.

"The Orthodox Christian concept of the roles of science and technology is this, in sum: The primary role of science is to adorn man's mind with knowledge, in order to inspire the contemplation of God and His creation. The role of technology is to help man find the moderate amount of earthly happiness he needs in order to practice virtue – to avoid excessive earthly sorrows on the one hand while avoiding excessive earthly joys on the other hand, both of which conduce to vice. There is no room in this concept for 'unlimited technological progress,' a quintessentially Luciferian idea linked to heretical, utopian ideas of human perfectibility. The 'Baconian' or 'New Atlantis' ideal is quite different: A 'high priesthood' of scientists and scholars, operating in secret, will discover 'truths' that will perfect human society on earth."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Allen, *Orthodox Survival Course Class 58*, <https://www.spreaker.com/user/youngfaithradio/58-ep-orthsurv-edit>.

However, this “perfect society” was, perforce, a Masonic ideal. For, as Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln write, “Virtually all the Royal Society’s founding members were Freemasons. One could reasonably argue that the Royal Society itself, at least in its inception, was a Masonic institution – derived... from the ‘invisible Rosicrucian brotherhood’...”⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, New York: Delacorre Press, 1982, p. 144.

5. THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Not only in England, with the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II, but also in other European and Asian countries, there was something of a recovery of monarchical forms of government in the late seventeenth century. In Russia, the autocracy recovered from the Time of Troubles. And despotism still ruled in Persia, India and China, while it reached its peak in Europe under Louis XIV.

At the same time the acid of anti-monarchism did not cease to eat away at the foundations of states. While the English Revolution did not succeed in finally abolishing the monarchy, it undoubtedly weakened it (Charles II was much more cautious in his treatment of Roundheads and Dissenters than his father had been) – and the example of England was to influence the French *philosophes*. In Russia, meanwhile, the Old Ritualists were opposed, if not to monarchism in general, at any rate to the “Nikonian” Muscovite monarch; and their “theocratic democratism” bore striking resemblances to the contemporary self-governing communities of the American Puritans...

A critical point was reached in the years 1685, as Catholic absolutism and religious intolerance staged a defiant comeback. In that year Louis XIV of France repealed the Edict of Nantes, which had given toleration to the Protestants. As a result, between 250,000 and 900,000 French Huguenots (Protestants) fled to England, the Netherlands and Prussia.⁵⁷ In the same year Charles II of England, a fervent admirer and secret ally of Louis, died, having been converted to Catholicism on his deathbed; he was succeeded by his brother, James II, a Catholic, who approved of Louis’ Edict.

But Catholic absolutism now declined sharply... Charles, write David Starkey and Katie Greening, “had been acutely aware of the rumblings of anti-Catholic sentiment in England, and he had prophesied that his younger brother, James, would last no longer than three years on the throne. But James II acceded surprisingly smoothly: there were no riots in the streets, no rebellions or resistance...

“[However,] James II was a man on a mission: inspired by the successes of his Catholic ancestor Mary Tudor, he was determined to convert the nation back to what he considered to be the ‘true faith’. Moreover, he felt that his ambition was bolstered by divine right; an open Catholic had acceded to the throne in a nation with an inbred hostility to Catholicism – what clearer sign could there be from God that He supported the Catholic cause!...

“As James made conspicuous moves to ease the burdens on English Catholics – opening monastic houses, filling official positions with popish candidates – he became increasingly unpopular. In 1688 he issued a ‘Declaration of Indulgence’ which proposed universal religious toleration, arguing that it was a guarantee of economic prosperity, as opposed to persecution, which spoiled trade, depopulated

⁵⁷ Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 146.

countries and discouraged strangers'; and, in the process, suspended the ban on Catholics from holding public office. On 27 April of that year, James ordered that the clergy read the Declaration from their pulpits; seven prominent bishops refused, amid a wave of public sympathy and popular demonstrations of support for their cause..."⁵⁸

The critical event that appears to have sparked the revolution was the birth of a son to King James and his wife, Mary of Modena. This meant that the lawful heir to the throne was a Catholic... Seven leading Whig parliamentarians acted quickly; they secretly invited the Protestant Dutch King (or "Stadtholder") William of Orange to rule over them together with his wife, James' Protestant daughter Mary – but on their terms.⁵⁹ William accepted these terms, since he needed English arms and money in his struggle against French absolutism. And so the revolution of 1688 took place: favoured by the winds as William of Normandy had been in 1066, the Dutch William landed in the west at Brixham in Devon in November, 1688, encountering no opposition to his 500 ships and 20,000 men.⁶⁰ When the two armies eventually met, James fled, abandoning his men and casting the Great Seal of the realm into the Thames.

"A Convention Parliament met in January 1689. It was composed of 319 Whigs and 232 Tories. What divided them now was how to define and justify what had happened. Whigs saw James as being deposed after breaking his 'contract' with the people.⁶¹ Tories wanted to preserve the principle of monarchy as God-given, permanent and governed by lawful succession: James was 'incapacitated', and Willem and Mary were regents. But Willem threatened to go home unless he was made king, and so he was, as co-sovereign with his Stuart wife, Mary. A Whig-Tory compromise emerged. James was declared both to have 'broken the original contract between king and people' and also to have 'abdicated' and left the throne 'vacant'. By leaving the country he had enabled divisive political questions to be fudged. It could therefore be agreed that what had happened was that the existing constitution, which James had tried to destroy, had been preserved, not overthrown. These events, now often downplayed or forgotten, were long extolled as the 'Glorious Revolution', which almost without bloodshed in England, ended monarchical absolutism, established the primacy of Parliament, and preserved the Protestant religion."⁶²

Before the coronation, in accordance with the terms agreed beforehand, William and Mary had to agree to a Bill of Rights which declared, as Starkey writes, "that

⁵⁸ Starkey and Greening, *Music & Monarchy*, London: BBC Books, 2013, pp. 187, 188, 190.

⁵⁹ The letter was written in the cellar of Ladye Place, Hurley. Cf. Lucy Worsley, "How Glorious was the Glorious Revolution?" *BBC History Magazine*, January, 2017, p. 26.

⁶⁰ This region was well-chosen as the launch-pad of the invasion because the West Country had been the power-base of the Duke of Monmouth, who had unsuccessfully rebelled against James II in 1685, and many still sympathized with a rebellion against James. (Anna Keary, "The Righteous Royal Rebel", *BBC History Magazine*, July, 2016, p. 50).

⁶¹ "Whigs" and Tories" are originally abusive terms for Irish outlaws and Scottish drovers respectively (Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 147). (V.M.)

⁶² Tombs, *op. cit.* pp. 262-263.

the crown could not dispense with or suspend laws made in Parliament, it could not raise taxation except through Parliament and it could not have a standing army without the consent of Parliament. On the other hand, the crown should allow elections to Parliament to be free and parliaments frequent. Finally, and above all, the Bill declared it 'inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant kingdom' for the monarch to be a Papist or to be married to a Papist."⁶³

William and Mary were crowned as equal monarchs on April 11, 1689. The preacher at the coronation claimed that the new settlement was an ideal compromise between despotism and democracy: "Happy are we," he said, "who are delivered from both extremes, who neither live under the error of Despotick power, nor are cast loose to the wildness of ungovern'd multitudes."

*

'The events of 1688-89," writes Edward Vallance, "became the cornerstone of the Whig interpretation of English history. According to this tradition, the members of the Convention parliament who voted the crown to William and Mary were not constitutional innovators, but defenders of England's 'ancient constitution' (the body of fundamental laws which were held to guarantee the rights and liberties of the English) from the absolutist designs of James.

"In the words of Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), the revolutionaries 'regenerated the deficient part of the old constitution through the parts which were not impaired'. In contrast to the violence and terror engulfing revolutionary France at the time Burke was writing, this earlier English revolution was 'glorious' because it was carried out by parliament. Above all, 1688-89 was to be celebrated because it was, according to the Whig interpretation, a bloodless revolution..."⁶⁴

By any normal standards, however, the "Glorious Revolution" was glorious and bloodless only by comparison with Cromwell's. A legitimate king, who, whatever his faults, could hardly be called a cruel tyrant, - it was he, not William, who issued the "Declaration of Indulgence" proclaiming universal religious toleration - was overthrown by a group of rebels who entered into a treasonable conspiracy with a foreign power. The fact that they were parliamentarians makes their treachery worse. A revolution can be justified only on the grounds that it overthrows a false faith and installs the true one. But true religious zeal was a rarity now in the British Isles. And in any case Protestantism was not the true faith...

Lord Macaulay in his *History of England* (1848) saw this "glorious" and "bloodless" revolution as the key event making possible both Britain's ascent to the status of a great power and her avoidance of the bloody revolutions that took

⁶³ Starkey, *Crown & Country*, p. 395.

⁶⁴ Vallance, "A Not So Bloodless Revolution", *The Life and Times of the Stuarts*, *BBC History Magazine*, pp. 98-100.

place in nineteenth-century Europe; it was in effect the foundation-stone of the British empire...

Tombs agrees: "The 1688 revolution was not only domestic in its aims and importance: it also reoriented foreign policy, committed England to play a crucial part in European affairs, and, as is clear in retrospect, set it on the path to world power. The first act of William of Orange, even before he became king, was to dispatch troops to the Continent to fight the French. While he lived, England was in a personal union with Ireland and Scotland, but more importantly with the Dutch Republic. After Anne's death, England was linked with Hanover. So for the first time since the 1450s it became a continental power, 'its horizons... delineated by two German rivers, the Elbe and the Weser'. Within a single lifetime, what had been a poor, weak, unstable and declining kingdom, well below Sweden in military terms, made itself a global empire. Its political institutions, archaic, eccentric and seemingly doomed before 1688, were now compared favourably with those of the ancient world. The English language, hitherto known only in the islands and a scattering of outposts, and English culture and manners, hitherto considered strange and provincial, grew fashionable even in Paris and Versailles. Voltaire promised his friends 'to acquaint you with the character of this strange people... fond of their liberty, learned, witty, despising life and death, a nation of philosophers.' England - London above all - became a global bazaar, insatiably sucking in and spewing out goods, money, ideas, words and people. It thus played an increasing part in the economic, demographic, social and political transformation of the world, in ways that were unplanned, largely uncontrollable and in many ways cataclysmic - a process in which England, both subject and object, master and slave, was itself transformed.⁶⁵

Would it have been different if the Stuarts had returned to power? Perhaps... But the English masses had rejected Catholicism for good, and James II's invasion of Ireland, supported by Louis XIV, was defeated by William on the Boyne in 1690, condemning Catholic Ireland to a Protestant Ascendancy for generations. As for the Scots, they were, of course, even more Protestant than the English; so when the Scottish clan of Macdonald was dilatory in showing allegiance to the new king, they were massacred at Glencoe.

The last show of Stuart resistance was the invasion of England by James' son, Bonnie Prince Charlie, in 1745... But he failed: from now on dull Germans, not Romantic Scots, were destined to rule the whole island...

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One of the casualties of the Glorious Revolution was the schism of the Non-Jurors. As a condition of office, the clergy of the official churches of England, Scotland and Ireland were required to swear allegiance to William and Mary in 1689. Those clergy who refused to that, considering their rule to be a usurpation, were called the Non-Jurors. Some 2% of the priests refused to swear, "although

⁶⁵ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-335.

this did not mean they lost their positions. More serious for the government was the refusal of nine bishops to do so; despite efforts to reach a compromise, they were removed in 1691, by which time three of them had died.

"In 1693, [William Sancroft, former Archbishop of Canterbury](#) appointed his own bishops, creating the schismatic Non-Juror Church. The majority refused to follow him and remained within the Church of England, acting as an internal pressure group; these are sometimes referred to as "crypto-Non-Jurors". Never large in numbers, the Non-Juror church rapidly declined after 1715, although minor congregations remained in existence until the 1770s."⁶⁶

"The canonical position of the Non-Juror group," wrote Fr. George Florovsky, "was precarious; its bishops had no recognized titles and but a scattered flock. Some leaders of the group took up the idea that they might regularize their position by a concordat with the Churches of the East. Non-jurors maintained in theology the tradition of the great Caroline divines, who had always been interested in the Eastern tradition and in the early Greek Fathers. The Greek Church had remonstrated strongly against the execution of Charles I; the Russian Government had acted to the same effect, cancelling on that occasion the privileges of English merchants in Russia. Among the original Non-jurors was Bishop Frampton, who had spent many years in the East and had a high regard for the Eastern Church. Archbishop Sancroft himself had been in close contact with the Eastern Church a long time before. Thus there were many reasons why Non-jurors should look to the East."

It was not until 1712, generations after the revolution, some of the Non-Jurors seized the opportunity presented by the visit of a Greek metropolitan to England to enter into negotiations with the Orthodox. Describing themselves as "the Catholick Remnant" in Britain, their intention, writes Florovsky, "was to revive the 'ancient godly discipline of the Church', and they contended that they had already begun to do this." However, the attempt failed, partly because the Archbishop of Canterbury opposed it, and partly because the Non-Jurors rejected several Orthodox doctrines: the invocation of saints, the veneration of icons, and the Mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ - all three doctrines which the Orthodox of Anglo-Saxon England had embraced without reserve. However, it seems that the real problem, from the Non-Jurors' point of view, was the Patriarch of Jerusalem's confession that "our Oriental Faith is the only truth Faith", so that, in Florovsky's words, "there is no room for adjustment or dispensation in matters of doctrine - complete agreement with the Orthodox Faith is absolutely indispensable."

The Non-Jurors' rejection of this revealed that they did not have a real understanding of what reunion in the Church means - that is, the *conversion* of those who have been in disunity and schism to the Faith and Church of the Orthodox. Instead, they approached ecclesiastical reunion in a political manner, through the offering and demanding of concessions and compromises. They

⁶⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonjuring_schism.

believed in the perfect correctness of all the beliefs which they had held till then. They would not accept that in certain matters - perhaps not through any fault of their own - they were wrong. They would not bow down before the heavenly wisdom of the Church, "the pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Timothy 3.15), but rather sought to make the Church change her faith to accommodate them.

Why did Britain become such a successful state, triumphing eventually over states with greater resources and much bigger populations such as France and Spain? The usual explanation attributes her success to the rejection of absolutism. Thus whereas France and Spain were unwieldy, corrupt absolutist monarchies, England by 1689 had developed a powerful Parliament, whose members, held together by a common commitment to local government, the Common Law and Protestantism, were able to limit the power of the king and make him accountable to them.

However, it is not immediately obvious why making the king accountable to a group of extremely rich landowners, whose power only increased through the eighteenth century, should have made the difference. After all, other states, such as Hungary and Poland, also muzzled their monarchy - but were much less successful than Britain. This accountability factor, writes Francis Fukuyama, "is not sufficient to explain why the English Parliament was strong enough to force the monarchy into a constitutional settlement. The Hungarian nobility represented to the diet what was also very powerful and well organized. Like the English barons at Runnymede, the lesser Hungarian nobility forced their monarch into a constitutional compromise in the thirteenth century, the Golden Bull, and in subsequent years kept the central state on a very short lease. After the death of Matyas Hunyadi in 1490, the noble estate reversed the centralizing reforms that the monarchy had put into place in the previous generation and returned power to themselves.

"But the Hungarian noble estate did not use their power to strengthen the country as a whole; rather, they sought to lower taxes on themselves and guard their own narrow privileges at the expense of the country's ability to defend itself. In England, by contrast, the constitutional settlement coming out of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689 vastly strengthened the English state, to the point that it became, over the next century, the dominant power in Europe. So if the English Parliament was strong enough to constrain a predatory monarch, we need to ask why that Parliament did not itself evolve into a rent-seeking coalition and turn against itself like the Hungarian Diet.

"There are at least two reasons why accountable government in England did not degenerate into rapacious oligarchy. The first has to do with England's social structure compared to that of Hungary. While the groups represented in the English Parliament were an oligarchy, they sat at the top of a society that was much more mobile and open to non-elites than was Hungary's. In Hungary, the gentry had been absorbed into a narrow aristocracy, whereas in England they represented a large and cohesive social group, more powerful in certain ways than the aristocracy. England, unlike Hungary, had a tradition of grassroots political

participation in the form of the hundred and county courts and other institutions of local governance. English lords were accustomed to sitting in assemblies on equal terms with their vassals and tenants to decide issues of common interest. Hungary, furthermore, had no equivalent of the English yeomanry, relatively prosperous farmers who owned their own land and could participate in local political life. And cities in Hungary were strictly controlled by the noble estate and did not generate a rich and powerful bourgeoisie the way that English ones did.

“Second, despite English traditions of individual liberty, the centralized English state was both powerful and well regarded through much of the society. It was one of the first states to develop a uniform system of justice, it protected property rights, and it acquired substantial naval capabilities in its struggles with various Continental powers. The English experiment with republican government after the beheading of Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of Cromwell’s Protectorate was not a happy one. The regicide itself seemed, even to the supporters of Parliament, an unjust and illegal act. The English Civil War witnessed the same sort of progressive radicalization experienced later during the French, Bolshevik, and Chinese revolutions. The more extreme anti-Royalist groups like the Levellers and the Diggers seemed to want not just political accountability but also a much broader social revolution, which frightened the property-owning classes represented in Parliament. It was thus with a great deal of relief that the monarchy was restored in 1660 with the accession of Charles II. After the Restoration, the issues of political accountability reappeared under the Catholic James II, whose machinations again aroused suspicions and opposition from Parliament and ultimately led to the Glorious Revolution. But this time around, no one wanted to dismantle the monarchy or the state; they only wanted a king who would be accountable to them. They got one in William of Orange.

“Ideas were again important. By the late seventeenth century, thinkers like Hobbes and Locke had broken free of concepts of a feudal social order based on classes and estates, and argued in favour of a social contract between state and citizen. Hobbes argued in *Leviathan* that human beings are fundamentally equal both in their passions and in their ability to inflict violence on one another, and that they have rights merely by virtue of the fact that they are human beings. Locke accepted these premises as well and attacked the notion that legitimate rule could arise from anything other than consent of the governed. One could overthrow a king, but only in the name of the principle of consent. Rights, according to these early liberals, were abstract and universal, and could not be legitimately appropriated by powerful individuals. Hungary had succumbed to the Turks and the Austrians long before ideas like these could spread there.

“There is one simple lesson to be drawn from this comparison. Political liberty – that is, the ability of societies to rule themselves – does not depend only on the degree to which a society can mobilize opposition to centralized power and impose constitutional constraints on the state. It must also have a state that is strong enough to act when action is required. Accountability does not run in just one direction, from the state to the society. If the government cannot act cohesively, if there is no broader sense of public purpose, then one will not have laid the basis

for true political liberty. In contrast to Hungary after the death of Matyas Hunyadi, the English state after 1689 remained strong and cohesive, with a Parliament willing to tax itself and make sacrifices in the prolonged foreign struggles of the eighteenth century. A political system that is all checks and balances is potentially no more successful than one with no checks, because governments periodically need strong and decisive action. The stability of an accountable political system thus rests on a broad balance of power between the state and its underlying society.”⁶⁷

“Consent” would be a better term than “balance of power” here. As has been argued, and will continue to be argued in this series, there can be no equality of power between the government and the governed, and ultimately, if it is not the king that holds sway over the people, then it is the people, or an oligarchic clique within it, that holds sway over the king – they are the ultimate sovereign. That is why English political history continued to develop in the direction of increasing power to the people until we can no longer speak of a “balance” today. Nevertheless, this much is true: *no sovereign power, whether a king or an oligarchy or a parliament, can act effectively in the long run without the consent of the people, without their acceptance of the sovereign’s legitimacy.* This does not entail constitutionalism or democracy: a king can be a hereditary autocrat and still rule effectively for the benefit of the people as a whole *so long as the people see his rule as legitimate.* When the sovereign is perceived, whether justly or unjustly, to have lost that legitimacy, and is no longer obeyed voluntarily, then he can continue to rule only by violence and oppression, whose end, sooner or later, is revolution...

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“In the 1690s,” writes Bernard Simms, “the English, partly drawing on imported Dutch ideas, established the strongest and most ‘modern’ state in Europe. A funded national debt was created, supported by the new Bank of England (1694) and a sophisticated stock and money market. An East India company was established as a semi-state body. Underpinning it all was a broad political consensus in favour of parliamentary government, and resisting tyranny at home and abroad. The Triennial Act of 1694 stipulated that parliamentary elections were to take place every three years, and the abandonment of censorship allowed political and commercial matters to be discussed freely inside and outside parliament... William III and his parliaments were able to raise the staggering sums needed to fight Louis, and managed to fund a huge proportion of the war, at least a third, out of long-term loans rather than income. Englishmen thus lived not only in the freest European state, but also the strongest in relation to its size and population.”⁶⁸

Vitally important was the English government’s ability, in sharp contrast to the French government’s relative inability, to tax its people (mainly the landowners). “By the end of the War of American Independence there were 14,000 revenue officers of all kinds or in other words there were more tax-collectors than Anglican

⁶⁷ Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, London: Profile, 2012, pp. 429-431.

⁶⁸ Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1453 to the Present*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 62.

clergymen. This expansion was accompanied by professionalization. As John Brewer has written, 'Dependent upon a complex system of measurement and book-keeping, organised as a rigorous hierarchy based on experience and ability, and subject to strict discipline from its central office, the English Excise more closely approximated to Max Weber's idea of bureaucracy than any other government agency in the eighteenth century.'

"In short, the fiscal system that evolved in England in the course of the seventeenth century was universal, bureaucratic, professional and public. Consequently, it enjoyed the vital ingredient of trust..."⁶⁹

England's money was spent first of all on her navy. William's main concern in invading England had been, not conquest, but "getting the English on the same side as the Dutch in their competition against France. After becoming King of England, he granted many privileges to the Royal Navy in order to ensure their loyalty and cooperation. William ordered that any Anglo-Dutch fleet be under English command, with the Dutch navy having 60% of the strength of the English."⁷⁰

The arrangement did not go too well at first. At the beginning of the 1690s the English navy suffered two defeats at the hands of the French. But after much soul-searching a remedy was found: in 1694 the newly created Bank of England borrowed a vast sum of money (at 8% interest) that was poured into the huge industrial effort required to build a modern navy. Wood from England's forests, iron from her coal-fields, food from all over the country, and above all sailors, tough and highly disciplined, were produced to build, man and victual the ships that, already in the early 1700s were defeating the French and the Spanish, and by the *annus mirabilis* of 1759 had established Britain (for now England was united with Scotland to become Great Britain) as the world's first global superpower, ruling the waves and controlling all the world's major trade routes...

And so the Glorious Revolution, according to Starkey, "invented a modern England, a modern monarchy, perhaps even modernity itself."⁷¹ But still more important for the invention of modernity was that other revolution that accompanied it – the scientific revolution.

⁶⁹ Tim Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815*, London: Penguin, 2008, p. 597.

⁷⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Dutch_Wars

⁷¹ Starkey, *Crown & Country*, p. 378.

6. NEWTON'S PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

A striking fact about the early (pre-Newtonian) scientists was that they were believers who did not divide religion and science into hermetically sealed compartments in accordance with the modern scientific world-view. Nor did Newton himself. Although he was perhaps the greatest scientist of all time, he was, in Michael White's words, "interested in a synthesis of all knowledge and was a devout seeker of some form of unified theory of the principles of the universe. Along with many intellectuals before him, Newton believed that this synthesis – the fabled *prisca sapientia* – had once been in the possession of mankind."⁷²

In fact, Newton closely integrated his belief in God with his scientific work, saying of space, for example, that it was 'as it were, God's sensorium' ...the realm of divine ideas."⁷³ He not only believed that God created the heavens and the earth, but that He created the laws of nature and, contrary to the Deists' teaching, continued to interest Himself and intervene in their workings. As his disciple Samuel Clarke wrote to the German philosopher Leibniz, "the notion of the world's being a great machine, going on without the interposition of God, as a clock continues to go without the assistance of a clock-maker, is the notion of materialism and fate, and tends... to exclude providence and God's government in reality out of the world."⁷⁴

Newton believed that, in the absence of any material such as ether between two objects, the gravitational force between them, the "action at a distance", was created by God.⁷⁵

There was a large element of hubris in his giving himself the pseudonym "'Jeova Sanctus Unus' – One Holy God – based upon an anagram of the Latinised version of his name, Isaacus Neutonus".⁷⁶ However, his pride is not the point here. The important point is that the greatest scientist in history refused to see religious truth as sharply segregated from scientific truth. Still less did he believe that religious truth needed to be "verified" by science. So far was Newton from segregating religion and science that he spent – to the puzzlement of his admirers ever since – many years studying alchemy and the Holy Scriptures. For "they who search after the Philosophers' Stone," he wrote, "[are] by their own rules obliged to strict & religious life. That study [is] fruitful of experiments."⁷⁷ Indeed, so assiduous was he in his search for the Philosophers' Stone that Keynes considered him to have been not so much the first of the men of the Age of Reason as the last of the magicians...

⁷² White, *Isaac Newton: The Last Sorcerer*, London: Fourth Estate, 1998, p. 106.

⁷³ Bragg, *The Adventure of English*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2003, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁴ Clarke, in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 371.

⁷⁵ Stephen Meyer, *The Return of the God Hypothesis*, New York: HarperOne, 2021, pp. 40-47.

⁷⁶ White, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ White, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

According to Keynes, who discovered his religious writings in Cambridge, Newton “regarded the universe as a cryptogram set by the Almighty”.⁷⁸ If the Almighty set the cryptogram, then only one who was pleasing to the Almighty could be expected to understand it. Hence “his belief that the emotional and spiritual state of the individual experimenter was involved intimately with the success or failure of the experiment.”⁷⁹ And hence his quoting of Hermes Trismegistus: “I had this art and science by the sole inspiration of God who has vouchsafed to reveal it to his servant. Who gives those that know how to use their reason the means of knowing the truth, but is never the cause that any man follows error & falsehood.”⁸⁰

Now if the universe is a cryptogram written by God, there should be no conflict between the universe and the Holy Scriptures. And so Newton set about studying Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation. “He reasoned that because God’s work and God’s word came from the same Creator, then Nature and Scripture were also one and the same. Scripture was a communicable manifestation or interpretation of Nature, and as such could be viewed as a blueprint for life – a key to all meaning.”⁸¹ In accordance with this principle, Newton set about interpreting the prophecies, concluding, for example, that the plan of the Temple of Solomon (Ezekiel 40-48) was a paradigm for the entire future of the world.⁸² Again, A.C. Grayling cites his interpretation of the Book of Revelation that led him to believe that the end of the world would not come before 2060...⁸³

Newton’s interpretation of the Scriptures can hardly be called traditional or patristic; he paid little attention to St. Peter’s warning that “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation” (II Peter 1.20). It is certain that he was less inspired as an interpreter of Scripture than as a scientist, and we know that he was far from Orthodox in his theology.⁸⁴ However, it is not as a religious thinker that his example is important, but as showing that great science, far from being incompatible with religious “fundamentalism” (Newton believed in the literal truth of the Creation story, rejecting the idea that living creatures came into being by chance) and the belief that the true science comes from Divine inspiration, may actually be nourished by it.

⁷⁸ White, *op. cit.*, p. 122

⁷⁹ White, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

⁸⁰ White, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁸¹ White, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁸² White, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 158.

⁸³ Grayling, *The Age of Genius*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, p. 144.

⁸⁴ He was probably an Arian and certainly a Unitarian, a fact which he carefully concealed until he was dying. As Karen Armstrong writes, in his treatise entitled *The Philosophical Origins of Gentile Theology*, he “argued that Noah had founded a superstition-free religion in which there were no revealed scriptures, no mysteries, but only a Deity which could be known through the rational contemplation of the natural world. Later generations had corrupted this pure faith; the spurious doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity had been added to the creed by unscrupulous theologians in the fourth century. Indeed, the Book of Revelation had prophesied the rise of Trinitarianism – ‘this strange religion of ye West’, ‘the cult of three equal gods’ – as the abomination of desolation” (*The Battle for God*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2000, p. 69).

From the seventeenth century, both science and religion, both the book of nature and the book of God - were increasingly subject to a single heuristic method of study - what we now call the scientific outlook, or empiricism. This is the methodology which declares that the only reliable way of attaining non-mathematical truth is by inferences from the evidence of the senses (mathematical truth describes the *structure* of inferential and deductive reasoning). This principle, first proclaimed by Bacon in his *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), rejects the witness of non-empirical sources - for example, God or intuition or so-called "innate ideas" - in scientific work.

The reverse process - that is, inferences about God and other non-sensory realities from the evidence of the senses - was admitted by the early, believing empiricists (that is, roughly until the death of Newton), but rejected by most later ones. In time empiricism became not only a methodological or epistemological, but also an *ontological* principle, the principle, namely, that reality not only is best discovered by empirical means, but also *is*, solely and exclusively, that which can be investigated by empirical means; non-empirical "reality" simply does not exist. Thus empiricism led to materialism. However, it was and is possible to espouse empiricism in science and not be a materialist, but to be religious, as is demonstrated by the many believing scientists of Bacon's time (and all times).

In accordance with the difference in the kinds of evidence admitted, there is a difference in the nature and structure of the authority that science and religion rely on. Science relies on the authority of millions of observations that have been incorporated into a vast structure of hypotheses that are taken as "proven" - although in fact no hypothesis can ever be proved beyond every possible doubt, and science advances by the systematic application of *doubt* to what are thought to be weak points in the hypothetical structure. Religion, however, without denying empirical evidence, admits a much wider range of things and events as facts, as *certain, undoubted* facts - not only Divine Revelation, but also immaterial entities like the soul, immaterial states like love, and many miracles that empirical, materialist science denies *a priori*.

We may suppose that the incentive to scientific research was present in Europe rather than in advanced pagan or Muslim societies largely thanks to the Christian faith; belief in the Legislator motivated the study of His laws. As C.S. Lewis writes: "Professor Whitehead points out that centuries of belief in a God who combined 'the personal energy of Jehovah' with 'the rationality of a Greek philosopher' first produced that firm expectation of systematic order which rendered possible the birth of modern science. Men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator..."⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Lewis, *Miracles*, London: Fount, 1998, p. 110. For an extensive discussion of this hypothesis, see Meyer, *op. cit.*, chapter 1.

This is one of the reasons, argues John Darwin, why such advanced pagan societies as Ming China, which had a tradition of empirical research and technical inventiveness, nevertheless failed before the onslaught of Christian Europe. In China, he writes, “for reasons that historians have debated at length, the tradition of scientific experimentation had faded away, perhaps as early as 1400. Part of the reason may lie in the striking absence in Confucian thought of the ‘celestial lawgiver’ – a god who had prescribed the laws of nature. In Europe, belief in such a providential figure, and the quest for ‘his’ purposes and grand design, had been a (perhaps *the*) central motive for scientific inquiry. But the fundamental assumption that the universe was governed by a coherent system of physical laws that could be verified empirically was lacking in China...”⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise & Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, pp. 198-200.

7. THE SCIENTISTIC WORLD-VIEW

After Newton's death in 1727, the Newtonian study of the laws of nature began to lose faith in the Legislator. The critical step was to make scientific method the measure of *all* things. Doubt would now no longer be simply one tool among others to probe the mysteries of God's universe: it would be *the* tool used to "demonstrate" that the universe is neither mysterious, nor God's...

The fateful transition from the early, theistic to the later, radical and atheist empiricism is marked by David Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1747), in which he writes: "While we argue from the course of nature and infer a particular intelligent cause which first bestowed and still preserves order in the universe, we embrace a principle which is still uncertain and useless. It is uncertain because the subject lies entirely beyond the reach of human experience. It is useless because... we can never on that basis establish any principles of conduct and behaviour."

Hume argued, writes Meyer, "that the lawful concourse of nature precluded the possibility of miraculous intervention by a transcendent God. Miracles, he said, are impossible because they *violate* the laws of nature. He depicted these laws as autonomous entities rather than descriptions of how God normally chooses to order the material world, as Newton and earlier scientists had believed.

"Hume justified his rejection of the possibility of miracles by insisting *that uniform and repeated human experience* demonstrated that the natural laws could not be violated. As he explained, 'A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, and as firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.'"⁸⁷

A miracle is, by definition, a violation of the laws of nature. But who is to say that God cannot violate his own laws? Certainly there are very many witnesses to the fact that such violations have taken place down the ages. To assume that all such reports of miracles were hallucinations or lies is not a position that can be rationally, empirically sustained. But then atheism is not consistent with either good sense or scientific objectivity...

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"There is no difficulty," writes Fr. Nikita Grigoriev, "in holding a 'religious world-view' and from within that worldview examining natural phenomena from a scientific perspective. Scientific study is simply an activity incorporated within the religious worldview. But a serious contradiction can indeed arise, if the 'scientific method' is allowed to get out of bounds - in which case it may properly be called 'scientism'.

⁸⁷ Meyer, op. cit., p. 52.

"The faith requisite to scientific study can be extended beyond its natural limits, so that it begins to claim that only that which can be examined scientifically deserves to be taken seriously, to be accorded the title 'real'. That which escapes the possibility of such study is then 'demoted' to the status of hallucination, the vagaries of a pathological psyche. With this kind of perspective, we have passed out of the realm of the rational, the logical, into that of faith of the worst sort - ill-founded faith in 'man as the measure of all things'.

"Such 'scientism' holds that man, by his reason alone, given enough time, is able to elucidate the entire fabric of reality... and that whatever escapes his grasp either does not exist or should be treated as if it did not exist..."⁸⁸

And so in the eighteenth century, writes Gabriel Simonov, "science in Western Europe after Newton moved quickly forward. Under the influence of the encyclopaedists, rationalism rose up against Descartes, replacing innate ideas with empiricism and clarity of thought with reliability of facts.

"Relying on the successes of scientific determinism, some thinkers and scientists dared to foretell that in the future science would be able to explain everything, and then it would be in a position to foresee everything. From there it was one step not only to criticism of the book of Genesis and the Bible in general, but also to the rejection of God. This step was taken by the major French mathematician and physicist Laplace (1749-1827), who in a conversation with Napoleon Bonaparte, on whom he exerted influence, said: 'Citizen First Consul, the hypothesis of God is not necessary for me.'"⁸⁹

Science's tendency towards atheism is a fruit of its derivation from the Tree of knowledge, tasting of which led to the fall of man. It is a method of reasoning carried out by fallen men with fallen faculties and with strictly limited and earthly aims. It gives a superficial knowledge of the fallen world, but cannot give real knowledge of the unfallen world, neither the world of unfallen spirits nor the world that is beyond the grave. It is of limited use for limited men - that is, men who use only their fallen faculties; and when the true light of knowledge comes - as we see it come in the lives of the saints, the truly enlightened ones - it ceases to have any use at all.

St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, who had a thorough training in physics, mathematics and engineering, writes: "You ask what is my opinion of the human sciences? After the fall men began to need clothing and numerous other things that accompany our earthly wanderings; in a word, they began to need material development, the striving for which has become the distinguishing feature of our age. The sciences are the fruit of our fall, the production of our damaged fallen reason. Scholarship is the acquisition and retention of impressions and knowledge that have been stored up by men during the time of the life of the fallen world. Scholarship is a

⁸⁸ Grigoriev, "Religion and Science", *Living Orthodoxy*, November-December, 1991, p. 32.

⁸⁹ Simonov, "'Shestodnev' i Nauka" (The Six Days and Science), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), 176, II-III, 1997, p. 119.

lamp by which 'the gloom of darkness is guarded to the ages'. The Redeemer returned to men that lamp which was given to them at creation by the Creator, of which they were deprived because of their sinfulness. This lamp is the Holy Spirit, He is the Spirit of Truth, who teaches every truth, searches out the deep things of God, opens and explains mysteries, and also bestows material knowledge when that is necessary for the spiritual benefit of man. Scholarship is not properly speaking wisdom, but an opinion about wisdom. The knowledge of the Truth that was revealed to men by the Lord, access to which is only by faith, which is inaccessible for the fallen mind of man, is replaced in scholarship by guesses and presuppositions. The wisdom of this world, in which many pagans and atheists occupy honoured positions, is directly contrary according to its very origins with spiritual, Divine wisdom: it is impossible to be a follower of the one and the other at the same time; one must unflinchingly be renounced. The fallen man is 'falsehood', and from his reasonings 'science falsely so-called' is composed, that form and collection of false concepts and knowledge that has only the appearance of reason, but is in essence vacillation, madness, the raving of the mind infected with the deadly plague of sin and the fall. This infirmity of the mind is revealed in special fullness in the philosophical sciences."⁹⁰

And again he writes: "The holy faith at which the materialists laughed and laugh, is so subtle and exalted that it can be attained and taught only by spiritual reason. The reason of the world is opposed to it and rejects it. But when for some material necessity it finds it necessary and tolerates it, then it understands it falsely and interprets it wrongly; because the blindness ascribed by it to faith is its own characteristic."⁹¹

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"As everyone knows," writes Sir Isaiah Berlin, "the great triumphs of natural science in the seventeenth century gave the proponents of the scientific method immense prestige. The great liberators of the age were Descartes and Bacon, who carried opposition to the authority of tradition, faith, dogma or prescription into every realm of knowledge and opinion, armed with weapons used during the Renaissance and, indeed, earlier. Although there was much cautious avoidance of open defiance of Christian belief, the general thrust of the new movement was to bring everything before the bar of reason: the cruder forgeries and misinterpretation of texts, on which lawyers and clerics had rested their claims, had been exposed by humanists in Italy and Protestant reformers in France; appeals to the authority of the Bible, or Aristotle, or Roman law, had met with a good deal of acutely argued resistance based both on learning and on critical methods. Descartes made an epoch with his attempt to systematize these methods – notably in his *Discourse on Method* and its application in his *Meditations* – his two most popular and influential philosophical treatises. Spinoza's *Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding*, his quasi-geometrical method in the *Ethics*, and the severely rationalist assumptions and rigorous logic in his political works and

⁹⁰ St. Ignaty, *Sochinenia (Works)*, volume 4, letter N 45.

⁹¹ St. Ignaty, *Sochinenia (Works)*, volume 4, letter N 61.

his criticisms of the Old Testament, had carried the war into the enemy's camp. Bacon and Spinoza, in their different ways, sought to remove obstacles to clear, rational thinking. Bacon exposed what he considered the chief sources of delusion: 'idols' of the 'tribe', 'the cave', 'the market-place' and 'the theatre' – effects, in his view, of the uncritical acceptance of the evidence of his senses, of one's own predilections, of misunderstanding of words, of confusions bred by the speculative method of philosophers, and the like. Spinoza stressed the degree to which emotions cloud reason, and led to groundless fears and hatreds which led to destructive practice; from Valla to Locke and Berkeley there were frequent warnings and examples of fallacies and confusions due to the misuse of language.

“The general, if not the universal, tendency of the new philosophy was to declare that if the human mind can be cleared of dogma, prejudice and cant, of the organised obscurities and Aristotelian patter of the schoolmen, then nature will at last be seen in the full symmetry and harmony of its elements, which can be described, analysed and represented by a logically appropriate language – the language of the mathematical and physical sciences. Leibniz seems to have believed not only in the possibility of constructing a logically perfect language, which would reflect the structure of reality, but in something not unlike a general science of discovery. His views spread far beyond philosophical or scientific circles – indeed, theoretical knowledge was still conceived as one undivided realm; the frontiers between philosophy, science, criticism, theology were not sharply drawn. There were invasions and counter-invasions; grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, philosophy made forays into the fields of historical learning and natural knowledge, and were attacked by them in turn. The new rationalism spread into the creative arts. Just as the Royal Society in England formally set itself against the use of metaphor and other forms of rhetorical speech, and demanded language that was plain and literal and precise, so there was in France at this time a corresponding avoidance of metaphor, embellishment and highly coloured expression in, for example, the plays of Racine or Molière, in the verse of Fontaine and Boileau, writers who dominated the European scene; and because such luxuriance was held to flourish in Italy, Italian literature was duly denounced in France for the impurity of its style. The new method sought to eliminate everything that could not be justified by the systematic use of rational methods, above all the fictions of the metaphysicians, the mystics, the poets; what were myth and legend but falsehoods with which primitive and barbarous societies were gulled during their early, helpless childhood? At best, they were fanciful or distorted accounts of real events or persons. Even the Catholic Church was influenced by the prevailing scientific temper, and the great archival labours of the Bollandists and Maurists were conducted in a semi-scientific spirit...

“The scientific model (or 'paradigm') which dominated the century, with its strong implication that only that which was quantifiable, or at any rate measurable – that to which in principle mathematical methods were applicable – was real, strongly reinforced the old conviction that to every question there was only one true answer, universal, eternal, unchangeable; it was, or appeared to be, so in mathematics, physics, mechanics and astronomy, and soon would be in chemistry and botany and zoology and other natural sciences; with the corollary that the most

reliable criterion of objective truth was logical demonstration or measurement, or at least approximations to this.

“Spinoza’s political theory is a good example of this approach: he supposes that the rational answer to the question of what is the best government for men is in principle discoverable by anyone, anywhere, in any circumstances. If men have not discovered these timeless solutions before, this must be due to weakness, or the clouding or reason by emotion, or perhaps bad luck: the truths of which he supposed himself to be giving a rational demonstration could presumably have been discovered and applied by human reason at any time, so that mankind might have been spared many evils. Hobbes, an empiricist, but equally dominated by a scientific model, presupposes this also. The notion of time, change, historical development does not impinge upon these views. Furthermore, such truths, when discovered, must add to human welfare. Consequently the motive for the search is not curiosity, or desire to know the truth as such, so much as utilitarian – the promotion of a better life on earth by making man more rational and therefore wiser; more just, virtuous and happy. The ends of man are given: given by God or nature. Reason, freed from its trammels, will discover what they are: all that is necessary is to find the right means for their attainment...”⁹²

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The scientific revolution was probably, with the rise of capitalism, the decisive factor causing the birth of modernity and the gradual demise of the old, religious world-view. For it seemed to banish the need for God, not only as a First Cause, but also as a censor on thought and action. And if Newton himself remained a (heretical) believer, his successors would abandon even his theism.

“In fact,” writes the atheist historian Yuval Noah Harari with remarkable *hubris* that reveals the nature of the modern, scientific world-view, “God is present even in the Newton myth. Newton himself is God. When biotechnology, nanotechnology and the other forms of science ripen, *Homo Sapiens* will attain divine powers and come full circle back to the Tree of Knowledge... Scientists will upgrade us into gods...”

“Until modern times, most cultures believed that humans played a part in some great cosmic plan. The plan was devised by the omnipotent gods or by the eternal laws of nature, and humankind could not change it. The cosmic plan gave meaning to human life, but also restricted human power. Humans were much like actors on a stage. The script gave meaning to their every word, tear and gesture – but place strict limits on their performance. Hamlet cannot murder Claudius in Act I, or leave Denmark and go to an ashram in India. Shakespeare won’t allow it. Similarly, human cannot live for ever, they cannot escape all diseases, and they cannot do as they please. It’s not in the script.

⁹² Berlin, “The Divorce between the Sciences and the Humanities”, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 329-330, 333-334.

“In exchange for giving up power, premodern humans believed that their lives gained meaning. It really mattered whether they fought bravely on the battlefield, whether they supported the lawful king, whether they ate forbidden foods for breakfast or whether they had an affair with the next-door neighbour. This of course created some inconveniences, but it gave humans psychological protection against disasters. If something terrible happened – such as war, plague or drought – people consoled themselves that ‘We all play a role in some great cosmic drama devised by the gods or by the laws of nature. We are not privy to the script, but we can rest assured that everything happens for a purpose. Even this terrible war, plague and drought have their place in the proper scheme of things. Furthermore, we can count on the playwright that the story surely has a good and meaningful ending. So even the war, plague and drought will work out for the best – if not here and now, then in the afterlife.’

“Modern culture rejects this belief in a great cosmic plan. We are not actors in any larger-than-life drama. Life has no script, no playwright, no director, no producer – and no meaning. To the best of our scientific understanding, the universe is a blind and purposeless process, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing. During our infinitesimally brief stay on our tiny speck of a planet, we fret and strut this way and that, and then are heard of no more.

“Since there is no script, and since humans fulfill no role in any great drama. Terrible things might befall us and no power will come to save us or give meaning to our suffering. There won’t be a happy ending, or a bad ending, or any ending at all. Things just happen, one after another. The modern world does not believe in purpose, only in cause...”⁹³

So far, in Harari’s exposition, the religious world-view has the edge over the modern. For since suffering was inevitable, the key to happiness was how to cope with suffering – and only religion had that key. However, science supposedly held the promise of annihilating suffering, if not immediately or in our generation, at any rate in the long term. And to the extent that science fulfilled that promise, the modern world-view became more alluring. For a while the two world-views might be held simultaneously; but as the claims of science became greater and more all-encompassing, so God, Providence, the after-life and eternal rewards and punishment for good and evil in the after-life became less convincing concepts.

And so, continues Harari, if things “just happen, without any binding script or purpose, then humans too are not confined to any predetermined role. We can do anything we want – provided we can find a way. We are constrained by nothing except our own ignorance. Plagues and droughts have no cosmic meaning – but we can eradicate them. Wars are not a necessary evil on the way to a better future – but we can make peace. No paradise awaits us after death – but we can create paradise here on earth and live in it for ever, if we just manage to overcome some technical difficulties.

⁹³ Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 114, 233-235.

“If we invest money in research, then scientific breakthroughs will accelerate technological progress. New technologies will fuel economic growth, and a growing economy will dedicate even more money to research. With each passing decade we will enjoy more food, faster vehicles and better medicines. One day our knowledge will be so vast and our technology so advanced that we shall distil the elixir of eternal youth, the elixir of true happiness, and any other drug we might possibly desire – and no god will stop us.

“The modern deal thus offers humans an enormous temptation, coupled with a colossal threat. Omnipotence is in front of us, almost within our reach, but below us yawns the abyss of complete nothingness. On the practical level modern life consists of a constant pursuit of power within a universe devoid of meaning. Modern culture is the most powerful in history, and it is ceaselessly researching, inventing, discovering and growing. At the same time, it is plagued by more existential angst than any other previous culture...”⁹⁴

For “what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?” (Mark 8.36).

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True Religion, unlike *both* the false science of the pre-modern mind *and* the true, but often trivial science that replaced it, does not seek power over nature, but rather knowledge of the Creator of nature – Whose power, of course, can only be submitted to, not exploited as Simon Magus tried to exploit it. It opposes science only when it goes beyond its proper bounds and ceases to be empirical in its methods, even becoming so proud and blind as to deny the existence of God. In seeking the truly useful, salvific knowledge, True Religion relies on no other ultimate authority than the Word of God as communicated either directly or to the Church, “the pillar and ground of the Truth” (I Timothy 3.15), which preserves and verifies individual revelations. Doubt has no place within the true religion, but only when one is still in the process of seeking it, when different religious systems are still being approached as possible truths – in other words, as hypotheses. Having cleaved to the true religion by faith, however, - and faith is defined as the opposite of doubt, as “the certainty of things not seen” (Hebrews 11.1), - the religious believer advances, not by doubt, but by the deepening of faith, by ever deeper immersion in the undoubted truths of religion.

When the differences between science and religion are viewed from this perspective, there are seen to be important differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. From this perspective, Catholicism is more “religious”, and Protestantism – less religious and more “scientific”. Catholicism’s view was formulated at the Council of Trent, and was summarized as follows in a letter by Cardinal Bellarmino: “As you are aware, the Council of Trent forbids the interpretation of the Scriptures in a way contrary to the common opinion of the holy Fathers”. This was correct from an Orthodox point of view, but did not

⁹⁴ Harari, op. cit., pp. 235-236.

correspond to what actually was the case in the Catholic Church. For whatever the Council of Trent may have said, the deciding voice in Catholicism *de facto* was not “the consensus of the Fathers” but that of *the Pope*, which often contradicted the patristic consensus. Nevertheless, the essential point here is that for Catholics the criterion of truth was ancient in origin and went back, in theory at any rate, to Divine Revelation as interpreted by the Fathers. Protestantism, on the other hand, arose as a protest against, and a doubting of, the revealed truths of the Catholic religion. From an Orthodox point of view, some of these doubts were justified, and some not - but that is not the essential point here. The essential point is that Protestantism arose out of doubt rather than faith, and, like Descartes in philosophy, placed doubt at the head of the corner of its new theology.

How? First, by doubting that there is a Church that is “the pillar and ground of the truth”, the vessel of God’s revelation. So where is God’s revelation to be sought? In the visions and words of individual men, the Prophets and Apostles, the Saints and Fathers?

Yes; but - and here the corrosive power of doubt enters again - not all that the Church has passed down about these men can be trusted, according to the Protestants. In particular, the inspiration of the post-apostolic Saints and Fathers is to be doubted, as is much of what we are told of the lives even of the Prophets and Apostles. In fact, we can only rely on the Bible - *Sola Scriptura*. Only the Bible is objective evidence; for everybody can read, analyse and interpret it. Therefore only it corresponds to what we would call *scientific evidence*.

But here’s the rub: can we be sure even of the Bible? After all, the text comes to us from the Church, not direct from heaven. Can we be sure that Moses wrote Genesis, or Isaiah Isaiah, or Paul Hebrews? To answer these questions we have to analyse the text scientifically. Then we will find the *real* text, the text we can really trust, the text of the real author. But suppose we cannot find this real text? And suppose we conclude that the “real” text of the book was written by tens of authors, spread over hundreds of years? Can we then be sure that it is the Word of God? But if we cannot be sure that the Bible is the Word of God, how can we be sure of anything? Thus Protestantism, which begins with the doubting of authority, ends with the loss of truth itself. Or rather, it ends with a scientific truth which dispenses with religious truth, or accepts religious truth only to the extent that it is “confirmed by the findings of science”. It ends by being a branch of the scientific endeavour of systematic doubt, and not a species of religious faith at all.

The original error of Protestantism consisted in a false reductionist attitude to Divine Revelation. Revelation is given to us in the Church, “the pillar and ground of the truth”, and consists of two indivisible and mutually interdependent parts - Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition. Scripture and Tradition support each other, and are in turn supported by the Church, which herself rests on the Rock of truth, Christ the Incarnate Truth, as witnessed to in Scripture and Tradition. Any attempt to reduce Divine Revelation to one of these elements, any attempt to make one element essential and the other inessential, is doomed to end with the loss of

Revelation altogether, the dissolution of the Rock of ages into the sands of shifting, inconstant opinion, driven hither and thither by the tides of scientific fashion.

Vladimir Trostnikov has shown that Protestant tendency towards reductionism in fact goes back to the Catholicism of the eleventh century, just after the Roman Church's break with Orthodoxy, and to the nominalist thinker Roscelin. Nominalism, which had triumphed over its philosophical rival, universalism, by the 14th century, "gives priority to the particular over the general, the lower over the higher".

As such, it contradicts the Hierarchical conception, and anticipates Protestant reductionism, which insists that the simple precedes the complex, and that the complex can always be reduced, both logically and ontologically, to the simple.⁹⁵

Thus the Catholic heresy of nominalism gave birth to the Protestant heresy of reductionism, which reduced the complex spiritual process of the absorption of God's revelation in the Church to the unaided rationalist dissection of a single element in that life, the book of the Holy Scriptures. As Trostnikov explains, the assumption that reductionism is true has led to a series of concepts which taken together represent a summation of the contemporary world-view: that matter consists of elementary particles which themselves do not consist of anything; that the planets and all the larger objects of the universe arose through the gradual condensation of simple gas; that all living creatures arose out of inorganic matter; that the later forms of social organization and politics arose out of earlier, simpler and less efficient ones; that human consciousness arose from lower phenomena, drives and archetypes; that the government of a State consists of its citizens, who must therefore be considered to be the supreme power.

We see, then, why science, like capitalism, flourished in the Protestant countries. Protestantism, according to Landes, "gave a big boost to literacy, spawned dissent and heresies, and promoted the skepticism and refusal of authority that is at the heart of the scientific endeavor. The Catholic countries, instead of meeting the challenge, responded by closure and censure."⁹⁶

The truth is that both true science and true religion depend on authority – that is, the reports of reliable men about what they have seen, touched and heard (Moses during his forty days on Sinai, the Apostles in the locked room on the eve of the Resurrection of Christ). False reports can lead to false science no less than to false religion and superstition. Moreover, the reports on which both religion and science are based on empirical evidence: the emptiness of a tomb or the touch of a pierced side, on the one hand; the falling of an apple or the bending of a ray, on the other. The question in both science and religion is: can we rely on this evidence, is it trustworthy and authoritative? And so both science and religion seek truth, and

⁹⁵ Trostnikov, "The Role and Place of the Baptism of Rus' in the European Spiritual Process of the Second Millenium of Christian History", *Orthodox Life*, volume 39, N 3, May-June, 1989, p. 29.

⁹⁶ Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, London: Abacus, 1999, p. 179.

both rely on authority. The difference lies, first, in the kinds of truth they seek, and secondly, in the nature of the authority they rely on.

Thus there is no contradiction between true science and true religion. This was understood even by the prophet of the scientific revolution, Francis Bacon. As he wrote: "Undoubtedly a superficial tincture of philosophy [science] may incline the mind to atheism, yet a farther knowledge brings it back to religion; for on the threshold of philosophy, where second causes appear to absorb the attention, some oblivion of the highest cause may ensue; but when the mind goes deeper, and sees the dependence of causes and the works of Providence, it will easily perceive, according to the mythology of the poets, that the upper link of Nature's chain is fastened to Jupiter's throne..."⁹⁷

Still, even if we accept that empirical science does not contradict true religion, we must still ascribe a far lower importance to the former as compared with the latter, which in the light of religious truth must be considered trivial.

This had been asserted as long ago as the pre-scientific fourth century by St. Basil the Great. And now, in the seventeenth century, the century of the scientific revolution, it was asserted by the brilliant French mathematician Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), who wrote: "I will not try here to prove with arguments of natural reason either the existence of God, or the Holy Trinity, or the immortality of the soul, or any such matters; not only because I do not feel myself sufficiently confident to find something in nature with which I can persuade the atheists whose souls have become very hard, but also because without Christ, this knowledge is useless and sterile. If a man became persuaded that the analogies of numbers are immaterial truths, eternal and dependent upon a first truth by means of which they exist, and which is called God, I would not have found him very advanced in his salvation. The God of the Christians is not simply a God Who creates geometrical truths and the order of the elements: this belongs to the pagans and to the Epicureans. He is not only a God Who stretches His providence over the life and goods of men to give to those who worship him a happy length of years; this is the part of the Hebrews. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of the Christians is a God of love and consolation; He is a God Who fills the souls and hearts of those who are captured by Him, He is a God Who makes them feel within themselves their *wretchedness* and His immeasurable mercy; Who *unites* them in the depth of their heart; Who fills it with *humility, joy, ... trust, love*; Who makes His believers *incapable* of all else except seeking Him. All those who seek God outside Christ and stop at nature, either find no light which can satisfy them, or arrive at a point of creating for themselves a means whereby they can know God without a mediator (i.e. without Christ) and so fall either into atheism or into deism, in other words, into two things which put the Christian religion to shame almost to the same degree..."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Bacon, *De Augmentis*, quoted in B. Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1946, p. 30.

⁹⁸ Pascal, *Pensées*.

The great tragedy of thoroughgoing empiricism is that it deprives a man of certainty in anything substantive. Thus the great atheist philosopher of science Bertrand Russell once said that he would never die for his beliefs because he might be wrong... For he believed that only science was the path to truth, and that since science was always hypothetical and subject to doubt and correction, it could never provide certainty. Only mathematics, he believed, provided certain truth, but that was no comfort because mathematical truths were purely formal, mathematics being in essence a branch of formal logic (as Russell tried to prove in his *Principia Mathematica* (1903)). This shows how tragic is the fate of science-worshippers...

The difference between empiricism and faith is that faith, contrary to empiricism, provides certainty; for "faith is the substance [in Greek: hypothesis, understood in its original, non-empiricist sense] of things hoped for, the proof [elegkos] of things not seen" (Hebrews 11.1).

8. JOHN LOCKE AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

John Locke, we will recall, was the secretary of the Presbyterian Earl of Shaftesbury who opposed King Charles II in the “Exclusion Crisis” of 1679-81. This explains the main aim of his work, which was to justify the limitations placed on monarchical power by the Glorious Revolution. Thus he set out to prove that in the years leading to the revolution, King James II had broken some kind of agreement with the people, and so had been rightly overthrown, whereas the man who overthrew him and succeeded him, William III, was abiding by its terms and so should be obeyed. Locke retained Hobbes’ idea that the state had been founded in the beginning by a social contract. But he reworked it so as to bring the monarch within rather than above the contract, making parliament the real sovereign, and bringing God back into the picture, if only for decency’s sake...

“If Louis XIV,” writes A.C. Grayling, “is the paradigm of an absolute monarch, the political philosophy of Locke is the period’s most significant theoretical rejection of absolutism. Locke was not a maker of the bloodless middle-class revolution of 1688, but rather its explainer and justifier. He wrote to describe the principles exemplified by the event, and to support them. That is why his writings proved of such importance for the political upheavals in North America and France a century after his time.

“Locke was both physician and secretary to Lord Shaftesbury, opponent of James II and proponent of the idea of a new constitutional settlement. Being in opposition to the Crown was dangerous, and necessitated a period of exile in the Netherlands for Shaftesbury and Locke both before and during James II’s reign. This direct involvement at the heart of events that resulted in England becoming a constitutional monarchy informed all of Locke’s political writings. It is no surprise therefore that he is quoted, and at considerable length, in the documents of the American and French revolutions. To the *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment he was a hero...”⁹⁹

Like Hobbes, Locke began his argument by positing an original State of Nature in which all men were equal and free. But, unlike Hobbes, he considered that this original state was not one of total anarchy and vicious egoism, but rather of social cohesion, with men “living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth”. “Though this (State of Nature) be a state of liberty,” he wrote, “yet it is not a state of licence.”¹⁰⁰ For, in addition to the State of Nature, Locke also posited a “Law of Nature” inspired by “the infinitely wise Maker” and identifiable with “reason”, which instructed men not to infringe on the freedom of other men. Thus “the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one; and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that

⁹⁹ Grayling, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.

¹⁰⁰ Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. Locke’s criticism of Hobbes was later echoed by the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, who asked: had not the author of *Leviathan* “forgot to mention Kindness, Friendship, Sociableness, Love of Company and Converse, Natural affection, or anything of this kind?” (in Roy Porter, *The Enlightenment*, London: Macmillan, 1990, p. 160).

being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."¹⁰¹

In the State of Nature every man owns the land he tills and the product of that labour: "Though the earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his Labour with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property."¹⁰² The critical words here are "property" and "possessions". For Locke's second aim, after the justification of the overthrow of James II and enthronement of William III, was to make sure that the constitutional monarchy was in the hands of the men of property, the aristocratic landowning class. And so those who signed the original social contract, in his view, were not all the men of the kingdom, but only those who had substantial property and therefore the right to vote for members of parliament in elections. For "the great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths is the preservation of their property."¹⁰³

The Natural Rights are based on God's own word. For, writes J.S. McClelland, interpreting Locke, He "means us to live at his pleasure, not another's, therefore no-one may kill me (except in self-defence, which includes war); God commands me to labour in order to sustain and live my life, therefore I have the right to the liberty to do so; and God must mean what I take out of mere nature to be mine, therefore a natural right to property originates in the command to labour: the land I plough, and its fruits are mine. Man, being made in God's image and therefore endowed with natural reason, could easily work out that this was so, and they have Holy Writ to help them.

"Men's natural reason also tells them two other very important things. First, it tells each man that all other men have the same rights as he. All rights have duties attached to them (a right without a corresponding duty, or set of duties, is a privilege, not a right, a sinecure for instance, which carries with it the right to a salary without the duty to work for it). Rational men are capable of working this out for themselves, and they easily recognise that claiming Natural Rights requires that they respect the exercise of those same rights in others, and it is this reciprocity which makes the State of Nature social. If everybody recognises naturally that Natural Rights are universal or they cease to be natural, then plainly this implies that men could live together without government. That is what Locke really means when he says that the State of Nature is a state of liberty, not licence.

"However, the State of Nature is still the state of fallen man. Sinful men, alas, will sometimes invade the Natural Rights of others. From this it follows that men have another Natural Right, the right of judgement (and punishment) when they

¹⁰¹ Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, chapter 2, section 6.

¹⁰² Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, chapter 13, section 149.

¹⁰³ Locke, in Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, p. 651.

think their Natural Rights have been violated by others. This right is not a substantive right, a right to something; rather it is an energising right, or a right which gives life to the other Natural Rights. Rights are useless unless there is a right to judge when rights have been violated, and so the right to judgement completes the package of Natural Rights."¹⁰⁴

The purpose of the state is to protect Natural Rights. It follows that "society is natural while the state is artificial. Human nature being composed as it is of certain Natural Rights which rational men recognise that they and others possess, society arises spontaneously. It follows that, because society is prior to the state, both logically and as a matter of history, it is up to society to decide what the state shall be like, and not the state which shall decided what society shall be like. This insistence [on] the separation of society from the state, and a society's priority over the state, was to become the bedrock of the doctrine which came to be known as liberalism. Put another way, Locke thinks that what the state is like is a matter (within limits) of rational reflection and choice, but society is a given about which men have no choice. Society is what God meant it to be, capitalist and naturally harmonious, except that in the real world societies tend to become a bit ragged at the edges. Offences against Natural and positive law, murder, theft, fraud and riot for instance, happen from time to time, and men need the special agency of the state to cope with them."¹⁰⁵

The social contract consists in men giving up "to the state their right to judgement when their Natural Rights have been violated. Of course, a Natural Right being God's gift, part of what it is to be a human being, it is impossible to alienate it completely. At the moment of contract, Locke's men give up the absolute minimum for the maximum gain: they entrust the state with their right to judgement on the condition that the state uses the right to judge when Natural Rights have been violated in order to allow men to enjoy their other Natural Rights, to life, liberty and property, more abundantly.

"... Men are capable of making a collective agreement with their rulers in the State of Nature, either in the very beginning or in some future, imaginable emergency when government has collapsed. In Locke's account of the matter it is easy to see when and why government would in fact collapse: when it violates, or is seen to violate, enough [of] men's Natural Rights for them justifiably to rebel by taking back to themselves the right of judgement because government has betrayed its trust and misused it. Men therefore have a right of rebellion, and perhaps even a moral duty to rebel, if government begins to frustrate God's purpose for the world. The moment for rebellion happens when enough men are prepared to repudiate their contract with their rulers and fall back on the original contract of society. In all events, the Lockean Sovereign is party to the contract to set up government. The king is king on terms."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

¹⁰⁵ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

¹⁰⁶ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

Locke was scornful of Hobbes' idea that despotism was necessary to preserve peace. To think that men should seek a peaceful life by surrendering all their power (and property) to an absolute sovereign, he wrote, "is to think that Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done them by Pole-Cats, or Foxes, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by Lions."¹⁰⁷ Therefore government should not be concentrated in the hands of one man or institution; it should be composed of a legislative power - parliament, elected every few years by the property-owning people, and an executive power - the monarchy. The executive and legislative powers, according to Locke, must be kept separate, as a check on each other, to prevent the abuse of power.

Locke's disciple Montesquieu developed this idea in his famous *Spirit of the Laws*: "Constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go... To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power. A government may be so constituted, as no man shall be compelled to do things to which the law does not oblige him, nor forced to abstain from things which the law permits."¹⁰⁸ Therefore in order to preserve liberty, said Montesquieu, it is necessary to separate and balance the three arms of government: the executive, the legislative and the judicial.¹⁰⁹

The monarchy is necessary because only such a power can make laws valid and effective. But the king is not above the laws passed by parliament, and is to that extent subject to parliament. If the king transgresses the laws by, for example, failing to summon the legislators at the proper times, or by setting up "his own arbitrary authority in place of the laws", then he can be resisted by force. As A.L. Smith writes, "Locke put government in its proper position as a trustee for the ends for which society exists; now a trustee has great discretionary powers and great freedom from interference, but is also held strictly accountable, and under a properly drawn deed nothing is simpler than the appointment of new trustees. For after all, the ultimate trust remains in the people, in Locke's words; and this is the sovereign people, the irrevocable depository of all powers."¹¹⁰ Even the legislative power of parliament could rule only by "promulgating standing laws" and not "extemporary arbitrary decrees".

This would appear to allow the people to rebel not only against the king, but also against parliament. The problem is: where to draw the line? When is the use of force against the government just and lawful?

¹⁰⁷ Locke, *Two Treatises of Civil Government*; in David Held, *Models of Democracy*, Oxford: Polity Press, 1987, p. 51.

¹⁰⁸ Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*; in Held, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁹ However, as Held writes, "a fundamental difficulty lay at the very heart of his conception of liberty. Liberty, he wrote, 'is the right of doing whatever the law permits'. People are free to pursue their activities within the framework of the law. But if freedom is defined in direct relation to the law, there is no possibility of arguing coherently that freedom might depend on altering the law or that the law itself might under certain circumstances articulate tyranny" (*op. cit.*, pp. 59-60).

¹¹⁰ Smith, "English Political Philosophy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. VI: The Eighteenth Century, 1909, p. 809.

This vital question has never received a satisfactory answer in western political theory. Locke's answer was: when "estates, liberties, lives are in danger, and perhaps religion too". For "the end of government is the good of mankind, and which is best for mankind, that the people should always exposed to the boundless will of tyranny or that the rulers should be sometimes liable to be opposed? Upon the forfeiture of their rulers, [power] reverts to the society and the people have a right to act as supreme and place it in a new form or new hands, as they think good."¹¹¹

In other words, if the people feel that their Natural Rights have been violated by king or parliament, then in theory they should be able to declare the contract broken and take power back from their representatives – by force, if need be. For "the Community may be said in this respect to be always the Supreme Power".¹¹² Thus if the prince seeks to "enslave, or destroy them", the people are entitled to "appeal to heaven". But "since Heaven does not make explicit pronouncements," writes Russell, "this means, in effect, that a decision can only be reached by fighting, since it is assumed that Heaven will give the victory to the better cause."¹¹³

However, the experience of the English revolution and Locke's own conservative instincts led him to countenance revolution only in extreme cases. Otherwise the right to rebel would "lay a perpetual foundation for disorder". "Great mistakes in the ruling part... will be born by the People without muting or murmur", and recourse would be had to force only after "a long train of Abuses, Prevarications, and Artifices".¹¹⁴ In general, therefore, Locke's system represents an uneasy compromise between older, religious ways of thinking and the new rationalism. On the one hand, he wanted the authority that an established church and an anointed king gives in order to protect property and prevent the revolution that had so nearly destroyed everything a generation before. On the other hand, he wanted to give the people the right to overthrow a tyrant. But it is clearly the secular interests of his class, rather than religious feeling, that motivates his thinking.

It was those secular interests that triumphed in the end. By the time William and Mary had died, in 1714, and the German Hanoverian dynasty had taken their place, the character of the English monarchy had been changed for good, if not for the better. England was a constitutional monarchy ruled by king and parliament together, but with the landed aristocracy firmly in charge.

¹¹¹ Locke, *An Essay concerning the true, original, extent, and end of Civil Government* (1690).

¹¹² Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, chapter 13, section 149.

¹¹³ Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 662-663.

¹¹⁴ Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, chapter 14, section 168. "'Overturning the constitution and frame of any just government' is 'the greatest crime a man is capable of', but 'either ruler or subject' who forcibly invades 'the rights of either prince or people' is guilty of it. 'Whosoever uses force without right, as everyone does in society who does it without law, puts himself into a state of war with those against whom he so uses it... every one has a right to defend himself and to resist the aggressor.'" (J.R. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution*, London: Blandford Press, 1972, p. 25)

Locke's political philosophy was more revolutionary than is generally realized. Its radical nature consisted not so much in its burial of the Stuart idea of absolute monarchy, as in the idea of *universal rights* as something that preceded and overrode local traditions and rights formed over centuries. Such *universalism* and *cosmopolitanism* was a natural consequence of the *commercialism* that now became characteristic of English parliamentocracy (following the Dutch example). Businessmen need to do business with men of all faiths and nationalities; their bottom line is personal profit, not nationalism, the glory and pre-eminence of one nation. Businessmen need large international markets which have rules, but rules that are as non-discriminatory as possible, allowing all classes and nations and faiths to enter into, and profit from, the dominant reality - *the market*. Thus the British Empire, as we shall see, largely followed the businessmen and supported their markets, rather than the other way round.

This universalism went against the traditional, particularist nature of English conservatism defended, as Ofir Haivry and Yoram Hazony write, "by leading Whig intellectuals in works from William Atwood's *Fundamental Constitution of the English Government* (1690) to Josiah Tucker's *A Treatise of Civil Government* (1781), which strongly opposed both absolutism and Lockean theories of universal rights. This is the view upon which men like Blackstone, Burke, Washington, and Hamilton were educated. Not only in England but in British America, lawyers were trained in the common law by studying Coke's *Institutes of the Lawes of England* (1628-44) and Hale's *History of the Common Law of England* (1713). In both, the law of the land was understood to be the traditional English constitution and common law, amended as needed for local purposes.

"Because Locke is today recognized as the decisive figure in the liberal tradition, it is worth looking more carefully at why his political theory was so troubling for conservatives. We have described the Anglo-American conservative tradition as subscribing to a historical empiricism, which proposes that political knowledge is gained by examining the long history of the customary laws of a given nation and the consequences when these laws have been altered in one direction or another. Conservatives understand that a jurist must exercise reason and judgment, of course. But this reasoning is about how best to adapt traditional law to present circumstances, making such changes as are needed for the betterment of the state and of the public, while preserving as much as possible the overall frame of the law. To this we have opposed a standpoint that can be called *rationalist*. Rationalists have a different view of the role of reason in political thought, and in fact a different understanding of what reason itself is. Rather than arguing from the historical experience of nations, they set out by asserting general axioms that they believe to be true of all human beings, and that they suppose will be accepted by all human beings examining them with their native rational abilities. From these they deduce the appropriate constitution or laws for all men.

"Locke is known philosophically as an empiricist. But his reputation in this regard is based largely on his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1689), which

is an influential exercise in empirical psychology. His *Second Treatise of Government* is not, however, a similar effort to bring an empirical standpoint to the theory of the state. Instead, it begins with a series of axioms that are without any evident connection to what can be known from the historical and empirical study of the state. Among other things, Locke asserts that, (1) prior to the establishment of government, men exist in a 'state of nature,' in which (2) 'all men are naturally in a state of perfect freedom,' as well as in (3) a 'state of perfect equality, where naturally there is no superiority or jurisdiction of one over another.' Moreover, (4) this state of nature 'has a law of nature to govern it'; and (5) this law of nature is, as it happens, nothing other than human 'reason' itself, which 'teaches all mankind, who will but consult it.' It is this universal reason, the same among all mankind, that leads them to (6) terminate the state of nature, 'agreeing together mutually to enter into . . . one body politic' by an act of free consent. From these six axioms, Locke then proceeds to deduce the proper character of the political order for all nations on earth.

"Three important things should be noticed about this set of axioms. The first is that the elements of Locke's political theory are not known from experience. The 'perfect freedom' and 'perfect equality' that define the state of nature are ideal forms whose relationship with empirical reality is entirely unclear. Nor can the identity of natural law with reason, or the assertion that the law dictated by reason 'teaches all mankind,' or the establishment of the state by means of purely consensual social contract, be known empirically. All of these things are stipulated as when setting out a mathematical system.

"The second thing to notice is that there is no reason to think that any of Locke's axioms are in fact true. Faced with this mass of unverifiable assertions, empiricist political theorists such as Hume, Smith, and Burke rejected all of Locke's axioms and sought to rebuild political philosophy on the basis of things that can be known from history and from an examination of actual human societies and governments.

"Third, Locke's theory not only dispenses with the historical and empirical basis for the state, it also implies that such inquiries are, if not entirely unnecessary, then of secondary importance. If there exists a form of reason that is accessible to 'all mankind, who will but consult it,' and that reveals to all the universal laws of nature governing the political realm, then there will be little need for the historically and empirically grounded reasoning of men such as Fortescue, Coke, and Selden. All men, if they will just gather together and consult with their own reason, can design a government that will be better than anything that 'the many ages of experience and observation' produced in England. On this view, the Anglo-American conservative tradition—far from having brought into being the freest and best constitution ever known to mankind—is in fact shot through with unwarranted prejudice and an obstacle to a better life for all. Locke's theory thus pronounces, in other words, the end of Anglo-American conservatism, and the end

of the traditional constitution that conservatives still held to be among the most precious things on earth.”¹¹⁵

“In all its forms,” writes Sir Roger Scruton, “the social contract enshrines a fundamental liberal principle, namely, that, deep down, our obligations are self-created and self-imposed. I cannot be bound by the law, or legitimately constrained by the sovereign, if I never chose to be under the obligation to obey. Legitimacy is conferred by the citizen, and not by the sovereign, still less by the sovereign’s usurping ancestors. If we cannot discover a contract to be bound by the law, then the law is not binding.”¹¹⁶

However, as Hegel pointed out, this original premise, that “our obligations are self-created and self-imposed”, is false. We do not choose the family we are born in, or the state to which we belong, and yet have obligations to both. Of course, we can rebel against such obligations; the son can choose to say that he owes nothing to his father, and the citizen can choose to defy his state. And yet he would not even exist without his father; and without his father’s upbringing he would not even be capable of making choices. Thus we are “hereditary bondsmen”, to use Byron’s phrase. In this sense we live in a cycle of freedom and necessity: the free choices of our ancestors limit our own freedom, while our choices limit those of our children. The idea of a social contract entered into in a single generation is therefore not only a historical myth; it is a dangerous myth. It is a myth that distorts the very nature of society, which cannot be conceived as existing except over several generations. But if society exists over several generations, all generations should be taken into account in drawing up the contract. Why should only one generation’s interests be respected? For, as Scruton continues, interpreting the thought of Edmund Burke, “the social contract prejudices the interests of those who are not alive to take part in it: the dead and the unborn. Yet they too have a claim, maybe an indefinite claim, on the resources and institutions over which the living so selfishly contend. To imagine society as a contract among its living members, is to offer no rights to those who go before and after. But when we neglect those absent souls, we neglect everything that endows law with its authority, and which guarantees our own survival. We should therefore see the social order as a partnership, in which the dead and the unborn are included with the living.”¹¹⁷

“Every people,” writes L.A. Tikhomirov, “is, first of all, a certain historical whole, a long row of consecutive generations, living over hundreds or thousands of years in a common life handed down by inheritance. In this form a people, a nation, is a certain socially organic phenomenon with more or less clearly expressed laws of inner development... But political intriguers and the democratic

¹¹⁵ Haiyry and Hazony, “What is Conservatism?”, *American Affairs*, Summer, 2017, vol. I, no. 2. <https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2017/05/what-is-conservatism/>

¹¹⁶ Scruton, *What is Philosophy*, p. 416. As Andrzej Walicki writes: “The argument that society was founded on reason and self-interest could of course be used to sanction rebellion against any forms of social relations that could not prove their rationality or utility.” (*A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 39)

¹¹⁷ Scruton, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

tendency does not look at a people in this form, as a historical, socially organic phenomenon, but simply in the form of a sum of the individual inhabitants of the country. This is the second point of view, which looks on a nation as a simple association of people united into a state because they wanted that, living according to laws which they like, and arbitrarily changing the laws of their life together when it occurs to them."¹¹⁸

As Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow writes: "It is obligatory, say the wise men of this world, to submit to social authorities on the basis of a social contract, by which people were united into society, by a general agreement founding government and submission to it for the general good. If they think that it is impossible to found society otherwise than on a social contract, - then why is it that the societies of the bees and ants are not founded on it? And is it not right that those who break open honeycombs and destroy ant-hills should be entrusted with finding in them... a charter of bees and ants? And until such a thing is done, nothing prevents us from thinking that bees and ants create their societies, not by contract, but by nature, by an idea of community implanted in their nature, which the Creator of the world willed to be realised even at the lowest level of His creatures. What if an example of the creation of a human society by nature were found? What, then, is the use of the fantasy of a social contract? No one can argue against the fact that the original form of society is the society of the family. Thus does not the child obey the mother, and the mother have power over the child, not because they have contracted between themselves that she should feed him at the breast, and that he should shout as little as possible when he is swaddled? What if the mother should suggest too harsh conditions to the child? Will not the inventors of the social contract tell him to go to another mother and make a contract with her about his upbringing? The application of the social contract in this case is as fitting as it is fitting in other cases for every person, from the child to the old man, from the first to the last. Every human contract can have force only when it is entered into with consciousness and good will. Are there many people in society who have heard of the social contract? And of those few who have heard of it, are there many who have a clear conception of it? Ask, I will not say the simple citizen, but the wise man of contracts: when and how did he enter into the social contract? When he was an adult? But who defined this time? And was he outside society before he became an adult? By means of birth? This is excellent. I like this thought, and I congratulate every Russian that he was able - I don't know whether it was from his parents or from Russia herself, - to agree that he be born in powerful Russia... The only thing that we must worry about is that neither he who was born nor his parents thought about this contract in their time, and so does not referring to it mean fabricating it? And consequently is it not better, as well as simpler, both in submission and in other relationships towards society, to study the rights and obligations of a real birth instead of an invented contract - that pipe-dream of social life, which, being recounted at the wrong time, has produced and continues to

¹¹⁸ Tikhomirov, "Demokratia liberal'naia i sotsial'naia" ("Liberal and Social Democracy"), in *Kritika Demokratia* (A Critique of Democracy), Moscow: "Moskva", 1997, p. 122.

produce material woes for human society. 'Transgressors have told me fables, but they are not like Thy law, O Lord' (Psalms 118.85)."¹¹⁹

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In spite of these contradictions, Lockean social contract theory has remained the dominant model of society in Anglo-Saxon countries to this day. Thus probably the most influential contemporary work of political philosophy, John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, is in essence a variation on Lockean social contract theory with one or two original twists.

One of these is the idea that people enter into the social contract from a so-called "original position" in which they are covered with a "veil of ignorance". That is, the people "are denied knowledge of everything which makes them who they are: their class, skills, age, gender, sexuality, religious views and conceptions of the good life. Rawls argues that the principles which these people would choose to regulate their relations with one another are definitive of justice... The veil of ignorance is meant to ensure that our views on justice are not distorted by our own interests. 'If a man knew that he was wealthy, he might find it rational to advance the principle that various taxes for welfare measures be counted unjust; if he knew that he was poor, he would most likely propose the contrary principle...'"¹²⁰

This theory escapes the objection that people entering into a social contract are simply choosing their self-interest by completely abstracting from the real man with his concrete desires, interests and beliefs. Thus not only is the original social contract a historical myth in the strictest sense of the word: the "conception of the good" of those who enter into it is not allowed to intrude into political life in any way.

As Scruton notes, Rawls's social contract aims to remove "from the legal order all reference to the sources of division and conflict between human groups, so as to create a society in which no question can arise that does not have a solution acceptable to everyone. If religion, culture, sex, race, and even 'conceptions of the good' have all been relegated to the private sphere, and set outside the scope of jurisdiction, then the resulting public law will be an effective instrument for the government of a multicultural society, forbidding citizens to make exceptions in favour of their preferred group, sex, culture, faith, or lifestyle.... This simply reinforces the status of the theory as the theology of a post-religious society."¹²¹

Locke had argued that religion was a private matter, and that people should be made as far as possible to mind their own business; but he drew the line at Catholics and atheists. Rawls goes further in making the State completely value-free (or value-less) - and Catholics and atheists are equally welcome! Thus the

¹¹⁹ Metropolitan Philaret, *Sochinenia* (Works), Moscow, 1877, vol. 3, pp. 448, 449; reprinted in *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, N 9 (573), September, 1997, pp. 3-4.

¹²⁰ Ben Rogers, "Portrait: John Rawls", *Prospect*, June, 1999, p. 51

¹²¹ Roger Scruton, *The West and the Rest*, London: ISI Books, 2002, pp. 10-11.

theory, while not explicitly anti-religious, actually leads, in its modern variants, to the purest secularism: the original social contract must be postulated to be between irreligious people and to lead to a state that is strictly irreligious, relegating religion entirely to the private sphere.

But such a state will be accepted only by a society for which religion has ceased to be the primary focus of life, and has become merely one “interest” or “need” among many others. Such a society was England after the Glorious Revolution. And such a society has the whole of the West become since then insofar as the Glorious Revolution has become the model for “democratic” regime-change throughout the world, while its attendant theories of the social contract and human rights have become the dominant orthodoxy in all states that aspire to become part of the “international community”.

We come to the perhaps shocking conclusion that the “glorious” and “bloodless” revolution of 1688, together with its attendant theory of the social contract, was built on crypto-atheist foundations that logically lead, in the fullness of time, to the purest atheism. It follows that for a truly religious believer – whether he be Christian, Hindu, Jewish or Muslim – for whom the truth of his faith is the first value, and who longs, as every truly religious believer must long, for the triumph of his faith throughout society and the spread of its influence into every social and political institution, social contract theory is unacceptable. He cannot sign up to such a “contract” (assuming, for the sake of argument, that such a thing exists). And if he is forced to sign, and even if he is coerced or re-educated into renouncing his faith, he will at best be an unenthusiastic, inwardly grumbling citizen and at worst a potential revolutionary. Therefore if we accept that religious belief is a permanent feature of human society, we must also accept that social contract theory and the liberal theory of government can never be a stable, long-term foundation for that society – although it may well be a temporary restraint on, and container of, civil war in a religiously divided nation...

But only a temporary restraint. For, as we see in the West (particularly America) today, and as Phillip Blond writes, quoting John Millbank and Adrian Pabst: “The triumph of liberalism today more and more brings about the “war of all against all.” Liberalism brings about the very thing, a universal civil war, from which it initially promised deliverance. It also brings about what has never existed before, but what it claims was there in the beginning: an isolated individual abstracted from all social ties and duties.”¹²²

Scruton concludes: “Liberal individualism is an attractive philosophy, and has produced beautiful and influential theories of political legitimacy, including those of Locke, Harrison, Montesquieu, Rousseau and, in our time, John Rawls. But it does not describe real human beings. What matters to us, far more than our deals and bargains, are the ties that we never contracted, that we stumbled into through passion and temptation, as well as those that could never be chosen, like those that

¹²² Blond, “Politics after Liberalism”, *First Things First*, December, 2017.

bind us to our parents, our country, and our religious and cultural inheritance..."¹²³

Scruton writes in another place: "Political philosophers of the Enlightenment, from Hobbes and Locke, reaching down to John Rawls and his followers today, have found the roots of political order and the motives of political obligation in a social context – an agreement, overt or implied, to be bound by principles to which all reasonable citizens can assent. Although the social contract exists in many forms, the ruling principle was announced by Hobbes with the assertion that there can be 'no obligation on any man which ariseth not from some act of his own'. My obligations are my own creation, binding because freely chosen. When you and I exchange promises the resulting contract is freely undertaken, and any breach does violence not merely to the other but also to the self, since it is a repudiation of a well-grounded rational choice. If we could construe our obligation to the state on the model of a contract, therefore, we should have justified it in terms that all rational beings must accept. Contracts are the paradigms of self-chosen obligations – obligations that are not imposed, commanded or coerced but freely undertaken. When is founded in a social contract, therefore, obedience to the law is simply the other side of free choice. Freedom and obedience are one and the same.

"Such a contract is addressed to the abstract and universal *Homo oeconomicus* who comes into the world without attachments, without, as Rawls puts it, a conception of the good and with nothing save his rational self-interest to guide him. But human societies are by their nature exclusive, establishing privileges and benefits that are offered only to the insider, and which cannot be freely bestowed on all-comers without sacrificing the trust on which social harmony depends. The social contract begins from a thought-experiment, in which a group of people gather together to decide on their common future. But if they are in a position to decide on their common future, it is because they already have one because they recognize their mutual togetherness and reciprocal dependence, which makes it incumbent upon them to settle how they might be governed under a common jurisdiction in a common territory. In short, the social contract requires a relation of membership. Theorists of the social contract write as though it presupposes only the first-person singular of free rational thought. In fact, it presupposes a first-person plural, in which the burdens of belonging have already been assumed.

"Even in the American case [after the Declaration of Independence], in which a decision was made to adopt a constitution and make a jurisdiction *ab initio*, it is nevertheless true that a first-person plural was involved in the very making. This is confessed in the document itself: 'We, the people...' Which people? Why, *us*; we who *already belong*, whose historic tie is now to be transcribed into law. We can make sense of the social contract only on the assumption of some such pre-contractual 'we'. For who is to be included in the contract? And why? And what do we do with one who opts out? The obvious answer is that the founders of the new social order already belong together: they have already imagined themselves

¹²³ Scruton, *Wagner's Parsifal*, London: Penguin, 2020, p. 17.

as a community, through the long process of social interaction that enables people to determine who should participate in their future and who should not.

“Furthermore, the social contract makes sense only if future generations are included in it. The purpose is to establish an enduring society. At once, therefore, there arises that web of non-contractual obligations that links parents to children and children to parents and that ensures, willy-nilly, that within a generation the society will be encumbered by non-voting members, dead and unborn, who will rely on something other than a mere contract between the living if their rights are to be respected and their love deserved. Even when there arises, as in America, an idea of ‘elective nationality’, so that newcomers may choose to belong, *what* is chosen is precisely not a contract but a bond of membership whose obligations and privileges transcend anything that could be contained in a defeasible agreement.

“There cannot be a society without this experience of membership. For it is this that enables me to regard the interests and needs of strangers as my concern; that enables me to recognize the authority of decisions and laws that I must obey, even though they are not directly in my interest; that gives me a criterion to distinguish those who are entitled to the benefit of the sacrifices that my membership calls from me, from those who are interloping. Take away the experience of membership and the ground of the social contract disappears: social obligations become temporary, troubled and defeasible, and the idea that one might be called upon to lay down one’s life for a collection of strangers begins to border on the absurd. Moreover, without the experience of membership, the dead will be disenfranchised, and the unborn, of whom the dead are the metaphysical guardians, will be deprived of their inheritance. Unless the contract between the living can be phrased in such a way that the dead and the unborn are a part of it, it becomes a contract to appropriate the earth’s resources for the benefit of its temporary residents. Philosophers of the social contract, such as John Rawls, are aware of the problem: but to my mind they have failed to discover the motives that would lead ordinary people to sign up to a contract that spreads their obligations into the distant future. Critics of western societies do not hesitate to point out that the squandering of resources is exactly what has happened, since the contractual vision of society gained ground over the experience of membership that made it possible.

“We can envisage society as founded in a contract only if we see its members as capable of the free and responsible choices that a contract requires. But only in certain circumstances will human beings develop into rational choosers, capable of undertaking obligations and honouring promises, and oriented towards one another in a posture of responsibility. In the course of acquiring this posture towards others, people acquire obligations of quite another kind - obligations to parents, to family, to place and community upon all of which they have depended for the nurture without which the human animal cannot develop into the human person. Those obligations are not obligations of justice, such as arise from the free dealings of human adults. The Romans knew the as obligations of piety (*pietas*), meaning that they stem from the natural gratitude towards what is *given*, a gratitude that we spontaneously direct to the gods. Today we are reluctant to provide these obligations with such a theological backing, though it is important

to see that, for religious believers, unchosen obligations are not only vital to the building from below of a durable social order, but also properly owed to God..."¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Scruton, *How to be a Conservative*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 22-24.

9. WAR, CALVINISM AND JEWISH BANKERS

“In the seventeenth century,” writes Dan Cohn-Sherbok, “the court Jew came to play a crucial role in state affairs. Each royal or princely court had its own Jewish auxiliary. Throughout the country court Jews administered finances, provisioned armies, raised money, provided textiles and precious stones to the court... Such court Jews stood at the pinnacle of the social scale, forming an elite class.”¹²⁵

They were especially important in financing wars. Thus William III of England and Holland led an anti-French coalition from 1672 to 1702 which, as Johnson notes, “was financed and provisioned by a group of Dutch Sephardic Jews operating chiefly from the Hague.”¹²⁶ They were led by Samuel Oppenheimer.¹²⁷

The Jews were also influential in Germany, in spite of Luther’s strong opposition to Judaism. And banking at the Viennese court was dominated by Jews - during the Austrian wars against France and then Turkey, Samuel Oppenheimer became the Imperial War Purveyor to the Austrians... Thus, as David Vital writes, “by 1694 the Austrian state debt to Oppenheimer alone amounted to no less than 3 million florins. At his death, by Emmanuel’s estimate, it had reached double that figure.”¹²⁸ In France, meanwhile, under Louis XIV and XV the leading position in the financial world was occupied by the Jewish banker Samuel Bernard, about whose help to France contemporaries said that ‘his whole merit consisted in the fact that he supported the State, as a string supports that which hangs on it.’”¹²⁹

It was not only in the West that Jewish money ruled. In the sixteenth century, a French diplomat who lived in Constantinople under Suleiman the Magnificent, Nicolas de Nicolay, wrote: “They now have in their hands the most and greatest traffic of merchandise and ready money that is conducted in all the Levant. The shops and stalls best stocked with all the varieties of goods which can be found in Constantinople are those of the Jews. They also have among them very excellent practitioners of all the arts and manufactures, especially the Marranos not long since banished and expelled from Spain and Portugal who to the great detriment and injury of Christianity have taught the Turks several inventions, artifices and machines of war such as how to make artillery, arquebuses, gunpower, cannon-balls and other arms.”¹³⁰

Protected by the Ottoman Turks from the attacks of the Christians, the Constantinopolitan Jews intrigued against the West European States. Thus Joseph Nasi, a banker and entrepreneur, through contacts in Western Europe was able, according to Philip Mansel, “to maintain an international network which helped him obtain revenge on Spain and France. It is possible that, from the banks of the

¹²⁵ Cohn-Sherbok, *Atlas of Jewish History*, London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 115.

¹²⁶ Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 281.

¹²⁷ Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-258.

¹²⁸ Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 14.

¹²⁹ Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia’s Crown of Thorns)*, Moscow, 1998, p. 155.

¹³⁰ De Nicolay, in Philip Mansel, *Constantinople*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 124.

Bosphorus, he encouraged the revolt of the Netherlands against Philip II of Spain. An envoy from the rebel leader, the Prince of Orange, came to see him in 1569..."¹³¹

In fact, the Jews served all sides in the Gentile wars...

But there was a price to be paid... In the 18th century the Jewish banker Jean Lo (Levi) founded a huge "Mississippi company" in Paris, which gave him monopoly rights to trade with China, India, the islands of the southern seas, Canada and all the colonies of France in America, and which "guaranteed" dividends of 120% a year to investors. However, the paper he issued was founded on nothing, the company collapsed, "millions of Frenchmen were ruined and for many years the finances of the country were hopelessly disordered. At the same time many representatives of the Jewish community of Paris amassed huge fortunes on this misery."¹³²

During the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), King Frederick the Great of Prussia, writes Christopher Clark, "resolved to fund his campaigns with a coin inflation. Prussia had no native silver to speak of and thus had to import all its coin bullion - a business that had traditionally been in the hands of Jewish agents. By reducing the proportion of silver in the Prussian coinage, he would be able to extract a 'mint charge' in the form of the unused silver. Frederick had always made more intensive use of Jewish financial managers than his predecessors and he obliged a consortium of Jewish bankers and bullion merchants - including [Veitel Heine] Ephraim and [Daniel] Itzig - to accept responsibility for minting the debased coins. The profits generated by this enterprise - amounting to about 29 million thalers - made a significant contribution to the king's war costs. By the end of this hostilities, the Jewish mint managers - together with an array of other Jewish businessmen specializing in the supply of war provisions - were among the wealthiest men in Prussia."¹³³

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However, the most significant developments took place in England, where the need to finance wars became particularly pressing... Robert Tombs writes: "William had invaded England to bring it into the alliance fighting against Louis XIV's France, thought to be aiming at 'universal monarchy'. Louis retaliated by giving troops to aid James to recover his throne. Thus began a 'Second Hundred Years' War', a titanic struggle to break French power that ended only in 1815 at Waterloo... During those 127 years, England fought in five of the eight bloodiest wars in world history: the Nine Years War (1688-97), the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13), the Seven Years' War (1755-63), and finally the French Revolutionary (1792-1802) and Napoleonic Wars (1803-15). And in addition to these was the American War of Independence (1775-83), less lethal, but extremely

¹³¹ Mansel, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹³² Platonov, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

¹³³ Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 257-258.

expensive. War created new institutions, new relationships, new demands, new powers, new ambitions, new dangers and new priorities, which crowded out the concerns with religious ritual and royal prerogative that had dominated previous decades. Thus war transformed England and Britain...

“Whatever the political alliances or concessions required to maximise the unity and commitment of England in that struggle, they would be made. Hence, religious toleration was necessary to maintain a broad anti-French coalition, and William insisted on it. He accepted a Bill of Rights (1689), which enshrined right of petition, free debate in Parliament, freedom of election, trial by jury, the right to bear arms and frequency of Parliament, and it forbade extra-legal royal action. A Mutiny Act (1689) made the existence of the army dependent on parliamentary consent. A Triennial Act (1694) required general elections every three years. In short, once again, but now more explicitly than ever, the Crown was made subject to law, and its powers, still extensive, were defined by agreement with the nation. This time, there was no going back on the deal, which sketched out a constitution for England. Parliament had placed itself at the centre of the state. But what made these changes effective was Parliament’s ancient control of taxation. The pressing need created by war to have a parliament that would sanction ever-increasing taxation and debt changed it from a periodic event, called when the king needed it, to a permanent institution, which has met every year since 1689...

“War required a bigger and more professional army, the origins of which went back to the New Model Army of the Civil War. Would it be maintained in peacetime or disbanded? This was a matter of great political and ideological significance. Politically, because with memories of civil war still fresh the control of military force seemed crucial. Ideologically, because the right and duty to bear arms was a defining part of free citizenship - as well as being cheaper. But the length and intensity of war after 1689 means that the old idea that English freedom meant a society defended by its armed citizens and a monarch with no significant armed force became both unpopular and impractical. Hence, one of the characteristic vulnerabilities of the English state, its military weakness, disappeared. However, army service was widely shunned, and so England early became a country that relied on professional soldiers for serious fighting.

“Lack of money had been England’s other great weakness since the reign of Elizabeth, and it had caused recurring crises for the Stuarts. After the Glorious Revolution taxes spiralled, with parliamentary approval. By the end of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713, tax as a proportion of national income had nearly tripled since 1688...

“Taxation, however, was not enough to meet wartime spending: governments had to borrow more than ever before. Public debt went from £31m in the 1680s to £100m in 1760, paying not only for Britain’s navy and army, but contributing to those of its allies too. This required a sophisticated financial system, by which short-term liabilities - in effect, IOUs from government departments - could be replaced by long-term, low-interest bonds. During the 1690s, ministers, MPs and businessmen studied the methods of the Dutch and the Venetians, Europe’s most

sophisticated financiers. Experiments and mistakes were made with lotteries and life annuities. In 1694, William Paterson, a Scot, and Michael Godfrey, an Englishman, won approval from Parliament for a Bank of England modelled on the Bank of Amsterdam, an event of truly historic importance... Immediately, in 1695, the Bank proved its worth by saving the government's credit from collapsing, and kept it afloat until peace came two years later..."¹³⁴

The foundation of the Bank of England was indeed of historic importance; for it both underwrote Britain's rise to the position of most powerful country in the world, and put the finances of England back into the hands of the Jews for the first time since King Edward I had expelled them in 1290. N. Bogoliubov writes: "With the help of the agent William Paterson [the king] succeeded in persuading the British Treasury to borrow 1.25 million British pounds from Jewish bankers. This strengthened his position. Insofar as the state debt had already, even without this, attained improbable heights, the government could do nothing but agree to the conditions presented:

"1. The name of the creditor will remain in secret: he is allowed to found 'The Bank of England' (a Central Bank).

"2. The directors of the above-mentioned bank are given the right to establish the gold support of paper money.

"3. They are given the right to give credits to the extent of ten pounds in paper money to every pound kept in gold.

"4. They are given the right to accumulate a national debt and collect the necessary sum by means of direct taxation of the people.

"Thus there appeared the first private central bank - 'the Bank of England'. By means of these operations banking procedures were able to produce a 50% profit on the Bank's capital deposits at 5%. It was the English people who had to pay for this. The creditors were not concerned that the debt should be paid, since in conditions of indebtedness they were able to exert influence also on the political processes in the country. The national debt of England rose from £1,250,000 in 1694 to £16,000,000 in 1698..."¹³⁵

By the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 it was £147,000,000.¹³⁶

Massive indebtedness is usually considered a weakness. But it has been argued that it was precisely England's credibility as a borrower that ensured her success by enabling her to enter into deep indebtedness without the debt being called in. Thus Niall Ferguson writes: "In a seminal article published in 1989, North and

¹³⁴ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-307, 308-309, 309-310.

¹³⁵ Bogoliubov, in Begunov, Yu.K. Stepanov, A.D, Dushenov, K.Yu., *Taina Bezzakonia* (The Mystery of Iniquity), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 381-382

¹³⁶ Blanning, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

Weingast argued that the real significance of the Glorious Revolution lay in the credibility that it gave the English state as a sovereign borrower. From 1689, Parliament controlled and improved taxation, audited royal expenditure, protected private property rights and effectively prohibited debt default. This arrangement, they argued, was 'self-enforcing', not least because property owners were overwhelmingly the class represented in Parliament. As a result, the English state was able to borrow money on a scale that had previously been impossible because of the sovereign's habit of defaulting or arbitrarily taxing or expropriating. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century thus inaugurated a period of rapid accumulation of public debt without any rise in borrowing costs – rather the reverse.

“This was in fact a benign development. Not only did it enable England to become Great Britain and, indeed, the British Empire, by giving the English state unrivalled financial resources for making – and winning – war. By accustoming the wealthy to investment in paper securities, it also paved the way for a financial revolution that would channel English savings into everything from canals to railways, commerce to colonization, ironworks to textile mills. Though the national debt grew enormously in the course of England's many wars with France, reaching a peak of more than 260 per cent of GDP in the decade after 1815, this leverage earned a handsome return, because on the other side of the balance sheet, acquired largely with a debt-financed navy, was a global empire. Moreover, in the century after Waterloo, the debt was successfully reduced with a combination of sustained growth and primary budget surpluses. There was no default. There was no inflation. And Britannia bestrode the globe...”¹³⁷

“Parliament,” says Tombs, “underpinned credit. In contrast with absolutist states, its guarantee made defaults unlikely (many MPs were bondholders), and the Commons publicly voted taxation earmarked for interest payments. By 1715 fully half of the revenue went to servicing what became a permanent National Debt. There were crises and panics about unsustainable debt levels. But ‘as long as land lasts and beer is drunk’, declared the long-serving the Duke of Newcastle, England would never default. Realizing this, domestic and foreign savers became eager to lend, keeping interest rates low. As confidence grew, the rate of interest fell from 14 percent in 1693 to 3 percent in 1731, meaning, of course, that Britain could borrow nearly five times as much money for the same outlay of interest, and so outspend its bigger and richer enemy France. The combination of the House of Commons and the City of London funded Britain's rise to world power.

“But war brought new political controversies too. The rapid wartime growth of what has been termed the ‘fiscal-military state’ altered the relationship of citizens and government. The state became increasingly intrusive and expensive. It also employed more people and created a larger number of beneficiaries, including ‘new men’ such as bankers, lenders, contractors and bureaucrats, usually Whigs, who were both serving and profiting from its activities. Parliament, by placing itself at the centre of decision, was less clearly the defender of the citizen against

¹³⁷ Ferguson, *The Great Degeneration*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 38-39.

the demands of the state: it was itself the demander, with many of its members benefiting personally from salaries, jobs, pensions and contracts.

“There emerged new political alignments. In the 1690s a loose ‘Country Party’ was set up by Whigs led by the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (the theorist of politeness). Its ideas attracted many Tories. They claimed to be ‘Patriots’, standing for the interests of the ‘country’ against the selfishness of the ‘court’ and the political and financial oligarchy. It found a fashionable ideology ready made, and which remained potent throughout the century – ‘Roman’ or ‘civic human’ ideas, derived from the prestigious writings of ancient patriots. Civic humanists thought politics should be the disinterested activity of a virtuous elite upholding the public good and combating corruption – for it was corruption, not the royal prerogative, that they now saw as threatening freedom: ‘What the French government does by despotism, the English government does by corruption’. This was not a democratic creed: indeed, they feared democracy would facilitate corruption. The Country Party also appealed potentially to all who simply resented ever-higher taxes. War on the Continent seemed to many a cynical way of keeping the money flowing. Thus emerged a powerful but eclectic Patriot rhetoric, willing to lump together Roman republicanism, Magna Carta and Locke’s contract theory. It came to permeate English political debate and was exported to America and France. Whenever we call for honest politics or high-minded leadership to combat self-interest, corruption and the self-absorption of ‘Westminster’ or ‘Washington’, we are echoing these ideas...”¹³⁸

The increased power of the Jews in England naturally aroused suspicion and opposition. However, in 1732, as Paul Johnson writes, “a judgement gave Jews, in effect, legal protection against generic libels which might endanger life. Hence... England became the first place in which it was possible for a modern Jewish community to emerge”.¹³⁹

Indeed, when the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa expelled the Jews from Prague in 1744, the British government intervened, “with the Secretary of State, Lord Harrington, condemning the expulsions to her ambassador as ‘detrimental and prejudicial to the true interest of the common cause’ against France. These pleas initially fell on deaf ears, but Maria Theresa soon relented and the Jews ultimately returned home...”¹⁴⁰

“By the end of the eighteenth century,” writes David Vital, “the Jews of England had little to complain of...”¹⁴¹

Paul Johnson explains Jewish success as follows: “The dynamic impulse to national economies, especially in England and the Netherlands, and later in North

¹³⁸ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-311.

¹³⁹ Johnson, *History of the Jews*, London: Pimlico, p. 278.

¹⁴⁰ Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, p. 101.

¹⁴¹ Vital, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

America and Germany, was provided not only by Calvinists, but by Lutherans, Catholics from north Italy and, not least, by Jews.

“What these moving communities shared was not theology but an unwillingness to live under the state regimentation of religious and moral ideas at the behest of the clerical establishments. All of them repudiated clerical hierarchies, favouring religious government by the congregation and the private conscience. In all these respects the Jews were the most characteristic of the various denominations of emigrants...

“Capitalism, at all its stages of development, has advanced by rationalizing and so improving the chaos of existing methods. The Jews could do this because, while intensely conservative (as a rule) within their own narrow and isolated world, they had no share in or emotional commitment to society as a whole and so could watch its old traditions, methods and institutions being demolished without a pang – could, indeed, play a leading role in the process of destruction. They were thus natural capitalist entrepreneurs...

“It was the unconscious collective instinct of the Jews both to depersonalize finance and to rationalize the general economic process. Any property known to be Jewish, or clearly identifiable as such, was always at risk in medieval and early modern times, especially in the Mediterranean, which was then the chief international trading area. As the Spanish navy and the Knights of Malta treated Jewish-chartered ships and goods as legitimate booty, fictitious Christian names were used in the paperwork of international transactions, including marine insurance. These developed into impersonal formulae. As well as developing letters of credit, the Jews invented bearer-bonds, another impersonal way of moving money. For an underprivileged community whose property was always under threat, and who might be forced to move at short notice, the emergence of reliable, impersonal paper money, whether bills of exchange or, above all, valid banknotes, was an enormous blessing.

“Hence the whole thrust of Jewish activity in the early modern period was to refine these devices and bring them into universal use. They strongly supported the emergence of the institutions which promoted paper values: the central banks, led by the Bank of England (1694) with its statutory right to issue notes, and the stock exchanges...

“In general, financial innovations which Jews pioneered in the eighteenth century, and which aroused much criticism then, became acceptable in the nineteenth.

“...Jews were in the vanguard in stressing the importance of the selling function... [and] were among the leaders in display, advertising and promotion...

“They aimed for the widest possible market. They appreciated the importance of economies of scale...

“Above all, Jews were more inclined than others in commerce to accept that businesses flourished by serving consumer interests rather than guild interests. The customer was always right. The market was the final judge. These axioms were not necessarily coined by Jews or exclusively observed by Jews, but Jews were quicker than most to apply them.

“Finally, Jews were exceptionally adept at gathering and making use of commercial intelligence. As the market became the dominant factor in all kinds of trading, and as it expanded into a series of global systems, news became of prime importance. This was perhaps the biggest single factor in Jewish trading and financial success...”¹⁴²

Thus, as Hannah Arendt writes, with the rise of capitalism, “Jewish banking capital became international. It was united by means of cross-marriages, and a truly international caste arose,” the consciousness of which engendered “a feeling of power and pride”.¹⁴³ After centuries of exile, the Jews - or at any rate a small group of successful Jewish bankers and entrepreneurs - were back at the heart of the Gentile world...

¹⁴² Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-246, 247, 283, 285, 286.

¹⁴³ Arendt, “On Totalitarianism”, in Mikhail Nazarov, *Tajna Rossii* (The Mystery of Russia), Moscow: “Russkaia idea”, 1999, p. 394

10. THE PEACE OF UTRECHT

“The beginning of the 18th century,” writes Paul Lay, “saw the reordering of three composite monarchies: Britain, Austria and Spain. The first of these, which took place in 1707, saw the English come to an arrangement with the Scots – they already shared a monarch – which preserved Scottish law and religion, established a parliamentary union and prosecuted economic integration. Four years later, the Austrians guaranteed the Hungarian constitution in exchange for Habsburg succession. Spain’s reordering took longer and was more complicated. The *Nueva Planta* – which began in the same year as the Anglo-Scottish union and was completed four years after the Austrian – bore down on Aragon, was more lenient towards the Catalans (despite or perhaps because of their recent rebellion), and abolished customs barriers.”¹⁴⁴

The union of England and Scotland into Great Britain was remarkable because, except in finance and foreign policy, it left Scotland with almost all its native institutions, including law, education and religion. The union was so peaceful, non-despotic and politically and economically successful that, as David Starkey points out, the Monarch of the United Kingdom changed religion on crossing from England into Scotland – he or she was Anglican in England and Reformed Protestant in Scotland.¹⁴⁵ By contrast, Louis XIV’s almost continuous wars of attempted conquest of his West European neighbours, undertaken for no other reason than personal glory, as he himself admitted, brought untold suffering both to France and her neighbours – especially the Germans of the Rhineland, who acquired a hatred of the French that was to explode after the even worse destruction wrought by Napoleon.

Louis’ bid for hegemony in defiance of the Westphalian system of international relations came to grief in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13). “In 1700,” as Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, “the Spanish King Carlos II died, leaving the Spanish empire to Louis XIV’s grandson Philipp of Anjou, a succession that, if accepted, would give the Sun King virtual dominion over not only much of Europe but of the Americas too. It was a step too far for Louis who – after decades of triumph and magnificence – was old, arrogant, and perhaps exhausted. Certainly France was over-extended. Louis was faced with a difficult choice but ultimately he accepted the inheritance and his grandson became king of Spain. In 1702 William III of England along with his native Holland, the Habsburg emperor and others put together another Grand Alliance against Louis, His ambitions and absolutist Catholic vision cost France dear. As Louis aged, as his heirs died, as France suffered poverty and hunger, his armies were humiliated by the outstanding commanders the duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy in a trans-European conflict known as the War of the Spanish Succession. Louis lived

¹⁴⁴ Lay, “Europe’s Inner Tensions”, *History Today*, January, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ “Historian David Starkey on Boris’s Landmark Election Victory”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7Yzy6Rqrmc>. Starkey points out that the extremely free union of England and Scotland was repeated in the highly successful creation of the “five eyes” dominions of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

too long: he saw France defeated and the deaths of his sons and grandsons. French invincibility was broken..."¹⁴⁶

In 1704 British naval forces captured Gibraltar, and a few weeks later Marlborough defeated a Franco-Bavarian army at Blenheim. "The Blenheim campaign," writes Jeremy Black, "was crucial in preventing French hegemony in western Europe. Allied with Britain and the Dutch against France, the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I (c. 1658-1705) was central to the struggle on the European mainland as his defeat would have allowed the French to dominate both Germany and northern Italy and to concentrate against the Anglo-Dutch efforts in the Low Countries and the lower Rhineland. A combination of Louis XIV of France, the Elector of Bavaria, Max Emanuel, and Hungarian rebels, threatened to overcome Leopold, and thus to end the Habsburg ability to counter-balance French power."¹⁴⁷

The defeat of France in the War of the Spanish Succession was indeed one of the most important - and bloody - in history. 31,000 were killed or wounded at Blenheim. Marlborough triumphed again, but at greater cost to himself, at Ramillies (1706) and Malplaquet (1709), where "the death toll was comparable with the terrible first day of the Somme in 1916, and it shocked all sides."¹⁴⁸ The result was a reordering of international politics on a relatively stable balance-of-power basis at the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713; the eleven bilateral treaties constituting the Treaty were the result of general exhaustion rather than the decisive victory of one side or the other.

The main task of the signatories was to rebalance the power of France, still the most powerful state in Europe, and Habsburg Austria. Britain gained Gibraltar, Minorca and Newfoundland, together with a lucrative thirty-year monopoly on trading African slaves with the Spanish colonies.¹⁴⁹

From now on, there were three kinds of state in Western Europe: old-style absolutism, represented by Spain and the Vatican, in which Church and feudalism still exerted their old power, but with less vigour than before; new-style absolutism, represented by France, in which the Church and feudalism remained subject to the king; and constitutional monarchy, represented by Britain and Holland, in which the king, while still strong, was increasingly subject to the law of parliament and, behind parliament, to Mammon.

After the terrible bloodletting of Louis XIV's wars, and the Treaty of Utrecht, it was to be hoped that there would be no more outbursts of absolutist madness. After all, even Louis himself, as he lay dying in 1715, appeared to have learned the folly of absolutism. "Aged seventy-six and tormented by the misery he felt he had inflicted on his country, he advised his bemused great-grandson and heir, the five-

¹⁴⁶ Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, pp. 258-259.

¹⁴⁷ Black, "Blenheim, Gibraltar and the Making of a Great Power", *History Today*, August, 2004, pp/ 10-11.

¹⁴⁸ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

¹⁴⁹ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

year-old Louis XV, 'Above all, remain at peace with your neighbours. I loved war too much. Do not follow me in that, or in overspending.' Repentance was too late. At the king's funeral, the bishop pronounced the pointed banality, *Mes frères, Dieu seul est grand, My brothers, God alone in great...*"¹⁵⁰

Utrecht did not, of course, destroy absolutism or the lust for glory; for those are perennial traits of fallen human nature. However, it introduced relative peace in Europe until the rise of Frederick the Great. As Philip Bobbitt writes, it is "the first European treaty that explicitly establishes a balance of power as the objective of the treaty regime. The letters patent that accompanied Article VI of the treaty between England, France, and the king of Spain whose dynastic rights were being set aside acknowledged the 'Maxim of securing for ever the universal Good and Quiet of Europe, by an equal weight of Power, so that many being united in one, the Balance of the Equality desired, might not turn to the Advantage of one, and the Danger and Hazard of the Rest'.

"This treaty permitted adjustments at the margin, but not the wholesale annexation of a national state; inhabitants now cared whether they were French, German, or Austrian. More importantly, securing the territorial state system had now become an important diplomatic objective; after Utrecht, the recognition of any state required its assurance to an international society that the system generally was not thereby jeopardized."¹⁵¹

Utrecht "subordinated the traditional criteria of inheritance and hierarchical allegiance (religious or political). In their place was a unity of strategic approach – a judgement by the society of states as to what was an appropriate strategic goal and what constitutional forms were legitimate. This is how it looked to Voltaire, writing in about 1750: 'For some time now it has been possible to consider Christian Europe, give or take Russia [a significant exception!] as "*une espèce de grande république*" – a sort of great commonwealth – partitioned into several states, some monarchic, the others mixed, some aristocratic, others popular, but all dealing with one another; all having the same principles of public and political law unknown in the other parts of the world. Because of these principles the European [states] never enslave their prisoners, they respect the ambassadors of their enemies, they jointly acknowledge the pre-eminence and various rights of [legitimate rulers], and above all they agree on the wise policy of maintaining an equal balance of power between themselves so far as they can, conducting continuous negotiations even in times of war, and exchanging resident ambassadors or less honourable spies, who can warn all the courts of Europe of the designs of any one, give the alarm at the same time and protect the weaker..."¹⁵²

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The Peace of Utrecht represents a point of multilateral equilibrium, when the

¹⁵⁰ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁵¹ Bobbit, *The Shield of Achilles*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 129.

¹⁵² Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

dominance of the continent by the empires of Philip V and Louis XIV was declining, and that of Napoleon was still to come. At this time, writes Stella Ghervas, “we find that there existed already a common agreement in the Law of Nations that no single power should ever extend a universal monarchy (hence, a continental empire) over Europe. Preventing such a thing from occurring was precisely the purpose of the balance of power, the principle of multilateral equilibrium included in the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713...”¹⁵³

This equilibrium did not prevent war – far from it: the eighteenth century was full of wars whose main aim was to adjust or restore the equilibrium when it was disturbed (mainly by Charles the Great of Sweden and Frederick the Great of Prussia). And democracy was not yet part of the consensus, as it is now. But all agreed that states were no longer the scattered dynastic possessions of kings or princes, but should be relatively compact and territorial. Frederick the Great waged war precisely to make Prussia a more compact kingdom. The Holy Roman Empire with its multitude of non-contiguous states, was a partial exception to that rule (which is one reason why Frederick despised it and believed it could be plundered). But its days were numbered...

Moreover, the territorial state then emerging almost everywhere “was characterized by a shift from the monarch-as-embodiment of sovereignty”, in the manner of Louis XIV’s *l’état, c’est moi*, “to the monarch as minister of sovereignty”¹⁵⁴, in the manner of modern constitutional monarchy.

Bobbitt continues: “In his correspondence during the treaty process, [the British Foreign Secretary] Bolingbroke repeatedly referred to negotiations about the ‘*système des affaires de l’Europe*’ and to a ‘system for a future settlement of Europe’. In fact, in the eighth of his ‘Letters on History’, which deals with Utrecht, he writes that the object of the congress was to achieve a ‘constitution of Europe’...

“... The language of this new consensus was reflected in four striking contrasts with the idiom it superseded.

“First, the language of ‘interests’ replaced that of ‘rights’. ‘Rights’ were something that kings might assert against each other; ‘interests’ were something that states might have in common. Whereas the Westphalian monarchs had been concerned to establish the rights of the kingly states – the legal status of dynastic descent; the absolute right of the king over the subjects, including especially control over the religious liberties of the persons within his realm; and the perfect sovereignty of each kingly state unfettered by any external authority – the society of territorial states was concerned instead with the mutual relationships among states, specifically with maintaining a balance of power within that society itself. At one point Bolingbroke observed explicitly that ‘enough has been said

¹⁵³ Ghervas, “Antidotes to Empire: From the Congress System to the European Union”, in John W. Boyer and Berthold Molden (eds.), *Eutropes: The Paradox of European Empire*, Paris and Chicago: Cahiers Parisiens, vol. 7, 2014, p. 52.

¹⁵⁴ Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

concerning right, which was in truth little regarded by any of the parties concerned... in the whole course of the proceedings. Particular interests alone were regarded.'

"Second, aggrandizement - so integral to the structure of the kingly state - was replaced by the goal of secure 'barriers' to such a degree that claims for new accessions were universally clothed in the language of defensive barriers. Aggrandizement per se was frowned upon and even regarded as illegitimate.

"Third, the word *state* underwent a change. A 'state' became the name of a territory, not a people, as would occur later when state-nations began to appear, not a dynastic house, as was the case at Westphalia...

"Fourth, whereas the kingly state had seen a balance of power as little more than a temptation for hegemonic ambition to upset, the territorial states viewed the balance of power as the fundamental structure of the constitutional system itself...

"*Territorial* states are so named owing to their preoccupation with the territory of the state. As part of the Treaty of Utrecht, the first agreements were introduced fixing customs duties levied at the state frontier and diminishing the role of internal customs duties. The 'most favoured nation' clause makes its appearance at Utrecht. This attentiveness to commercial matters - the peace was accompanied by an extensive series of commercial treaties among the signatories - is also characteristic of the territorial states. Rather than focusing on the communities and towns that defined the boundaries of the kingly state, the territorial state attempts to fix a frontier boundary, a line that marks the jurisdiction of the state. These boundaries are crucial if bartering is to take place, and dynastic rights to be ignored, in maintaining the balance of power, so we may say that for this reason also the territorialism of the eighteenth century state favoured a system of perfecting the balance of power among states - but why did these states seek such a system in the first place?

"The territorial state aggrandizes itself by means of peace because peace is the most propitious climate for the growth of commerce..."¹⁵⁵

Here we come to the nub of the matter. The medieval system, imperfect though it was, had restrained both religious sectarianism and the growth of laissez-faire capitalism. In the early modern period this restraint was removed, leading to savage wars of religion and absolutism (the two usually went together). Then, towards the end of the seventeenth century, as religious passions cooled, and the ambitions of the greatest despots such as Louis XIV were checked, a new passion came to the fore in the minds of the propertied classes - laissez-faire capitalism, whose rise was aided by the reinvention of paper money (it had previously been invented in China), by the introduction of private banking on a larger scale, and by the invention of the stock market. The latter produced the first massive financial speculations, such as the South Sea Bubble in England and the Mississippi

¹⁵⁵ Bobbitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 522-523, 527.

Company in France. The most important men now, as Jonathan Swift noted in 1710, were “quite different from any that were ever known before the Revolution [of 1688]; consisting of those... whose whole fortunes lie in funds and stocks; so that power, which... used to follow land, is now gone over into money...”¹⁵⁶

Since one cannot serve both God and mammon, this trend inevitably meant that religion weakened. Already in 1668 in Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras* we can see a revulsion from the methods of the wars of religion:

*Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery...
As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.*

And the rise of another, no less pernicious tendency:

*What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
About two hundred poundes a year.
And that which was true before
Proved false again? Two hundred more...*

The leader of this brave new world of commerce and balance-of-power politics was England. Her revolution had removed the last vestiges of feudalism and absolutism, and she now had a banking system that financed a powerful fleet that dominated global maritime trade and interfered in continental Europe - mainly to limit the power of potential European hegemon - first Louis XIV and his successors, and then Napoleon.

¹⁵⁶ Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

11. ENGLAND'S CONSERVATIVE ENLIGHTENMENT

Britain now, as Norman Davies writes, “emerged as the foremost maritime power, as the leading diplomatic broker, and as the principal opponent of French supremacy...”¹⁵⁷ The word now was “Britain” rather than England, because England and Scotland had become a single state. (Ireland would become part of the Union in 1801.) The immediate reason for the Union was a failed Scottish colonial venture in New Caledonia. English cash was needed to prevent the ruin of the Scottish finances... But there were other reasons, the most important of which was that they were both fighting the same enemy, Catholic France, and the war effort “required ever greater coordination north and south. It made no sense at all to have two separate commercial and colonial policies, for example. Whig elites on both sides of the border agreed that whatever their differences, the containment of Louis XIV came first. So, in 1707, they concluded an Act of Union, in which Scotland received generous representation at Westminster, and retained its legal and educational system, but gave up its separate foreign and security policy. And as the Union was made in order to prosecute the war, so did the war make the Union. The common cause against popery and Universal Monarchy welded together the two halves more efficiently than bribery, intimidation or crude commercial advantage ever could have done.”¹⁵⁸

The Union was soon producing important intellectual and cultural fruits; for it would be English *and* Scottish thinkers, from Locke and Newton to Hume and Adam Smith, who gave to this new world the first sketch of that new philosophy of life known as the Enlightenment...

In 1706 Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, wrote to a comrade in the Netherlands: “There is a mighty Light which spreads its self over the world especially in those two free Nations of England and Holland; on whom the Affairs of Europe now turn; and if Heaven sends us soon a peace suitable to the great Socrates we have had, it is impossible but Letters and Knowledge must advance in greater Proportion than ever... I am far from thinking that the cause of Theisme will lose anything by fair Dispute. I can never... wish better for it when I wish the Establishment of an entire Philosophical Liberty.”¹⁵⁹

This quotation combines many of the characteristic themes of the Enlightenment: the image of light itself; the optimism, the belief that knowledge and education will sweep all before it; the belief in free speech, which, it was felt then, would not damage faith; above all, the belief in liberty. And indeed, with the English Enlightenment there came a tolerance that went far beyond the bounds of what had been considered tolerable in the past. Thus while Catholicism was still banned, because that was considered a political threat, the Earl of Shaftesbury was

¹⁵⁷ Norman Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 625.

¹⁵⁸ Bernard Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 71.

¹⁵⁹ Shaftesbury, in Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

allowed “to print his scandalous view that religion should be optional and atheism considered a possible form of belief” ...¹⁶⁰

“The Enlightenment was not a crusade,” writes Mark Goldie, “but a tone of voice, a sensibility.”¹⁶¹ That sensibility consisted in the utterance of reasonable and useful truths which might be considered dull platitudes if they were not said with elegance and wit, as for example by the Catholic poet Alexander Pope:

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man’s erring judgement, and misguide the mind
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is PRIDE, the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever Nature has in worth deny’d,
She gives in large recruits of needful pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swelled with wind;
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
Make use of every friend – and every foe.
A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring...¹⁶²

However, the Enlightenment was more than a sensibility: it was also, and primarily, a world-view, which can be summarised as follows: “All men are by nature equal; all have the same natural rights to strive after happiness, to self-preservation, to the free control of their persons and property, to resist oppression, to hold and express whatever opinions they please. The people is sovereign; it cannot alienate its sovereignty; and every government not established by the free consent of the community is a usurpation. The title-deeds of man’s rights, as Sieyès said, are not lost. They are preserved in his reason. Reason is infallible and omnipotent. It can discover truth and compel conviction. Rightly consulted, it will reveal to us that code of nature which should be recognised and enforced by the civil law. No evil enactment which violates natural law is valid. Nature meant man to be virtuous and happy. He is vicious and miserable, because he transgresses her laws and despises her teaching.

“The essence of these doctrines is that man should reject every institution and creed which cannot approve itself to pure reason, the reason of the individual. It is true that if reason is to be thus trusted it must be unclouded by prejudice and superstition. These are at once the cause and effect of the defective and mischievous social, political and religious institutions, which have perverted

¹⁶⁰ Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

¹⁶¹ Goldie, “Priesthood and the Birth of Whiggism”, quoted in Porter, *op. cit.*, p. xxi.

¹⁶² Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, lines 201-217.

man's nature, inflamed his passions, and distorted his judgement. Therefore to overthrow prejudice and superstition should be the first effort of those who would restore to man his natural rights."¹⁶³

The English Enlightenment rested especially on the achievements of Sir Isaac Newton, whose *Principia* astonished the world, and whose *Opticks*, by explicating the nature of light, provided the Enlightenment thinkers with the perfect image of their programme of intellectual enlightenment.

As Alexander Pope put it,

*Nature, and Nature's Laws lay Hid from Sight;
God said, 'Let Newton be!', and all was Light.*

Voltaire so admired Newton that he called his mistress "Venus-Newton". Newtonian physics appeared to promise the unlocking of all Nature's secrets by the use of reason alone – although it must be remembered that Newton believed in Scriptural revelation as well reason.

Roy Porter writes: "Newton was the god who put English science on the map, an intellectual colossus, flanked by Bacon and Locke.

*Let Newton, Pure Intelligence, whom God
To mortals lent to trace His boundless works
From laws sublimely simple, speak thy fame
In all philosophy.*

Sang James Thomson in his 'Ode on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton' (1727). Later, Wordsworth was more romantic:

*Newton with his prism and silent face,
... a mind for ever,
Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone.*

'Newton' the icon proved crucial to the British Enlightenment, universally praised except by a few obdurate outsiders, notably William Blake, who detested him and all his works.

"What was crucial about Newton – apart from the fact that, so far as his supporters were concerned, he was a Briton blessed with omniscience – was that he put forward a vision of Nature which, whilst revolutionary, reinforced latitudinarian Christianity. For all but a few diehards, Newtonianism was an invincible weapon against atheism, upholding no mere First Cause but an actively intervening personal Creator who continually sustained Nature and, once in a while, applied a rectifying touch. Like Locke, furthermore, the public Newton

¹⁶³ F.F. Willert, "Philosophy and the Revolution", *The Cambridge Modern History*, Cambridge University Press, vol. VIII: The French Revolution, 1934, pp. 2-3.

radiated intellectual humility. Repudiating the *a priori* speculations of Descartes and later rationalists, he preferred empiricism: he would 'frame no hypotheses' (*hypotheses non fingo*), and neither would he pry into God's secrets. Thus, while he had elucidated the law of gravity, he did not pretend to divine its causes. Not least, in best enlightened fashion, Newtonian science set plain facts above mystifying metaphysics. In Newtonianism, British scientific culture found its enduring rhetoric: humble, empirical, co-operative, pious, useful. 'I don't know what I may seem to the world, but, as to myself,' he recalled, in his supreme soundbite, 'I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me'....

"The affinities between the Newtonian cosmos and the post-1688 polity were played up. In the year after the master's death, his disciple J.T. Desaguliers produced an explicit application of physics to politics in *The Newtonian System of the World: The Best Model of Government, an Allegorical Poem* (1728), where the British monarchy was celebrated as the guarantor of liberty and rights: 'attracting is now as universal in the political, as the philosophical world'.

*What made the Planets in such Order move,
He said, was Harmony and mutual Love.*

God himself was commended as a kind of constitutional monarch, "coerced" by his own laws:

*His Pow'r, coerc'ed by Laws, still leaves them free,
Directs but not Destroys their Liberty.*

The *Principia* thus provided an atomic exploratory model not just for Nature but for society too (freely moving individuals governed by law)...

"This enthronement of the mechanical philosophy, the key paradigm switch of the 'scientific revolution', in turn sanctioned the new assertions of man's rights over Nature so salient to enlightened thought... No longer alive or occult but rather composed of largely inert matter, Nature could be weighted, measured - and mastered. The mechanical philosophy fostered belief that man was permitted, indeed duty-bound, to apply himself to Nature for (in Bacon's words) the 'glory of God and the relief of man's estate'. Since Nature was not, after all, sacred or 'ensouled', there could be nothing impious about utilizing and dominating it. The progressiveness of science thus became pivotal to enlightened propaganda. The world was now well-lit, as bright as light itself."¹⁶⁴

But the light in question was a light that cast much of reality into the shade. For "with the Newtonian mechanistic synthesis," writes Philip Sherrard, "... the world-picture, with man in it, is flattened and neutralized, stripped of all sacred or spiritual qualities, of all hierarchical differentiation, and spread out before the

¹⁶⁴ Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136, 137, 138, 142.

human observer like a blank chart on which nothing can be registered except what is capable of being measured.”¹⁶⁵

Locke’s philosophy also began with a *tabula rasa*, the mind of man before empirical sensations have been imprinted upon it. The development of the mind then depends on the movement and association and ordering of sensations and the concepts that arise from them, rather like the atoms of Newton’s universe. And the laws of physical motion and attraction correspond to the laws of mental inference and deduction, the product of the true *deus ex machina* of the Newtonian-Lockean universe – Reason. Locke’s political and psychological treatises promised that all the problems of human existence could be amicably settled by reason rather than revelation, and reasonableness rather than passion. Traditional religion was not to be discarded, but purified of irrational elements, placed on a firmer, more rational foundation; for, as Benjamin Whichcote said, with Locke’s agreement, “there is nothing so intrinsically rational as religion”.¹⁶⁶ Hence the title of another of Locke’s works: *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), in which only one key dogma was proclaimed as necessary: that Jesus was the Messiah, proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom. Reason, for Locke, was “the candle of the Lord”, “a natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of light, and Fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties”.¹⁶⁷ Armed with reason, and even without Christ, one can know what is the just life lived in accordance with natural law.

“Locke,” writes Roy Porter, “had no truck with the fideist line that reason and faith were at odds; for the latter was properly ‘nothing but a firm assent of the mind: which... cannot be accorded to anything but upon good reason’. Gullibility was not piety. To accept a book, for instance, as revelation without checking out the author was gross superstition – how could it honour God to suppose that faith overrode reason, for was not reason no less God-given?”

“In a typically enlightened move, Locke restricted the kinds of truths which God might reveal: revelation could not be admitted contrary to reason, and ‘faith can never convince us of anything that contradicts our knowledge’. Yet there remained matters on which hard facts were unobtainable, as, for instance, Heaven or the resurrection of the dead: ‘being beyond the discovery or reason’, such issues were ‘purely matters for faith’.

“In short, Locke raised no objections to revealed truth as such, but whether something ‘be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge – it was the constant court of appeal. The *credo, quia impossibile est* of the early Church fathers might seem the acme of devotion, but it ‘would prove a very ill rule for men to choose their opinions or religion by’. Unless false prophets were strenuously avoided, the mind would fall prey to ‘enthusiasm’, that eruption of the ‘ungrounded fancies of a

¹⁶⁵ Sherrard, *The Rape of Man and Nature*, Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1987, p. 69.

¹⁶⁶ Whichcote, in Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

¹⁶⁷ Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, book IV, chapter 19.

man's own brain'. Doubtless, God might speak directly to holy men, but Locke feared the exploitation of popular credulity, and urged extreme caution."¹⁶⁸

Lockean rationalism led to Deism, which sought to confine God's activity in the world to the original act of creation. Of course, the original creation was admitted to be a miracle, but miracles in general were not accepted. This made a nonsense of the Christian faith, which is based entirely on miracles – but consistency was never a virtue of eighteenth-century (or contemporary) rationalism. As St. Nikolai Velimirovich writes: "How can those who believe in God say that God does not work wonders? Why do they call Him the Almighty if He is not the One Who sustains and preserves the world, His own creation, by His everpresent activity which is in itself a miracle?"

Others still, who believe that God created man, doubt that He can heal the sick or cause the blind to see according to their faith and prayer. What inconsistency! Cannot the One Who performed the greatest miracle of all perform also the least miracle? Cannot the builder who built the house also repair it?

Those who deny the existence of miracles are in reality denying two things. First they are denying prayer because in each prayer people seek the intervention of God, i.e. a miracle from God, in all their sorrows and weaknesses. If this intention were impossible then all the prayers mankind has ever offered up to God have been in vain, foolish and pitiful. Second, the non-existence of miracles would rule out the freedom of God in the world He created. Man, by this line of reasoning would have the freedom to tame wild beasts, to graft fruit-trees, etc., and God would have no freedom to move about and act in His own creation. How mindless and impudent to say that the creature has freedom and the Creator has not! – that the servants, slaves and hired labourers may do whatever they wish in the Master's garden and the Master may not!"¹⁶⁹

The Deists' understanding of God was closely modelled on the English monarchy: "'God is a monarch', opined Viscount Bolingbroke, 'yet not an arbitrary but a limited monarch': His power was limited by His reason".¹⁷⁰ All history since the creation could be understood by reason alone without recourse to Divine Revelation or Divine intervention.

Thus in 1730 Matthew Tyndal published his *Christianity as Old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature*. In it he declared: "If nothing but Reasoning can improve Reason, and no Book can improve my Reason in any Point, but as it gives me convincing Proofs of its Reasonableness; a Revelation, that will not suffer us to judge of its Dictates by our Reason, is so far from improving Reason, that it forbids the Use of it... Understanding... can only be improv'd by studying the Nature and Reason of things: 'I applied my Heart' (says the wisest of

¹⁶⁸ Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁹ Velimirovich, "God's Miracles: the Foretaste of Eternal Goodness".

¹⁷⁰ Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

Men) 'to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom and the Reason of Things' (Ecclesiastes 7.25)..."

Of course, the word "Reason" has a long and honourable history in Christian theology; Christ Himself is the Logos, and "Logos" can be translated by "Reason". But what the Deists were proposing was no God-enlightened use of human reason. Reason for them was something divorced from Revelation and therefore from Christ; it was something purely ratiocinative, rationalist, not the grace-filled, revelation-oriented reason of the Christian theologians. "Reason is for the philosopher what Grace is for the Christian", wrote Diderot.¹⁷¹

It followed from this Deistic concept of God and Divine Providence that all the complicated theological speculation and argument of earlier centuries was as superfluous as revelation itself. The calm, lucid religion of nature practised by philosopher-scientists would replace the arid, tortured religion of the theologians. And such a religion, as well as being simpler, would be much more joyful than the old. No more need to worry about sin, or the wrath of God, or hell. No more *odium theologicum*, just *gaudium naturale*.

As Porter writes, "rejecting the bogeyman of a vengeful Jehovah blasting wicked sinners, enlightened divines instated a more optimistic (pelagian) theology, proclaiming the benevolence of the Supreme Being and man's capacity to fulfil his duties through his God-given faculties, the chief of these being reason, that candle of the Lord."¹⁷²

This Deist, man-centred view of the universe was sometimes seen as being summed up in Alexander Pope's verse:

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.*¹⁷³

However, Pope, a Roman Catholic and therefore a member of a persecuted minority, also expressed a scepticism about the limits of human knowledge that provided a necessary counter-balance to the prevailing optimism:

*Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err.*¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Diderot, in Stephen J. Lee, *Aspects of European History, 1494-1789*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 252.

¹⁷² Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹⁷³ Pope, *An Essay on Man*, ii, 1-2 (1733).

¹⁷⁴ Pope, *An Essay on Man*, ii, 3-10.

But for the Deists this was too sceptical; they believed in this world with its delightfully harmonious laws, reflecting a wise, benevolent Creator and completely comprehensible to the human mind. Not for them the traditional awareness of the Fall. They knew nothing of the pessimism of Rousseau: "How blind are we in the midst of so much enlightenment!"¹⁷⁵

For the Deists, religion had to be happy and reasonable. "Religion is a cheerful thing," Lord Halifax explained to his daughter. And Lord Shaftesbury enlarged: 'Good Humour is not only the best Security against Enthusiasm: Good Humour is also the best Foundation of Piety and True Religion.' For the proof of that religion, you had only to look about you. It was perfectly evident to anyone standing in the grounds of any English stately home that a discriminating gentleman had created them: how much more overwhelming evidence of that even greater Gentleman above, who had so recently revealed to Sir Isaac Newton that his Estate too was run along rational lines..."¹⁷⁶

Porter writes: "The Ancients taught: 'be virtuous', and Christianity: 'have faith'; but the Moderns proclaimed: 'be happy'. Replacing the holiness preached by the Church, the great ideal of the modern world has been happiness, and it was the thinkers of the 18th century who first insisted upon that value shift.

*Oh Happiness! Our being's end and aim!
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! Whate'er thy name...*

sang poet Alexander Pope. 'Happiness is the only thing of real value in existence', proclaimed the essayist Soame Jenyns. 'Pleasure is now the principal remaining part of your education,' Lord Chesterfield instructed his son.

"And if phrases like 'pleasure-loving' always hinted at the unacceptable face of hedonism, it would be hard to deny that the quest for happiness - indeed the right to happiness - became a commonplace of Enlightenment thinking, even before it was codified into Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' definition. That formula was itself a variant upon phrases earlier developed by the moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson, and by the Unitarian polymath, Joseph Priestley, who deemed that 'the good and happiness of the members, that is, the majority of the members of any state, is the great standard by which everything related to that state must finally be determined.'

"The quest for happiness became central to enlightened thinking throughout Europe, and it would be foolish to imply that British thinkers had any monopoly of the idea. Nevertheless, it was a notion which found many of its earliest champions in this country. 'I will faithfully pursue that happiness I propose to myself,' ... had insisted at the end of the 17th century. And English thinkers were to the fore in justifying happiness as a goal....

¹⁷⁵ Rousseau, *Letter to D'Alembert* (1758).

¹⁷⁶ Gascoigne, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

“What changes of mind made hedonism acceptable to the Enlightenment? In part, a new turn in theology itself. By 1700 rational Anglicanism was picturing God as the benign Architect of a well-designed universe. The Earth was a law-governed habitat meant for mankind’s use; man could garner the fruits of the soil, tame the animals and quarry the crust. Paralleling this new Christian optimism ran lines of moral philosophy and aesthetics espoused by the Third Earl of Shaftesbury and his admirer, Francis Hutcheson. Scorning gravity and the grave, Shaftesbury’s rhapsodies to the pleasures of virtue pointed the way for those who would champion the virtues of pleasure.

“Early Enlightenment philosophers like Locke gave ethics a new basis in psychology. It was emphasized that, contrary to Augustinian rigour, human nature was not hopelessly depraved; rather the passions were naturally benign – and in any case pleasure was to be derived from ‘sympathy’ with them. Virtue was, in short, part and parcel of a true psychology of pleasure and was its own reward. Good taste and good morals fused in an aesthetic of virtue.

“Like Nature at large, man became viewed as a machine made up of parts, open to scientific study through the techniques of a ‘moral anatomy’ which would unveil psychological no less than physical laws of motion. Building on such natural scientific postulates, thinkers championed individualism and the right to self-improvement. It became common, as in Bernard Mandeville’s *Fable of the Bees*, to represent society as a hive made up of individuals, each pulsating with needs, desires and drives which hopefully would work for the best: private vices, public benefits. ‘The wants of the mind are infinite,’ asserted the property developer and physician Nicholas Barbon, expressing views which pointed towards Adam Smith’s celebration of ‘the uniform, constant and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition’. ‘Self love’, asserted Joseph Tucker, Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, ‘is the great Mover in human Nature’.”¹⁷⁷

The English Enlightenment was politically conservative. For the revolution had already taken place in England, and by 1700 the essential freedoms, especially the freedom of the press, which the Enlightenment thinkers so valued, had already been won. “In these circumstances,” writes Porter, “enlightened ideologies were to assume a unique inflection in England: one less concerned to lambast the status quo than to vindicate it against adversaries left and right, high and low. Poachers were turning gamekeepers; implacable critics of princes now became something more like apologists for them; those who had held that power corrupted now found themselves, with the advent of political stabilisation, praising the Whig regime as the bulwark of Protestant liberties....

“... the ‘conservative enlightenment’ was thus a holding operation, rationalizing the post-1688 settlement, pathologizing its enemies and dangling

¹⁷⁷ Porter, “Architects of Happiness”, *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 1, N 8, December, 2000, pp. 15-16.

seductive prospects of future security and prosperity. The Enlightenment became established and the established became enlightened."¹⁷⁸

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The last important figure in the conservative, English phase of the Enlightenment, although he was a Frenchman, was Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu. His *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of the Laws) was published in French in 1748, and in English in 1750. Although placed by the Roman Catholic Church on its List of Prohibited Books, it still had an enormous influence, most notably on Catherine the Great and the Founding Fathers of the United States Constitution. Macaulay mentioned Montesquieu's continuing importance when he wrote in his 1827 essay entitled "Machiavelli" that "Montesquieu enjoys, perhaps, a wider celebrity than any political writer of modern Europe..."

"In his classification of political systems, Montesquieu defines three main kinds: republican, monarchical, and despotic. As he defines them, Republican political systems vary depending on how broadly they extend citizenship rights - those that extend citizenship relatively broadly are termed democratic republics, while those that restrict citizenship more narrowly are termed aristocratic republics. The distinction between monarchy and despotism hinges on whether or not a fixed set of laws exists that can restrain the authority of the ruler: if so, the regime counts as a monarchy; if not, it counts as despotism.

"Driving each classification of political system, according to Montesquieu, must be what he calls a 'principle. This principle acts as a spring or motor to motivate behavior on the part of the citizens in ways that will tend to support that regime and make it function smoothly.

"For democratic republics (and to a somewhat lesser extent for aristocratic republics), this spring is the love of virtue - the willingness to put the interests of the community ahead of private interests.

"For monarchies, the spring is the love of honor - the desire to attain greater rank and privilege.

"Finally, for despotisms, the spring is the fear of the ruler.

"A political system cannot last long if its appropriate principle is lacking. Montesquieu claims, for example, that the English failed to establish a republic after the Civil War (1642-1651) because the society lacked the requisite love of virtue."

Perhaps Montesquieu's main contribution to political theory was his concept of the separation of the powers of government. "Building on and revising a discussion in John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, Montesquieu argues that

¹⁷⁸ Porter, *The Enlightenment*, pp. 31, 32.

the executive, legislative, and judicial functions of government should be assigned to different bodies, so that attempts by one branch of government to infringe on political liberty might be restrained by the other branches."¹⁷⁹

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The main tendency of the English Enlightenment, as we have seen, was towards universalism, science, materialism and a conservative liberalism that claimed to believe in God, king and country while undermining them in fact. Most people – not only Englishmen, but also foreigners such as Voltaire – believed that the English constitutional monarchy was the best form of government. Of course, there were exceptions. The great poet Alexander Pope fiercely satirized the corruption of the time, and wrote:

For Forms of Government let fools contest; whatever is best administered is best.

Also characteristic of the period was cosmopolitanism. Thus the monarchy, from the time of George I, was German; the language of the court was French; the main artistic models and influences in music and architecture were Italian. Specifically English traditions in the arts (which had reached a high level in the previous century under the architect Sir Christopher Wren and the great composer Henry Purcell) fell into decay. However, the crushing victories of the Duke of Marlborough over the French in the War of the Spanish Succession, followed, a half-century later, by the still greater triumphs over the French in the Seven Years War (which laid the foundations of the British Empire), stimulated a not unnatural feeling of patriotic pride in the English, together with the feeling that the English were God's people with a mission to bring faith and civilization to other peoples beyond the ocean.

This revived patriotism and religiosity required artistic expression and confirmation, which it received it by the arrival on English shores of Georg Friedrich Handel, a German by birth, who came to England originally in the service of a very German employer, King George I; and his early compositions were by no means English in style or inspiration. Thus he made his reputation with Italian-style operas such as *Rinaldo* (1711), and imported large numbers of Italian and German singers and musicians into London to perform his works. However, in 1727 Handel applied for, and received, British citizenship; and in October of that year, at the coronation of King George II, he embarked on a new and extraordinarily successful career as the English composer *par excellence* by composing, for unprecedentedly vast vocal and orchestral resources, four coronation anthems in the English language.

“English Protestantism” write David Starkey and Katie Greening, “– with its single-minded emphasis on the pure, unadulterated word of God – had historically been a great enemy of music. But Handel responded more imaginatively than any Englishman to the power and poetry of the English of the King James Bible and

¹⁷⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Spirit_of_the_Laws.

Prayer Book, to create a new musical language. In the coronation anthems he put the new language at the service of the Hanoverian monarchy, and the anthems were an instant hit – in particular ‘Zadok the Priest’, which remains the most celebrated and most frequently played of the four... The text it uses is a biblical passage describing the anointing of King Solomon, which has been used at coronations since Anglo-Saxon times...”¹⁸⁰

So at a time of unprecedented change in a secular and modernist direction, England through the genius of Handel and his English-speaking religious oratorios received a conservative, traditionalist stimulus that placed a permanent seal on the English soul. If “Zadok the Priest” harked back to Anglo-Saxon times, when England was Orthodox, and reinforced the innate monarchism of the English, his most famous composition, the glorious oratorio *The Messiah* (1741), has probably done more than any other single work of art to preserve the remnants of Christian faith in the English-speaking peoples worldwide. Mozart re-orchestrated the work, but insisted that any alteration to Handel’s score should not be interpreted as an effort to improve the music. No less was the praise from Ludwig van Beethoven, who said of Handel’s works: “Go to him to learn how to achieve great effects, by such simple means.”¹⁸¹

And so, at the very moment that England was plunging herself into the darkness of the all-too-human “Enlightenment”, God in His great mercy reminded us through Handel’s works that there is another, true and Divine Enlightenment which no darkness can ever quench.

In 1745, the Stuart pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, unsuccessfully invaded England from Scotland. To stir up patriotic resistance to the invader, the native English composer Thomas Arne, Handel’s only real rival, composed “God save the king!”, which became the national anthem of several countries.¹⁸² Not to be outdone in patriotic zeal, in the next year Handel composed *Judas Maccabaeus*. “At each performance,” write Starkey and Greening, the audience “were given a booklet containing all the words so they could read along to the singing. Thus they would also have understood the obvious parallels between the Israelites and the modern English nation: these were a nationalistic people who regarded themselves under the special protection of God, and the ‘just wars’ Israelites waged with their enemies would have immediately chimed with English audiences...”

“In the years that followed, Handel would write a series of oratorios that would each present a new instalment of the ancient story of God’s chosen people – the story of ancient Israel. But it was also the story of God’s new chosen people in a new Holy Land named Great Britain. The idea of a divinely ordained monarchy no longer held sway in Hanoverian England: instead, it had been replaced by the idea

¹⁸⁰ Starkey and Greening, *Music & Monarchy*, London: BBC Books, 2013, p. 244.

¹⁸¹ “Handel: Fifteen Facts about the Great Composer”, <http://www.classicfm.com/composers/handel/guides/handel-facts-composer/>

¹⁸² Starkey and Greening, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-259.

of a 'divinely ordained' nation. Oratorio was the soundtrack for this new ideology, combining religious zeal with a strident national pride..."¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Starkey and Greening, *op. cit.*, pp. 272, 273.

12. THE ENLIGHTENMENT, INDUSTRY AND MONEY

Hardly coincidentally, England's conservative Enlightenment emphasizing the materialist values of happiness, prosperity and pleasure coincided with what has been called the "proto-Industrial revolution". As Tombs writes: "Although England had always been one of the world's most prosperous countries, for centuries richer than many developing countries in the twentieth century, by the eighteenth century it was one of the very richest, with a growing urban, manufacturing and service sector exceeded only by Holland. Its income per capita in 1760 was slightly above that of India in 2000. Its workers' wages held up, while other countries, such as once world-leading Italy, were inexorably impoverished by rising populations. Although China and India were the world's main exporters of manufactured goods – cotton, silk, porcelain – and Asia had long enjoyed sophisticated commercial systems, average living standards were much lower than in England.

"Then came something new, first seen in Holland and England in the late 1600s. People whose basic needs were fulfilled developed ever-increasing appetites for comfort, novelty and pleasure; and these appetites generated a widespread eagerness to earn more money to gratify them. This is probably connected with the slackening of religious conflict, the growth of 'politeness', and the appearance of exotic imports from Asia and the Americas. People began acquiring more, and new types of goods, they abandoned the uniform, unchanging, hard-wearing items that had satisfied most people since time immemorial – solid wood, rough leather, pewter, thick woollens. Household furniture was upgraded: in came wardrobes, comfortable chairs, clocks, mirrors, earthenware, even china. Old items were replaced with newer, more fashionable ones.

"There was a revolution in the clothing of ordinary people: in came white linen undergarments, white stockings, colourful outer clothes, ribbons, men's wigs, women's silk hats, neckerchiefs, silver buckles. The aim was to be neat, clean, modern and respectable, but not 'flashy' – the look of Enlightenment England. Regional styles of dress disappeared. People were not aping their betters, but showing they were as good as anyone. Young men and apprentices worked and spent – and sometimes stole – to look what they called 'right', 'knowing' and 'genteel'... Clothing was the spearhead of the Industrial Revolution, because it began the mass consumption of machine-made goods. Cotton, adopted first by women for its brightness and cleanness, became the leading sector of industrialization. Buying goods became a form of enjoyment and self-invention. This was not a dour Protestant work ethic of thrift and saving, but a romantic work ethic based on self-expression, ambition and enjoyment – 'daydreams of desire'. Fashion and novelty were the aims; and hence the appetite for goods was insatiable.

"People began to consume more and more things that were merely pleasurable – and novel pleasures at that: tobacco, tea, sugar, coffee, fresh white bread, convenience foods and alcohol. Harvest labourers in 1750s Hertfordshire were being fed not just beer, mutton and carrots, but tea, coffee, biscuits, chocolate, sago

and rum. Many of these new pleasures had a social aspect – smoking, drinking, showing off new clothes – and this meant having more money to spend in taverns, gin shops, coffee houses and pleasure gardens, all characteristics of eighteenth-century society.

“These new pleasures began to supplement and even replace, the old unchanging pleasures of Merrie England: eating a lot, drinking a lot of beer, and taking plenty of time off (more leisure was taken before 1600 than would be taken again until the later twentieth century). Spending more required people to work longer and differently. People took fewer days off (facilitated by the Commonwealth’s abolition of saints’ days, not reversed at the Restoration). More married women took jobs. Working hours began a steady rise until they reached heights probably unprecedented in world history, on average 65-70 hours a week, compared with 40-50 hours in the developing world today.

“New habits of consumption reached not only the ‘middling sort’, but trickled down to the poor, who acquired more goods than would have been available to a prosperous yeoman a century earlier: ownership of saucepans, dishes, clocks, pictures, mirrors, curtains, lamps, and tea and coffee utensils at least doubled between 1670 and 1730. Watches, usually in silver cases – a new fashion item – become general among English working men in the second half of the century. They were a coveted means of display, with ribbons and seals dangling from the breeches pocket. They were also (as they could be pawned) an investment. By the 1790s there were an estimated 800,000 silver and 400,000 gold watches in England.

“What is termed proto-industry (rural, household-based production for non-local markets) supplied these new appetites to get and spend. This ‘industrial revolution’ was powered more by perspiration than technological inspiration. Similar appetites fuelled the Asian ‘Tiger economies’ in the late twentieth century, where meat, televisions, jeans, motor-cycles and mobile phones played the role of tea and sugar, watches, cotton clothes and crockery in providing incentives to earn and consume.

“Women played a leading part in these changes, for girls and married women had unusual economic and social autonomy. After the Black Death (again), when higher wages and social mobility increased socio-economic freedom, there developed in north-west Europe a characteristic marriage pattern. It had, and still has, profound cultural and social effects. In contrast to other continents (where marriage was and still is universal, young and arranged, where new couples lives within an extended family and where young women occupy an extremely subordinate position) English women had more choice of partner and married much later, often their late twenties. The Poor Law may have lessened the need to have lots of children, as parents were not solely dependent on their children in old age. Moreover, English law, though it made married women subordinate to their husbands, recognized single women as independent of their male relatives. Late marriage gave young people several years of earning, spending and relative independence, often away from home. Among the consequences were rising premarital conceptions (from 15 to 40 percent over the eighteenth century) and

illegitimacy (from 1 to 5 percent of births – nearly 1960s levels). In all, over half of first-born children were conceived out of wedlock, though usually with marriage the expected, if not obligatory, consequence. Marriage and reproduction were responsive to economic opportunity: couples married when they could afford it, and set up households independent of parents and in-laws. Wives' and husbands' roles were increasingly similar and equal, with women often heads of families and owners of businesses. Family members were more willing and able to seek a variety of work – it was rare for fathers, mothers and children to work together in the same occupations. By the time of the Napoleonic Wars, two-thirds of married women were earning wages in such trades as retailing, lace-making, brewing and spinning – a much higher proportion than in most of the world today. Often it was the new earnings of young people and married women which enabled individuals and households to acquire new luxuries..."¹⁸⁴

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In spite of this rapid increase in income from industry, the aristocratic ethos of the English in the early eighteenth century remained “anti-business”. As John Plender writes, “Alexander Pope reflected this in his ‘Epistle to Bathurst’, the satirical poem that discusses ‘whether the invention of Money has been more commodious, or pernicious to Mankind’ and illustrates Pope’s conviction that ‘we may see the small value God has for riches by the people he gives them to’.

“A truly decisive landmark in the balance of the argument over money and markets came with Enlightenment thinkers, who promoted the notion that self-interest was good and that Christian hostility to materialism was pure hypocrisy. Nowhere was the accusation of double standards more powerfully, entertainingly and controversially put than by Bernard Mandeville. Mandeville was a Dutch-born physician who wrote widely on philosophy and economics during an adult life spent mainly in London.”¹⁸⁵

“He wrote a scandalous [satirical poem] *Table of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714), in which the hive prospered because of the ambition, greed and even dishonesty of its occupants:

*Thus every part was full of Vice,
Yet the whole Mass a Paradise.*

Mandeville outraged moralists. Yet there was a growing tendency to recognize material gain as legitimate, and individual happiness and pleasure as proper objects of life.”¹⁸⁶

Some even thought that luxury was socially beneficial. Thus Dr Johnson said: “You cannot spend money in luxury without doing good to the poor. Nay, you do

¹⁸⁴ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-373.

¹⁸⁵ Plender, *Capitalism. Money, Markets and Morals*, London: Biteback, 2016, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸⁶ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

more good to them by spending it in luxury than by giving it; for by spending it on luxury you make them exert industry, whereas by giving it you keep them idle.”¹⁸⁷

“Men of the Enlightenment took sides in the great eighteenth-century debate on luxury, with Swift and Smollett leading the hair-shirts while Pope hopped from one side of the fence to the other. Meanwhile, the [Scottish] philosopher David Hume took the nuanced view that luxury could be morally innocent provided it was aesthetically refined. The eighteenth-century argument about the usefulness of luxury is really a version of what is now known as the trickledown theory. It suffered from the flaw that in a society marked by an uneven distribution of income favouring a numerically small elite, the rich had plenty of spending power to satisfy their desires, but not enough buying power to dynamise the economy to its full potential to raise real incomes. The German sociologist and economist Werner Sombart nonetheless argued two centuries later that luxury played an important part in the development of capitalism. And Mandeville’s point has trickled down through history. To name just one example, Gordon Gekko’s ‘greed is good’ speech in the film *Wall Street* clearly descends in a direct line from the author of the fable.

“*The Fable of the Bees* was not universally admired by other Enlightenment thinkers. Adam Smith [like Hume, a Scot] could not bring himself to accept the extremity of Mandeville’s paradox, in which vice was a necessary condition of prosperity. In his justly celebrated redefinition of the argument about business and morality, he emphasised self-interest rather than vice, with his statement in *The Wealth of Nations* that ‘it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.’ [Book 1, chapter 2] In much the same vein, he added: ‘I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good.’ Yet, as the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he also emphasised the need for markets to operate within a moral context and believed that the act of engaging exchange entailed a discipline that encouraged good individual behaviour as well as the good of wider society.”¹⁸⁸

Smith argued that the individual was “led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention...” “The invisible hand” of self-interest - the economists’ equivalent of Divine Providence - would see to it that greed and selfishness would be rewarded as unerringly in this life as unacquisitiveness and selflessness, according to the old dispensation, was held to be in the next. Here we see the doctrine of laissez-faire economics that has become one of the corner-stones of the modern world-view: to be selfish and amoral is to be selfless and moral!

One of the virtues of capitalism, according to its advocates, is that it corrects itself. “The success of the free market,” explains the former British Chancellor of the Exchequer (i.e. economics minister) Nigel Lawson, “is, in a sense, Darwinism: a matter of survival of the fittest, as rival systems have been tested to destruction.

¹⁸⁷ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, London: Penguin Books.

¹⁸⁸ Plender, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

And the most fundamental reason why this is so is that the most basic fact of economic life, as indeed, of all other dimensions of life, is that we are all fallible.

“We all make mistakes, and always will. Markets make mistakes, and so do governments. Businessmen and bankers make mistakes, and so do politicians and bureaucrats. Thus any attempt to construct a system which will eliminate mistakes is doomed to failure. All we can sensibly do is put in place a system in which mistakes are soonest recognised and most rapidly corrected. That means, in practice, the liberal market economy.

“By contrast, experience shows that, whatever the political system, it is governments that find it hardest to own up to mistakes, still less to correct them. And this is supported by another fact of life. We are all subject to self-interest. But whereas, as Adam Smith explained, the market economy is the means by which self-interest produces public benefit, this is less clear in the case of bureaucratic self-interest...”¹⁸⁹

For “it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-interest, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.”¹⁹⁰

This argument in favour of laissez-faire capitalism is interesting but unconvincing. Nor is it fair to Adam Smith himself, who, as Sir Roger Scruton writes, did *not* believe “that self-interest is the only, or even the most important, motive governing our economic behaviour. A market can deliver a rational allocation of goods and services only when there is a trust between its participants, and trust exists only where people take responsibility for their actions and make themselves accountable to those with whom they deal. In other words, economic order depends on moral order.

“In *The Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, Smith argued that trust, responsibility and accountability exist only in a society that respects them, and only when the spontaneous fruit of human sympathy is allowed to ripen. It is where sympathy, duty and virtue achieve their proper place that self-interest leads, by an invisible hand, to a result that benefits everyone. And this means that people can best satisfy their interests only in a context where they are also on occasions moved to renounce them. Beneath every society where self-interest pays off, lies a foundation of self-sacrifice.

“We are not built on the model of *homo economicus* – the rational chooser who acts always to maximise his own utility at whatever cost to the rest of us. We are subject to motives that we do not necessarily understand, and which can be displayed in terms of utilities and preference orderings only by misrepresenting them. These motives make war on our circumstantial desires. Some of them – the

¹⁸⁹ Lawson, “The Brexit Crinege – Mrs. T. would say ‘No!’”, *Standpoint*, February, 2018, pp. 21-22.

¹⁹⁰ Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Book I, chapter 2.

fear of the dark, the revulsion towards incest, the impulse to cling to the mother – are adaptations that lie deeper than reason. Others – guilt, shame, the love of beauty, the sense of justice – arise from reason itself, and reflect the web of interpersonal relations and understandings through which we situate ourselves as free subjects, in a community of others like ourselves. At both levels – the instinctual and the personal – the capacity for sacrifice arises, in the one case as a blind attachment, in the other case as a sense of responsibility to others and to the moral way of life.”¹⁹¹

Adam Smith spoke disparagingly of “the masters of mankind” who are the “principal architects” of government policy and who pursue their own “vile maxim”: “All for ourselves and nothing for other people”.¹⁹² Smith, properly understood, was not a proponent of the completely laissez-faire theory attributed to him.

For is it not the height of irrationality to think that the completely unfettered expression of self-interest and avarice will lead in the end to a land flowing with milk and honey for all? Smith believed that there are some forces restraining self-interest: the moral faculty of *sympathy* and the economic faculty of *competition*. But these are feeble weapons against the innate power of egoism. The fact is: self-interest can never be transformed into its opposite; the fall cannot be manipulated by any hand, visible or invisible, into paradisaal innocence and perfection; it has to be eradicated from the root through the true enlightenment of the true religion...

¹⁹¹ Scruton, *How to be a Conservative*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 19-20.

¹⁹² Smith, in Noam Chomsky, *Who Rules the World?*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 8.

13. THE IDEA OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

Not the least important “dogma” of the Enlightenment was religious toleration. This was not a new idea. Even the pagan Roman emperors had been generally tolerant of religion until the mid-third century: the persecutors Nero and Domitian were untypical madmen. The idea revived in the early sixteenth century, in the wake of the resurrection of the old pagan ideas of the dignity of man. We say “pagan”, because the justification adduced for religious toleration was not truly Christian, but what we would now call essentially irreligious: a belief that religious differences are not worth fighting and dying over.

We find the idea well expressed in Sir Thomas More’s fantasy-manifesto, *Utopia*. Paradoxically, More was a man of faith who persecuted Protestants and died for his loyalty to Catholic teaching at the hands of King Henry VIII. But he was also a humanist; and in *Utopia* King Utopus has introduced a social system characterized by common ownership of property and religious toleration, with no official church or religion.

“King Utopus, even at the first beginning hearing that the inhabitants of the land were before his coming thither at continual dissension and strife among themselves for their religions, perceiving also that this common dissension (whiles every several sect took several parts in fighting for his country) was the only occasion of his conquest over them all, as soon as he had gotten the victory, first of all made a decree that it should be lawful for every man to favour and follow what religion he would, and that he might do the best he could to bring other to his opinion, so that he did it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly, without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing against others. If he could not by fair and gentle speech induce them unto his opinion, yet he should use no kind of violence, and refrain from displeasent and seditious words. To him that would vehemently and fervently in this cause strive and contend was decreed banishment or bondage.

“This law did King Utopus make, not only for the maintenance of peace, which he saw through continual contention and mortal hatred utterly extinguished, but also because he thought this decree should make for the furtherance of religion...

“Furthermore, though there be one religion which alone is true, and all other vain and superstitious, yet did he well foresee (so that the matter were handled with reason and sober modesty) that the truth of its own power would at the last issue out and come to light. But if contention and debate in that behalf should continually be used, as the worst men be most obstinate and stubborn and in their evil opinion most constant, he perceived that then the best and holiest religion would be trodden underfoot and destroyed by most vain superstitions, even as good corn is by thorns and weeds overgrown and choked.”¹⁹³

¹⁹³ More, *Utopia*, book II, pp. 119-120.

More was hovering between two contrary propositions: that free debate will ultimately lead to the triumph of truth (“the truth of its own power would at the last issue out and come to light”), and that this freedom will be used by the worst men for the triumph of heresy (“then the best and holiest religion would be trodden underfoot”). For most of history, it would be the second that would be believed by the majority of men. And in the long term they were correct...

However, this optimistic attitude would not survive the appearance of Protestantism and the religious wars that followed. But it revived as the era of the wars of religion was coming to an end. Of course, some relaxation of religious persecution was only to be expected, when in Germany, for example, as a result of the Thirty Years War, between a third and a half of the population lay dead.¹⁹⁴ No society can continue to take such losses without disappearing altogether. Believers on both sides of the conflict were exhausted. They longed for a rest from religious passions and the opportunity to rebuild their shattered economies in peace. It was as a result of this cooling of religious passions, and rekindling of commercial ones, that the idea of religious toleration was reborn. Thus the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 acknowledged that “subjects whose religion differs from that of their prince are to have equal rights with his other subjects” (V. 35).¹⁹⁵ This was a landmark in political history. The goal was no longer unanimity, but unity under the sovereign, an agreement to “live and let live” so long as the power of the sovereign was not contested.

And yet the idea of religious toleration had not yet penetrated the popular consciousness. Calvinism was not an inherently tolerant creed, insofar as “the Calvinist dogma of predestination,” as Roy Porter points out, “had bred ‘enthusiasm’, that awesome, irresistible and unfalsifiable conviction of personal infallibility”.¹⁹⁶ As late as 1646 Thomas Edwards wrote: “Religious toleration is the greatest of all evils; it will bring in first scepticism in doctrine and looseness of life, then atheism”.¹⁹⁷ As we have seen, the Puritan colonies of New England, in spite of their love of freedom, abhorred religious toleration....

It was the English Revolution, which killed the king and forcibly suppressed Parliament four times, that finally pushed the idea of toleration into the forefront of political debate. For, as Winstanley wrote in *The Law of Freedom* (1651), Cromwell “became the main stickler for liberty of conscience without any limitation. This toleration became his masterpiece in politics; for it procured him a party that stuck close in all cases of necessity.” Milton’s *Areopagitica* (1646) advocated freedom of speech and the abolition of censorship: “Let her [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?” Besides, “how”, asked Milton, “shall the licensers themselves be confided in, unless we can confer upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility and uncorruptedness?”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 568.

¹⁹⁵ Bettenson & Maunder, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

¹⁹⁶ Porter, *Enlightenment*, London: Penguin books, 2000, p. 50.

¹⁹⁷ Edwards, in Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹⁹⁸ Milton, *Areopagitica*.

As Peter Ackroyd writes, Milton “railed against those with closed minds, of which the Presbyterians were the largest number. Censorship and licensing would be ‘the stop of truth’. The people of England would suffer from the change, when ‘dull ease and cessation of our knowledge’ would inevitably lead to ‘obedient conformity’ or to ‘rigid external formality’...

“What did the censors and opponents of freedom have to fear? ‘He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, there that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.’...

“He writes of London as a beacon of that cause. ‘Behold now this vast City, a City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded by His protection... Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirred up in this City.’”¹⁹⁹

It was noble-sounding ideal, but it did not survive the reality of Cromwell’s rule, as we have seen. For, as Jacques Barzun writes, “Cromwell’s toleration was of course not complete – nobody’s has ever been or ought to be: the most tolerant mind cannot tolerate cruelty, the most liberal state punishes incitement to riot or treason. To all but the Catholic minority in England, the church of Rome was intolerable.”²⁰⁰

Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1651), published during Cromwell’s Protectorate, seems to provide a powerful argument for intolerance – indeed, the most complete tyranny of the State over the religious beliefs of its citizens. For religious truth, according to Hobbes, was nothing other than that which the sovereign ruler declared it to be: “An opinion publicly appointed to be taught cannot be heresy; nor the Sovereign Princes that authorise them heretics.”²⁰¹

Being in favour of the absolute power of the sovereign, Hobbes was fiercely opposed to the other major power in traditional societies, religion, which he relegated to an instrument of government; so that the power of censorship passed, in his theory, entirely from the Church to the State. His strong views on the necessity of obeying the ruler in all circumstances relegated religious faith to a private sphere that was not allowed to impinge on public life. However, Hobbes was not opposed to dissent so long as it did not lead to anarchy, “for such truth as opposeth no man’s profit nor pleasure, is to all men welcome.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

²⁰⁰ Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 276.

²⁰¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*; in Christopher Hill, “Thomas Hobbes and the Revolution in Political Thought”, *Puritanism and Revolution*, London: Penguin books, 1958, p. 277.

²⁰² Hobbes, *Leviathan*; in Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, p. 283.

In fact, he did not believe in objective Truth, but only in “appetites and aversions, hopes and fears”, and in the power of human reason to regulate them towards the desired end of public tranquillity. He was not anti-religious so much as a-religious... But it cannot be denied that his position is one of secularist caesaropapism. And in the hands of atheist rulers, his arguments could be used to justify the suppression of all religion.

It was John Locke, according to Porter, who became the real “high priest of toleration”. “In an essay of 1667, which spelt out the key principles expressed in his later *Letter on Toleration*, Locke denied the prince’s right to enforce religious orthodoxy, reasoning that the ‘trust, power and authority’ of the civil magistrate were vested in him solely to secure ‘the good preservation and peace of men in that society’. Hence princely powers extended solely to externals, not to faith, which was a matter of conscience. Any state intervention in faith was ‘meddling’.

“To elucidate the limits of those civil powers, Locke divided religious opinions and actions into three. First, there were speculative views and modes of divine worship. These had ‘an absolute and universal right to toleration’, since they did not affect society, being either private or God’s business alone. Second, there were those – beliefs about marriage and divorce, for instance – which impinged upon others and hence were of public concern. These ‘have a title also to toleration, but only so far as they do not tend to the disturbance of the State’. The magistrate might thus prohibit publication of such convictions if they would disturb the public good, but no one ought to be forced to forswear his opinion, for coercion bred hypocrisy. Third, there were actions good or bad in themselves. Respecting these, Locke held that civil rulers should have ‘nothing to do with the good of men’s soul or their concernments in another life’ – it was for God to reward virtue and punish vice, and the magistrate’s job simply to keep the peace. Applying such principles to contemporary realities, Locke advocated toleration, but with limits: Papists should not be tolerated, because their beliefs were ‘absolutely destructive of all governments except the Pope’s’; nor should atheists, since any oaths they took would be in bad faith.

“As a radical Whig in political exile in the Dutch republic, Locke wrote the first *Letter on Toleration*, which was published, initially in Latin, in 1689. Echoing the 1667 arguments, this denied that Christianity could be furthered by force. Christ was the Prince of Peace, his gospel was love, his means persuasion; persecution could not save souls. Civil and ecclesiastical government had contrary ends; the magistrate’s business lay in securing life, liberty and possessions, whereas faith was about the salvation of souls. A church should be a voluntary society, like a ‘club for claret’; it should be shorn of all sacerdotal pretensions. While Locke’s views were contested – Bishop Stillingfleet, for example, deemed them a ‘Trojan Horse’ – they nevertheless won favour in an age inclined, or resigned, to freedom of thought and expression in general.”²⁰³

²⁰³ Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-197.

“Since you are pleased to enquire,” wrote Locke, “what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of Christians in their different professions of religion, I must needs answer you freely, that I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristic mark of the true church. For whatsoever some people boast of the antiquity of places and names, or of the pomp of their outward worship; others, of the reformation of their discipline; all, of the orthodoxy of their faith – for everyone is orthodox to himself – these things, and all others of this nature, are much rather marks of men striving for power and empire over one another than of the Church of Christ. Let anyone have never so true a claim to all these things, yet if he be destitute of charity, meekness, and good-will in general towards all mankind, even to those that are not Christians, he is certainly yet short of being a true Christian himself. The kings of the Gentiles exercise leadership over them,’ said our Saviour to his disciples, ‘but ye shall not be so. The business of true religion is quite another thing. It is not instituted in order to the erecting of an external pomp, nor to the obtaining of ecclesiastical dominion, nor to the exercising of compulsive force, but to the regulating of men's lives, according to the rules of virtue and piety.”²⁰⁴

Locke here displays the common prejudice of all liberals that “the exercise of true religion” has nothing to do with the confession of true dogmas, and that zeal for the faith must necessarily involve pride and the desire for dominion...

Smith expounds Locke’s idea as follows: “Religion is a man’s private concern, his belief is part of himself, and he is the sole judge of the means to his own salvation. Persecution only creates hypocrites, while free opinion is the best guarantee of truth. Most ceremonies are indifferent; Christianity is simple; it is only theologians who have encrusted it with dogma. Sacerdotalism, ritual, orthodoxy, do not constitute Christianity if they are divorced from charity. Our attempts to express the truth of religion must always be imperfect and relative, and cannot amount to certainty... Church and State can be united if the Church is made broad enough and simple enough, and the State accepts the Christian basis. Thus religion and morality might be reunited, sectarianism would disappear with sacerdotalism; the Church would become the nation organised for goodness...”²⁰⁵

The Lockean idea of toleration became the corner-stone of Anglicanism... Ironically, however, it was the Catholic King James II, who first bestowed freedom of religion on Catholics, Anglicans and Non-Conformists in his *Declaration of Indulgence* (1688), declaring: “We cannot but heartily wish, as it will easily be believed, that all the people of our dominions were members of the Catholic Church; yet we humbly thank Almighty God, it is and has of long time been our constant sense and opinion (which upon divers occasions we have declared) that conscience ought not to be constrained nor people forced in matters of mere religion: it has ever been directly contrary to our inclination, as we think it is to the interest of government, which it destroys by spoiling trade, depopulating

²⁰⁴ Locke, *A Letter concerning Toleration*.

²⁰⁵ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 813.

countries, and discouraging strangers, and finally, that it never obtained the end for which it was employed..."²⁰⁶

The generosity shown by James to non-Catholics was not reciprocated by his Protestant successors, who, through the *Toleration Act* (1689) and *Declaration of Indulgence* (1690), re-imposed restrictions on the Catholics while removing them from the Protestants. And Locke's *Letter on Toleration*, published in the same year as the *Toleration Act*, did not extend its argument for toleration to atheists and Catholics.

As Jean Bethke Elshtain interprets his thought: "Atheists are untrustworthy because they do not take an oath on the Bible, not believing in Divine action; and they deny the divine origin of fundamental truths necessary to underwrite decent government. Catholics are (or may be) civically unreliable because of their allegiance to an external power."²⁰⁷

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The justification given for this far-from-universal tolerance was purely secular: "Some ease to scrupulous consciences in the exercise of religion" was to be granted, since this "united their Majesties' Protestant subjects in interest and affection..." In other words, tolerance was necessary in order to avoid the possibility of civil war between the Anglicans and the Non-Conformist Protestants. From now on, "though laws against blasphemy, obscenity and seditious libel remained on the statute book, and offensive publications could still be presented before the courts, the situation was light years away from that obtaining in France, Spain or almost anywhere else in ancien régime Europe."²⁰⁸

The more religious justifications of tolerance offered in, for example, More's *Utopia* or Milton's *Areopagitica*, were no longer in fashion. In the modern age that was beginning, religious tolerance was advocated, not because it ensured the eventual triumph of the true religion, but because it prevented war. And war, of course, "spoiled trade" ...

"To enlightened minds," writes Porter, "the past was a nightmare of barbarism and bigotry: fanaticism had precipitated bloody civil war and the axing of Charles Stuart, that man of blood, in 1649. Enlightened opinion repudiated old militancy for modern civility. But how could people adjust to each other? Sectarianism, that sword of the saints which had divided brother from brother, must cease; rudeness had to yield to refinement. Voltaire saw this happening before his very eyes in England's 'free and peaceful assemblies': 'Take a view of the Royal Exchange in London, a place more venerable than many courts of justice, where the representatives of all nations meet for the benefit of mankind. There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian transact together as tho' they all profess'd the same

²⁰⁶ Bettenson & Maunder, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

²⁰⁷ Elshtain, *Sovereignty*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, p. 121.

²⁰⁸ Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

religion, and give the name of Infidel to none but bankrupts. There the Presbyterian confides in the Anabaptist, and the Churchman depends on the Quaker's word. And all are satisfied'. [*Letters concerning the English Nation*]. This passage squares with the enlightened belief that commerce would unite those whom creeds rent asunder. Moreover, by depicting men content, and content to be content – differing, but agreeing to differ – the philosophe pointed towards a rethinking of the *summum bonum*, a shift from God-fearingness to a selfhood more psychologically oriented. The Enlightenment thus translated the ultimate question 'How can I be saved?' into the pragmatic 'How can I be happy?'"²⁰⁹

For "the so-called *Toleration Act* of 1689 had an eye first and foremost to practical politics, and did not grant toleration. Officially an 'Act for Exempting their Majesties' Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of Certain Laws', it stated that Trinitarian Protestant Nonconformists who swore the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance and accepted thirty-six of the Thirty-nine Articles [the official confession of the Anglican Church] could obtain licences as ministers or teachers. Catholics and non-Christians did not enjoy the rights of public worship under the Act – and non-Trinitarians were left subject to the old penal laws. Unitarians, indeed, were further singled out by the Blasphemy Act of 1697, which made it an offence to 'deny any one of the persons in the holy Trinity to be God'. There was no official Toleration Act for them until 1813, and in Scotland the death penalty could still be imposed – as it was in 1697 – for denying the Trinity.

"Scope for prosecution remained. Ecclesiastical courts still had the power of imprisoning for atheism, blasphemy and heresy (maximum term: six months). Occasional indictments continued under the common law, and Parliament could order books to be burned. Even so, patriots justly proclaimed that England was, alongside the United Provinces, the first nation to have embraced religious toleration – a fact that became a matter of national pride. 'My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king I looked,' remarked Defoe's castaway hero, Robinson Crusoe; 'we had but three subjects, and they were of different religions. My man Friday was a pagan and a cannibal, and the Spaniard was a Papist: however, I allowed liberty of conscience throughout my dominions'.

"Two developments made toleration a *fait accompli*: the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, and the fact that England had already been sliced up into sects. It was, quipped Voltaire, a nation of many faiths but only one sauce, a recipe for confessional tranquillity if culinary tedium: 'If there were only one religion in England, there would be danger of despotism, if there were only two they would cut each other's throats; but there are thirty, and they live in peace' [*Letters concerning the English Nation*]." ²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

²¹⁰ Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

The lapsing of the Licensing Act ended pre-publication censorship. This was, writes Tombs, “in contrast to France, which had 120 full-time censors. William III favoured legal toleration of Dissenting sects, both because he himself had been in English terms a Dissenter, and more importantly because he wanted domestic harmony to further the war against France. The bishops discovered to their chagrin that they no longer in practice had the power to prosecute heretics – on one occasion, Queen Anne kept deliberately losing the paperwork. Moderates were appointed to vacant sees. Though blasphemy remained a crime, the need for trial by jury meant that prosecution of dissident views was chancy, and magistrates were usually unenthusiastic. So lax were controls that one Jacobite parson operated a printing press inside the King’s Bench Prison. As Locke put it, toleration ‘has now at last been established by law in our country. Not perhaps so wide in scope as might be wished for... Still, it is something to have progressed so far...’

“This is not to say that complete domestic harmony broke out. The Glorious Revolution was far from initiating the smooth consensus that ‘Whig history’ later celebrated. Religious antagonisms shaped political and cultural links throughout the eighteenth century and beyond. But they rarely caused violence, at least not in England. The struggle was waged with words – on paper, in Parliament, in pulpits, sometimes in the law courts, and in clubs and coffee houses. Moreover, there are many signs of a deliberate rejection of extremism – ‘enthusiasm’, ‘fanaticism’, ‘hypocrisy’, ‘superstition’ – whether ‘Popish’ or ‘Puritan’. It became common to praise the virtues of moderation, sincerity and rationality, so that differences of opinion would not (as one Anglican woman put it) ‘dissolve and deface the Laws of Charity and Humane Society’. All parties claimed to practise politeness, plain speech, moderation and sincerity. Dislike of intellectual extremism, and distaste for verbal violence, even within the adversarial party system, has remained powerful in English political discourse ever since.

“The philosopher of politeness was a Whig intellectual, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, whose widely read *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711) asserted that human beings had an innate ‘sense of right and wrong’, that ‘affection’ for society and people was part of human nature, and that our own ‘happiness and welfare’ depended on working for ‘the general good’. Shaftesbury believed that virtue was manifested in ‘good breeding’, which meant being incapable of ‘a rude or brutal action’. He thought that ‘good humour is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion’, which would leave aside theological disputation in favour of ‘plain honest morals’.”²¹¹

In order to evaluate this new culture of toleration and politeness, so different from the unruliness and “enthusiasm” for which the English had been known up to this point, we must remember that the new culture was largely a middle-class affair: the peasants remained closer to the old unruliness and “enthusiasm”. For “throughout the eighteenth century, and into the first decade of the nineteenth,

²¹¹ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-285.

there was a rumbustious, mostly male, counter-culture which deliberately flouted the rules of politeness."²¹²

This was manifested particularly in the hymn-singing Methodist movement, which attracted country people from the remoter country areas of the British Isles and the colonies.

The "enthusiasm" of the lower classes was rejected by the upper classes. As the Duchess of Buckingham said of the Methodist George Whitefield: "His doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinged with impertinence and disrespect towards his superiors. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth..."²¹³

Monstrous indeed! Polite society did not like to be reminded of its sinfulness. Fortunately for these polite and tolerant gentlemen and gentlewomen, the official Anglican Church was obligingly sympathetic to their sensitivities, and, unlike the Methodists and other Nonconformist sects, did not probe too deeply into their souls. And that is precisely why, as H.M.V. Temperley wrote: "The earlier half of the eighteenth century in England is an age of materialism, a period of dim ideals, of expiring hopes... We can recognise in English institutions, in English ideals, in the English philosophy of this age, the same practical materialism, the same hard rationalism, the same unreasonable self-complacency. Reason dominated alike the intellect, the will, and the passions; politics were self-interested, poetry didactic, philosophy critical and objective... Even the most abstract of thinkers and the most unworldly of clerics have a mundane and secular stamp upon them."²¹⁴

But this profound cultural change was noted and approved by the greatest minds of the age, such as the Scottish philosopher and historian David Hume. "Our ancestors," he wrote in 1748, "a few centuries ago, were sunk into the most abject superstitions, last century they were enflamed with the most furious enthusiasm, and are now settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters, that is to be found in any nation of the world..."²¹⁵

For any religious person this was a depressing picture, and evidence that most Britons had renounced the most important task of human beings – the search for truth. It followed that "because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved", God sent the English "a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (II Thessalonians 2.10-11).

It was precisely in this dull, snobbish, self-satisfied – but oh so tolerant! - England of the early 18th century that the foundations of the modern world were laid, and in particular its deadly and determined opposition to the true faith...

²¹² Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

²¹³ Gascoigne, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

²¹⁴ Temperley, "The Age of Walpole and the Pelhams", *The Cambridge Modern History*, Cambridge University Press, 1934, vol. VI: The Eighteenth Century, pp. 76, 77.

²¹⁵ Hume, "Of National Characters".

II. EAST: THE AGE OF PETER THE GREAT

14. TSAR VERSUS PATRIARCH

A new phase in the relationship between Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon of Moscow began on July 10, 1658, when the patriarch, seeing that the tsar was clearly determined to follow his own will, and was now snubbing the patriarch in various ways, withdrew to his monastery of New Jerusalem, near Moscow...

He compared this move to the flight of the Woman clothed with the sun into the wilderness in Revelation 12, and quoted the 17th Canon of Sardica²¹⁶ and the words of the Gospel: "If they persecute you in one city, depart to another, shaking off the dust from your feet".²¹⁷ "The whole state knows," he said, "that in view of his anger against me the tsar does not go to the Holy Catholic Church, and I am leaving Moscow. I hope that the tsar will have more freedom without me."²¹⁸

Some have regarded Nikon's action as an elaborate bluff that failed. Whatever the truth about his personal motivation, which is known to God alone, there can be no doubt that the patriarch, unlike his opponents, correctly gauged the seriousness of the issue involved. For the quarrel between the tsar and the patriarch signified, in effect, the beginning of the schism of Church and State in Russia. In withdrawing from Moscow to New Jerusalem, the patriarch demonstrated that "in truth 'the New Jerusalem', 'the Kingdom of God', the beginning of the Heavenly Kingdom in Russia was the Church, its Orthodox spiritual piety, and not the material earthly capital, although it represented... 'the Third Rome'."²¹⁹

However, Nikon had appointed a vicar-metropolitan in Moscow, and had said: "I am not leaving completely; if the tsar's majesty bends, becomes more merciful and puts away his wrath, I will return". In other words, while resigning the active administration of the patriarchy, he had not resigned his rank – a situation to which there were many precedents in Church history. And to show that he had not finally resigned from Church affairs, he protested against moves made by his deputy on the patriarchal throne, and continued to criticize the Tsar for interfering in the Church's affairs, especially in the reactivation of the *Monastirskij Prikaz*...

Not content with having forced his withdrawal from Moscow, the boyars resolved to have him defrocked, portraying him as a dangerous rebel – although the Patriarch interfered less in the affairs of the Tsar than St. Philip of Moscow had

²¹⁶ "If any Bishop who has suffered violence has been cast out unjustly, either on account of his science or on account of his confession of the Catholic Church, or on account of his insisting upon the truth, and fleeing from peril, when he is innocent and in danger, should come to another city, let him not be prevented from living there, until he can return or find relief from the insolent treatment he had received. For it is cruel and most burdensome for one who has had to suffer an unjust expulsion not to be accorded a welcome by us. For such a person ought to be shown great kindness and courtesy."

²¹⁷ Sergei Fomin and Tamara Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow, 1998, volume I, p. 23; M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part II, p. 105.

²¹⁸ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, p. 104.

²¹⁹ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, Moscow, 1995, p. 141. Italics mine (V.M.).

done in the affairs of Ivan the Terrible.²²⁰ And so, in 1660, they convened a council of several Russian and three bishops, which tried to defrock the patriarch. However, Hieromonk Epiphany Slavynetsky objected that this was unlawful: only a council with the participation of the Eastern Patriarchs could defrock another patriarch. But they did appoint a patriarchal *locum tenens*, Metropolitan Pitirim, to administer the Church independently without seeking the advice of the patriarch and without commemorating his name. Nikon rejected this council, and cursed Pitirim...

The State that encroaches on the Church condemns itself. And in 1661 Patriarch Nikon had a vision in which he saw the Moscow Dormition cathedral full of fire: "The hierarchs who had previously died were standing there. Peter the metropolitan rose from his tomb, went up to the altar and laid his hand on the Gospel. All the hierarchs did the same, and so did I. And Peter began to speak: 'Brother Nikon! Speak to the Tsar: why has he offended the Holy Church, and fearlessly taken possession of the immovable things collected by us. This will not be to his benefit. Tell him to return what he has taken, for the great wrath of God has fallen upon him because of this: twice there have been pestilences, and so many people have died, and now he has nobody with whom to stand against his enemies.' I replied: 'He will not listen to me; it would be good if one of you appeared to him.' Peter continued: 'The judgements of God have not decreed this. You tell him; if he does not listen to you, then if one of us appeared to him, he would not listen to him. And look! Here is a sign for him.' Following the movement of his hand I turned towards the west towards the royal palace and I saw: there was no church wall, the palace was completely visible, and the fire which was in the church came together and went towards the royal court and burned it up. 'If he will not come to his senses, punishments greater than the first will be added,' said Peter. Then another grey-haired man said: 'Now the Tsar wants to take the court you bought for the churchmen and turn it into a bazaar for mammon's sake. But he will not rejoice over his acquisition.'"²²¹

Not only in relation to the Church, but also in other matters the "most merciful" tsar was exhibiting a sharp change in policy and life-style. Having freed himself from the tutelage of the Church, and submitting himself to western influences that he had previously abhorred, he began showing signs of a fatal move towards caesaropapism. These changes anticipated the still sharper changes that would take place under his son, Peter the Great.

Thus Montefiore writes that he returned from the Polish war "a confident warlord who had seen how the Polish lords lived. He commissioned an English agent to buy tapestries, trees, lace, singing parrots and royal carriages to embellish his newly sumptuous palaces and hired mineralogists, alchemists, glassmakers and an English doctor, Samuel Collins, who soon noticed that 'he begins to make his court and edifices more stately, to furnish his rooms with tapestries and

²²⁰ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part II, pp. 106-107.

²²¹ Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume I, pp. 24-25.

contrive a house of pleasure.' Engaging 2,000 new foreign officers, he reformed the army and studied ballistics technology.

"Rid of Nikon, he realized that every ruler needs a chancellery to enforce his orders, creating a new Office of Secret Affairs. When boyars missed his dawn church services he registered their names and had them collected with hands bound behind their backs and wearing their robes, tossed into the river where they might easily have drowned or died of the cold. 'This is your reward,' he laughed, 'for preferring to sleep with your wives instead of celebrating the lustre of this blessed day.' He relished this despotic bullying, writing to his friends: 'I have made it my custom to duck courtiers every morning in a pond. The baptism in the Jordan is well done. I duck four or five, sometimes a dozen, whoever fails to report on time for my inspection.'

"But these games were deadly serious. He put the old boyars in their place. When he had to promote a military bungler like Prince Ivan Khovansky, nicknamed the 'Windbag', the tsar did so 'even though everyone called you a fool.' He indulgently reprimanded the Whispering Favourite of Khitrovo for keeping a harem of Polish sex slaves and he was infuriated by the whoremongering of his own father-in-law Miloslavsky: Alexei told him either to give up sex or to marry fast.

"Now the war lurched towards disaster. The Poles and Swedes made peace with each other, so that Poland and the Cossack and Tatar allies could turn on Russia. In June 1659, Alexei's army was routed by a Polish-Cossack-Tatar coalition, losing as many as 40,000 men, and his gains in Ukraine and Livonia. But the tsar had found a brilliant new minister to guide him out of this crisis: Afanasy Ordyn-Naschchokin, son of a poor noble from Pskov, secured peace with the Swedes at Kardis. Alexei consulted the Council. There the bovine Miloslavsky suggested that if he were appointed to supreme command he'd bring back the king of Poland in chains.

"'What?' Alexei shouted. 'You have the effrontery, you boor, to boast of your skills? When have you ever borne arms? Pray tell us the fine actions you have fought! You old fool... Or do you presume to mock me impertinently?' Seizing him by the beard, he slapped him across the face, dragged him out of the Golden Chamber and slammed the doors behind him.

"Naschchokin recommended not just peace with Poland but a real alliance if not a union under Alexei as king of Poland. But meanwhile his general Prince Grigory Romodanovsky struggled to hold to eastern Ukraine. When he did well, Alexei praised him, but when he failed he received a furious epistle that must have made his hair stand on end. 'May the Lord God reward you for your satanic service... thrice-damned and shameful hater of Christians, true son of Satan and friend of devils, you shall fall into the bottomless pit for failing to send those troops.

Remember, traitor, by whom you were promoted and rewarded and on whom you depend! Where can you flee?"²²²

The people as a whole were suffering, and in 1661 the patriarch wrote to the tsar: "Secular judges dispense justice and violate it, and through this you have gathered against yourself a great assembly on the Day of Judgement, crying aloud at your wrongdoings. You preach to everyone that they should fast, but there is scarcely anyone left now who is not fasting, because bread is scarce; in many places they fast to death because there is nothing to eat. No one is spared: the destitute, the blind, widows, monks, and nuns are burdened with heavy taxes. Everywhere there is weeping and misery. Nobody makes merry nowadays." Again, in 1665 he wrote to the Eastern Patriarchs: "Men are taken for military service, bread and money are taken mercilessly. The Tsar doubles and trebles the tribute laid on the Christian people – and all in vain..."²²³

"On 25 July 1662," continues Montefiore, "Alexei and his family were attending church at his favourite Kolomenskoe Palace outside Moscow when a huge crowd started calling for the head of his father-in-law Miloslavsky, who as Treasury boss was hated for devaluing the coinage with copper. Sending his family to hide in the tsarina's apartments, Alexei emerged to reason with the crowd while he summoned reinforcements from Moscow, not realizing the capital was in the hands of the rioters and that more protesters were approaching.

"Alexei was on his horse ready to ride back to Moscow when this furious sea of humanity washed over him. He was manhandled, the tsarina insulted, and his retainers were about to draw their swords when his troops charged the crowd from behind. 'Save me from these dogs!' cried Alexei and spurred his horse. The mob was driven into the river and many were arrested. Alexei attended the torture chambers and specified the punishments: 'ten or twenty thieves' hanged at once, eighteen left to rot on gibbets along the roads into Moscow and a hundred at Kolomenskoe, were ripped out, bodies dismembered.

"When he was riding through Moscow, he wielded the tsar's traditional steel-pointed staff, the very one with which Ivan the Terrible had murdered his son. When a man rushed through his guards, Alexei killed him with the staff. It turned out that the man had not been paid. 'I killed an innocent man,' but the commander who didn't pay him 'is guilty of his blood' and was dismissed.

"The Copper Riot shook the tsar, who suffered palpitations, nose-bleeds and indigestion which his doctors Collins and Engelhardt treated with laxatives, opium and hellebore to slow the heart. Yet his boisterous activity shows an astonishingly tough constitution, as his brood of sons proved. His eldest was also named Alexei and now Maria gave birth to another son, Fyodor. When the carefully educated eldest turned thirteen, he was presented as the heir.

²²² Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, London, 2016, pp. 53-54.

²²³ Kliuchevsky, *A Course in Russian History: The Seventeenth Century*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 261.

“On the night of 18 December 1664, a convoy of ten sleighs swept into the snow-covered Kremlin, halting outside the Dormition Cathedral. Out stepped Nikon. Alexei ordered his immediate departure, but this mysterious visitation exposed the seething conflicts around the tsar.

“Alexei ordered that everyone must obey the new rules of Orthodox ritual – or die. He tried conciliating the leader of the Old Believers, Avvakum, but he remained defiant. Two well-connected female courtiers, Feodosia Morozova, sister-in-law of his late minister, and Princess Eudoxia Urusova, were obdurate. They were banned from court, then arrested and offered liberty if they just crossed themselves in the new way, but when Alexei visited them in the dungeons Morozova defiantly gave him the two fingers. Alexei was determined not to create martyrs, so he had them tortured then starved to death. Avvakum had his wife and children buried alive in front of him: he himself was just exiled. But across Russia, Old Believers were burned alive. Many fled to Siberia and to the Cossack badlands: some fortified the Arctic island monastery of Solovki.”²²⁴

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With Nikon’s departure, the tsar was left with the problem of replacing him at the head of the Church. S.A. Zenkovsky writes that he “was about to return Protopriest Avvakum, whom he personally respected and loved, from exile, but continued to keep the new typicon... In 1666-1667, in order to resolve the question of what to do with Nikon and to clarify the complications with the typicon, [the tsar] convened first a Russian council of bishops, and then almost an ecumenical one, with the participation of the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch [who had been suspended by the Patriarch of Constantinople]. The patriarch of Constantinople (he wrote that small details in the typicon were not so important – what was important was the understanding of the commandments of Christ, the basic dogmas of the faith, and devotion to the Church) and the patriarch of Jerusalem did not come to this council, not wishing to get involved in Russian ecclesiastical quarrels.

“The first part of the council sessions, with the participation only of Russian bishops, went quite smoothly and moderately. Before it, individual discussions of each bishop with the tsar had prepared almost all the decisions. The council did not condemn the old typicon, and was very conciliatory towards its defenders, who, with the exception of Avvakum, agreed to sign the decisions of the council and not break with the Church. The stubborn Avvakum refused, and was for that defrocked and excommunicated from the Church. The second part of the council sessions, with the eastern patriarchs, was completely under the influence of Metropolitan Paisius Ligarides of Gaza (in Palestine) [who had been defrocked by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and was in the pay of the Vatican]. He adopted the most radical position in relation to the old Russian ecclesiastical traditions. The old Russian rite was condemned and those who followed it were excommunicated

²²⁴ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

from the Church (anathema). Also condemned at that time were such Russian writings as the *Story of the White Klobuk* (on Moscow as the Third Rome), the decrees of the *Stoglav* council, and other things."²²⁵

The council then turned its attention to Patriarch Nikon. On December 12, 1666 he was reduced to the rank of a monk on the grounds that "he annoyed his great majesty [the tsar], interfering in matters which did not belong to the patriarchal rank and authority".²²⁶ The truth was the exact opposite: that the tsar and his boyars had interfered in matters which did not belong to their rank and authority, breaking the oath they had made to the patriarch.²²⁷

Another charge against the patriarch was that in 1654 he had defrocked and exiled the most senior of the opponents to his reforms, Bishop Paul of Kolomna, on his own authority, without convening a council of bishops.²²⁸

But, as Lebedev writes, "Nikon refuted this accusation, referring to the conciliar decree on this bishop, which at that time was still in the patriarchal court. Entering then [in 1654] on the path of an authoritative review of everything connected with the correction of the rites, Nikon of course could not on his own condemn a bishop, when earlier even complaints against prominent protopriests were reviewed by him at a Council of the clergy."²²⁹

The council also sinned in approving the *Tomos* sent by the Eastern Patriarchs to Moscow in 1663 to justify the supposed lawfulness of Nikon's deposition. Under the name of *Patriarchal Replies* it expressed a caesaropapist doctrine, according to which the Patriarch was exhorted to obey the tsar and the tsar was permitted to remove the patriarch in case of conflict with him. Patriarch Dionysius of Constantinople expressed this clearly caesaropapist doctrine as follows in a letter to the tsar: "You have the power to have a patriarch and all your councillors established by you, for in one autocratic state there must not be two principles, but one must be the senior." To which Lebedev justly replied: "It is only to be wondered at how the Greeks by the highest authority established and confirmed in the Russian kingdom that [caesaropapism] as a result of which they themselves had lost their monarchy! It was not Paisius Ligarides who undermined Alexis Mikhailovich: it was the ecumenical patriarchs who deliberately decided the matter in favour of the tsar..."²³⁰

²²⁵ S.A. Zenkovsky, "Staroobriadchestvo, Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo" (Old Ritualism, the Church and the State), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1987- I, pp. 88-89.

²²⁶ Vladimir Rusak, *Istoria Rossijskoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Church), USA, 1993, p. 191.

²²⁷ Ironically, they also transgressed those articles of the *Ulozhenie*, chapter X, which envisaged various punishments for offending the clergy (Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 71).

²²⁸ Dobroklonsky, *Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi* (A Guide to the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, p. 290; S.G. Burgaft and I.A. Ushakov, *Staroobriadchestvo* (Old Ritualism), Moscow, 1996, pp. 206-207. According to the Old Ritualists, Bishop Paul said that, in view of Nikon's "violation" of Orthodoxy, the members of the state Church should be received into communion with the Old Ritualists by the second rite, i.e. chrismation.

²²⁹ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 100.

²³⁰ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, p. 132.

However, opposition was voiced by Metropolitans Paul of Krutitsa and Hilarion of Ryazan, who feared “that the *Patriarchal Replies* would put the hierarchs into the complete control of the royal power, and thereby of a Tsar who would not be as pious as Alexis Mikhailovich and could turn out to be dangerous for the Church”.

They particularly objected to the following sentence in the report on the affair of the patriarch: “It is recognized that his Majesty the Tsar alone should be in charge of spiritual matters, and that the Patriarch should be obedient to him”, which they considered to be humiliating for ecclesiastical power and to offer a broad scope for the interference of the secular power in Church affairs.²³¹

So, as M.V. Zyzykin writes, “the Patriarchs were forced to write an explanatory note, in which they gave another interpretation to the second chapter of the patriarchal replies... The Council came to a unanimous conclusion: ‘Let it be recognized that the Tsar has the pre-eminence in civil affairs, and the Patriarch in ecclesiastical affairs, so that in this way the harmony of the ecclesiastical institution may be preserved whole and unshaken.’ This was the principled triumph of the Nikonian idea, as was the resolution of the Council to close the *Monastirskij Prikaz* and the return to the Church of judgement over clergy in civil matters (the latter remained in force until 1700).”²³²

And yet it had been a close-run thing... During the 1666 Council Ligarides had expressed an essentially pagan view of tsarist power: “[The tsar] will be called the new Constantine. He will be both tsar and hierarch, just as the great Constantine, who was so devoted to the faith of Christ, is praised among us at Great Vespers as priest and tsar. Yes, and both among the Romans and the Egyptians the tsar united in himself the power of the priesthood and of the kingship.”

The good sense of the Russian (as opposed to the Greek) hierarchs finally averted a catastrophe. However, the unjust condemnation of Patriarch Nikon, the chief supporter of the Orthodox doctrine of Church-State relations, cast a long shadow over the proceedings, and meant that within a generation the attempt to impose absolutism on Russia would begin again... Indeed, the caesaropapist tendency began already with Nikon’s successor, the new Patriarch Joachim, who, as Robert Massie writes, “well understood his designated role when he addressed the Tsar saying: ‘Sovereign, I know neither the old nor the new faith, but whatever the Sovereign orders, I am prepared to follow and obey in all respects.’”²³³ True, the tsar asked forgiveness of Nikon just before his death. But the reconciliation was incomplete. For the patriarch replied to the tsar’s messenger: “Imitating my teacher Christ, who commanded us to remit the sins of our neighbours, I say: may God forgive the deceased. But a written forgiveness I will not give, because during his life he did not free us from imprisonment”²³⁴

²³¹ Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

²³² Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, part III, pp. 274, 275.

²³³ Massie, *Peter the Great: His Life and World*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 61.

²³⁴ Nikon, in Rusak, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi*, USA, 1993, p. 193.

For this sin, the incipient enslavement of the patriarchate to the State, the whole nation was bound to suffer. Thus in 1670-71, writes Hans Joachim-Torke, “peasants joined the greatest rebellion of the seventeenth century – a mass insurrection that began on the periphery under the leadership of Stepan (‘Stenka’) Razin. The rebellion sprang from the ranks of the Don Cossacks, who lived south of Moscow’s ever-expanding border and had their own autonomous military order (military council as well as the election of the ataman and other officials). Through the influx of fugitive peasants, bondsmen, and petty townsmen, the Cossacks has multiplied to the point where they had their own ‘proletariat’ – some ten to twenty thousand Cossacks who could no longer support themselves by tilling the land. Their plight was exaggerated by Moscow’s decision to reduce its paid ‘service Cossacks’ to a mere 1,000 persons. War with Poland in 1654-67 increased the flight of people to the untamed southern steppes (*dikoe pole*). Although the government was not unhappy to see the strengthening of barriers against the Crimean Tatars, it promulgated a statute of limitations on fugitives and ordered the forcible return of 10,000 fugitives. Amidst this unrest, in 1667 Stepan Razin summoned Cossacks to join a traditional campaign of plunder and led some 2,000 Cossacks to the lower Volga, ultimately reaching the Persian coast in 1668-9. Over the next two years, however, the expedition turned into a popular rebellion against landowners and state authorities. With some 20,000 supporters, Razin prepared to strike at Moscow itself. Although he did establish a Cossack regime in Astrakhan and issued radical promises to divide all property equally, he had no coherent political programme and explicitly declared autocracy inviolable. In Simbirsk his forces attracted peasants, some non-Russian people, and petty townsmen and service people from the middle Volga. In the spring of 1671, however, Razin was betrayed by his own Cossack supporters: handed over to tsarist authorities, he was later executed in Moscow.”²³⁵

“Razin’s legend... lived on. He became a hero of popular legend and song for the next couple of centuries, and the notion survived that he might one day be resurrected and return to lead the ordinary people in a final emancipation from unjust and tyrannical oppressors. Old Believers, since they impugned the very legitimacy of both state and church, nourished such expectations. The symbiosis of Old Belief and Cossackdom, merging at times with the discontents of Tatars, Bashkirs and other non-Russians created a threat to imperial authority in the southeast for at least a century to come...”²³⁶

The intrusion of the tsar into the ecclesiastical administration, leading to the deposition of Patriarch Nikon, was the decisive factor allowing the Old Ritualist movement to gain credibility and momentum, as manifested particularly in the Razin rebellion. In the longer term, it led to the greater subjection of the Church to the State under Peter the Great. And thereby it radically undermined the ideal of

²³⁵ Joachim-Torke, “From Muscovy towards St. Petersburg 1598-1689”, in Gregory L. Frazee, *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 83-84.

²³⁶ Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 172.

Moscow the Third Rome, which depended on a true “symphony” between Church and State such as Patriarch Nikon stood for. The logic of the geopolitical situation dictated that Moscow should replace Constantinople as the leader of the Orthodox *oikoumene*, and that the Russian patriarchate should replace the Ecumenical patriarchate as the first Church of Orthodoxy, just as New Rome had replaced Old Rome in the fifth century. But Nikon’s deposition (ironically, by Greek hierarchs) destroyed the dream...

And yet even in the St. Petersburg period of Russian history, when the ideal of statehood espoused by Peter the Great and Catherine the Great was closer to the despotism of the First Rome than the Autocracy of the Second Rome, by a miracle of Divine Providence the ideals of the Third Rome continued to be pursued – and partially realized. For during the reigns of Tsars Nicholas I and Alexander II, and again during the reign of Nicholas II, the idea of Moscow the Third Rome was revived, if not explicitly at any rate by implication, and Orthodox intellectuals such as Aksakov and Dostoyevsky again began to see this as the role that Divine Providence had entrusted to Russia.²³⁷ Thus the wars waged by Russia for the liberation of Bulgaria in 1877-78 and Serbia in 1914-17 were seen as prefiguring the full realization of that role, when “Constantinople shall be ours” and when the whole Orthodox world would be reunited under one roof in accordance with the ancient ideal: “One Faith, One Church, One Empire”. But then came the revolution, which destroyed the ideal just as the Russians found themselves within striking distance of recapturing Hagia Sophia for the Orthodox...

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Inevitably, the ideal of the Third Rome and the reality of Russian history diverged sharply; and there have not been lacking cynics who see the ideal as a cover for a crudely imperialist will to power. However, as an ideal it was a noble one; nor can it be denied that the Universal Orthodox Church needed a secular protector. In most cases the Russian great princes and tsars Russia’s status as the Third Rome responded to this need. Whenever Greeks or Bulgars or Serbs or Arabs or Georgians or Armenians suffering under the Ottoman yoke appealed to Moscow or St. Petersburg for help, the tsars hastened to send armies into war even when they were unprepared or would have preferred to stay at home. Heavy is the head that bears the crown, and none heavier than that of the Emperor of the Third Rome...

The most pressing immediate challenge for Moscow the Third Rome was Ukraine... With the weakening of Poland and the increase in strength of the generally pro-Muscovite Cossacks under Hetman Bogdan Khmelnytsky, large areas of Belorussia and the Ukraine, including Kiev and the left bank of the Dnieper, were freed from Latin control, which could only be joyful news for the native Orthodox population who had suffered so much from the Polish-Jesuit yoke. Kiev itself was transferred to Muscovy by the Treaty of Andrusovo in 1667

²³⁷ See N. Ulyanov, "Kompleks Filofea" ("The Philotheus Complex"), *Voprosy Filosofii* (Questions of Philosophy), 1994, N 4, pp. 152-162.

for only two years. But in 1686 the deal became permanent when Muscovy paid the Poles 146,000 rubles.²³⁸

The question now arose whether the Kievan metropolia should remain within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was at that time ruled by Patriarch Dionysius IV. As we have seen, in the 1650s the tsar wanted the Kievan metropolia to be transferred to Moscow, while Patriarch Nikon supported the rights of the patriarch of Constantinople – this was another demonstration of his lack of personal ambition. But Dionysius had taken part in the deposition of Nikon: he was Alexei's man. And so in 1686 he agreed to the transfer of the Kievan metropolia to the Moscow Patriarchate, at any rate to the extent of allowing Moscow to ordain the Kievan metropolitan. However, it still remained, strictly speaking within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Moreover, the transfer was subject to three conditions: 1) the election of the metropolitan of Kiev was to take place by the bishops, clergy and nobles of the metropolia and with the permission and at the command of the Hetman, not the Russian tsar; 2) both the Ecumenical and the Moscow patriarchs were to be commemorated; and 3) the metropolitan of Kiev was to preserve all his privileges.²³⁹ The first two conditions were never fulfilled.

In any case, in 1687 Patriarch Dionysius was removed for this act²⁴⁰, and the transfer of Kiev to Moscow denounced as anti-canonical by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Things were made worse when, in 1688, Moscow reneged on its promise to give Kiev the status of an autonomous metropolia and turned it into an ordinary diocese.

This had consequences in the twentieth century, when Constantinople granted the Polish Church, formerly part of the Moscow Patriarchate, autocephaly in 1924, and then, from the beginning of the 1990s, began to lay claim to the Ukraine.

Constantinople's so-called "transfer" of Kiev to the jurisdiction of the Russian Church was extracted only under heavy pressure from the Sultan, who was in turn under pressure from Moscow, and wanted to ensure Moscow's neutrality in his war with the Sacred League in Europe. Ironically, the fact that he succumbed to this pressure tends to give strength to the argument that it was better for Kiev to be under the free Church of Russia under a powerful and Orthodox tsar rather than the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was in captivity to the godless Turks...

²³⁸ "The Treaty of Andrusovo is Signed", *History Today*, January, 2017, p. 9.

²³⁹ Konstantin Vetoshnikov, "'Peredacha' Kievskoj mitropolii Moskovskomu patriarkhaty v 1686 godu: kanonicheskij analiz" (The 'transfer' of the Kievan metropolia to the Moscow patriarchate in 1686: a canonical analysis), report delivered in French in Belgrade in August, 2016, <https://www.academia.edu>, translated into Russian in *Pravoslavie Segodnia* (Orthodoxy Today), September 16, 2016. Cf. V.G. Chentsova, "Sinodal'noe reshenie 1686 g. o Kievskoj mitropolii" (The Synodal Decision of 1686 on the Kievan Metropolia), in *Drevnaia Rus'. Voprosy Medievistiki* 2 (68), 2017, c. 89-110.

²⁴⁰ As Archbishop Vsevolod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA writes, "The subjection of the Kyivan Metropolia to the Moscow Patriarchate was concluded by the patriarch Dionysius without the agreement or ratification of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Great Church of Christ'

This is the argument of Sergei Kuznetsov, who writes: “The turning point for Orthodoxy coincided with the awakening of national self-consciousness among the Orthodox population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [Polish: Rzeczpospolita]. In 1648, when King Jan II Casimir (Vasa) ascended the Polish-Lithuanian throne, he resolved not to admit a single non-Catholic to a leading post in the entire Commonwealth.

“Even the Hadiach treaty of 1658, which was signed to protect Orthodoxy in Poland after an acute period of conflict, was set aside in favor of Uniatism.

“After the abdication of Jan Casimir from the throne in 1668, the general Polish confederation passed a law whereby “apostates from Catholicism and Uniatism” (i.e. Orthodox people) were deprived of civil rights and freedoms, and were subject to exile.

“In church relations, the situation was no better. The *Cathedræ* [Episcopal sees. – Trans.] in outposts of Orthodoxy in Western Ukraine, such as the Lviv and Lutsk dioceses, were often purchased by Bishops for money under one main condition – loyalty to the *Unia*. Orthodox Churches were seized *en masse* by the Uniates. At the same time, this violence over freedom of religious confession in Poland was strengthened at the legislative level, and as a result, the Orthodox population of the Commonwealth had no defense in the courts of law.

“The defenseless position of Constantinople, together with the deteriorating state of the Orthodox people in Western Rus’, in the end led to the Russian State sending their own representatives here [to Modern-day Ukraine/Western Rus’ – Trans.] to protect the rights of Orthodox believers. Nominally, Western Rus’ was then still a part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

“The Polish King in principle did not acknowledge the Patriarch of Constantinople, a clear indication of this being a 1676 declaration of the Sejm [Polish parliament. – Trans.] made ten years before the change of jurisdiction, forbidding Orthodox Ukrainian Brotherhoods and local Hierarchs to have any communication with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Mother Church could then do nothing about it, even as it already couldn’t do anything in principle, being as it was a hostage of the Ottoman Empire.

‘Moreover, even 50 years before the events described, nothing prevented the Polish authorities, for example, from declaring the assistant of the Ecumenical Patriarch – Patriarch Theophan of Antioch – as an impostor, and with the stroke of a pen, they declared all of the bishops whom he consecrated in Western Rus’ non-canonical.

“Beyond sending notes of protest, written assurances, and exhortations for the faithful to preserve Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate did nothing concrete.

“Caught between the powerful Catholic West, and the powerless Greek East, the Western Russian Church could only proceed down the path of the restoration

of historical justice: to restore the unity of the once divided Russian Church, and to enlist the support of the Patriarch of Moscow as well as the Russian tsar to restore not simply a nominal, but a real Church and Secular authority.

“It would not be superfluous to add that the division of the Metropolia in 1458 was, in particular, the handiwork of Pope Callixtus III, who perceived the Kievan Church as consisting of two parts: “Upper Russia” and “Lower Russia”. Thus we can see that what once lead to the separation of the church, now, on the contrary, contributed to its reunification.

“The exact moment and circumstances, of the transfer of the Kievan Metropolis to the Moscow Patriarchate is to this day the subject of speculation, which supposedly boils down to the nuances of the translation of the Patriarchal letter. There are a large number of studies on this subject, supported by an analysis of the original text of the letter of Patriarch Dionysius, but, given the special character of Greek Church diplomacy, it is extremely difficult to put an end to this complex issue.

“Firstly, there is no clear timeframe. In other words, the original letter gives the Patriarchate of Moscow the right to consecrate and appoint the Kievan Metropolitan, but it says nothing about any timeframe ascribed to this right. From that time on, the Metropolitan of Kiev has recognized the Patriarch of Moscow as his father.

“Secondly, the single connection between Constantinople and Kiev was stipulated only at a liturgical level: The Kievan Metropolitan had to commemorate the name of the Ecumenical Patriarch first during the Liturgy, and only then the Patriarch of Moscow.

“The most successful antipode of this intricate church diplomacy, and the key to understanding the ‘Ukrainian Church Question’, may be the *Tomos* of autocephaly... of *the Church of Greece*. The fact is that decisions of the Ecumenical Throne on the autocephaly or the autonomy of a particular territory depends upon how important that territory is to them. The Autocephalous Church of Greece consists of eighty-one dioceses, thirty of which are the so-called ‘New Territories’.

“The peculiarity is that the New Territories, (Northern Greece), are part of the Church of Greece, but in the *Tomos* of Autocephaly, it is stipulated that they were transferred from Constantinople to Athens ‘for a time’ (*αχρι καιρου/ ἄχρι καιροῦ*).^[3]

“In the letter of Patriarch Dionysius IV, there is no indication of a timeframe or a concrete date. It seems that the Kievan Metropolia was not so important for Constantinople, since they didn’t leave a way out for themselves. Even if Patriarch Dionysius theoretically had in mind a temporary nature of rule by the Moscow Patriarchate, then he would not have hesitated to claim his rights at the earliest opportunity.

“However, neither during the liquidation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, nor during the Russo-Turkish Wars, nor after the February revolution right up to 1923 (the [date of the] *Tomos* of Autocephaly of the Polish Orthodox Church), do we see any documents of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in which he claims his rights to these territories.”²⁴¹

The quarrel over the Kievan metropolia highlighted one important fact: if the Tsar of Russia was the Emperor of the Third Rome and the successor of the Emperors of the New Rome of Constantinople, then it was natural for his “symphonic partner” to be the Patriarch of Moscow. But that could not really be the case as long as (a) the leader of the Orthodox Church worldwide remained the Patriarch of Constantinople, and (b) the Tsar and the Patriarch of Moscow were not fully equal partners in full agreement with each other...

²⁴¹ Kuznetsow, “The Historical Aspects of the Transfer of the Kievan Metropolia to the Moscow Patriarchate”, *Orthodox Christianity*, August 20, 2018.

15. THE MESSIAH IN TURKEY

After the Edict of Expulsion in 1492, the Jews of Spain were invited to the Muslim lands by the promise of economic concessions and political protection. Speaking Ladano, they settled throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, but especially in Constantinople and Thessalonica. Thus the Jews had 44 synagogues and 30,000 people in Constantinople, which may have been the seat of their secret government, or exilarchate, which had been abolished by the Arabs of Baghdad in the tenth century. Again, in Thessalonica, which was called the New Jerusalem, there were 36,000 Jews. Their grip on trade was so powerful that in 1568 they appealed to the Sublime Porte to have their tax bill reduced.²⁴²

Powerful though they were, these Sephardic Jews still pined for their former life in Andalusia, and it was through them that the Kabbala received an important theoretical and practical development that reflected their longings.²⁴³

“The most important person,” writes Tikhomirov, “who gave an impulse to the Kabbalistic movement here was Issak Lourié Levi [or Louria], a native of Jerusalem, who had a mystical, passionate nature that devoted itself entirely to the idea. He lived for a very short time on the earth (from 1534 to 1572) and died at the age of 38 from the plague. But in the short period of his activity he exerted a powerful influence on the development of Kabbalism. In Jerusalem he founded a kabbalistic circle in which they discussed the Kabbala and practised incantations and the calling up of spirits. He had an enormous influence on those around him, and the movement of Kabbalism continued also after his death.”²⁴⁴

“Like most kabbalists,” writes Johnson, “he believed that the actual letters of the Torah, and the numbers which they symbolized, offered means of direct access to God. It is a very potent brew once swallowed. However, Luria also had a cosmic theory which had an immediate direct bearing on belief in the Messiah, and which remains the most influential of all Jewish mystical ideas. The kabbalah listed the various layers of the cosmos. Luria postulated the thought that Jewish miseries were a symptom of the breakdown of the cosmos. Its shattered husks, or klippot, which are vile, none the less contain tiny sparks, tikkim, of the divine light. This imprisoned light is the Exile of the Jews. Even the divine Shekinah itself is part of the trapped light, subject to evil influences. The Jewish people have a dual significance in this broken cosmos, both as symbols and as active agents. As symbols, the injuries inflicted on them by the gentiles show how evil hurts the light. But as agents they have the task of restoring the cosmos. By the strictest observance of the Law, they can release the sparks of light trapped in the cosmic husks. When this restitution has been made, the Exile of the Light will end, the Messiah will

²⁴² Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950*, London: HarperCollins, 2004; Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovii Istorii* (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 356.

²⁴³ Armstrong, *The Battle for God: a History of Fundamentalism*, New York: Ballantine, 2001, pp. 13-14.

²⁴⁴ Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 358. According to Armstrong (*op. cit.*, p. 11), “by 1650, Lurianic Kabbalah had become a mass movement, the only theological system to win such general acceptance among Jews at this time.”

come and Redemption will take place.”²⁴⁵

Luria also believed in reincarnation, writing: “If the soul was not purified entirely the first time, and it left this world, that soul must come back in a reincarnation, even a few times, until it is entirely purified.”²⁴⁶

This motif was to receive a fateful development in the thought of one of his disciples, Shabbatai Zevi, who “was educated on the Kabbala and declared himself to be the Messiah. Shabbatai Zevi was born in 1626 and died in 1676, and stirred up the whole Jewish world from the east to the extreme west. His father was from the Morea, and he himself began his activity in Smyrna. Possessing a huge ability to exert influence on those around him, he, while basing himself on Kabbalistic works (especially the Zohar), gave his own teaching, whose outlines, however, are not at all clearly known. In this period, both among Christians and among Jews there was an expectation of extraordinary events in 1666: among Christians – the Second Coming, among Jews – the coming of their Messiah. In Shabbatai Zevi those round him had already for a long time supposed to see something great, and in 1648 he finally declared that he was the Messiah. For this he was excommunicated from the synagogue and exiled from Smyrna. Then he began to preach in various other cities, including Constantinople. His fellow-labourer Nathan [Benjamin Levi], who played the role of the resurrected Prophet Elijah, announced that in 1666 the Messiah would appear, would liberate the Jews from the Turks and would take the Sultan into captivity. In 1665 Shabbatai Zevi did indeed triumphantly enter into Jerusalem, where the majority of the Jewish population believed in him. Then with the same pomp he appeared in Smyrna. A psychopathological inspiration that had not been seen for a long time took hold of the Jews. Everywhere the Jews gave themselves over to unrestrained joy, while others – to exploits of fasting and repentance with self-flagellation, giving alms and organizing feasts in honour of the Messiah, who was triumphantly announced in the synagogue. News of this reached Europe, where the same scenes began en masse, while the rabbis declared Shabbatai to be a liar and in every way opposed the movement. Meanwhile, the worried Turks arrested Shabbatai in 1666 and imprisoned him in Abydos, where crowds of worshippers continued to surround the Messiah in expectation that he would finally be released and liberate the Jews. The Turkish government decided to put an end this and declared Shabbatai Zevi an ultimatum: either accept Islam or be annihilated. Shabbatai Zevi accepted Islam, but still continued his role, until finally they exiled him to Dulcinea, where he died.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 260-261.

²⁴⁶ Recently Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the ultra-orthodox leader known as the “Moses of the Sephardic world” has applied this theory to the Holocaust, declaring that the Jewish victims of Nazism were “the reincarnation of earlier souls who sinned [and who] returned... to atone for their sins” (Lisa Beyer, Eric Silver, “Heresy and Holocaust”, *Time*, August 21, 2000, p. 74).

²⁴⁷ Dan Cohn-Sherbok writes that Nathan “sent letters to Jews throughout the diaspora requesting that they repent and recognize Shabbatai Zevi as their deliverer. According to Nathan, Shabbatai would bring back the lost tribes and inaugurate the period of messianic redemption. After a short period in Jerusalem, Shabbatai travelled to Smyrna, where he encountered fierce opposition from various local rabbis. In response he declared that he was the Anointed of the God of Jacob and criticized those who refused to accept him. This act provoked hysterical response from his

“However, Shabbataism did not disappear even after that. Up to now [the early twentieth century] there exists in Thessalonica a small sect of his followers, about 4000 souls, who call themselves the maiminim (that is, believers). Although their teaching is preserved in the strictest secrecy, nevertheless its Catechism is known. Both from this Catechism and from a work attributed to Shabbatai Zevi, it is evident that Shabbatai Zevi and the Messiah in general is periodically incarnated. Adam, Abraham, Moses, etc. are only parts of the soul of Shabbatai Zevi. The maiminim affirm that Shabbatai Zevi has been incarnate 18 times.

“After the death of Shabbatai Zevi there were several continuers of his work, who were generally looked upon as incarnations of the original soul of the Messiah, that is, as the Divinity having taken on human form. This incarnation of the Divinity constitutes one of the main points of the teaching of Shabbatai Zevi, and although his followers present several different schools, in this respect they all agree. It is noteworthy that Shabbatai Levi rebuked the Jews for their murder of Jesus Christ and intended to declare Him a prophet. In the work attributed to Shabbatai and which at the same time a certain Nehemiah Hia Hojon (in Graetz’ opinion, a simple rogue) called his own, the religious history of the world is expounded. This world-view should be compared, for clarity’s sake, with the teaching of Hojon on the trihypostacity of the Divinity. It is very possible that this was also Shabbatai’s idea. According to the teaching of Hojon, the Divinity is trinitarian, but not in the same sense as is taught by Christians. In the Divinity there are three Partsefim (persons): 1) the Holy Pre-Eternal Elder, who is the soul of all souls, 2) the Holy King, who is the incarnation of God, and 3) a female essence, the Shehinah. In the above-indicated work of Shabbatai it is explained that the creation of the world by Ayn-Sof (from the Kabbala) turned out to be unsuccessful. Neither the world, nor God himself were able to realize its ideal character. Only with the incarnation of Shabbatai Zevi – the Messiah, Christ, the Holy King – was the world renewed and attained perfection. Then also ‘the unknown hidden Holy Elder’ became knowable, and attained his development and realization. The Messiah, the highest man, constitutes one whole with God. He is the true creator and founder, for he brings order into the shaken-up structure of the world. Thus Shabbatai Zevi was the incarnation of the Divinity and one of the Partsefim. But we must note that in this theory the highest man, or Holy King, unites in himself the masculine and feminine principles. Consequently, in him is also included the Shehinah, although, perhaps, the trihypostacity is not thereby destroyed.

followers: a number fell into trances and had visions of him crowned on a royal throne as the King of Israel.

“In 1666 he went to Istanbul, where he was arrested and put into prison. Soon the prison quarters were transformed into a messianic court, and pilgrims from throughout the Jewish world travelled to Constantinople to join in messianic rituals and ascetic activities. Hymns were composed in Shabbatai’s honour and new festivals introduced. The same year Shabbatai met the Polish kabbalist Nehemiah ha-Kohen, who denounced him to the Turkish authorities. When Shabbatai was brought to the Turkish court, he was given the choice between conversion and death. Given this alternative, Shabbatai converted to Islam...” (*Atlas of Jewish History*, London & New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 119) (V.M.)

“In all this we clearly see a variation on what is undoubtedly the Kabbala. But apparently Shabbatai said about the Jews contemporary to him that they worshipped, not God, but the Metatron. In the teaching of the maiminim the Jews, although predestined for salvation, must now be numbered among the unbelievers, and for their salvation they must admit that Shabbatai Zevi is the Messiah.

“The sects of the Hassidim and Frankists in Poland, Russia and Austria are considered offshoots of Shabbataism. But the founder of Hassidism in Poland at that time, Israel Besht (1698-1760), had no relations of any kind with the Shabbataists, and was extremely negatively disposed to Shabbatai Zevi. One presents in his teaching several other Kabbalistic variations. As regards Yankel Leibovich, who accepted the name of Jacob Frankel, he truly recognized the Messianic status of Shabbatai. According to his teaching, there were many Messiahs and there are all incarnations of one and the same Messianic soul, among whom are King David, Elijah the Prophet, Jesus Christ, Mahomet and Shabbatai Zevi. Jacob Frank composed his teaching in Thessalonica after entering into close relations with the Shabbataists... ”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-360.

16. THE CONFESSION OF DOROTHEUS

In the midst of these frightening intimations of the Coming of the Antichrist, and a definite retreat of Orthodox Christianity in the face of its enemies in East and West, the *Confession* of Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem (1672) comes as a refreshing antidote, a proof that the true faith was alive and well in the Mother of the Christian Churches.

Dennis Bratcher writes: "A Synod of Eastern Orthodox Churches was called in Jerusalem in 1672 to refute the position of Cyril Lucaris, Patriarch of Constantinople, who had published a Confession in which he attempted to express Orthodox beliefs in terms of the predestination beliefs of Calvinism. From a Reformation perspective, he had also challenged some of the important religious practices of the Eastern churches, such as the veneration of icons and prayers to the saints. Orthodox leaders contended that the Confession of Cyril was a forgery perpetrated by Calvinists to spread their influence among Eastern churches. They presented quotations from known writings of Cyril to show that he had not held the positions expressed in the Confession. In addition, they argued that the Confession was not an official pronouncement by an Orthodox Patriarch.

"The Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 soundly rejected any further attempts at reformulation of Orthodox teachings and strengthened Orthodox beliefs against both the Protestant Reformation and Catholicism. The Synod produced its own confession, the Confession of Dositheus (Patriarch of Jerusalem), in which point by point it refuted Cyril's' eighteen points. In addition it added four catechetical style questions that defended the restriction of reading and study of Scripture to the priests, defended the role of tradition, as well as a lengthy defense of the veneration of icons and prayers to the saints.

"The version here is adapted from *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem*, translated and edited by J. Robertson, 1899. The original documents of the Synod contain several other chapters that outline the controversy and the basis for reaching its conclusions. The Confession below is excerpted from Chapter 6. The footnotes of the original document have been omitted, except for the biblical references in braces, which were footnotes in the original and are included here in the body of the text. Adaptations include updating archaic language and sentence structure, with some explanatory comments included in brackets and notes."

"Dositheus, by the mercy of God, Patriarch of Jerusalem, to those that ask and inquire concerning the faith and worship of the Greeks, that is of the Eastern Church, how it thinks concerning the Orthodox faith, in the common name of all Christians subject to our Apostolic Throne, and of the Orthodox worshippers that are sojourning in this holy and great city of Jerusalem (with whom the whole [Orthodox] Catholic Church agrees in all that concerns the faith) publishes this concise Confession, for a testimony both before God and before man, with a sincere conscience, and devoid of all dissimulation.

"Decree 1. We believe in one God, true, almighty, and infinite, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; the Father unbegotten; the Son begotten of the Father

before the ages, and consubstantial with Him; and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, and consubstantial with the Father and the Son. These three Persons in one essence we call the All-holy Trinity, – by all creation to be ever blessed, glorified, and adored.

“Decree 2. We believe the Divine and Sacred Scriptures to be God-taught; and, therefore, we ought to believe the same without doubting; yet not otherwise than as the Catholic Church has interpreted and delivered the same. For every foul heresy accepts the Divine Scriptures, but perversely interprets the same, using metaphors, and homonymies, and sophistries of man’s wisdom, confounding what ought to be distinguished, and trifling with what ought not to be trifled with. For if [we were to accept Scriptures] otherwise, each man holding every day a different sense concerning them, the Catholic Church would not by the grace of Christ continue to be the Church until this day, holding the same doctrine of faith, and always identically and steadfastly believing. But rather she would be torn into innumerable parties, and subject to heresies. Neither would the Church be holy, the pillar and ground of the truth, {1 Timothy 3:15} without spot or wrinkle; {Ephesians 5:27} but would be the Church of the malignant {Psalm 25:5} as it is obvious the church of the heretics undoubtedly is, and especially that of Calvin, who are not ashamed to learn from the Church, and then to wickedly repudiate her.

“Wherefore, the witness also of the Catholic Church is, we believe, not of inferior authority to that of the Divine Scriptures. For one and the same Holy Spirit being the author of both, it is quite the same to be taught by the Scriptures and by the Catholic Church. Moreover, when any man speaks from himself he is liable to err, and to deceive, and be deceived; but the Catholic Church, as never having spoken, or speaking from herself, but from the Spirit of God – who being her teacher, she is ever unfailingly rich – it is impossible for her to in any wise err, or to at all deceive, or be deceived; but like the Divine Scriptures, is infallible, and has perpetual authority.

“Decree 3. We believe the most good God to have from eternity predestined unto glory those whom He has chosen, and to have consigned unto condemnation those whom He has rejected; but not so that He would justify the one, and consign and condemn the other without cause. For that would be contrary to the nature of God, who is the common Father of all, and no respecter of persons, and would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth {1 Timothy 2:4}. But since He foreknew the one would make a right use of their free-will, and the other a wrong, He predestined the one, or condemned the other. And we understand the use of free-will thus, that the Divine and illuminating grace, and which we call preventing [or, prevenient] grace, being, as a light to those in darkness, by the Divine goodness imparted to all, to those that are willing to obey this – for it is of use only to the willing, not to the unwilling – and co-operate with it, in what it requires as necessary to salvation, there is consequently granted particular grace. This grace co-operates with us, and enables us, and makes us to persevere in the love of God, that is to say, in performing those good things that God would have us to do, and which His preventing grace admonishes us that we

should do, justifies us, and makes us predestined. But those who will not obey, and co-operate with grace; and, therefore, will not observe those things that God would have us perform, and that abuse in the service of Satan the free-will, which they have received of God to perform voluntarily what is good, are consigned to eternal condemnation.

“But to say, as the most wicked heretics do and as is contained in the Chapter [of Cyril's' Confession] to which this answers – that God, in predestining, or condemning, did not consider in any way the works of those predestined, or condemned, we know to be profane and impious. For thus Scripture would be opposed to itself, since it promises the believer salvation through works, yet supposes God to be its sole author, by His sole illuminating grace, which He bestows without preceding works, to show to man the truth of divine things, and to teach him how he may co-operate with it, if he will, and do what is good and acceptable, and so obtain salvation. He takes not away the power to will – to will to obey, or not obey him.

“But than to affirm that the Divine Will is thus solely and without cause the author of their condemnation, what greater defamation can be fixed upon God? and what greater injury and blasphemy can be offered to the Most High? We do know that the Deity is not tempted with evils, {cf. James 1:13} and that He equally wills the salvation of all, since there is no respect of persons with Him. we do confess that for those who through their own wicked choice, and their impenitent heart, have become vessels of dishonour, there is justly decreed condemnation. But of eternal punishment, of cruelty, of pitilessness, and of inhumanity, we never, never say God is the author, who tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents. {Luke 15:7} Far be it from us, while we have our senses, to believe or to think this; and we do subject to an eternal anathema those who say and think such things, and esteem them to be worse than any infidels.

“**Decree 4.** We believe the tri-personal God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be the maker of all things visible and invisible. The invisible are the angelic Powers, rational souls, and demons, – though God did not make the demons what they later became by their own choice, – and the visible are heaven and what is under heaven. Because the Maker is good by nature, He made everything that he made very good {cf. Genesis 1:31}, and cannot ever be the maker of evil. But if there is any evil, that is to say, sin, that comes about contrarily to the Divine Will, in man or in demon, – for that evil is simply in nature, we do not acknowledge, – it is either of man, or of the devil. For it is a true and infallible rule, that God is in no way the author of evil, nor can it at all by just reasoning be attributed to God.

“**Decree 5.** We believe that all things, whether visible or invisible, are be governed by the providence of God. Although God foreknows evil things and permits them, yet in that they are evils, He is neither their contriver nor their author. When evil things occur, they may be over-ruled by the Supreme Goodness for something beneficial, not indeed as being their author, but as engrafting onto them something for the better. And we ought to adore, but not curiously pry into, Divine Providence in its ineffable and only partially revealed judgments. {cf.

Romans 11:33} . Even though what is revealed to us in Divine Scripture concerning [the providence of God] as being conducive to eternal life, we ought honestly to search out, and then unhesitatingly to interpret the same agreeably to primary notions of God.

“Decree 6. We believe the first man created by God to have fallen in Paradise, when, disregarding the Divine commandment, he yielded to the deceitful counsel of the serpent. And as a result hereditary sin flowed to his posterity; so that everyone who is born after the flesh bears this burden, and experiences the fruits of it in this present world. But by these fruits and this burden we do not understand [actual] sin, such as impiety, blasphemy, murder, sodomy, adultery, fornication, enmity, and whatever else is by our depraved choice committed contrarily to the Divine Will, not from nature. For many both of the Forefathers and of the Prophets, and vast numbers of others, as well of those under the shadow [of the Law], as well as under the truth [of the Gospel], such as the divine Precursor, and especially the Mother of God the Word, the ever-virgin Mary, did not experience these [sins], or such like faults. But only what the Divine Justice inflicted upon man as a punishment for the [original] transgression, such as sweats in labor, afflictions, bodily sicknesses, pains in child-bearing, and, finally, while on our pilgrimage, to live a laborious life, and lastly, bodily death.

“Decree 7. We believe the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to have emptied Himself, {cf. Philippians 2:7} that is, to have taken into His own Person human flesh, being conceived of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the ever-virgin Mary; and, becoming man, to have been born, without causing any pain or labor to His own Mother after the flesh, or injury to her virginity, to have suffered, to have been buried, to have risen again in glory on the third day, according to the Scriptures, {cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3,4} to have ascended into the heavens, and to be seated at the right hand of God the Father. Whom also we look for to judge the living and the dead.

“Decree 8. We believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be the only mediator, and that in giving Himself a ransom for all He has through His own Blood made a reconciliation between God and man, and that Himself having a care for His own is advocate and propitiation for our sins. Notwithstanding, in [our] prayers and supplications unto Him, we say the Saints are intercessors, and, above all, the undefiled Mother of the very God the Word; likewise, the holy Angels – whom we know to be set over us – the Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, Pure Ones, and all whom He hath glorified as having served Him faithfully. We also count with those the Bishops and Priests, as standing about the Altar of God, and righteous men eminent for virtue. We learn from the Sacred Oracle that we should pray one for another, and that the prayer of the righteous avails much, {James 5:16} and that God hears the Saints rather than those who are steeped in sins. And not only are the Saints while on their pilgrimage regarded as mediators and intercessors for us with God, but especially after their death, when all reflective vision being done away, they behold clearly the Holy Trinity in whose infinite light they know what concerns us. Just as we do not doubt that the Prophets while they were in a body with the perceptions of the senses knew what was done in heaven, and so foretold what was future; so also that the Angels, and the Saints become as Angels, know

in the infinite light of God what concerns us, we do not doubt, but rather unhesitatingly believe and confess.

“Decree 9. We believe that no one can be saved without faith. By faith we mean the right notion that is in us concerning God and divine things, which, working by love, that is to say, by [keeping] the Divine commandments, justifies us with Christ; and without this [faith] it is impossible to please God.

“Decree 10. We believe that what is called, or rather is, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in which we have been taught to believe, contains generally all the Faithful in Christ, who, being still on their pilgrimage, have not yet reached their home in the Fatherland [heaven]. But we do not in any wise confound this Church which is on its pilgrimage with that which is in the Fatherland, because it may be, as some of the heretics say, that the members of the two are sheep of God, the Chief Shepherd, {cf. Psalm 94:7} and hallowed by the same Holy Spirit. For that [confusing the heavenly and earthly Church] is absurd and impossible, since the one is yet militant, and on its journey; and the other is triumphant, and settled in the Fatherland, and has received the prize. Since a mortal man cannot universally and perpetually be head of this Catholic Church, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is head, and Himself holding the rudder is at the helm in the governing of the Church through the Holy Fathers. And, therefore, the Holy Spirit has appointed Bishops as leaders and shepherds over particular Churches, that are real Churches, and consist of real members [of the Catholic Church]. These authorities and heads [were not appointed] by abuse, but properly, and look unto the Author and Finisher of our Salvation, {cf. Hebrews 2:10; 12:2} and refer to Him what they do in their capacity of heads.

“But along with their other impieties, the Calvinists have imagined this also, that the simple Priest and the High Priest [Bishop] are perhaps the same; and that there is no necessity for High Priests. [They assert] that the Church may be governed by some Priests, and that not [only] a High Priest but a [simple] Priest also is able to ordain a Priest, and a number of Priests to ordain a High Priest. They affirm in lofty language that the Eastern Church assents to this wicked notion – for which purpose the Tenth Chapter was written by Cyril [Confession of Cyril Lucaris] – we explicitly declare according to the mind which has obtained from the beginning in the Eastern Church: –

“That the dignity of the Bishop is so necessary in the Church, that without him, neither Church nor Christian could either be or be spoken of. For he, as a successor of the Apostles, having received in continued succession by the imposition of hands and the invocation of the All-holy Spirit the grace that is given him of the Lord of binding and loosing, is a living image of God upon the earth, and by a most ample participation of the operation of the Holy Spirit, who is the chief functionary, is a fountain of all the Mysteries [Sacraments] of the Catholic Church, through which we obtain salvation.

“And he is, we suppose, as necessary to the Church as breath is to man, or the sun to the world. It has also been elegantly said by some in commendation of the

dignity of the High Priesthood, "What God is in the heavenly Church of the first-born, {cf. Hebrews 12:23} and the sun in the world, that every High Priest is in his own particular Church, as through him the flock is enlightened, and nourished, and becomes the temple of God." {cf. Ephesians 2:21}

I

"It is obvious that this great mystery and dignity of the Episcopate has come down to us by a continued succession. For since the Lord has promised to be with us always, although He is with us by other means of grace and Divine operations, yet in a more eminent manner does He make us His own and dwell with us through the Bishop as chief functionary and through the divine Mysteries [sacraments] is united with us. The Bishop is the first minister, and chief functionary, through the Holy Spirit, and does not allow us to fall into heresy. And, therefore [John] of Damascus, in his Fourth Epistle to the Africans, said that the Catholic Church is everywhere committed to the care of the Bishops. Clement, the first Bishop of the Romans, and Evodius at Antioch, and Mark at Alexandria, were acknowledged successors of Peter. Also [acknowledged] is that the divine Andrew seated Stachys on the Throne of Constantinople, in his own stead; and that in this great holy city of Jerusalem our Lord Himself appointed James, and that after James another succeeded, and then another, until our own times. And, therefore, Tertullian in his Epistle to Papianus called all Bishops the Apostles' successors. To their succession to the Apostles' dignity and authority Eusebius, the [friend] of Pamphilus, testifies, and all the Fathers testify, of whom it is needless to give a list. The common and most ancient custom of the Catholic Church confirms this.

"And that the dignity of the Episcopate differs from that of the simple Priest, is obvious. For the Priest is ordained by the Bishop, but a Bishop is not ordained by a Priest, but by two or three High Priests, as the Apostolic Canon directs. And the Priest is chosen by the Bishop, but the High Priest is not chosen by the Priests or Presbyters, nor is he chosen by secular Princes, but by the Synod of the Primatial Church of that country, in which is situated the city that is to receive the ordinand, or at least by the Synod of the Province in which he is to become a Bishop. Or, if the city should choose him, it does not do so absolutely, but the election is referred to the Synod. And if it appear that he has [been chosen] agreeably to the Canons, the [Bishop] Elect is advanced by ordination by the Bishops, with the invocation of the All-holy Spirit. But if not, he whom the Synod chooses is advanced.

"The [simple] Priest, indeed, retains to himself the authority and grace of the Priesthood, which he has received; but the Bishop imparts it to others also. And the one having received the dignity of the Priesthood from the Bishop, can only perform Holy Baptism, and Prayer-oil, minister sacrificially the unbloody Sacrifice*, and impart to the people the All-holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, anoint the baptized with the Holy Myron [Chrism oil], crown the Faithful legally marrying, pray for the sick, and that all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, {cf. 1 Timothy 2:4} and especially for the remission and forgiveness of the sins of the Faithful, living and dead. And if he be eminent for experience and virtue, receiving his authority from the Bishop, he directs those Faithful that come unto him, and guides them into the way of possessing the heavenly kingdom, and is appointed a preacher of the sacred Gospel.

“The High Priest is also the minister of all these, since he is in fact, as has been said before, the fountain of the Divine Mysteries and graces, through the Holy Spirit, and he alone consecrates the Holy Myron [Chrism oil]. And the ordinations of all orders and degrees in the Church are proper to him; and in a primary and highest sense he binds and looses, and his sentence is approved by God, as the Lord hath promised. {Matthew 16:19} And he preaches the Sacred Gospel, and contends for the Orthodox faith, and those that refuse to hear he casts out of the Church as heathens and publicans, {cf. Matthew 18:17} and he puts heretics under excommunication and anathema, and lays down his own life for the sheep. {cf. John 10:11} From which it is apparent, that without contradiction the Bishop differs from the simple Priest, and that without him all the Priests in the world could not exercise the pastorate in the Church of God, or govern it at all.

“But it is well said by one of the Fathers, that it is not easy to find a heretic that has understanding. For when these forsake the Church, they are forsaken by the Holy Spirit, and there remains in them neither understanding nor light, but only darkness and blindness. For if that had not happened to them, they would not have opposed things that are most plain; among which is the truly great mystery of Episcopacy, which is taught by Scripture, written of, and witnessed to, both by all Ecclesiastical history and the writings of holy men, and always held and acknowledged by the Catholic Church.

“**Decree 11.** We believe that members of the Catholic Church are all the Faithful, and only the Faithful, who, truly having received the blameless Faith of the Saviour Christ from Christ Himself, and the Apostles, and the Holy Ecumenical Synods, adhere to the same without wavering, although some of them may be guilty of all manner of sins. For unless the Faithful, even when living in sin, were members of the Church, they could not be judged by the Church. But now being judged by her, and called to repentance, and guided into the way of her salutary precepts, though they may be still defiled with sins, for this only, that they have not fallen into despair, and that they cleave to the Catholic and Orthodox faith, they are, and are regarded as, members of the Catholic Church.

“**Decree 12.** We believe that the Catholic Church is taught by the Holy Spirit. For he is the true Paraclete; whom Christ sends from the Father, {cf. John 25:26} to teach the truth, {cf. John 26:13} and to drive away darkness from the minds of the Faithful. The teaching of the Holy Spirit, however, does not directly illuminate the Church, but [does so] through the holy Fathers and Leaders of the Catholic Church. All Scripture is, and is called, the word of the Holy Spirit, not that it was spoken directly by Him, but that it was spoken by Him through the Apostles and Prophets. In like manner the Church is taught indeed by the Life-giving Spirit, but through the medium of the holy Fathers and Doctors (whose rule is acknowledged to be the Holy and Ecumenical Synods; for we shall not cease to say this ten thousand times); and, therefore, not only are we persuaded, but do profess as true and undoubtedly certain, that it is impossible for the Catholic Church to err, or at all be deceived, or ever to choose falsehood instead of truth. For the All-holy Spirit continually

operating through the holy Fathers and Leaders faithfully ministering, delivers the Church from error of every kind.

“Decree 13. We believe a man to be not simply justified through faith alone, but through faith which works through love, that is to say, through faith and works. But [the idea] that faith can fulfill the function of a hand that lays hold on the righteousness which is in Christ, and can then apply it unto us for salvation, we know to be far from all Orthodoxy. For faith so understood would be possible in all, and so none could miss salvation, which is obviously false. But on the contrary, we rather believe that it is not the correlative of faith, but the faith which is in us, justifies through works, with Christ. But we regard works not as witnesses certifying our calling, but as being fruits in themselves, through which faith becomes efficacious, and as in themselves meriting, through the Divine promises {cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10} that each of the Faithful may receive what is done through his own body, whether it be good or bad.

“Decree 14. We believe man in falling by the [original] transgression to have become comparable and similar to the beasts; that is, to have been utterly undone, and to have fallen from his perfection and impassibility, yet not to have lost the nature and power which he had received from the supremely good God. For otherwise he would not be rational, and consequently not a human. So [he still has] the same nature in which he was created, and the same power of his nature, that is free-will, living and operating, so that he is by nature able to choose and do what is good, and to avoid and hate what is evil. For it is absurd to say that the nature which was created good by Him who is supremely good lacks the power of doing good. For this would be to make that nature evil – what could be more impious than that? For the power of working depends upon nature, and nature upon its author, although in a different manner. And that a man is able by nature to do what is good, even our Lord Himself intimates saying, even the Gentiles love those that love them. {Matthew 5:46; Luke 6:32} But this is taught most plainly by Paul also, in Romans 1:19, [actually Rom 2:14] and elsewhere expressly, saying in so many words, “The Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law.” From which it is also apparent that the good which a man may do cannot truly be sin. For it is impossible for that what is good to be evil. Although, being done by nature only and tending to form the natural character of the doer but not the spiritual, it does not itself contribute to salvation without faith. Nor does it lead to condemnation, for it is not possible that good, as such, can be the cause of evil. But in the regenerated, what is wrought by grace, and with grace, makes the doer perfect, and renders him worthy of salvation.

“A man, therefore, before he is regenerated, is able by nature to incline to what is good, and to choose and work moral good. But for the regenerated to do spiritual good – for the works of the believer being contributory to salvation and wrought by supernatural grace are properly called spiritual – it is necessary that he be guided and prevented [preceded] by grace, as has been said in treating of predestination. Consequently, he is not able of himself to do any work worthy of a Christian life, although he has it in his own power to will, or not to will, to cooperate with grace.

“Decree 15. We believe that there are in the Church Evangelical Mysteries [i.e., Sacraments of the Gospel Dispensation], and that they are seven. For a less or a greater number of the Mysteries we have not in the Church; since any number of the Mysteries other than seven is the product of heretical madness. And the seven of them were instituted in the Sacred Gospel, and are gathered from the same, like the other dogmas of the Catholic Faith.

“For in the first place our Lord instituted Holy Baptism by the words, “Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;” {Matthew 28:19} and by the words, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that does not believe shall be condemned.” {Mark 16:16}

“And that of Confirmation, that is to say, of the Holy Myron or Holy Chrism, by the words, “But ye – tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” {Luke 24:49} With which they were endued by the coming of the Holy Spirit, and this the Mystery of Confirmation signifies; concerning which Paul also wrote in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 1, and Dionysius the Areopagite more explicitly.

“And the Priesthood by the words, “This do ye for My Memorial;” {Luke 22:19} and by the words, “Whatever you bind and loose upon the earth shall be bound and loosed in the heavens.” {Matthew 18:18}

“And the unbloody Sacrifice by the words, “Take, eat; This is My Body;” {Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; and cf. Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 2:24} and, “Drink all of It; This is My Blood of the New Testament;” {Matthew 26:27; and cf. Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 2:25} and by the words, “Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, you do not have life in yourselves.” {John 6:53}

“And Marriage, when, having recited the things which had been spoken thereof in the Old [Testament], He, as it were, set His seal thereto by the words, “Those whom God hath joined together, do not let man put asunder,” {Matthew 19:6} and this the divine Apostle also calls a great Mystery. {Ephesians 5:32}

“And Penance, with which is joined sacramental confession, by the words, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” [NRSV]; {John 20:23} and by the words, “unless you repent, you will [all] likewise perish.” {Luke 13:3,5}

“And lastly, the Holy Oil or Prayer-Oil is spoken of in Mark, {Mark 6:13} and is expressly witnessed to by the Lord’s brother. {James 5:14}

“And the Mysteries consist of something natural, and of something supernatural; and are not bare signs of the promises of God. For then they would not differ from circumcision – what could be worse than that [idea]? We acknowledge them to be, of necessity, efficient means of grace to the receivers. But

we reject, as alien to Christian doctrine, the notion that the integrity of the Mystery requires the use of the earthly thing [i.e., depends upon its reception]; for this is contrary to the Mystery of the Offering [i.e., the Sacrament of the Eucharist], which being instituted by the Substantial Word, and hallowed by the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is perfected by the presence of the thing signified, specifically, of the Body and Blood of Christ. And the perfecting of it necessarily precedes its use. For if it were not perfect before its use, he that receives it wrongly could not eat and drink judgment unto himself; {1 Corinthians 11:26,28,29} since he would be partaking of mere bread and wine. But now, he that partakes unworthily eats and drinks judgment unto himself; so that not in its use, but even before its use, the Mystery of the Eucharist has its perfection. Moreover, we reject as something abominable and pernicious the notion that when faith is weak the integrity of the Mystery is impaired. For heretics who renounce their heresy and join the Catholic Church are received by the Church; although they received their valid Baptism with weakness of faith. Wherefore, when they afterwards become possessed of the perfect faith, they are not again baptized.

“Decree 16. We believe Holy Baptism, which was instituted by the Lord, and is conferred in the name of the Holy Trinity, to be of the highest necessity. For without it none is able to be saved, as the Lord says, “Whoever is not born of water and of the Spirit, shall in no way enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens.” {John 3:5} And, therefore, baptism is necessary even for infants, since they also are subject to original sin, and without Baptism are not able to obtain its remission. Which the Lord showed when he said, not of some only, but simply and absolutely, “Whoever is not born [again],” which is the same as saying, “All that after the coming of Christ the Savior would enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens must be regenerated.” And since infants are men, and as such need salvation, needing salvation they need also Baptism. And those that are not regenerated, since they have not received the remission of hereditary sin, are, of necessity, subject to eternal punishment, and consequently cannot without Baptism be saved. So that even infants should, of necessity, be baptized. Moreover, infants are saved, as is said in Matthew; {Matthew 19:12} but he that is not baptized is not saved. And consequently even infants must of necessity be baptized. And in the Acts {Acts 8:12; 16:33} it is said that the whole houses were baptized, and consequently the infants. To this the ancient Fathers also witness explicitly, and among them Dionysius in his Treatise concerning the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy; and Justin in his fifty-sixth Question, who says expressly, “And they are guaranteed the benefits of Baptism by the faith of those that bring them to Baptism.” And Augustine says that it is an Apostolic tradition, that children are saved through Baptism; and in another place, “The Church gives to babes the feet of others, that they may come; and the hearts of others, that they may believe; and the tongues of others, that they may promise;” and in another place, “Our mother, the Church, furnishes them with a particular heart.”

“Now the matter of Baptism is pure water, and no other liquid. And it is performed by the Priest only, or in a case of unavoidable necessity, by another man, provided he is Orthodox, and has the proper intention to Divine Baptism. And the effects of Baptism are, to speak concisely, firstly, the remission of the hereditary

transgression, and of any sins of any kind that the baptized may have committed. Secondly, it delivers him from the eternal punishment, to which he was liable, as well for original sin and for mortal sins he may have individually committed. Thirdly, it gives to the person immortality; for in justifying them from past sins, it makes them temples of God.

“And it cannot be said that there is any sin which may have been previously committed that remains, though not imputed, that is not washed away through Baptism, For that were indeed the height of impiety, and a denial, rather than a confession of piety. Indeed, truly, all sin existing, or committed before Baptism, is blotted out, and is to be regarded as never existing or committed. For the forms of Baptism, and on either hand all the words that precede and that perfect Baptism, do indicate a perfect cleansing. And the same thing even the very names of Baptism do signify. For if Baptism is by the Spirit and by fire, {Matthew 3:11} it is obvious that it is in all a perfect cleansing; for the Spirit cleanses perfectly. If it is light, {Hebrews 6:4} it dispels the darkness. If it is regeneration, {Titus 3:5} old things are passed away. And what are these except sins? If the baptized puts off the old man, {Colossians 3:9} then sin also. If he puts on Christ, {Galatians 3:27} then in effect he becomes free from sin through Baptism. For God is far from sinners. This Paul also teaches more plainly, saying: “As through one [man] we, being many, were made sinners, so through one [are we made] righteous.” {Romans 5:19} And if righteous, then free from sin. For it is not possible for life and death to be in the same [person]. If Christ truly died, then remission of sin through the Spirit is true also. Hence it is evident that all who are baptized and fall asleep while babes are undoubtedly saved, being predestinated through the death of Christ. Forasmuch as they are without any sin; – without that common [to all], because delivered from it by the Divine laver, and without any of their own, because as babes they are incapable of committing sin; – and consequently are saved. Moreover, Baptism imparts an indelible character, as does also the Priesthood. For as it is impossible for any one to receive twice the same order of the Priesthood, so it is impossible for any once rightly baptized, to be again baptized, although he should fall even into myriads of sins, or even into actual apostasy from the Faith. For when he is willing to return unto the Lord, he receives again through the Mystery of Penance the adoption of a son, which he had lost.

“**Decree 17.** We believe the All-holy Mystery of the Sacred Eucharist, which we have enumerated above, fourth in order, to be that which our Lord delivered in the night in which He gave Himself up for the life of the world. For taking bread, and blessing, He gave to His Holy Disciples and Apostles, saying: “Take, eat; This is My Body” (Matthew 26:26). And taking the chalice, and giving thanks, He said: “Drink you all of It; This is My Blood, which for you is being poured out, for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:28) In the celebration of this we believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be present. He is not present typically, nor figuratively, nor by superabundant grace, as in the other Mysteries, nor by a bare presence, as some of the Fathers have said concerning Baptism, or by impanation, so that the Divinity of the Word is united to the set forth bread of the Eucharist hypostatically, as the followers of Luther most ignorantly and wretchedly suppose. But [he is present] truly and really, so that after the consecration of the bread and of the wine, the

bread is transmuted, transubstantiated, converted and transformed into the true Body Itself of the Lord, Which was born in Bethlehem of the ever-Virgin, was baptized in the Jordan, suffered, was buried, rose again, was received up, sits at the right hand of the God and Father, and is to come again in the clouds of Heaven; and the wine is converted and transubstantiated into the true Blood Itself of the Lord, Which as He hung upon the Cross, was poured out for the life of the world. {John 6:51}

“Further [we believe] that after the consecration of the bread and of the wine, there no longer remains the substance of the bread and of the wine, but the Body Itself and the Blood of the Lord, under the species and form of bread and wine; that is to say, under the accidents of the bread.

“Further, that the all-pure Body Itself, and Blood of the Lord is imparted, and enters into the mouths and stomachs of the communicants, whether pious or impious. Nevertheless, they convey to the pious and worthy remission of sins and life eternal; but to the impious and unworthy involve condemnation and eternal punishment.

“Further, that the Body and Blood of the Lord are severed and divided by the hands and teeth, though in accident only, that is, in the accidents of the bread and of the wine, under which they are visible and tangible, we do acknowledge; but in themselves to remain entirely unsevered and undivided. Wherefore the Catholic Church also says: “Broken and distributed is He That is broken, yet not severed; Which is ever eaten, yet never consumed, but sanctifying those that partake,” that is worthily.

“Further, that in every part, or the smallest division of the transmuted bread and wine there is not a part of the Body and Blood of the Lord – for to say so were blasphemous and wicked – but the entire whole Lord Christ substantially, that is, with His Soul and Divinity, or perfect God and perfect man. So that though there may be many celebrations in the world at one and the same hour, there are not many Christs, or Bodies of Christ, but it is one and the same Christ that is truly and really present; and His one Body and His Blood is in all the several Churches of the Faithful; and this not because the Body of the Lord that is in the Heavens descends upon the Altars; but because the bread of the Prothesis* set forth in all the several Churches, being changed and transubstantiated, becomes, and is, after consecration, one and the same with That in the Heavens. For it is one Body of the Lord in many places, and not many; and therefore this Mystery is the greatest, and is spoken of as wonderful, and comprehensible by faith only, and not by the sophistries of man’s wisdom; whose vain and foolish curiosity in divine things our pious and God-delivered religion rejects.

“Further, that the Body Itself of the Lord and the Blood That are in the Mystery of the Eucharist ought to be honored in the highest manner, and adored with *latria* [Gk: adoration or worship]. For one is the adoration of the Holy Trinity, and of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Further, that it is a true and propitiatory Sacrifice offered for all Orthodox, living and dead; and for the benefit of all, as is set forth

expressly in the prayers of the Mystery delivered to the Church by the Apostles, in accordance with the command they received of the Lord.

“Further, that before Its use, immediately after the consecration, and after Its use, What is reserved in the Sacred Pixes for the communion of those that are about to depart [i.e. the dying] is the true Body of the Lord, and not in the least different from it; so that before Its use after the consecration, in Its use, and after Its use, It is in all respects the true Body of the Lord.

“Further, we believe that by the word “transubstantiation” the manner is not explained, by which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord, – for that is altogether incomprehensible and impossible, except by God Himself, and those who imagine to do so are involved in ignorance and impiety, – but that the bread and the wine are after the consecration, not typically, nor figuratively, nor by superabundant grace, nor by the communication or the presence of the Divinity alone of the Only-begotten, transmuted into the Body and Blood of the Lord; neither is any accident of the bread, or of the wine, by any conversion or alteration, changed into any accident of the Body and Blood of Christ, but truly, and really, and substantially, doth the bread become the true Body Itself of the Lord, and the wine the Blood Itself of the Lord, as is said above.

“Further, that this Mystery of the Sacred Eucharist can be performed by none other, except only by an Orthodox Priest, who has received his priesthood from an Orthodox and Canonical Bishop, in accordance with the teaching of the Eastern Church. This is compendiously the doctrine, and true confession, and most ancient tradition of the Catholic Church concerning this Mystery; which must not be departed from in any way by such as would be Orthodox and who reject the novelties and profane vanities of heretics. But necessarily the tradition of the institution must be kept whole and unimpaired. For those that transgress, the [Orthodox] Catholic Church of Christ rejects and anathematizes.

“**Decree 18.** We believe that the souls of those that have fallen asleep are either at rest or in torment, according to what each has done; – for when they are separated from their bodies, they depart immediately either to joy, or to sorrow and lamentation; though confessedly neither their enjoyment nor condemnation are complete. For after the common resurrection, when the soul shall be united with the body, with which it had behaved itself well or ill, each shall receive the completion of either enjoyment or of condemnation.

“And the souls of those involved in mortal sins, who have not departed in despair but while still living in the body, though without bringing forth any fruits of repentance, have repented – by pouring forth tears, by kneeling while watching in prayers, by afflicting themselves, by relieving the poor, and finally by showing forth by their works their love towards God and their neighbour, and which the Catholic Church has from the beginning rightly called satisfaction – [their souls] depart into Hades, and there endure the punishment due to the sins they have committed. But they are aware of their future release from there, and are delivered by the Supreme Goodness, through the prayers of the Priests, and the good works

which the relatives of each do for their Departed; especially the unbloody Sacrifice benefiting the most; which each offers particularly for his relatives that have fallen asleep, and which the Catholic and Apostolic Church offers daily for all alike. Of course, it is understood that we do not know the time of their release. We know and believe that there is deliverance for such from their direful condition, and that before the common resurrection and judgment, but when we know not.

“Question 1. Should the Divine Scriptures be read in the vulgar tongue [common language] by all Christians? No. Because all Scripture is divinely-inspired and profitable {cf. 2 Timothy 3:16}, we know, and necessarily so, that without [Scripture] it is impossible to be Orthodox at all. Nevertheless they should not be read by all, but only by those who with fitting research have inquired into the deep things of the Spirit, and who know in what manner the Divine Scriptures ought to be searched, and taught, and finally read. But to those who are not so disciplined, or who cannot distinguish, or who understand only literally, or in any other way contrary to Orthodoxy what is contained in the Scriptures, the Catholic Church, knowing by experience the damage that can cause, forbids them to read [Scripture]. Indeed, it is permitted to every Orthodox to hear the Scriptures, that he may believe with the heart unto righteousness, and confess with the mouth unto salvation {Romans 10:10}. But to read some parts of the Scriptures, and especially of the Old [Testament], is forbidden for these and other similar reasons. For it is the same thing to prohibit undisciplined persons from reading all the Sacred Scriptures, as to require infants to abstain from strong meats.

“Question 2. Are the Scriptures plain to all Christians that read them? If the Divine Scriptures were plain to all Christians that read them, the Lord would not have commanded such as desired to obtain salvation to search them; {John 5:39} and Paul would have said without reason that God had placed the gift of teaching in the Church; {1 Corinthians 13:28} and Peter would not have said of the Epistles of Paul that they contained some things hard to be understood. {2 Peter 3:16} It is evident, therefore, that the Scriptures are very profound, and their sense lofty; and that they need learned and divine men to search out their true meaning, and a sense that is right, and agreeable to all Scripture, and to its author the Holy Spirit.

“Certainly, those that are regenerated [in Baptism] must know the faith concerning the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, His passion, resurrection, and ascension into the heavens. Yet what concerns regeneration and judgment – for which many have not hesitated to die – it is not necessary, indeed impossible, for them to know what the Holy Spirit has made apparent only to those who are disciplined in wisdom and holiness.

“Question 3. What Books do you call Sacred Scripture? Following the rule of the Catholic Church, we call Sacred Scripture all those which Cyril [Lucaris] collected from the Synod of Laodicea, and enumerated, adding to Scripture those which he foolishly and ignorantly, or rather maliciously, called Apocrypha; specifically, “The Wisdom of Solomon,” “Judith,” “Tobit,” “The History of the Dragon” [Bel and the Dragon], “The History of Susanna,” “The Maccabees,” and “The Wisdom of Sirach.” For we judge these also to be with the other genuine

Books of Divine Scripture genuine parts of Scripture. For ancient custom, or rather the Catholic Church, which has delivered to us as genuine the Sacred Gospels and the other Books of Scripture, has undoubtedly delivered these also as parts of Scripture, and the denial of these is the rejection of those. And if, perhaps, it seems that not always have all of these been considered on the same level as the others, yet nevertheless these also have been counted and reckoned with the rest of Scripture, both by Synods and by many of the most ancient and eminent Theologians of the Catholic Church. All of these we also judge to be Canonical Books, and confess them to be Sacred Scripture.

“Question 4. How ought we to think of the Holy Icons, and of the adoration of the Saints? Since The Saints are and are acknowledged to be intercessors by the Catholic Church, as has been said in the Eighth Decree, it is time to say that we honor them as friends of God, and as praying for us to the God of all. The honor we pay them is twofold. According to one manner which we call hyperdulia* we honor the Mother of God the Word. For though indeed the Theotokos [Gk: "godbearer," a title for Mary] is servant of the only God, yet she is also His Mother, having borne in the flesh one of the Trinity. Because of this also she is hymned as being beyond compare, as well as above all Angels as Saints. This is why we pay her the adoration of hyperdulia.

“But according to the other manner, which we call dulia [Gk: "veneration"], we adore or rather honor, the holy Angels, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, and, finally, all the Saints. Moreover, we adore and honor the wood of the precious and life-giving Cross on which our Savior underwent this world-saving passion, and the sign of the life-giving Cross, the Manger at Bethlehem, through which we have been delivered from irrationality, [an allusion to the manger out of which the irrational animals eat their food -translator] the place of the Skull [Calvary], the life-giving Sepulcher, and the other holy objects of adoration; as well the holy Gospels, as the sacred vessels by which the unbloody Sacrifice is performed. And by annual commemorations, and popular festivals, and sacred edifices and offerings; we do respect and honor the Saints. And then we adore, and honor, and kiss the Icons of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the most holy Theotokos, and of all the Saints, also of the holy Angels, as they appeared to some of the Forefathers and Prophets. We also represent the All-holy Spirit, as He appeared, in the form of a dove.

“And if some say we commit idolatry in adoring the Saints, and the Icons of the Saints, and the other things, we regard it as foolish and frivolous. For we worship with latria [Gk: *adoration*] the only God in Trinity, and none other; but the Saints we honor for two reasons: firstly, for their relation to God, since we honor them for His sake; and for themselves, because they are living images of God. But that which is for themselves hath been defined as of dulia. But the holy Icons [we adore] relatively since the honor paid to them is referred to their prototypes. For he that adores the Icon, through the Icon adores the prototype; and the honor paid to the Icon is not at all divided or at all different from [the honor paid to the one who] is portrayed, and is done unto the same like that done unto a royal embassy.

“And what they adduce from Scripture in support of their novelties does not help them as they think, but rather we agree. For we, when reading the Divine Scriptures, examine the occasion and person, the example and cause. Therefore, when we contemplate God Himself saying at one time, “You shall not make for yourself any idol, or likeness; neither shall you adore them, nor serve them;” {Exodus 20:4,5; Deuteronomy 5:8,9} and at another, commanding that Cherubim should be made; (Exodus 25:18) and further, that oxen and lions {1 Kings 7:29} were placed in the Temple, we do not rashly consider the seriousness of these things. For faith is not in assurance; but, as has been said, considering the occasion and other circumstances we arrive at the right interpretation of the same; and we conclude that, “You shall not make for yourself any idol, or likeness,” is the same as saying, “You shall not adore strange Gods,” {Exodus 20:4} or rather, “You shall not commit idolatry.” For so both the custom prevalent in the Church from Apostolic times of adoring the holy Icons relatively is maintained, and the worship of latria reserved for God alone; and God does not appear to speak contrarily to Himself. For if the Scripture says [absolutely], “You shall not make,” “You shall not adore,” we fail to see how God afterwards permitted likenesses to be made, even though not for adoration. Therefore, since the commandment concerns idolatry only, we find serpents, and lions, and oxen, and Cherubim made, and figures and likenesses, among which Angels appear, as having been adored.

“And as to the Saints whom they bring forward as saying that it is not lawful to adore Icons, we conclude that they rather help us since they in their sharp disputations inveighed both against those that adore the holy Icons with latria, as well as against those that bring the icons of their deceased relatives into the Church. They subjected to anathema those that so that, but not against the right adoration, either of the Saints, or of the holy Icons, or of the precious Cross, or of the other things that have been mentioned, especially since the holy Icons have been in the Church, and have been adored by the Faithful even from the times of the Apostles. This is recorded and proclaimed by very many with whom and after whom the Seventh Holy Ecumenical Synod puts to shame all heretical impudence.

“It is clear that it is appropriate to adore the Holy Icons, and what have been mentioned above. And it anathematizes, and subjects to excommunication, both those that adore the Icons [themselves] with latria [Gk: adoration] as well as those that say that the Orthodox commit idolatry in adoring the Icons. We also, therefore, do anathematize with them such as adore either Saint, or Angel, or Icon, or Cross, or Relic of Saints, or sacred Vessel, or Gospel, or anything else that is in heaven above, or anything on the earth, or in the sea, with latria [Gk: adoration]; and we ascribe adoration with latria to the only God in Trinity. And we anathematize those that say that the adoration of Icons is the latria [Gk: adoration, here as worship] of Icons, and who adore them not, and honor not the Cross, and the Saints, as the Church has delivered.

“Now we adore the Saints and the Holy Icons, in the manner declared. We portray them in adornment of our temples, so that they may be the books of the unlearned, and so that they may imitate the virtues of the Saints; and for them to remember, and have an increase of love, and be vigilant in always calling upon the

Lord, as Sovereign and Father, but [also] upon the Saints, as his servants, and our helpers and mediators.

“And so much for the Chapters and Questions of Cyril [*Lucaris*]. But the heretics find fault even with the prayers of the pious unto God, since we do not know why they should maliciously malign the Monks only. Prayer is a conversation with God and a petitioning for such good things as are suitable for us, from Him of whom we hope to receive. We also know that it is also an ascent of the mind to God and a pious expression of our purpose towards God, a seeking what is above, the support of a holy soul, a worship most acceptable to God, a token of repentance, and of steadfast hope. Prayer is made either with the mind alone, or with the mind and voice, thereby engaging in the contemplation of the goodness and mercy of God, of the unworthiness of the petitioner, and in thanksgiving, and in realizing the promises attached to obedience to God.

“It is accompanied by faith, hope, perseverance, and observance of the commandments. And, as already said, it is a petitioning for heavenly things, and has many fruits, which it is needless to enumerate. It is made continually, and is accomplished either in an upright posture, or by kneeling. And so great is its efficacy, that it is acknowledged to be both the nourishment and the life of the soul. All this is gathered from Divine Scripture, so that if any ask for demonstration of it, he is like a fool, or a blind man, who disputes about the sun’s light at the hour of noon, and when the sky is clear. But the heretics, wishing to leave nothing that Christ has enjoined unassailed, carp at this also.

“But being ashamed to impiously maintain these things concerning prayer openly, they do not forbid it to be offered at all, but are disturbed at the prayers of the Monks. They act this way in order to raise in the simple-minded a hatred towards the Monks, so that they may not endure even the sight of them, as though they were profane and innovators, much less to allow the dogmas of the pious and Orthodox faith to be taught by them. For the adversary is wise as to evil, and ingenious in inventing malicious attacks. Therefore, his followers also – such as these heretics especially – are not so much anxious about piety, as desirous of always involving men in an abyss of evils, and of estranging them into places that the Lord does not take under his care. {cf. Deuteronomy 11:12}

They should be asked, therefore, what are the prayers of the Monks? If they can show that the Monks do anything entirely different from themselves, and not in accordance with the Orthodox worship of Christians, we also will join with them, and say, not only that the Monks are no Monks, but also no Christians. But if the Monks set forth particularly the glory and wonders of God, continually and unremittingly at all times, as far as is possible for man, proclaim the Deity, with hymns and doxologies; now singing parts of Scripture, and now gathering hymns out of Scripture, or at least giving utterance to what is agreeable to it, we must acknowledge that they perform a work apostolic and prophetic, or rather that of the Lord.

“Therefore, we also, in singing the Paracletikê, the Triodion, and the Menæon [Menaion], perform a work in no way unbecoming Christians. For all such Books

talk about the Diety as one, and yet of more than one personality, and that even in the Hymns, some gathered out of the Divine Scriptures, and others according to the direction of the Spirit. In order that in the melodies the words may be paralleled by other words, we sing parts of Scripture. Also moreover, that it may be quite plain that we always sing parts of Scripture, to every one of our Hymns, called a Troparion, we add a verse of Scripture. And if we sing, or read the Thecara [Treasury], or other prayers composed by the Fathers of old, let them say what there is in these which is blasphemous, or not pious, and we will prosecute these [Monks] with them.

“But if they only say that to pray continually and unremittingly is wrong, what have they to do with us? Let them contend with Christ – as indeed they do contend – who said in the parable of the unjust judge {Luke 28:2} that prayer should be made continually. He taught us to watch and pray, {Mark 13:33} in order to escape trials, and to stand before the Son of man. {Luke 21:36} Let them contend with Paul in the Chapter of the First [Epistle] to the Thessalonians [5:17], and elsewhere in many places. I refrain from mentioning the divine leaders of the Catholic Church from Christ until us. For it is sufficient to put these [heretics] to shame [to point out] the accord of the Forefathers, Apostles, and Prophets concerning prayer.

“If, therefore, what the Monks do is what the Apostles and Prophets did and, we may say, what the holy Fathers and Forefathers of Christ Himself did, then it is manifest that the prayers of the Monks are fruits of the Holy Spirit, the giver of graces. But the novelties which the Calvinists have blasphemously introduced concerning God and divine things, perverting, mutilating, and abusing the Divine Scriptures, are sophistries and inventions of the devil.

“A futile effort, too, is the assertion, that the Church cannot appoint fasts and abstinence from certain meats without violence and tyranny. For the Church, acting most rightly, carefully appoints prayer and fasting for the mortification of the flesh and all the passions. Of this, all the Saints have been lovers and examples. It is through this that our adversary the devil {cf. 1 Peter 5:8} is overthrown by the grace from on high, together with his armies and his hosts, and the race {cf. 2 Timothy 4:7} that is set before the pious is the more easily accomplished. In making these provisions the undefiled {cf. Ephesians 5:27} Church everywhere uses neither violence nor tyranny, but exhorts, admonishes, and teaches, in accordance with Scripture, and persuades by the power of the Spirit...

“Let, therefore, idle speech and innovating heretics keep silence, and not try [as] against us cunningly to bolster up falsehood as all apostates and heretics have ever done, by stealing some sentences from the Scriptures and the Fathers. Let them say this one thing only, that in contriving excuses {cf. Psalms 140:4} for sins they have chosen to speak wickedness against God, {cf. Psalms 74:6} and blasphemies against the Saints.

“**EPILOGUE.** Let it be sufficient for the reputation of the falsehoods of the adversaries, which they have devised against the Eastern Church, that they allege

in support of their falsehoods the incoherent and impious Chapters of the said Cyril [Lucaris]. And let it be for a sign not to be contradicted {cf. Luke 2:34} that those heretics have unjustly make maliciously false statements against us, as though they spoke the truth. But let it be for a sign to be believed, that is for reformation of their innovations and for their return to the Catholic and Apostolic Church, in which their forefathers also were of old, and [who] assisted at those Synods and contests against heretics, which these now reject and revile. For it was unreasonable on their part, especially as they considered themselves to be wise, to have listened to men that were lovers of self and profane, and that spoke not from the Holy Spirit, but from the prince of lies, and to have forsaken the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which God hath purchased with the Blood of His own Son, {cf. Acts 20:28} and to have abandoned her. For otherwise there will overtake those that have separated from the Church the pains that are reserved for heathens and publicans. But the Lord who has ever protected her against all enemies, will not neglect the Catholic Church. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

“In the year of Salvation 1672, on the 16th [day] of the month of March, in the Holy City of Jerusalem: —

“I, Dositheus, by the mercy of God, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and of all Palestine, declare and confess this to be the faith of the Eastern Church.”

17. THE OLD RITUALIST REBELLION

At the coronation of Tsar Theodore Alexeyevich (1676-1682) certain additions were made to the rite that showed that the Russian Church now looked on the tsardom as a quasi-priestly rank. "These additions were: 1) the proclamation of the symbol of faith by the tsar before his crowning, as was always the case with ordinations, 2) the vesting of the tsar in royal garments signifying his putting on his rank, and 3) communion in the altar of the Body and Blood separately in accordance with the priestly order, which was permitted only for persons of the three hierarchical sacred ranks. These additions greatly exalted the royal rank, and Professor Pokrovsky explained their introduction by the fact that at the correction of the liturgical books in Moscow in the second half of the 17th century, the attention of people was drawn to the difference in the rites of the Byzantine and Muscovite coronation and the additions were introduced under the influence of the Council of 1667, which wanted to exalt the royal rank."²⁴⁹

The pious tsar did not use his exalted position to humiliate the Church. On the contrary, he tried, as far as it was in his power, to correct the great wrong that had been done to Patriarch Nikon in his father's reign. Thus when the patriarch died it was the tsar who ordered "that the body should be conveyed to New Jerusalem. The patriarch did not want to give the reposed hierarchical honours. [So] his Majesty persuaded Metropolitan Cornelius of Novgorod to carry out the burial. He himself carried the coffin with the remains."²⁵⁰

Again, it was the tsar rather than the patriarch who obtained a *gramota* from the Eastern Patriarchs in 1682 restoring Nikon to patriarchal status and "declaring that he could be forgiven in view of his redemption of his guilt by his humble patience in prison".²⁵¹ This was hardly an adequate summary of the situation. But it did go some of the way to helping the Greeks redeem their guilt in the deposition of the most Grecophile of Russian patriarchs. For it was not only the Russians that had sinned in Nikon's deposition: the Eastern Patriarchs had also submitted to the pressure of tsar and boyars.

If Patriarch Nikon had not been forced to leave his see, there would have been no Old Ritualist schism in that as early as 1656 he was ready to accept those who served on the old books. Nor would there have been that weakening of the authority of the Church vis-à-vis the State that was to have such catastrophic consequences. Now, in the reign of Tsar Theodore Alexeyevich, Patriarch Nikon was posthumously restored to his see, the Old Ritualist schism was still of small proportions, and Church-State relations were still essentially "symphonic". Even the *Monastirskij Prikaz*, which Nikon had fought so hard to remove, was in fact removed in 1675.

²⁴⁹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 165.

²⁵⁰ Rusak, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

²⁵¹ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 26. In 1676 Patriarch Joachim had convened a council which hurled yet more accusations against him... (Rusak, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194)

However, the schism continued to spread and deepen owing to the stubborn fanaticism of the Old Ritualists and their turning a *Church* quarrel into a rebellion against *the State*.

S.A. Zenkovsky writes: "The struggle between the supporters of the old rite, on the one hand, and the state (the tsar) and the Church, on the other, was complicated by two important phenomena: the rebellion of the Solovki monastery (the monks were joined, at the beginning of the 1670s, by a part of the defeated rebels of Stepan Razin) and the burnings. The siege of Solovki, the very important monastery and fortress on the White Sea, lasted for ten years and ended with the deaths of almost all its defenders. This was no longer a conflict between the Church and the Old Ritualists, but between rebels and the state. More important in their consequences were the burnings – mass immolations of those Old Ritualists who considered that after the council of 1667 grace in the Church had dried up and that the Antichrist was already ruling on earth. The burnings had already begun in the middle of the 1660s under the influence of the 'woodsman', the fanatical and religiously completely pessimistic elder Capiton.

"The burnings lasted until the beginning of the 19th century, but at the end of the 17th, especially in the 1670s, they acquired the terrible character of a mass religio-psychological epidemic. In Poshekhonye (in the Trans-Volga region, near Kostroma) between 4000 and 5000 people perished in the burnings; in one of the northern burnings about 2500 people died at once. It is very difficult to estimate the general number of victims of the burning before the end of the 17th century, but in all probability their number was no less than 20,000, and perhaps even more...

"The uprising on Solovki, the burnings, the participation of the Old Ritualists in the Razin rebellion, and the formation of a Cossack Old Ritualist 'republic' that separated from the Russian State at the turn of the 17th-18th centuries, gave the government enough reasons to persecute all the supporters of the Old Russian faith [*sic*] without examination..."²⁵²

Indeed, as Bishop Gregory Grabbe writes: "The Church Herself hardly participated in the persecution... The persecutions were from the State and for political reasons, insofar as (some of) the Old Believers considered the power of the State to be antichristian and did not want to submit to it."²⁵³ Those who did not attempt to challenge the authority of the State were not persecuted. Thus Zenkovsky notes that the priestless communities were not touched by the authorities, and that in general "the persecutions affected [only] those who tried to preach amidst the non-Old Ritualist population".²⁵⁴

Fr. Seraphim Rose wrote: "[Old Ritualists] are sectarians, and their spirit, not just their externals, separates them from Orthodoxy. If God can somehow draw

²⁵² Zenkovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁵³ Grabbe, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Moscow, 1998, p. 24.

²⁵⁴ Zenkovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

one or many of them to Orthodoxy, very good, but the measures of 'penitence' which John Hudanish describes would be simply a flattering of their sectarian pride. Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky was against receiving Old Believers even if they asked nothing but to keep the two-fingered cross – not because of the small act, but because this revealed they still had the sectarian mentality. Of course, since then the Russian Church has allowed Old Believers to retain the two-fingered Cross and their service books, but as a gesture of economy rather than an admission that Patriarch Nikon was wrong. For an Old Believer to become Orthodox there must be an awareness that the externals they preserve are not of the essence of Orthodoxy."²⁵⁵

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A critical point in the evolution of the schism came with the death of Tsar Theodore in 1682.

Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: "He did not have a son and heir. Therefore power had to pass to the brother of the deceased, Ivan, the son of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich from his first marriage with Maria Ilyinichna Miloslavskaja. Behind Ivan Alexeyevich, there also stood his very active sister the Tsarevna Sophia. But we know that from the second marriage of Alexis Mikhailovich with Natalia Kirillovna Naryshkina there was another son, Peter Alexeyevich, who was born in 1672. In 1682 he was ten years old, while his half-brother Ivan was fifteen. The Naryshkins did not want to let their interests be overlooked, and wanted Peter to be made Tsar. A battle began between them and their supporters and the supporters of the Miloslavsky princes. The result was yet another schism, this time in the Royal Family itself... This of course elicited a time of troubles. Behind Sophia and the Miloslavskys there stood a part of the boyars, including Prince Basil Vasilyevich Golitsyn. Opposed to them was Patriarch Joachim (at first not openly) and other supporters of the Naryshkins. A rumour was spread about them that they wanted to 'remove' (kill) Ivan Alexeyevich. The army of musketeers [*streltsy*] in Moscow rebelled. The musketeers more than once burst into the royal palace looking for plotters and evil-doers, and once right there, in the palace, before the eyes of the Royal Family, including Peter, they killed the boyars A. Matveev and I. Naryshkin. The country was on the edge of a new time of troubles and civil war. The wise Sophia was able to come to an agreement with the Naryshkins and in the same year both Tsareviches, Ivan and Peter, were proclaimed Tsars, while their 'governess', until they came of age, became the Tsarevna Sophia. The leader of the musketeers' army, the very aged Prince Dolgorukov, was removed in time and Prince Ivan Andreevich Khovansky was appointed. He was able quickly to take the musketeers in hand and submit them to his will.

"The Old Ritualists decided to make use of these disturbances. Protopriest Nikita Dobrynin, aptly nicknamed 'Emptyholy', together with similarly fanatical Old Ritualists, unleashed a powerful campaign amidst the riflemen and attained the agreement of the Royal Family and the Patriarch to the holding of a public

²⁵⁵ Rose, *Letter 187*, September 21 / October 4, 1975.

debate on the faith with the 'Nikonians', that is, first of all with the Patriarch himself. This debate took place on July 5, 1682 in the Granovita palace in the Kremlin in the presence of the Royal Family, the clergy and the Synclite. Nikita read aloud a petition from the Old Ritualists that the new books and rites should be removed, declaring that they constituted 'the introduction of a new faith'. Against this spoke Patriarch Joachim, holding in his hands an icon of Metropolitan Alexis of Moscow. He was very emotional and wept. The Old Ritualists did not want even to listen to him! They began to interrupt the Patriarch and simply shout: 'Make the sign of the cross in this way!', raising their hands with the two-fingered sign of the cross. Then Archbishop Athanasius of Kholmogor (later Arkhangelsk), who had himself once been an Old Ritualist, with knowledge of the subject refuted 'Emptyholy's' propositions, proving that the new rites were by no means 'a new faith', but only the correction of mistakes that had crept into the services. Protopriest Nikita was not able to object and in powerless fury hurled himself at Athanasius, striking him on the face. There was an uproar. The behaviour of the Old Ritualists was judged to be an insult not only to the Church, but also to the Royal Family, and they were expelled. Finding themselves on the street, the Old Ritualists shouted: 'We beat them! We won!' - and set off for the riflemen in the area on the other side of the Moscow river. As we see, in fact there was no 'beating', that is, they gained no victory in the debate. On the same night the riflemen captured the Old Ritualists and handed them over to the authorities. On July 11 on Red Square Nikita Dobrynin 'Emptyholy' was beheaded in front of all the people.

"Then, at a Church Council in 1682, it was decided to ask their Majesties to take the most severe measures against the Old Ritualists, to the extent of executing the most stubborn of them through burning. And so Protopriest Avvakum was burned in Pustozersk. This is perhaps the critical point beyond which the church schism began in full measure, no longer as the disagreement of a series of supporters of the old rites, but as a movement of a significant mass of people. Now the Old Ritualists began to abuse not only the 'Nikonian' Church, but also the royal power, inciting people to rebel against it. Their movement acquired not only an ecclesiastical, but also a political direction. It was now that it was necessary to take very severe measures against them, and they were taken, which probably saved the State from civil war. Many Old Ritualists, having fled beyond the boundaries of Great Russia, then began to undertake armed raids on the Russian cities and villages. It is now considered fashionable in our 'educated' society to have tender feelings for the schismatical Old Ritualists, almost as if they were martyrs or innocent sufferers. To a significant degree all this is because they turned out to be on the losing side. And what if they had won? Protopriest Avvakum used to say that if he were given power he would hang 'the accursed Nikonians' on trees (which there is no reason to doubt, judging from his biography). He said this when he had only been exiled by the 'Nikonians', and not even defrocked. So if the Old Ritualists had won, the Fatherland would simply have been drowned in blood. Protopriest Avvakum is also particularly venerated as the author of his noted 'Life'. It in fact displays the very vivid Russian language of the 17th century and in this sense, of course, it is valuable for all investigators of antiquity. But that is all! As regards the spirit and the sense of it, this is the work of a boundlessly self-

deceived man. It is sufficient to remember that none of the Russian saints wrote a 'Life' praising himself..."²⁵⁶

The apocalyptic element in Old Ritualism took its starting-point from the prophecy of Archimandrite Zachariah (Kopystensky) of the Kiev Caves Lavra, who in 1620 had foretold that the coming of the Antichrist would take place in 1666. And in a certain sense the Antichrist did indeed come in 1666. For as a result of the unlawful deposition of Patriarch Nikon, the symphony of powers between Church and State in Russia was fatally weakened...

The Old Ritualists also saw apocalyptic signs in the Tsar's acceptance of the Patriarch's reforms. And yet the parallel here, paradoxically, is with the Protestants, who similarly believed that true Christianity ended when State and Church came to work together in the time of the Emperor Constantine. The Old Ritualists fled into the woods to escape the Antichrist and wait for the Second Coming of Christ in their democratic communes, accepting the authority of neither king nor priest. Similarly, the Czech Taborites and German Anabaptists and English Puritans and Independents and Quakers fled from existing states to build their millennial communities in which the only king and priest was God.

This was particularly so with the priestless Old Ritualists, called the *Bespopovtsi* (as opposed to the *Popovtsi*, who still had priests, and the *Beglopopovtsi* who used priests fleeing from the official Church). The *Popovtsi*, according to St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, "are different in certain rites which have no influence on the

²⁵⁶ Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, pp. 154-156. The Grecophobe Avvakum continued to rant against "rehellenization", announcing that all the "Nikonians" had to be rebaptized, and "that newborn babies knew more about God than all the scholars of the Greek church". (Michael Cherniavsky, "The Old Believers and the New Religion", *Slavic Review*, vol. 25, 1966, pp. 27-33)

As Robert Massie writes, "these outbursts led to a second banishment, this time to far-off Pustozersk on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. From this remote spot, Avvakum managed to remain the leader of the Old Believers. Unable to preach, he wrote eloquently to his believers, urging them to preserve the old faith, not to compromise, to defy their persecutors and to accept sufferings and martyrdom gladly in imitation of Christ. 'Burning your body', he said, 'you commend your soul to God. Run and jump into the flames. Say, "Here is my body, Devil. Take and eat it; my soul you cannot take.'"

"Avvakum's final act of defiance assured his fiery destiny. From exile, he wrote to young Tsar Theodor declaring that Christ had appeared to him in a vision and revealed that Theodore's dead father, Tsar Alexis, was in hell, suffering torments because of his approval of the Nikonian reforms. Theodore's response was to condemn Avvakum to be burned alive. In April 1682, Avvakum achieved his long-desired martyrdom, bound to a stake in the market-place of Pustozersk. Crossing himself a last time with two fingers, he shouted joyfully to the crowd, 'There is terror in the stake until thou art bound to it, but, once there, embrace it and all will be forgiven. Thou wilt behold Christ before the heat has laid hold upon thee, and thy soul, released from the dungeon of the body, will fly up to heaven like a happy little bird.'

"Across Russia, the example of Avvakum's death inspired thousands of his followers. During a six-year period, from 1684 to 1690, Old Believers voluntarily followed their leader into the flames, preferring martyrdom to accepting the religion of the Antichrist. [The Regent] Sophia's government seemed to fit this image as well as that of Alexis or Theodore; indeed, she was even harsher on schismatics than her father or her brother had been. Provincial governors were instructed to provide whatever troops were necessary to help the provincial metropolitans enforce the established religion..." (*Peter the Great*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 63)

essence of Christianity, while the latter [*Bespopovtsi*] have no Bishop over themselves, contrary to the ecclesiastical canons. The formation of the former was aided in part by ignorance ascribing to certain rites and customs a greater importance than these rites have; while the formation of the latter was aided by the Protestant tendency of certain individual people.”²⁵⁷

The communities of the priestless, like those on the River Vyg in the north, were almost democratic communes, having no priests and recognising no political authority – not unlike the contemporary Puritan communities of North America. And gradually, as in the writings of Semeon Denisov, one of the leaders of the Vyg community, they evolved a new conception of Holy Russia, according to which the real Russia resided, not in the Tsar and the Church, for they had both apostasised, but in the common people. As Sergei Zenkovsky writes, Denisov “transformed the old doctrine of an autocratic Christian state into a concept of a democratic Christian nation.”²⁵⁸

From that time an apocalyptic rejection of the State became the keynote of Old Ritualism. As Fr. George Florovsky writes, “the keynote and secret of Russia’s Schism was not ‘ritual’ but the Antichrist, and thus it may be termed a socio-apocalyptic utopia. The entire meaning and pathos of the first schismatic opposition lies in its underlying apocalyptic intuition (‘the time draws near’), rather than in any ‘blind’ attachment to specific rites or petty details of custom. The entire first generation of *raskolouchitelej* [‘teachers of schism’] lived in this atmosphere of visions, signs, and premonitions, of miracles, prophecies, and illusions. These men were filled with ecstasy or possessed, rather than being pedants... One has only to read the words of Avvakum, breathless with excitement: ‘What Christ is this? He is not near; only hosts of demons.’ Not only Avvakum felt that the ‘Nikon’ Church had become a den of thieves. Such a mood became universal in the Schism: ‘the censer is useless; the offering abominable’.

“The Schism, an outburst of socio-political hostility and opposition, was a social movement, but one derived from religious self-consciousness. It is precisely this apocalyptic perception of what has taken place which explains the decisive or rapid estrangement among the Schismatics. ‘Fanaticism in panic’ is Kliuchevskii’s definition, but it was also panic in the face of ‘the last apostasy’...

“The Schism dreamed of an actual, earthly City: a theocratic utopia and chiliasm. It was hoped that the dream had already been fulfilled and that the ‘Kingdom of God’ had been realized as the Muscovite State. There may be four patriarchs in the East, but the one and only Orthodox tsar is in Moscow. But now even this expectation had been deceived and shattered. Nikon’s ‘apostasy’ did not disturb the Old Ritualists nearly as much as did the tsar’s apostasy, which in their opinion imparted a final apocalyptic hopelessness to the entire conflict.

²⁵⁷ Brianchaninov, “O Raskole” (“On the Schism”), in “Neizdannia proizvedenia episkopa Ignatia (Brianchaninova)” (“Unpublished Works of Bishop Ignatius (Brianchaninov)”), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), NN 1-2, January-February-March-April, 2003, p. 18.

²⁵⁸ Zenkovsky, in Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

“At this time there is no tsar. One Orthodox tsar had remained on earth, and whilst he was unaware, the western heretics, like dark clouds, extinguished this Christian sun. Does this not, beloved, clearly prove that the Antichrist’s deceit is showing its mask?’

“History was at an end. More precisely, sacred history had come to an end; it had ceased to be sacred and had become without Grace. Henceforth the world would seem empty, abandoned, forsaken by God, and it would remain so. One would be forced to withdraw from history into the wilderness. Evil had triumphed in history. Truth had retreated into the bright heavens, while the Holy Kingdom had become the tsardom of the Antichrist...”²⁵⁹

In spite of this, some Old Ritualists came to accept Russia as the legitimate Orthodox empire. Thus “the people continue to believe today that Moscow is the Third Rome and that there will be no fourth. So Russia is the new Israel, a chosen people, a prophetic land, in which shall be fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, and in which even the Antichrist will appear, as Christ appeared in the previous Holy Land. The representative of Orthodoxy, the Russian Tsar, is the most legitimate emperor on earth, for he occupies the throne of Constantinople...”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, part I, 1979, pp. 98, 99.

²⁶⁰ V.I. Kel’siev, in Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

18. FROM HOLY RUS' TO GREAT RUSSIA

Although the Old Ritualists were truly schismatics, they were not wrong in discerning signs of serious decline in Muscovy and the official Church.

One sign of decline was the introduction of theological ideas from Western Catholicism and Protestantism into Muscovy (usually via Kiev). The Russian hierarchy was supported in its struggle against these ideas by the Eastern Patriarchs, and in particular by Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem (1689-1707), whose *Confession* we have cited in full, and who as Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) wrote, was "a great zealot of Orthodoxy in the 17th century, sharply following Russian church life and often writing epistles to Russian patriarchs, tsars, even individual church and civil activists. Patriarch Dositheus looked on Russia as the support of the whole of Ecumenical Orthodoxy, and for that reason it was necessary for Russia first of all to keep to the Orthodox faith in all its strictness and purity. The patriarch looked with great alarm and fear at the increasing establishment of western, especially Catholic influence in Moscow. Patriarch Dositheus thought in a very definite way about Catholicism: 'The papist delusion is equivalent to atheism, for what is papism and what is the unia if not open atheism?' 'The lawless papists are worse than the impious and the atheists; they are atheists, for they put forward two gods - one in the heavens, and the other on earth.' 'Papism is nothing other than open and undoubting atheism'. 'The Latins, who have introduced innovations into the faith, the sacraments and all the church ordinances, are openly impious and schismatic, because they make a local church universal, and instead of Christ they venerate the popes as the head of the Church, and they venerate the Roman Church, which is a local church, as universal. And for that reason, according to the words of the Fathers and Teachers of the Church, they are deceivers, unfitting and shameless persons, not having love and being enemies of the peace of the Church, slanderers of the Orthodox, inventors of new errors, disobedient, apostate, as they were recognized to be by the Fathers, and therefore worthy of disdain.'"²⁶¹

In order to preserve the purity of the faith in Muscovy, Patriarch Dositheus proposed reserving the most important posts in the State and Church to Great Russians, who were purer in their faith than the Little Russians coming from Polish-dominated lands. For example, the Ukrainian Symeon Polotsky had brought to Moscow from Kiev the Latinizing teaching of Metropolitan Peter Moghila that the *epiclesis*, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, was not necessary in the canon of the Eucharist. Dositheus obtained the convening of a Council in Moscow in 1690 at which this teaching was repudiated.²⁶² He proposed that Patriarch Joachim burn heretical books, and defrock or excommunicate those who read them. Moreover, he supported the creation of a Greco-Slavonic Theological Academy that would strengthen traditional patristic Orthodoxy against the Latinism of the Jesuit schools. Most of these aims were achieved. However, during

²⁶¹ Troitsky, "Bogoslovie i Svoboda Tserkvi" (Theology and the Freedom of the Church), *Bogoslovskij Vestnik* (Theological Herald), September, 1915, vol. 3, 2005, pp. 32-33.

²⁶² Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, p. 353.

the reign of Peter the Great, who turned the State and Church sharply towards the West, the Academy had been renamed as Latino-Slavonic and Little Russians were again in the ascendant over Great Russians...

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The penetration of non-theological, secular foreign influences into Muscovy was evident already in 1675 when Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich issued an *ukaz*, declaring: "Courtiers are forbidden to adopt foreign, German and other customs, to cut the hair on their heads, and to wear robes, tunics and hats of foreign design, and they are to forbid their servants to do this."²⁶³ Such practices as smoking and drunkenness appeared.²⁶⁴

"A new passion for wealth and splendour," writes Catherine Merridale, "became detectable at court, adding a touch of worldliness to the pervasive Orthodox solemnity. In 1671, the atmosphere was lightened even further. Alexei married for a second time, and his new wife, nineteen-year-old Natalia Naryshkina, introduced a bracing air of youth and optimism..."²⁶⁵

Sexual immorality appeared in high places. The tsar, according to Archbishop Nathaniel of Vienna, "had an illegitimate son (who later became the boyar Ivan Musin-Pushkin). Concerning Tsaritsa Natalia Kirillovna, Tikhon Streshnev said that he was not her only lover, and Tsarevna Sophia had a 'dear friend' in Prince Basil Golitsyn. Such sinful disruptions had been seen earlier, being characteristic of the generally sensual Russian nature. But earlier these sins had always been clearly recognized as sins. People did not justify them, but repented of them, as Great Prince Ivan III repented to St. Joseph of Volotsk for his sin of sorcery and fortune-telling, as the fearsome Ivan the Terrible repented of his sins. But if the tsars did not repent of their sins, as, for example, Basil III did not repent of his divorce from St. Solomonia, these sins were rebuked by the representatives of the Church and burned and rooted out by long and painful processes. In the second half of the 17th century in Moscow we see neither repentance for sins committed, nor a pained attitude to them on the part of the sinners themselves and the surrounding society. There was only a striving to hide sins, to make them unnoticed, unknown, for 'what is done in secret is judged in secret'. A very characteristic trait distinguishing Muscovite society of the second half of the 17th century from preceding epochs, a trait fraught with many consequences, was the unrestrained gravitation of the upper echelons of Muscovite society towards the West, the sinful West and its sinful free life, which, as always with sin viewed from afar, seemed especially alluring and attractive against the background of the wearisome holy Russian way of life.

²⁶³ Tsar Alexis, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

²⁶⁴ There is evidence that drunkenness, long thought to be the vice of Russians from the beginning, was in fact rare before the seventeenth century and severely punished. Things began to change under the Romanovs, and western traders encouraged the new trend...

²⁶⁵ Merridale, *Red Fortress*, New York: Picador, 2013, p. 164.

“Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, and all the higher Moscow boyars after him, introduced theatres. Originally the theatrical troupes most frequently played ‘spiritual’ pieces. But that this was only an offering to hypocrisy is best demonstrated by the fact that the actors playing ‘sacred scenes’ gratifying unspoiled sensuality about Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, David and Bathsheba and Herod and Salome, were profoundly despised by the tsar and other spectators, who considered them to be sinful, ‘scandal-mongering’ people. Neither holy days nor festal days, and still more not the eves of feasts, were chosen for the presentation of these scenes. (It is known that Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich changed the date of a presentation fixed for December 18, for ‘tomorrow is the eve of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ’.) The real exponents of the really sacred scenes: The Action in the Cave and the Procession on the Donkey were considered by nobody to be sinful people, and their scenes were put on precisely on holy days. The tsar was followed by the boyars, and the boyars by the noblemen; everything that was active and leading in the people was drawn at this time to a timid, but lustful peeping at the West, at its free life, in which everything was allowed that was strictly forbidden in Holy Rus’, but which was so longed for by sin-loving human nature, against which by this time the leading echelons of Muscovite life no longer struggled, but indecisively pandered to. In this sinful gravitation towards the West there were gradations and peculiarities: some were drawn to Polish life, others to Latin, a third group to German life. Some to a greater degree and some to a lesser degree, but they all turned away from the Orthodox Old Russian way of life. Peter only decisively opened up this tendency, broke down the undermined partition between Rus’ and the West, beyond which the Muscovites timidly desired to look, and unrestrainedly threw himself into the desired sinful life, leading behind him his people and his state.

“Holy Rus’ was easily broken by Peter because much earlier it had already been betrayed by the leading echelons of Muscovite society.

“We can see the degree of the betrayal of the Holy Rus’ to a still greater degree than in the pandering to the desires of the flesh and the gravitation towards the free and sinful life, in the state acts of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, and principally in the creation of the so-called *Monastirskij Prikaz*, through which, in spite of the protests of Patriarch Nikon, the tsar crudely took into his own hands the property of the Church ‘for its better utilization’, and in the persecutions to which ‘the father and intercessor for the tsar’, his Holiness Patriarch Nikon, was subjected. Nikon understood more clearly than anyone where the above-listed inner processes in the Muscovite state were inclining, and unsuccessfully tried to fight them. For a genuinely Old Russian consciousness, it was horrific to think that the state could ‘better utilize’ the property of the Church than the Church. The state had been able earlier - and the more ancient the epoch, and the more complete its Old Russianness, the easier and the more often - to resort to Church property and spend it on its own urgent military and economic needs. After all, the Church took a natural interest in this. A son or daughter can freely take a mother’s money in a moment of necessity, and in the given case it is of secondary importance whether he returns it or not: it is a question of what is more convenient to the loving mother and her loving son. They do not offend each other. But in the removal of the

monastery lands by Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich (although this measure was elicited by the needs of the war in the Ukraine, which the Church very much sympathized with), another spirit was clearly evident: the spirit of secularization. This was no longer a more or less superficial sliding towards the longed-for sinful forms of western entertainment, it was not a temporary surrender to sin: it was already a far-reaching transfer into the inner sphere of the relations between Church and State – and what a state: Holy Rus’! – of the secular ownership relations with a view to ‘better utilization’ instead of the loving relations between mother and children characteristic of Orthodox morality. Better utilization for what ends? For Church ends? But it would be strange to suppose that the state can use Church means for Church ends better than the Church. For state ends? But then the degree of the secularization of consciousness is clear, since state ends are placed so much higher than Church ends, so that for their attainment Church property is removed. State ends are recognized as ‘better’ in relation to Church ends...

“So it was not Peter who destroyed Holy Rus’. It had been betrayed before him by the people and state nurtured by it. But Peter created Great Russia.”²⁶⁶

The difference between Holy Rus’ and Great Russia, according to Archimandrite Cyril (Zaitsev) was that whereas in Holy Rus’ the Church embraced all spheres of life, and there was nothing outside the Church’s embrace, in Great Russia, large spheres – “the State, the army, society, education, science, art” – were placed outside the Church. The isolation of the Church was produced by the western secular spirit, symbolized especially by Peter’s introduction of the new New Year’s Day of January 1, which now coexisted with the Church New Year of September 1.²⁶⁷

“The tragedy of Imperial Russia consisted in the fact that, even while remaining the shield of Holy Rus’, it lost the capacity to see its true nature. This arose at the very moment of the emergence of the Empire. Is this not the origin of the break in the traditions of ecclesiastical art – which arose literally simultaneously with the beginning of the Petersburg period? Imperial Russia began to live *its own* life, and Holy Rus’ continued to live *its own* life. Imperial Russia was creating a new cultural world – and Russia was enriched with much that Moscow had not even thought of. To a certain degree this novelty was the heritage, the reflection and the child of the past. The lustre of Holy Rus’ gave a particular quality to the whole of the newly created [culture], to the astonishment of the whole world insofar as this world began to acquaint itself with the riches of Russian cultural achievements. But the genuine, true Holy Rus’ no longer lived in them. It lived its own special, separate life – burning with an even, soft, caressing light somewhere in the depths, in the bowels of Russian life, so as at moments to light up the whole of Russia with its blindingly bright light...”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Archbishop Nathaniel (Lvov), “O Petre Velikom” (“On Peter the Great”), *Epokha* (The Epoch), N 10, 2000, no. 1, pp. 39-41.

²⁶⁷ Zaitsev, “Imperia Rossijskaia i Sviataia Rus’”, *Pravoslaniij Put’*, 1958, p. 4.

²⁶⁸ Zaitsev, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

The transition from Holy Rus' to Great Russia began in earnest in the last decade of the seventeenth century, in the career of the last Patriarch of Muscovite Russia, Adrian. At his enthronement in 1690 he expressed a traditional, very Nikonian concept of the relationship between the Church and the State: "The kingdom has dominion only on earth, ... whereas the priesthood has power on earth as in heaven... I am established as archpastor and father and head of all, for the patriarch is the image of Christ. He who hears me hears Christ. For all Orthodox are the spiritual sons [of the patriarch] – tsars, princes, lords, honourable warriors, and ordinary people... right-believers of every age and station. They are my sheep, they know me and they heed my archpastoral voice..."²⁶⁹

However, this boldness evaporated when the domineering personality of Peter the Great came to full power in the kingdom. Thus, as M.V. Zyzykin writes, "when Tsaritsa Natalia, who had supported Patriarch Adrian, a supporter of the old order of life, died [in 1694], there began a reform of customs which showed itself already in the outward appearance of the Tsar [Peter]. The Tsar's way of life did not accord with his sacred dignity and descended from this height to drinking bouts in the German suburb and the life of a simple workman. The Church with its striving for salvation... retreated into the background, and, as a consequence of this, a whole series of changes in customs appeared. Earlier the First-hierarchs and other hierarchs had been drawn into the Tsar's council even in civil matters; they had been drawn to participate in the *Zemskie Sobory* and the Boyar's Duma; now Peter distanced the Church's representatives from participation in state matters; he spoke about this even during the lifetime of his mother to the Patriarch and did not summon him to the council. The ceremony on Palm Sunday in which the Tsar had previously taken part only as the first son of the Church, and not as her chief master, was scrapped. This ceremony on the one hand exalted the rank of the Patriarch before the people, and on the other hand also aimed at strengthening the authority of his Majesty's state power through his participation in front of the whole people in a religious ceremony in the capacity as the first son of the Church. Until the death of his mother Peter also took part in this ceremony, holding the reins of the ass on which Patriarch Adrian [representing Christ Himself] sat, but between 1694 and 1696 this rite was put aside as if it were humiliating for the tsar's power. The people were not indifferent to this and in the persons of the riflemen who rebelled in 1698 they expressed their protest. After all, the motive for this rebellion was the putting aside of the procession on Palm Sunday, and also the cessation of the cross processions at Theophany and during Bright Week, and the riflemen wanted to destroy the German suburb and beat up the Germans because 'piety had stagnated among them'. In essence this protest was a protest against the proclamation of the primacy of the State and earthly culture in place of the Church and religion. So as to introduce this view into the mass of the people, it had been necessary to downgrade the significance of the First Hierarch of the Church, the Patriarch. After all, he incarnated in himself the earthly image of Christ, and in his

²⁶⁹ Patriarch Adrian, in Fr. Sergei Hackel, "Questions of Church and State in 'Holy Russia': some attitudes of the Romanov period", *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. II, no. 1, Spring, 1970, p. 10.

position in the State the idea of the enchurchment of the State that lay at the foundation of the symphony of powers, was vividly expressed. Of course, Peter had to remove all the rights of the Patriarch that expressed this. We have seen that the Patriarch ceased to be the official advisor of the Tsar and was excluded from the Boyars' Duma. But this was not enough: the Patriarch still had one right, which served as a channel for the idea of righteousness in the structure of the State. This was the right to make petitions before the Tsar, and its fall symbolized the fall in the authority of the Patriarch. Soloviev has described this scene of the last petitioning in connection with the riflemen's rebellion. 'The terrible preparations for the executions went ahead, the gallows were placed on Belij and *Zemlyanoj gorod*, at the gates of the Novodevichi monastery and at the four assembly houses of the insurgent regiments. The Patriarch remembered that his predecessors had stood between the Tsar and the victims of his wrath, and had petitioned for the disgraced ones, lessening the bloodshed. Adrian raised the icon of the Mother of God and set off for Peter at Preobrazhenskoye. But the Tsar, on seeing the Patriarch, shouted at him: 'What is this icon for? Is coming here really your business? Get away from here and put the icon in its place. Perhaps I venerate God and His All-holy Mother more than you. I am carrying out my duties and doing a God-pleasing work when I defend the people and execute evil-doers who plot against it.' Historians rebuke Patriarch Adrian for not saying what the First Priest was bound to say, but humbly yielded to the Tsar, leaving the place of execution in shame without venturing on an act of heroic self-sacrifice. He did not oppose moral force to physical force and did not defend the right of the Church to be the guardian of the supreme righteousness. The petitioning itself turned out to be, not the heroism of the Patriarch on his way to martyrdom, but an empty rite. The Patriarch's humiliation was put in the shade by Peter in that he heeded the intercession of a foreigner, the [Swiss] adventurer Lefort. 'Lefort, as Golikov informs us, firmly represented to Peter that his Majesty should punish the evil-doers for their evil-doing, but not lead them into despair: the former is the consequence of justice, while the latter is an act of cruelty.' At that very moment his Majesty ordered the execution to be stopped..."²⁷⁰

However, if Lefort restrained the tsar in this connection, in others he opened new paths of impiety to him. Thus it was in Lefort's palace in the German quarter "that Peter first heard European music, the strings and woodwind from another world. Even the loudest instruments were drowned, however, by the irregular

²⁷⁰ Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part III, pp. 218-220. Robert Massie adds a little more detail to this account: "Reports of the horror reached such magnitude that the Patriarch took it upon himself to go to Peter to beg for mercy. He went carrying an image of the Blessed Virgin, reminding Peter of the humanity of all men and asking for the exercise of mercy. Peter, resenting the intrusion of spiritual authority on temporal matters, replied to the churchmen with great feeling: 'What are you doing with that image and what business is it of yours to come here? Leave immediately and put that image in a place where it may be venerated. Know that I reverence God and His Most Holy Mother more earnestly, perhaps, than you do. But it is the duty of my sovereign office, and a duty that I owe to God, to save my people from harm and to prosecute with public vengeance crimes that lead to the common ruin.' In this case, Peter continued, justice and harshness were linked, the gangrene ran deep in the body politic and could be cut out only with iron and fire. Moscow, he said, would be saved not by pity but by cruelty..." (*Peter the Great*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 255)

explosions of ear-splitting masculine laughter that always seemed to accompany them. Peter established a periodic court, the 'All-Jesting and Most Drunken Assembly', and its amusements were scandalous. Korb reported a party in Lefort's mansion that included a sham Patriarch and a complete set of scenic clergy dedicated to Bacchus'. Peter's former tutor, Nikita Zotov, was 'decked with a mitre, and went stark naked, to betoken lasciviousness to the lookers-on. Cupid and Venus were the insignia on his crozier, lest there should be any mistake about what flock he was pastor of. The remaining rout of Bacchanalians came after hi, some carrying great bowls full of wine, others mead, other again beer and brandy...'”²⁷¹

Deeply saddened by this paganism, this blasphemous parody of the sacred traditions of Holy Rus', to which he could offer no effective resistance, the real patriarch, Adrian, died in October, 1700. Seizing his opportunity to remove the office of chief restrainer of his own impiety, Peter did not permit the election of a new patriarch, but only a *locum tenens*. Later in his reign he abolished the patriarchate itself and introduced what was in effect a Protestant, caesaropapist form of Church-State relations...

And so the seventeenth century ended with the effective fall of the symphony of powers in Russia in the form of the shackling of one of its two pillars – the patriarchate. Russia was now effectively an absolutist, not an autocratic state, However, the victory was not total, and a hundred years later, during the reign of Tsar Paul I, the Orthodox autocracy was to begin a comeback...

²⁷¹ Merridale, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

19. PETER THE GREAT: (1) IMITATOR OF THE WEST

The early modern period in Europe to 1688 was distinguished by two contrary tendencies: on the one hand, the tendency towards the absolutist state, freed now from the shackles of ecclesiastical and feudal obligation, and on the other hand, the rise of representative institutions and the gradual re-imposition of shackles on the state by “the will of the people” – that is, those classes of society (usually the aristocrats and landowners) who took it upon themselves to proclaim that their opinions were the opinions of the whole people. On the one hand, it was often assumed, as Bernard Simms writes, “that absolutism delivered the best government at home and the most effective defence of state interests abroad. Parliamentary or corporate systems, on the other hand, were widely considered to be corrupt, chaotic and prone to outside intervention. It was for this reason that the ‘reform’ party in Poland tried to curb the rights of the *Sejm* from the mid-1730s in favour of a more centralized government capable of resisting foreign powers...” On the other hand, according to Simms, “as the eighteenth century wore on, it became clear that the increasing bureaucratization of the continental European states [like Austro-Hungary] hampered effective decision-making, while parliamentary Britain remained capable of extraordinary clarity of vision, resilience and determined action.”²⁷²

The latter judgement, however, is a dubious one; and from the perspective of about the year 1700, or even 1750, it was the absolutist states such as France and Prussia that seemed to be the most successful. Britain’s triumph over France in the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), still lay in the future, as did the collapse of absolutist France in 1789. And that is one reason why the tendency in Russia was to develop in the direction of greater absolutism and despotism on the French or Prussian models, and not in the direction of British (still less Polish) representative government.

Now Russia, contrary to received opinion, was not an absolutist state before Peter the Great. The sign of real absolutism/despotism is the attempt to shackle the Church, and this is not characteristic of Russian history before Peter. Ivan the Terrible had been a despot in the second half of his reign, and Peter’s father Alexis Mikhailovich had unlawfully deposed Patriarch Nikon. But these were exceptions to the general course of Russian history, which is proved by the fact that after the deaths of Ivan and Alexis, Church-State symphony was quickly restored.

The difference between autocracy and despotism was well characterized by Nicholas Berdiaev as follows: “[In the Orthodox autocracy] there are no rights to power, but only obligations of power. The power of the tsar is by no means absolute, unrestricted power. It is autocratic because its source is not the will of the people and it is not restricted by the people. But it is restricted by the Church and by Christian righteousness; it is spiritually subject to the Church; it serves not its own will, but the will of God. The tsar must not have his own will, but he must serve the will of God. The tsar and the people are bound together by one and the

²⁷² Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 20-13, pp. 90, 94.

same faith, by one and the same subjection to the Church and the righteousness of God. Autocracy presupposes a wide national social basis living its own self-sufficient life; it does not signify the suppression of the people's life. Autocracy is justified only if the people has beliefs which sanction the power of the tsar. It cannot be an external violence inflicted on the people. The tsar is autocratic only if he is a truly Orthodox tsar. The defective Orthodoxy of Peter the Great and his inclination towards Protestantism made him an absolute, and not an autocratic monarch. Absolute monarchy is a child of humanism...

"In absolutism the tsar is not a servant of the Church. A sign of absolute monarchy is the subjection of the Church to the State. That is what happened to the Catholic Church under Louis XIV. Absolutism always develops a bureaucracy and suppresses the social life of the people..."²⁷³

By abolishing the patriarchate and taking control of the Church himself, Peter the Great joined his country to the absolutist tradition of West European monarchism, thereby tearing Russia away from her historical roots in the Orthodox autocracy. Let us now see how he did this in a little more detail...

*

In March, 1697 Peter undertook a long "Grand Embassy" to Western Europe. "He gathered a collection of about two hundred young nobles, put Franz Lefort and two of Moscow's own best diplomats in overall charge, and set off for Europe under the assumed name of Peter Mikhailov (which fooled no-one). In part, the Grand Embassy was a fact-finding tour, a chance to learn at first hand about ships, science and European manners. For Peter Mikhailov, it was also another so-called game, and he spent weeks in Dutch and English shipyards, often living as a common seaman. But Russia's unconventional sovereign was also careful to pay his diplomatic dues, and his delegation spent time at William III's Kensington Palace (the tsar actually lived at Deptford), and also in Habsburg Vienna. Peter was still at the Austrian court when he learned that Moscow's German quarter and his throne had been the target of a *streltsy* putsch. By time the news reached him in the summer of 1698, the worst was over [and the putsch suppressed]..."²⁷⁴

On his return, as B.A. Uspensky writes, he introduced "a whole range of cultural innovations. Already in the next year there began the forcible shaving of beards; the destruction of beards was marked for the New Year, 1699. It was then that there also began the struggle against Russian national dress and a range of other reforms of the same kind."²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Berdyaev, "Tsarstvo Bozhie i tsarstvo kesaria" ("The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Caesar"), *Put'* (The Way), September, 1925, pp. 39-40.

²⁷⁴ Merridale, *Red Fortress*, p. 174.

²⁷⁵ Uspensky, in Fomin & Fomina, *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1998, volume I, p. 268. Clergy and peasants were allowed to retain their beards. And nobles could keep them if they paid a "beard tax".

In accordance with Peter's westernizing drive, the nobility were chained to public service in the bureaucracy or the army; the peasants - to the land. This was to some extent explained by military necessity. For Peter had to fight foreign wars, against the Turks and the Swedes, whose success required a standing army.

Peter's reforms were motivated above all by *war*, by the need to catch up with the West in military and other technologies. As Francis Fukuyama writes, "War was... the chief motive for state building, especially the enormous pressures created by the Great Northern War with Sweden. Following defeat by Charles XII at the Battle of Narva in 1700, Peter began a thorough reorganization of the army along contemporary European lines and build a navy from scratch (beginning with a single ship and ending with a fleet of more than eight hundred that was capable of defeating the Swedish navy). He also modernized Russia's central administration by abolishing the old *prikazy* and replacing them with a system of colleges modelled on similar institutions in Sweden. The colleges were built around technical expertise - often, at this point, coming from foreigners - and exercised a deliberative function in debating and executing policies.

"The first phase of state building in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was based on mobilization of the middle service class, which split the nobility and ensured that a large number of them would be directly dependent on the state. Peter went even further and drafted the entire aristocracy into state service. The gentry entered the army as boys, were promoted on modern merit criteria, and had to remain with the regiments for their entire lives. The idea of a service nobility thus lasted far longer in Russia than it had in Europe, though it was implemented very differently. The nobles who served the state did not come with their own retinues of vassals and retainers but were assigned positions by a centralized hierarchy. This led to an overall militarization of Russian society, with a moral emphasis on duty, honor, hierarchy, and obedience..."

Peter created a new hereditary nobility based on merit in the first generation. He "replaced the old *mestnichestvo* with a Table of Ranks in 1722, a hierarchical system in which each of his subjects was entered into a legally defined order with its own privileges and obligations. By reaching a certain grade, a non-noble servitor, whether bureaucrat or military man, was automatically entered into the ranks of the hereditary nobility. This provided a path for new entrants into the nobility, which was needed because of the state's enormous staffing needs. The Table of Ranks solidified the corporate identity of the nobility and its capacity for collective action. But it never saw itself as an opponent of monarchical power; its interests had become too tightly bound to the state for that.

"What the nobles got in return for service was exemption from taxation, exclusive rights to the ownership of land and people, and the opportunity to squeeze their serfs harder. The close relationship of the deteriorating condition of the peasantry and the rise of a service gentry is indicated by the fact that serfdom first appeared in the lands given by the prince to his gentry as *pomest'ia*. These tended to be in the south, south-east, and west, frontier regions where new land had been acquired from neighbouring countries. In the great expanse of northern

territories where there was no fighting, the condition of peasants was much better – they were for the most part state peasants with obligations to the state rather than a private landlord.”²⁷⁶

Thus Peter gave the nobles despotic powers over their serfs. Although the seeds of serfdom had been sown in earlier reigns, under Peter, as Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, “a beginning was laid to that *serfdom* which for a long time became the shame and illness of Russia. Before Peter *from time immemorial* not only state peasants, but also those of the landowners were not deprived of rights and were under the protection of the laws - that is, they could never be serfs or slaves, the *property* of their lords! We have already seen that there were measures to limit and, finally, to ban the free departure of peasants, or their transfer from one lord to another. And there were measures to tie the Russian peasants to *the land* (but not to the lords!) with the aim of *preserving the cultivation of the land* in the central lands of Great Russia, keeping in them the cultivators themselves, the peasants that were capable of working. But Russian landowners always had bond-slaves, people who had fallen into complete dependence on the lords, mortgaging themselves for debts, or runaways, or others who were hiding from persecution. Gradually (not immediately) the landowners began to provide these bond-slaves, too, with *their own* (not common) land, forcing them to work on it to increase the lords’ profits, which at that time consisted mainly in the products of the cultivation of the land. Peter I, in introducing a new form of taxation, a poll-tax (on the person), and not on the plot of land and not on the ‘yard’ composed of several families, as had been the case before him, also taxed the bond-slaves with this poll-tax, thereby *putting them in the same rank* as the peasants. From that time the lords gradually began to look on their free peasants, too, as bond-slaves, that is, as *their own* property. Soon, under Catherine II, this was already legalised, so that the Empress called the peasants ‘slaves’, *which had never been the case in Russia!*”²⁷⁷

The sufferings of the Russian peasants were capped by yet another innovation: conscription. Peasants were conscripted for twenty-five years – virtually a lifetime...

“Although other European countries had effected mass levies before in an emergency, Russia was the first country to institute conscription as a permanent method of raising its armed forces. From the military point of view conscription had considerable advantages. It enabled Peter to win a great victory over Charles XII at Poltava in 1709, and to follow it up by a sustained and ultimately successful military and naval campaign that ended in the capitulation of Sweden in 1721. But its effect on Russian society was to impose new obligations and to impart a new rigidity to the system of state service.”²⁷⁸

Peter’s westernism was displayed not only in this western-style absolutism and in the western-style institutions he founded and technologies he imported. We see

²⁷⁶ Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, London: Profile, 2012, pp. 395-398.

²⁷⁷ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 173-174.

²⁷⁸ Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, London: Harper Collins, 1997, p. 80.

it also in his personal life: in his friendships with westerners, in his western clothes and life-style, in his Protestantizing beliefs, and in his marriage to a Latvian commoner, Catherine. He created a diplomatic service with representatives in the major European capitals, and compelled his diplomats to learn French.

But the most striking and enduring manifestation of his westernism was his construction of a new, thoroughly western-looking architecture. Thus after the victory over the Swedes at Poltava in 1709, he decided to build a palace at Peterhof "befitting the very highest of monarchs". A visit to Versailles in 1717 furthered Peter's ambitions and he employed more than 5,000 laborers, serfs and soldiers, supported by architects, water-engineers, landscape gardeners and sculptors. Work proceeded at a frenetic pace from 1714 until Peterhof was officially opened in 1723.

Well before that, however, he had undertaken his greatest westernizing project – the construction of a new capital at St. Petersburg to replace Moscow with its more Orthodox traditions. Situated at the extreme western end of the vast empire as Peter's "window to the West", and built over a bog at a terrible cost in human lives, this extraordinary city was largely built by French and Italian architects on the model of Venice and Amsterdam, peopled by shaven and pomaded courtiers who spoke more French than Russian.

"In microcosm," writes John T. Alexander, "the city advertised many Petrine beliefs. It was European in concept, name, and style – the style synonymous with the newly popular term *arkhitektura*. Its name and layout, the fortress and cathedral of Peter and Paul and the city crest all pointed to parallels with imperial Rome."²⁷⁹

For Peter was also trying to replace the traditional idea of Russia as the Third Rome by the western idea of the secular empire on the model of the *First Rome*, the Rome of the pagan Caesars and Augusti. (Sir Isaac Newton referred to Peter as "your Emperor, his Caesarian Majesty".) Just as St. Constantine's transfer of his capital from Old Rome to New Rome symbolized the transition from paganism to Christianity, so Peter's transfer of his capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg symbolized the transition from a religious state to a secular one.

"He adopted the title of *Russorum Imperator*, using Latin to evoke the military glory of the First Rome, while the commonly used epithet 'pious and gentle' dropped out of currency. Religious processions were replaced by splendid entries through triumphal arches, with Peter case in the personae of Mars or Hercules, pagan gods who owed their victories to their own strength and valour. After the final victory over Sweden he took the additional title of *Otets otechestva*, equivalent of the Latin *pater patriae*. The heritage of the Second Rome, Byzantium, was downgraded..."²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Alexander, "The Petrine Era and After 1689-1740", in Gregory L. Frazee, *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 120.

²⁸⁰ Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

As Wil van den Bercken writes: “Rome remains an ideological point of reference in the notion of the Russian state. However, it is no longer the second Rome but the first Rome to which reference is made, or ancient Rome takes the place of Orthodox Constantinople. Peter takes over Latin symbols: he replaces the title tsar by the Latin *imperator*, designates his state *imperia*, calls his advisory council *senate*, and makes the Latin *Rossija* the official name of his land in place of the Slavic Rus’ ...

“Although the primary orientation is on imperial Rome, there are also all kinds of references to the Christian Rome. The name of the city, St. Petersburg, was not just chosen because Peter was the patron saint of the tsar, but also to associate the apostle Peter with the new Russian capital. That was both a diminution of the religious significance of Moscow and a religious claim over papal Rome. The adoption of the religious significance of Rome is also evident from the cult of the second apostle of Rome, Paul, which is expressed in the name for the cathedral of the new capital, the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral. This name was a break with the pious Russian tradition, which does not regard the two Roman apostles but Andrew as the patron of Russian Christianity. Thus St. Petersburg is meant to be the new Rome, directly following on the old Rome, and passing over the second and third Romes...”²⁸¹

But above all St. Petersburg symbolized Russia’s transition from the Age of Faith (symbolized by Moscow, the old capital) to the Age of Reason. For, as Dostoyevsky said, it was “the most rational and premeditated city on earth”.

²⁸¹ Van den Brecken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, pp. 168-169.

20. PETER THE GREAT: (2) ENLIGHTENER OF THE EAST

Russia before Peter had always claimed to be, not a reincarnation or successor of the First Rome, but precisely the *Third Rome*, - that is, Rome as the protector of and spreader of Orthodoxy throughout the world in succession to the Second Rome of Constantinople. This ideal did not perish completely under Peter; for “neither the people nor the Church renounced the very ideal of the Orthodox kingdom, and, as even V. Klyuchevsky noted, continued to consider as law that which corresponded to this ideal, and not Peter’s decrees.”²⁸² Nevertheless, there were inevitably doubts; for how was one to understand Peter as being a true autocrat and the emperor of the Third Rome if he undermined the foundations of Orthodoxy? And so the rumour arose that the real Russian autocrat was sealed up in a column in Stockholm, and that Peter was a German who had been substituted for him...

However, if traditionalist Russians were beginning to lose faith in him, the Orthodox in Greece and the Balkans were delighted by the gradual extension of his power to the south... Thus after defeating the Swedes at the Battle of Poltava, he invaded the Balkans, calling on the Balkan Orthodox to see him as their protector. Although Peter was defeated by the Ottomans at the Battle of the Pruth, Russia now constituted a threat to Constantinople itself that translated into real influence with the Sultan. In fact, it is with Peter the Great and his eighteenth-century successors that we can first talk realistically about Russia fulfilling her role as the protector of the non-Russian Orthodox...

And so, as Lubov Millar writes, “he tried to obtain the return of the Holy Sepulchre to the Greek community there. Nothing came of his efforts. However, in 1700 an agreement was reached with the Ottoman empire, granting Russian pilgrims free access to the Holy Land. Gradually Russia obtained additional facilities from the Ottomans and, eventually, upon the insistence of the Russian Orthodox Synod, a Russian consulate was established in Jaffa, the port through which Russian pilgrims entered the Holy Land.”²⁸³

At that time, writes V.M. Lourie, “hopes in Greece for a miraculous re-establishment of Constantinople before the end of the world [based on the prophecies of Leo the Wise and others], were somewhat strengthened, if not squeezed out, by hopes on Russia. Anastasius Gordius (1654-1729), the author of what later became an authoritative historical-eschatological interpretation of the Apocalypse (1717-23) called the Russian Empire the guardian of the faith to the very coming of the Messiah. The hopes of the Greeks for liberation from the Turks that were linked with Russia, which had become traditional already from the time of St. Maximus the Greek (1470-1555), also found their place in the interpretations of the Apocalypse. Until the middle of the 19th century itself - until the Greeks, on

²⁸² Hieromonk Dionysius, Priest Timothy Alferov, *O Tserkvi, Pravoslavnom Tsarstve i Poslednem Vremeni*, Moscow, 1998, p. 66.

²⁸³ Millar, *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Richfield Springs, N.Y.: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 2009, p. 55.

a wave of pan-European nationalism thought up their 'Great Idea' – Russia would take the place of Byzantium in their eschatological hopes, as being the last Christian Empire. They considered the Russian Empire to be their own, and the Russian Tsar Nicholas (not their Lutheran King Otto) as their own, to the great astonishment and annoyance of European travellers."²⁸⁴

Less in the tradition of the Orthodox Emperor was Peter's abolition of the Russian patriarchate and its replacement by a Synod that was formally a department of the State. In 1721 Peter petitioned the Ecumenical Patriarch to recognize this "governmental" (*pravitel'stoennij*) Synod as having "equal to patriarchal power". In 1723 the reply came in the form of "two nearly identical letters, one from Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople, written on behalf of himself and the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and the other from Patriarch Athanasius of Antioch. Both letters 'confirmed, ratified, and declared' that the Synod established by Peter 'is, and shall be called, our holy brother in Christ'; and the patriarchs enjoined all Orthodox clergy and people to submit to the Synod 'as to the four Apostolic thrones'."²⁸⁵

The Eastern Patriarchs' agreement to the abolition of the patriarchate they themselves had established needs some explanation. Undoubtedly influential in their decision was the assurance they received from Peter that he had instructed the Synod to rule the Russian Church "in accordance with the unalterable dogmas of the faith of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Greek Church". Of course, if they had known all the Protestantizing, not to speak of pagan, tendencies of Peter's rule, and in particular his reduction of the Church to a department of the State, they might not have felt so assured...

Also relevant was the fact that the Russian tsar was the last independent Orthodox ruler and the main financial support of the Churches of the East. This made it difficult for the Patriarchs to resist the Tsar in this, as in other requests. Thus in 1716 Patriarch Jeremiah III acceded to Peter's request to allow his soldiers to eat meat during all fasts while they were on campaign²⁸⁶; and a little later he permitted the request of the Russian consul in Constantinople that Lutherans and Calvinists should not be baptized on joining the Orthodox Church.²⁸⁷

But a still more likely explanation is the fact that the Eastern Patriarchs were themselves in an uncanonical (simoniac) situation in relation to their secular ruler, the Sultan, which would have made any protest against a similar uncanonicity in

²⁸⁴ Lourié, "O Vozmozhnosti Kontsa Sveta v Odnog Otdel'no Vzyatoj Strane" ("On the Possibility of the End of the World in One Separate Country"), pp. 1-2 (MS).

²⁸⁵ James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great*, London: Macmillan, 1971, p. 223.

²⁸⁶ However, "Christopher Hermann von Manstein found that during the Ochakov campaign in the 1730s 'though the synod grants them a dispensation for eating flesh during the actual campaign, there are few that choose to take the benefit of it, preferring death to the sin of breaking their rule' (Janet M. Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650-1825*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 242).

²⁸⁷ Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 294. At the Moscow council of 1666-67, it had been decreed, under pressure from Ligarides, that papists should be received, not by baptism, but by chrismation.

Russia seem hypocritical. In fact, in the 18th century we have the tragic spectacle of the Orthodox Church almost everywhere in an uncanonical position vis-à-vis the secular powers: in Russia, deprived of its lawful head and ruled by a secular, albeit formally Orthodox ruler; in the Greek lands, under a lawful head, the Ecumenical Patriarch, who nevertheless unlawfully combined political and religious roles and was chosen, at least in part, by a Muslim ruler; in the Balkans, deprived of their lawful heads (the Serbian and Bulgarian patriarchs) and ruled in both political and religious matters by the Ecumenical Patriarch while being under the supreme dominion of the same Muslim ruler, or, as in Montenegro, ruled (from 1782) by prince-bishops of the Petrovic-Njegos family.

Only little Georgia retained something like the traditional symphony of powers. But even the Georgians were forced, towards the end of the eighteenth century, to seek the suzerainty of Orthodox Russia in the face of the Muslim threat.

The problem for the smaller Orthodox nations was that there was no clear way out of this situation. Rebellion on a mass scale was out of the question. So it was natural to look in hope to the north, where Peter, in spite of his “state heresy” (Glubokovsky’s phrase), was an anointed sovereign who greatly strengthened Russia militarily and signed all the confessions of the faith of the Orthodox Church. All these factors persuaded the Eastern Patriarchs to employ “economy” (leniency, condescension to weakness) and bless the uncanonical replacement of the patriarchate with a State-dominated Synod...

*

One of the chief tasks and characteristics of Christian Rome was *missionary work*; and if the mission fields for the Second Rome of Byzantium were the Slavic lands to the north of her, then the mission field of the Third Rome of Russia was the vast expanse of Asia to the East. In spite of the Time of Troubles and the internal divisions created by the Old Ritualist schism, Muscovite Russia was still bringing new nations to the True Faith, especially in Siberia; and this work continued under the St. Petersburg autocracy.

As in European Russia, missionary work in Siberia was carried out mainly through the creation of monasteries. The first such monastery was founded by the Elder Dalmat in 1644. “In 1653 Kondsky Monastery was founded for the evangelization of the Ostyaks. From 1660 to 1672 monasteries were founded all over Siberia, in Yakutsk, Kirensk and Irkutsk. In 1672 Hermogen founded Alabasin Monastery on the Chinese frontier.”²⁸⁸

“In the year 1640, the great national movement to the east, ‘the meeting of the sun,’ resulted in the Russian explorers arriving at the mouth of the Amur River and the Pacific Ocean. The bulwark of Orthodoxy against pagan China to the south became the Russian fortress of Albazin, famous for the wonderworking Albazin

²⁸⁸ Sergius Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics*, Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1980, p. 54.

Icon of the Mother of God (March 9) and the heroic “defense of Albazin” (1685-1686).

“In the summer of 1679, during the Apostles’ Fast, Gabriel Florov and a company of Cossacks set out from Albazin to explore the Zea River valley. For three years the Cossacks did patrol duty on the Zea, making the rounds of the surrounding settlements. They brought the Tungus settlers under Russian rule, and they established winter quarters and a stockade.

“Once, Cossack riders encountered two men on white horses, clad in armor and armed with bows and swords. These were Saints Vsevolod and Dovmont [holy warrior-princes of medieval Pskov]. Speaking with the Cossacks and learning that they were from Albazin, the holy warrior-princes predicted the approach of Chinese armies upon the Amur soon afterwards. They said the battle would be difficult, but predicted the ultimate triumph of Russian arms. ‘The Chinese will come again, and enter into a great battle, and we shall aid the Russian people in these struggles. The Chinese will not trouble the city.’

“Several times during 1684-1686 the Chinese horde advanced towards Albazin, but did not take the city. By the miraculous help of the Albazin Icon of the Mother of God and the holy Princes Vsevolod and Dovmont of Pskov, the enemy was rendered powerless against the Orthodox fortress.”²⁸⁹

At Nerchinsk on August 27, 1689, as the Chinese surrounding the fortress with a large fleet of heavily armed junks and some 17,000 soldiers, the Russian government through its envoy Fyodor Golovin signed a treaty with the Qing dynasty emperor. According to this treaty, which was written in Latin with translations into Russian and Chinese, the Russians gave up the area north of the Amur River as far as the Stanovoy Mountains and kept the area between the Arrgum River and Lake Baikal. In effect, this gave the whole of the Amur basin to China.

“Subsequently,” writes Robert K. Massie, “the Russians claimed that the treaty had been based not on justice, but on the presence of so much menacing Chinese military force. In 1858 and 1860, the tables were turned, and Russia took back 380,000 square miles of territory from an impotent China. Not all Russians approved this claim. After all, the Treaty of Nerchinsk had been honoured for 180 years: all that time, the territory had been Chinese. But Tsar Nicholas I [*recte*: Tsar Alexander II] approved, proclaiming: ‘Where the Russian flag has once been hoisted, it must never be lowered.’

“This is the essence of the Soviet-Chinese dispute. The Russians argue that the vast region was taken from them unfairly during Sophia’s regency and that, as *Izvestia* put it in 1972, ‘this provided the grounds for Russian diplomacy in the mid-nineteenth century to review the treaty by peaceful means and to establish the final

²⁸⁹ “The Account of the Miracles of Holy Princes Vsevolod and Dovmont” was written by Gabriel Florov at Yakutsk on October 23, 1689.

Russian-Chinese border in the Far East.' In reply, the Chinese argue that the Treaty of Nerchinsk was the legitimate treaty and that the Russians simply stole the territory from them in the nineteenth century. Today, the territory is Russian. But on Chinese maps it is Chinese..."²⁹⁰

Whatever the merits or otherwise of the Nerchinsk Treaty, it guaranteed a period of stability and peace between Russia and its only great-power rival in the region. And this in turn helped the development of missionary work in Siberia and China. Tsar Peter played an important part in promoting these missions. Thus in 1702 St. Philotheus was consecrated Metropolitan of Tobolsk; his diocese extended from the Urals to China, and he organized missions in the Urals, Kamchatka, Mongolia and northern China, baptizing more than forty thousand people and founding about three hundred parishes. Philotheus was succeeded in 1711 by St. John Maximovich, who continued to carry out very fertile missionary work in Siberia.

Missionary work had already been initiated in China. Thus in 1681, writes Dr. Jeremias Norman, "when the town of Albazin was recaptured from the Russians by the Manchus, a part of the Cossack defenders with a few women and children chose to accept Chinese suzerainty and were taken to Beijing by the Manchus. They forced Father Maksim Leontev to accompany them, and they also took along church vessels and icons.

"The Manchu emperor Kangxi granted the Russian captives a plot of ground in the northeastern part of Beijing, as well as a former Buddhist temple and cemetery on the outskirts of the city. The captives themselves were forced into a special contingent of the Imperial Guard. The former Buddhist temple was converted into a Chapel in honor of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, and Father Maksim began regular services there. Because of a need for more adequate facilities, Father Maksim requested the Metropolitan of Tobolsk to open a church in Beijing. The Metropolitan sent a priest, Father Gregory, and a Deacon from the Tobolsk Cathedral, Father Lavrentii Ivanov, who carried with him a new *antimension* for the Church in Beijing. The Metropolitan also ordered Father Maksim and the other clergy to pray for the Manchu emperor. Father Maksim continued his pastoral labors in Beijing until his death in 1711 or 1712. The Albazintsy, as the Cossacks who had submitted to the Manchus were known, took Manchu wives and before long were beginning to forget their Orthodox Faith and their pastor. A pastoral admonition from the Metropolitan of Tobolsk in 1711 recalled them to the practice of their Faith.

"In 1689 Russia signed the Treaty of Nerchinsk with China (the Manchu Empire); one of the provisions of this treaty allowed the Russian government to open and maintain a trading mission in the southern part of Beijing. Peter I took a personal interest in these new contacts with China and, at the advice of Patriarch Adrian, issued an *ukase* on June 18, 1700, in which he directed the Metropolitan of Kiev, Varlaam, to find a good and learned man for the Metropolitan See of Tobolsk,

²⁹⁰ Massie, *Peter the Great*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 85, note.

who would be able to direct the work of a Chinese mission; at the same time, the Metropolitan was urged to find two or three young men for training in the Chinese and Mongolian (Manchu) languages for Apostolic work in the Chinese Empire. This *ukase* also put the Chinese mission on firm financial footing. The goals of the mission at that time were defined as follows: 1) to be an intermediary between China and Russia; 2) to maintain Christianity among the Albazintsy and, if possible, to convert the Chinese to Orthodoxy, and 3) to supply interpreters.

“In 1712, with the concurrence of the Chinese emperor, the Russian Spiritual Mission was formally inaugurated in Beijing under the leadership of Archimandrite Ilarion (Lezhaiski), a graduate of the Kiev Theological Academy. He was aided by Hierodeacon Philip and six chanters. The members of the mission were paid a generous salary by the Chinese government.

“Little is known of this first mission. Archimandrite Ilarion died in less than two years, and four other members of the mission returned to Russia; in the end, only one Priest and three assistants remained. The mission did not die, however. It was even proposed that a Bishop be appointed for Beijing to counterbalance the influence of the Roman Catholic missionaries who at that time were influential in the capital. In fact a Bishop was nominated (Innokentii Kul’chinsky), but when he arrived at the Chinese border in March, 1721, he was prevented from entering the country at the request of the Jesuit missionaries in Beijing. After a second unsuccessful attempt to set up a Bishopric in Beijing in 1725, Archimandrite Antonii, who had first arrived in 1720, was made superior of the mission.

“After the death of the Kangxi Emperor in 1723, all Christian missionary work in China was forbidden; however, the Spiritual Mission was allowed to remain open and functioning according to the 1728 Treaty of Kyatchinsk. A new Church was built and named in honour of the Meeting of our Lord (*Sretenie*). It was agreed that every ten years one Archimandrite, two Hieromonks, two Hierodeacons, two chanters and four theological students would be allowed to come to the mission. All members of the mission would be paid a salary, but no one would be allowed to leave Beijing until his ten-year term was up.

“In 1729, the new Spiritual Mission settled in the diplomatic residence, where it was to remain until 1863, when it returned to its original site. During this long period of more than a century, the mission carried out its work, first under the Diocese of Tobolsk and Irkutsk, and later directly under the Holy Synod...”²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Norman, “The Orthodox Mission to the Chinese”, *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XVIII (2001), no. 1, pp. 29-31.

21. PETER THE GREAT: (3) OPPRESSOR OF THE CHURCH

Perhaps the most important and dangerous influence that Peter had received on his first journey to the West was the counsel he received from the Anglican Bishop Gilbert Burnet. The Tsar and the famous preacher had many long talks, and according to Burnet what interested the Tsar most was his exposition of the “authority that the Christian Emperors assumed in matters of religion and the supremacy of our Kings”. Burnet told the Tsar that “the great and comprehensive rule of all is, that a king should consider himself as exalted by Almighty God into that high dignity as into a capacity of doing much good and of being a great blessing to mankind, and in some sort a god on earth”.²⁹²

Peter certainly came to believe a similar teaching concerning his role as tsar. “By God’s dispensation,” he said, “it has fallen to me to correct both the state and the clergy; I am to them both sovereign and patriarch; they have forgotten that in [pagan] antiquity these [roles] were combined.”²⁹³

Peter learned many useful things on this journey to the West, especially as related to warfare. But in religion the influences were harmful. And many were prepared to condemn his undermining of the foundations of Russian Orthodoxy, inculcating Lutheran ideas. Thus in 1699 or 1700, on a visit to Voronezh, he ordered the bishop of the city, St. Metrophan, to visit him at the palace he had erected on an island in the River Voronezh. “Without delay the holy hierarch set out on foot to go to the tsar. But when he entered the courtyard which led to the palace, he saw that statues of the ancient Greek gods and goddesses had been set up there on the tsar’s order, to serve as architectural adornment. The holy one immediately returned to his residence. The sovereign was apprised of this, but, not knowing the reason why the holy Metrophan had turned back, he sent another messenger to him with orders that he attend upon the sovereign in the palace. But the saintly bishop replied: ‘Until the sovereign commandeth that the idols, which scandalize all the people, be taken away, I cannot set foot in the palace!’ Enraged by the holy hierarch’s reply, the tsar sent him the following message: ‘If he will not come, he shall incur the death sentence for disobedience to the powers that be.’ To this threat the saint replied: ‘The sovereign hath authority over my life, but it is not seemly for a Christian ruler to set up heathen idols and thus lead the hearts of the simple into temptation.’ Towards evening, the tsar suddenly heard the great bell of the cathedral toll, summoning the faithful to church. Since there was no particular feast being celebrated the following day, he sent to ask the bishop why the bell was being rung. ‘Because His Majesty has condemned me to be executed, I, as a sinful man, must bring the Lord God repentance before my death and ask forgiveness of my sins at a general service of prayer, and for this cause I have ordered an all-night vigil to be served.’ When he learned of this, the tsar laughed and straightway

²⁹² James Cracraft, *The Church Reform of Peter the Great*, London: Macmillan, 1971, pp. 37, 35.

²⁹³ It had not always been so. Thus early in his reign, in 1701, he replied to some Catholic Saxons who proposed a union between the Orthodox and Catholic churches: “Sovereigns have rights only over the bodies of their people. Christ is the sovereign of their souls. For such a union, a general consent of the people is necessary and that is in the power of God alone....” (Robert Massie, *Peter the Great*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 345).

commanded that the holy hierarch be told that his sovereign forgave him, and that he cease to alarm the people with the extraordinary tolling. And afterwards, Tsar Peter ordered the statues removed. One should understand that Peter never gave up his innovations, and if in this respect he yielded, it merely demonstrates the great respect he cherished for the bishop of Voronezh..."²⁹⁴

And now he set out gradually to enslave the Church to the power of the State. From 1701 to 1718 he enacted a series of piecemeal measures, but was to some extent inhibited by the resistance of the patriarchal *locum tenens*, Metropolitan Stefan Yavorsky of Ryazan, and of his own son, the Tsarevich Alexis. However, after the execution of the Tsarevich and the effective replacement of Yavorsky by a man more after his reforming heart, Metropolitan Theophan Prokopovich of Pskov, Peter set about a systematic codification and consolidation of his reforms in his *Ecclesiastical Regulation*, published in 1721...

Peter's anti-ecclesiastical reforms began on January 24, 1701, when he ordered the re-opening of the *Monastirskij Prikaz* which Patriarch Nikon had so struggled against. The *Prikaz* was authorized to collect all state taxes and peasant dues from the estates of the Church, as well as purely ecclesiastical emoluments. A large proportion of this sum was then given to the state to help the war-effort against Sweden. In other words, while the Church was not formally dispossessed, the State took complete control over her revenues. St. Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, whose model seminary had to close down as a result, protested: "You want to steal the things of the Church? Ask Heliodorus, Seleucus' treasurer, who wanted to go to Jerusalem to steal the things of the Church. He was beaten by the hands of an angel."²⁹⁵

The Church also lost her judicial independence, her ability to judge her own people in her own courts. The State demanded that clergy be defrocked for transgressing certain state laws. It put limits on the numbers of clergy, and of new church buildings. Monks were confined to their monasteries, no new monasteries could be founded, and the old ones were turned into hospitals and rest-homes for retired soldiers.

"Under Peter", writes Andrew Bessmertny, "a fine for the giving of alms (from 5 to 10 rubles) was introduced, together with corporal punishments followed by cutting out of the nostrils and exile to the galleys 'for the proclamation of visions and miracles'. In 1723 a decree forbidding the tonsuring of monks was issued, with the result that by 1740 Russian monasticism consisted of doddery old men, while

²⁹⁴ "The Life of our Father among the Saints Metrophanes, Bishop of Voronezh", *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XII, N 6, November-December, 1990, p. 16.

²⁹⁵ St. Demetrius, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume I, p. 290. According to Andrew Bessmertny-Anzimirov, Demetrius "was glorified as a fertile church writer, a composer of collections of lives of the saints (the best known was the 'Readings from the Menaion' in four volumes), the author of sermons dramas [e.g. his "Christmas Drama" of 1704] and verses. Academician D. Likhachev considered Demetrius of Rostov to be 'the last writer who had a huge significance for the whole of Orthodox Eastern and Southern Europe'" *Facebook*, December 9, 2017).

the founder of eldership, St. Paisius Velichkovsky, was forced to emigrate to Moldavia. Moreover, in the monasteries they introduced a ban on paper and ink - so as to deprive the traditional centres of book-learning and scholarship of their significance. Processions through the streets with icons and holy water were also banned (almost until the legislation of 1729)! At the same time, there appeared... the government ban on Orthodox transferring to other confessions of faith."²⁹⁶

If Peter was a tyrant, he was nevertheless not a conventional tyrant, but one who genuinely wanted the best for his country, however mistakenly he understood that. And in spite of the drunken orgies in which he mocked her institutions and rites, he did not want to destroy the Church, but only "reform" her.

Some of the "reforms" were harmful, like his allowing mixed marriages. The Holy Synod decreed that the children of these marriages should be Orthodox, which mitigated, but did not remove the harmfulness of the decree. Others were beneficial. Thus the decree that the lower age limit for ordination to the diaconate should be twenty-five, and for the priesthood - thirty, although motivated by a desire to limit the number of persons claiming exemption from military service, especially "ignorant and lazy clergy", nevertheless corresponded to the canonical ages for ordination. Again, his measures ensuring regular attendance at church by laypeople, if heavy-handed, at least demonstrated genuine zeal for the flourishing of Church life. Moreover, he encouraged missionary work, especially in Siberia, where the sees of Tobolsk and Irkutsk were founded and such luminaries as St. John of Tobolsk and St. Innocent of Irkutsk flourished during his reign. And in spite of his own Protestant tendencies, he blessed the publication of some, if not all, books defending the principles of the Orthodox faith against Protestantism.

The most shocking of the State's demands on the Church was that priests break the seal of confession and report on any parishioners who confessed anti-government sentiments and did not repent of them.²⁹⁷

Thus did Peter create a "police state" in which the priests were among the policemen. Now "a 'police state'," writes Fr. Georges Florovsky, "is not only, or even largely, an outward reality, but more an inner reality: it is less a structure than a style of life; not only a political theory, but also a religious condition. 'Policism' represents the urge to build and 'regularize' a country and a people's entire life - the entire life of each individual inhabitant - for the sake of his own and the 'general welfare' or 'common good'. 'Police' pathos, the pathos of order and paternalism, proposes to institute nothing less than universal welfare and well-

²⁹⁶ Bessmertny, "Natsionalizm i Universalizm v russkom religioznom soznanii" ("Nationalism and Universalism in the Russian Religious Consciousness"), in *Na puti k svobode sovesti* (On the Path to Freedom of Conscience), Moscow: Progress, 1989, p. 136.

²⁹⁷ The *ukaz* of May 17, 1722 stated: "If during confession someone discloses to the spiritual father an uncommitted but still intended crime, especially treason of rebellion against the Sovereign or the State, or an evil design against the honour or health of the Sovereign and his Family, and in declaring such evil intent shows that he does not repent of it... then the confessor must not only withhold absolution and remission from the sinner, but must promptly report him to the appropriate place."

being, or, quite simply, universal 'happiness'. [But] guardianship all too quickly becomes transformed into surveillance. Through its own paternalist inspiration, the 'police state' inescapably turns against the church. It also usurps the church's proper function and confers them upon itself. It takes on the undivided care for the people's religious and spiritual welfare."²⁹⁸

Peter's choice to lead his new "reformed" Church, Metropolitan Theophan (Prokopovich), was distinguished by an extreme westernism. Thus he called Germany the mother of all countries and openly expressed his sympathy with the German Lutheran theologians. This attachment to Lutheranism, especially as regards Church-State relations, is evident in his sermons. Thus in his sermon on Palm Sunday, 1718, he said: "Do we not see here [in the story of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem] what honour is paid to the King? Does this not require us not to remain silent about the duty of subjects to esteem the supreme authority, and about the great resistance to this duty that has been exposed in our country at the present time? For we see that not a small part of the people abide in such ignorance that they do not know the Christian doctrine concerning the secular authorities. Nay more, they do not know that the supreme authority is established and armed with the sword by God, and that to oppose it is a sin against God Himself, a sin to be punished by death not temporal but eternal..."

"Christians have to be subject even to perverse and unbelieving rulers. How much more must they be utterly devoted to an Orthodox and just sovereign? For the former are masters, but the latter are also fathers. What am I saying? That our autocrat [Peter], and all autocrats, are fathers. And where else will you find this duty of ours, to honour the authorities sincerely and conscientiously, if not in the commandment: 'Honour thy father!' All the wise teachers affirm this; thus Moses the lawgiver himself instructs us. Moreover the authority of the state is the primary and ultimate degree of fatherhood, for on it depends not a single individual, not one household, but the life, the integrity, and the welfare of the whole great nation."²⁹⁹

Already in a school-book published in 1702 Prokopovich had referred to the emperor as "the rock Peter on whom Christ has built His Church".³⁰⁰ And in another sermon dating from 1718 he "relates Peter, 'the first of the Russian tsars', to his patron saint Peter, 'the first of the apostles'. Like the latter, tsar Peter has an 'apostolic vocation... And what the Lord has commanded your patron and apostle concerning His Church, you are to carry out in the Church of this flourishing empire.' This is a far-reaching theological comparison..."³⁰¹

In July, 1721 Prokopovich published an essay "expressing the view that since Constantine's time the Christian emperors had exercised the powers of a bishop, 'in the sense that they appointed the bishops, who ruled the clergy'. This was, in

²⁹⁸ Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology*, Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1979, p. 115.

²⁹⁹ Prokopovich, in Cracraft, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 58-59.

³⁰⁰ Prokopovich, in Wil van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*, London: SCM Press, 1999, p. 176.

³⁰¹ Prokopovich, in Van den Brecken, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

short, a justification of Peter's assumption of complete jurisdiction over the government of the church; for a 'Christian sovereign', Prokopovich concluded in a celebrated definition of the term, is empowered to nominate not only bishops, 'but the bishop of bishops, because the Sovereign is the supreme authority, the perfect, ultimate, and authentic supervisor; that is, he holds supreme judicial and executive power over all the ranks and authorities subject to him, whether secular or ecclesiastical'. 'Patriarchalism [*patriarshestvo*]' - the belief that a patriarch should rule the autocephalous Russian church - Prokopovich equated with 'papalism', and dismissed it accordingly."³⁰²

The notion that not the Patriarch, but only the Tsar, was the father of the people was developed by Prokopovich in his *Primer*, which consisted of an exposition of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes: "Question. What is ordained by God in the fifth commandment ['Honour thy father and thy mother']? Answer: To honour all those who are as fathers and mothers to us. But it is not only parents who are referred to here, but others who exercise paternal authority over us. Question: Who are such persons? Answer: The first order of such persons are the supreme authorities instituted by God to rule the people, of whom the highest authority is the Tsar. It is the duty of kings to protect their subjects and to seek what is best for them, whether in religious matters or in the things of this world; and therefore they must watch over all the ecclesiastical, military, and civil authorities subject to them and conscientiously see that they discharge their respective duties. That is, under God, the highest paternal dignity; and subjects, like good sons, must honour the Tsar. [The second order of persons enjoying paternal authority are] the supreme rulers of the people who are subordinate to the Tsar, namely: the ecclesiastical pastors, the senators, the judges, and all other civil and military authorities."³⁰³

As Cracraft justly observes, "the things of God, the people were being taught by Prokopovich, were the things of Caesar, and vice-versa: the two could not be distinguished."³⁰⁴

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With Prokopovich as his main assistant, Peter now proceeded to the crown of his caesaropapist legislation, his *Ecclesiastical Regulation* of 1721, which established an "Ecclesiastical College" in parallel with nine secular Colleges, or Ministries, to replace the old patriarchal system. The *Regulation* was signed by the Senate, six bishops in St. Petersburg, and others in Moscow, Kazan and Vologda. Only the *locum tenens* Stefan Yavorsky demurred but he, too, signed in the end.

Instead of the patriarchate Peter established "the Most Holy Governing Synod". As M.A. Babkin says, "From 1723, the Synod was called 'His Holiness' and 'Governing'. The first of these titles pointed to the equality of the Synod with the

³⁰² Cracraft, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

³⁰³ Prokopovich, in Cracraft, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

³⁰⁴ Cracraft, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

Eastern patriarchs, and the second to the independence of the Synod from the Governing Senate, to which all colleges were subordinate (from 1802 they became known as ministries). That is, by its status, the Synod was not equated to the college, but to the Senate. If the Senate acted in the civil administration field, the Synod in that of the spiritual. Moreover, the buildings of the Senate and the Synod, located on Senate Square in St. Petersburg, were a single whole, connected by a triumphal arch, and surmounted by the imperial crown.

“The activity of the Synod was controlled by a secular person appointed by the emperor – chief prosecutor of the Holy Synod, who was the official representative of the authority of His Majesty. The chief prosecutor was responsible for protecting state interests in the field of church administration, as well as overseeing the governing bodies of the Orthodox Church in the centre and in the localities: the Synod and the spiritual consistories, respectively.”³⁰⁵

In abolishing the patriarchate Peter followed Thomas Hobbes: “Temporal and spiritual are two words brought into the world to make men see double, and mistake their lawful sovereign... A man cannot obey two masters... He who is chief ruler in any Christian state is also chief pastor, and the rest of the pastors are created by his authority”.³⁰⁶ Similarly, according to Peter and Prokopovich, the chief ruler was empowered to nominate not only bishops, “but the bishop of bishops [i.e. the patriarch], because the Sovereign is the supreme authority, the perfect, ultimate, and authentic supervisor; that is, he holds supreme judicial and executive power over all the ranks and authorities subject to him, whether secular or ecclesiastical”.

And so: “The fatherland,’ intoned the *Regulation*, ‘need not fear from an administrative council [the Ecclesiastical College] the sedition and disorders that proceed from the personal rule of a single church ruler. For the common folk do not perceive how different is the ecclesiastical power from that of the Autocrat, but dazzled by the great honour and glory of the Supreme Pastor [the patriarch], they think him a kind of second Sovereign, equal to or even greater than the Autocrat himself, and imagine that the ecclesiastical order is another and better state.

“Thus the people are accustomed to reason among themselves, a situation in which the tares of the seditious talk of ambitious clerics multiply and act as sparks which set dry twigs ablaze. Simple hearts are perverted by these ideas, so that in some matters they look not so much to their Autocrat as to the Supreme Pastor. And when they hear of a dispute between the two, they blindly and stupidly take sides with the ecclesiastical ruler, rather than with the secular ruler, and dare to conspire and rebel against the latter. The accursed ones deceive themselves into thinking that they are fighting for God Himself, that they do not defile but hallow their hands even when they resort to bloodshed. Criminal and dishonest persons are pleased to discover such ideas among the people: when they learn of a quarrel between their Sovereign and the Pastor, because of their animosity towards the

³⁰⁵ Babkin, interview given to media outlet “MK” (St. Petersburg).

³⁰⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, 161.

former they seize on the chance to make good their malice, and under pretence of religious zeal do not hesitate to take up arms against the Lord's Anointed; and to this iniquity they incite the common folk as if to the work of God. And what if the Pastor himself, inflated by such lofty opinions of his office, will not keep quiet? It is difficult to relate how great are the calamities that thereby ensue.

"These are not our inventions: would to God that they were. But in fact this has more than once occurred in many states. Let us investigate the history of Constantinople since Justinian's time, and we shall discover much of this. Indeed the Pope by this very means achieved so great a pre-eminence, and not only completely disrupted the Roman Empire, while usurping a great part of it for himself, but more than once has profoundly shaken other states and almost completely destroyed them. Let us not recall similar threats which have occurred among us.

"In an ecclesiastical administrative council there is no room for such mischief. For here the president himself enjoys neither the great glory which amazes the people, nor excessive lustre; there can be no lofty opinion of him; nor can flatterers exalt him with inordinate praises, because what is done well by such an administrative council cannot possibly be ascribed to the president alone... Moreover, when the people see that this administrative council has been established by decree of the Monarch with the concurrence of the Senate, they will remain meek, and put away any hope of receiving aid in their rebellions from the ecclesiastical order."³⁰⁷

Thus the purely imaginary threat of a papist revolution in Russia was invoked to carry out a revolution in Church-State relations along Protestant lines. The Catholic threat was already receding in Peter's time, although the Jesuits continued to make strenuous efforts to bring Russia into the Catholic fold. The real threat came from the Protestant monarchies, where caesaropapism was an article of faith.

Swedish and Prussian practice were the main models for the *Ecclesiastical Regulation*. But the original ideas had come during Peter's earlier visit to England and Holland. And not only from Bishop Burnet. Thus, according to A.P. Dobroklonsky, "they say that in Holland William of Orange [who was also king of England] advised him to make himself 'head of religion', so as to become the complete master in his state."³⁰⁸

The full extent of the Peter's Protestantization of the Church administration was revealed by the oath that the clerics appointed to the Ecclesiastical College were required to swear: "I acknowledge on oath that the Supreme Judge [*Krainij Sud'ia*] of this Ecclesiastical College is the Monarch of All Russia himself, our Most Gracious Sovereign". And they promised "to defend unsparingly all the powers, rights, and prerogatives belonging to the High Autocracy of His Majesty" and his "august and lawful successors".

³⁰⁷ Cracroft, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155; Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, pp. 229-230.

³⁰⁸ Dobroklonsky, in Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

The Church historian, Igor Smolitsch, called this the capitulation document of the Russian Church.³⁰⁹ Certainly, no Christian can recognize any mortal man as his supreme judge in the literal sense, and its evil fruits were very soon evident. Thus Tikhomirov writes: "In the first decade after the establishment of the Synod most of the Russian bishops were in prison, defrocked, beaten with whips, etc. I checked this from the lists of bishops in the indicated work of Dobroklonsky. In the history of the Constantinopolitan Church after the Turkish conquest we do not find a single period when there was such devastation wrought among the bishops and such lack of ceremony in relation to Church property."³¹⁰

The Tsar henceforth took the place of the Patriarch – or rather, of the Pope, for he consulted with his bishops much less even than a Patriarch is obliged to with his bishops. Thus, as Uspensky relates, "the bishops on entering the Emperor's palace had to leave behind their hierarchical staffs... The significance of this fact becomes comprehensible if it is borne in mind that according to a decree of the Council of 1675 hierarchs left their staffs behind when concelebrating with the Patriarch... Leaving behind the staff clearly signified hierarchical dependence..."³¹¹

Again, as Bishop Nikodem of Yeniseisk (+1874) put it: "The Synod, according to Peter's idea, is a political-ecclesiastical institution parallel to every other State institution and for that reason under the complete supreme commanding supervision of his Majesty. The idea is from the Reformation, and is inapplicable to Orthodoxy; it is false. The Church is her own Queen. Her Head is Christ our God. Her law is the Gospel..." Bishop Nikodem went on to say that in worldly matters the Tsar was the supreme power, but "in spiritual matters his Majesty is a son of the Church" and therefore subject to the authority of the Church.³¹²

"In Byzantium," writes Hosking, "the monarch's adherence to divine law was guaranteed by the patriarch. Now in Russia, with one pillar of the Byzantine 'symphony' removed, the monarch himself became the guarantor. One might read into that state of affairs the corollary that the monarch's authority was not limited by God's law, since it was itself an *expression* of God's law."³¹³

Zyzykin writes: "Basing the unlimitedness of his power in *Pravda Voli Monarshej* on Hobbes' theory, and removing the bounds placed on this power by the Church, he changed the basis of the power, placing it on the human base of a contract and thereby subjecting it to all those waverings to which every human establishment is subject; following Hobbes, he arbitrarily appropriated ecclesiastical power to himself; through the 'de-enchurchment' of the institution of royal power the latter lost its stability and the inviolability which is proper to an ecclesiastical institution. It is only by this de-enchurchment that one can explain the possibility of the

³⁰⁹ Smolitsch, *Geschichte der russischen Kirche 1700-1917*, vol. I, Leiden, 1964, p. 106.

³¹⁰ Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

³¹¹ Uspensky, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume 1, p. 297.

³¹² Bishop Nicodemus, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, volume I, p. 296.

³¹³ Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 199.

demand for the abdication of the Tsar from his throne without the participation of the Church in 1917. The beginning of this ideological undermining of royal power was laid through the basing of the unlimitedness of royal power in *Pravda Voli Monarshej* in accordance with Hobbes, who in the last analysis confirmed it on the basis, not of the Divine call, but of the sovereignty of the people...³¹⁴

L.A. Tikhomirov writes: "This *Pravda* affirms that Russian subjects first had to conclude a contract amongst themselves, and then the people 'by its own will abdicated and gave it [power] to the monarch.' At this point it is explained that the sovereign can by law command his people to do not only anything that is to his benefit, but also simply anything that he wants. This interpretation of Russian monarchical power entered, alas, as an official act into the complete collection of laws, where it figures under No. 4888 in volume VII.

"... In the *Ecclesiastical Regulation* it is explained that 'conciliar government is the most perfect and better than one-man rule' since, on the one hand, 'truth is more certainly sought out by a conciliar association than by one man', and on the other hand, 'a conciliar sentence more strongly inclines towards assurance and obedience than one man's command'... Of course, Theophan forced Peter to say all this to his subjects in order to destroy the patriarchate, but these positions are advanced as a general principle. If we were to believe these declarations, then the people need only ask itself: why do I have to 'renounce my own will' if 'conciliar government is better than one-man rule and if 'a conciliar sentence' elicits greater trust and obedience than one man's command?

"It is evident that nothing of the sort could have been written if there had been even the smallest clarity of monarchical consciousness. Peter's era in this respect constitutes a huge regression by comparison with the Muscovite monarchy."³¹⁵

Thus did Peter the Great, "a Sun King of the steppe",³¹⁶ destroy the traditional pattern of Church-State relations that had characterized Russian history since the time of St. Vladimir. Not until the reign of Nicholas II did the Church regain something like her former freedom. As Karamzin put it, under Peter "we became citizens of the world, but ceased to be, in some cases, citizens of Russia."³¹⁷

If we compare Peter I with another great and terrible tsar, Ivan IV, we see striking similarities. Both tsars were completely legitimate, anointed rulers. Both suffered much from relatives in their childhood; both killed their own sons and displayed pathological cruelty and blasphemy. Both were great warriors who defeated Russia's enemies and expanded the bounds of the kingdom. Both began by honouring the Church and ended by attempting to bend her completely to their will... There is one very important difference, however. While Ivan never attempted to impose a caesaropapist constitution on the Church, Peter did just that.

³¹⁴ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, p. 239.

³¹⁵ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 302-303.

³¹⁶ Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 196.

³¹⁷ Karamzin, in Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

The result was that Ivan's caesaropapism disappeared after his death, whereas Peter's lasted for another 200 years...

*

So can we count Peter as an Orthodox Tsar?

He always claimed to be Orthodox, and his seeking the advice of the Eastern Patriarchs certainly indicates a certain reverence for the Church. And he sincerely believed himself to be, as he once wrote to the Eastern patriarchs, "a devoted son of our Most Beloved Mother the Orthodox Church".³¹⁸

And yet his attitude to the faith was complex: while claiming to defend it both at home and abroad, he also felt the need to *mock* it and humiliate its servants. We see an early instance of this mockery in the manner in which the priests of the *Streltsy* rebellion of 1698 were executed. For "for the regimental priests who had encouraged the *Streltsy*, a gibbet constructed in the shape of a cross was erected in front of St. Basil's Cathedral. The priests were hanged by the court jester, dressed for the occasion in clerical robes..."³¹⁹ Peter had a deplorable tendency to mock the rites of the Church, which led many simple believers to see him as the Antichrist...

Like almost all absolutist despots, Peter was cruel. 80,000 labourers were used to build St. Petersburg, many of whom died in its cold marshland. Peter even killed his own son, the Tsarevich Alexis. For the Tsarevich had supposedly betrayed him and represented a political threat. But he may have been more than a purely political threat: Alexis represented a focus around which there gathered all those who loved the old traditions of Holy Rus' and hoped for their restoration. In killing him, therefore, Peter was striking a blow at the whole Orthodox way of life, and declaring, as it were, that there was no going back to the old ways. Exactly two centuries later, in 1918, the Bolsheviks would do the same, and for the same reasons, to Tsar Nicholas II...

Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: "Peter I's persecution of his own son, ending with the secret killing of the latter, was in essence the persecution of immemorial Great Russia, which did not want to change its nature, to be reborn according to the will of the monarch into something complete opposite to it. It was not by chance that the characteristics of the personality of the Tsarevich Alexis Petrovich mirrored so well the characteristics of the personality of the major part of Russia. In this major part the Tsar continued to be venerated, in spite of everything, as 'the Anointed of God', whom it was necessary to obey in everything except in matters of the faith, if he began to break or destroy its root foundations. Peter could not directly and openly war against this Great Russia (that is, with the majority of his people). Therefore he went on the path of slander (that his actions were opposed, supposedly, only by sluggards or traitors) and the hidden, as it were secret suffocation of everything whose root and core was Holy Rus', Orthodox Rus'. On

³¹⁸ Cracraft, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

³¹⁹ Massie, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

this path Peter was ineluctably forced to resort to one very terrible means: to cover his deliberately anti-God, dishonourable, if not simply criminal actions with pious words, using the name of God and other holy names, excerpts from the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, false oaths, etc. – or in other words, to act under the mask of Orthodox piety. Such had happened in earlier history and especially, as we remember, in the form of the actions of the ‘Judaizing’ heretics, Ivan IV and Boris Godunov. But from Peter I it becomes as it were a certain norm, a kind of rule for rulers that did not require explanation...”³²⁰

In part, Peter’s cruelty can be explained and forgiven him as being the pathological result of a very difficult and insecure childhood. As Montefiore writes, “like other practitioners of political autocracy [i.e. absolutism], such as Tsar Ivan the Terrible and King Louis XIV, his early years were dangerous and uncertain, overshadowed by terrifying coups and intrigues.”³²¹ But this can only be a partial explanation. Neither childhood suffering nor military necessity can explain or condone Peter’s attempt to overthrow the foundations of Holy Russia and mock what was most sacred to the Orthodox people. He was, formally speaking, an Orthodox tsar, and he did much that was good for the Orthodox commonwealth, for whose prosperity he sincerely and passionately cared. But there was also in him an antichristian principle.

A more merciful descendant of his, Tsar Nicholas II, expressed this duality in his estimate of the great Peter: “Of course, I recognize that my famous ancestor had many merits, but I must admit that I would be insincere if I repeated your raptures. This is the ancestor whom I love less than others because of his obsession with western culture and his trampling on all purely Russian customs. One must not impose foreign things immediately, without reworking them. Perhaps this time it was necessary as a transitional period, but I do not sympathize with it.”

The monarchist L.A. Tikhomirov wrote: “It would be superfluous to repeat that in his fundamental task Peter the Great was without question right and was a great Russian man. He understood that as a monarch, as the bearer of the duties of the tsar, he was obliged dauntlessly to take upon his shoulders a heavy task: that of leading Russia as quickly as possible to a complete as possible a mastery of all the means of European culture. For Russia this was a ‘to be or not be’ question. It is terrible even to think what would have been the case if we had not caught up with Europe before the end of the 18th century. Under the Petrine reforms we fell into a slavery to foreigners which has lasted to the present day, but without this reform, of course, we would have lost our national existence if we had lived in our barbaric powerlessness until the time of Frederick the Great, the French Revolution and the era of Europe’s economic conquest of the whole world. With an iron hand Peter forced Russia to learn and work – he was, of course, the saviour of the whole future of the nation.

³²⁰ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 194.

³²¹ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

“Peter was also right in his coercive measures. In general Russia had for a long time been striving for science, but with insufficient ardour. Moreover, she was so backward, such terrible labour was set before her in order to catch up with Europe, that the whole nation could not have done it voluntarily. Peter was undoubtedly right, and deserved the eternal gratitude of the fatherland for using the whole of his royal authority and power to create the cruellest dictatorship and move the country forward by force, enslaving the whole nation, because of the weakness of her resources, to serve the aims of the state. There was no other way to save Russia [!]

“But Peter was right only for himself, for his time and for his work. However, when this system of enslaving the people to the state is elevated into a principle, it becomes murderous for the nation, it destroys all the sources of the people’s independent life. But Peter indicated no limits to the general enserfment to the state, he undertook no measures to ensure that a temporary system should not become permanent, he even took no measures to ensure that enserfed Russia did not fall into the hands of foreigners, as happened immediately after his death.”³²²

While admitting the useful things that Peter accomplished, Archpriest Lev Lebedev comes to a different and much darker conclusion: “We are familiar with the words that Peter ‘broke through a window into Europe’. But no! He ‘broke through a window’ into Russia for Europe, or rather, opened the gates of the fortress of the soul of Great Russia for the invasion into it of the hostile spiritual forces of ‘the dark West’. Many actions of this reformer, for example, the building of the fleet, the building of St. Petersburg, of the first factories, were accompanied by unjustified cruelties and merciless dealing with his own people. The historians who praise Peter either do not mention this, or speak only obliquely about it, and with justification, so as not to deprive their idol of the aura of ‘the Father of the Fatherland’ and the title ‘Great’. For the Fatherland Peter I was the same kind of ‘father’ as he was for his own son the Tsarevich Alexis, whom he ordered to be killed – in essence, only because Alexis did not agree with his father’s destructive reforms for the Fatherland. That means that Peter I did not at all love Russia and did not care for her glory. He loved his own idea of the transformation of Russia and the glory of the successes precisely of this idea, and not of the Homeland, not of the people as it then was, especially in its best and highest state – the state of Holy Rus’.

“Peter was possessed by ideas that were destructive for the Great Russian soul and life. It is impossible to explain this only by his delectation for all things European. Here we may see the influence of his initiation into the teaching of evil [Masonry?] that he voluntarily accepted in the West. Only a person who had become in spirit not Russian could so hate the most valuable and important thing in Great Russia – the Orthodox spiritual foundations of her many-centuried life. Therefore if we noted earlier that under Peter the monarchy ceased to be Orthodox and Autocratic, now we must say that in many ways it ceased to be Russian or Great Russian. Then we shall see how the revolutionary Bolshevik and bloody

³²² Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-296.

tyrant Stalin venerated Peter I and Ivan IV. Only these two Autocrats were venerated in Soviet times by the communists – the fighters against autocracy... Now we can understand why they were venerated – for the antichristian and anti-Russian essence of their actions and transformations!

“Investigators both for and against Peter I are nevertheless unanimous in one thing: those transformations in the army, fleet, state administration, industry, etc. that were useful to Russia could not have been introduced (even with the use of western models) without breaking the root spiritual foundations of the life of Great Russia as they had been formed up to Peter...”³²³

And yet there is one investigator, who disagrees with this last judgement, Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev): “There is no doubt that it would have been possible to plant European knowledge of a technical and general educational character in the Russian people without breaking the Orthodox faith...”³²⁴

Certainly, there were many in Peter’s reign who were prepared to pay with their lives for their confession that he was, if not the Antichrist, at any rate a forerunner of the Antichrist...

And yet the consensus was that Peter was not the Antichrist. The Church prayed for him and anathematized his enemies, even when they were Orthodox, like the Ukrainian Hetman Mazeppa, who deserted to the Swedish King Charles XII.³²⁵

Archbishop Nathaniel of Vienna poses the question: “Why, in the course of two centuries, have we all, both those who are positively disposed and those who are negatively disposed towards Peter, not considered him as the Antichrist? Why, next to the pious rebukers of Peter, could there be pious, very pious venerators of him? Why could St. Metrophan of Voronezh, who fearlessly rebuked Peter’s comparatively innocent attraction to Greek-Roman statues in imitation of the Europeans, nevertheless sincerely and touchingly love the blasphemous-tsar and enjoy his love and respect in return? Why could Saints Demetrius of Rostov and Innocent of Irkutsk love him (the latter, as ‘over-hieromonk’ of the fleet, had close relations with him)? Why did the most ardent and conscious contemporary opponent of Peter’s reforms, the *locum tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Stefan Yavorsky, who struggled with Peter’s anti-ecclesiastical reforms and was persecuted and constrained by him for that, nevertheless not only not recognize Peter as the Antichrist, but also wrote a book refuting such an opinion? Why in general did the Church, which has always put forward from its midst holy fighters against all antichristian phenomena contemporary to it, however much these phenomena may have been supported by the bearers of supreme power, - the Church which later, under Catherine II, put forward against her far more restrained, veiled and far less far-reaching anti-ecclesiastical reforms such uncompromising fighters as Metropolitans Arseny (Matseyevich) and Paul

³²³ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

³²⁴ Sobolev, *Russkaia Ideologia* (The Russian Ideology), St. Petersburg, 1992, p. 18.

³²⁵ Massie, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

(Konyuskevich) – why, under the Emperor Peter, did the Church not put forward against him one holy man, recognized as such, not one rebuker authorized by Her? Why did our best Church thinker, who understood the tragedy of the fall of Holy Rus' with the greatest clarity and fullness, A.S. Khomiakov, confess that that in Peter's reforms, 'sensing in them the fruit of pride, the intoxication of earthly wisdom, we have renounced all our holy things that our native to the heart', why could he nevertheless calmly and in a spirit of sober goodwill say of Peter: 'Many mistakes darken the glory of the Transformer of Russia, but to him remains the glory of pushing her forward to strength and a consciousness of her strength'?

“And finally, the most important question: why is not only Russia, but the whole of the rest of the world, in which by that time the terrible process of apostasy from God had already been taking place for centuries, obliged precisely to Peter for the fact that this process was stopped by the mighty hand of Russia for more than 200 years? After all, when we rightly and with reason refer the words of the Apostle Paul: 'The mystery of lawlessness is already working, only it will not be completed until he who now restrains is removed from the midst' to the Russian tsars, we think mainly of the Russian [Petersburg] emperors, and not of the Muscovite tsars.³²⁶ These comparatively weak, exotic rulers, to whom the world outside their immediate dominions related in approximately the way that, in later times, they related to the Neguses and Negestas of Abyssinia, could not be the restrainers of the world. Consequently Peter was simultaneously both the Antichrist and the Restrainer of the Antichrist. But if that is the case, then the whole exceptional nature of Peter's spiritual standing disappears, because Christ and Antichrist, God and the devil fight with each other in every human soul, for every human soul, and in this case Peter turned out to be only more gifted than the ordinary man, a historical personality who was both good and evil, but always powerful, elementally strong. Both the enemies and the friends of Peter will agree with this characterization...”³²⁷

So Peter, according to this view, was at the same time both persecutor and protector of the Church, both a forerunner of the Antichrist and the Restrainer of his coming. Such a view is supported by Engels' remark: “Not one revolution in Europe and in the whole world can attain final victory while the present Russian state exists.”³²⁸ Peter, the founder of Great Russia did great harm to the Church, Holy Rus', but he also effectively defended her against her external enemies, supported her missionary work in Siberia and the East, and made it possible for

³²⁶ Thus Sophia, Elector of Hanover, recognized in Peter “a very extraordinary man... at once very good and very bad” (Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 86).

³²⁷ Archbishop Nathaniel (Lvov), “O Petre Velikom” (“On Peter the Great”), *Epokha* (The Epoch), N 10, 2000, N 1, pp. 35-36. Unlike several Byzantine emperors, he refused a unia with Rome. Thus he once attended a Catholic mass in Poland, and “his interest in the service prompted his Catholic hosts to propose a union of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, but Peter replied, ‘Sovereigns have rights only over the bodies of their people. Christ is the sovereign of their souls. For such a union, a general consent of the people is necessary and that is in the power of God alone’” (Massie, *op. cit.*, p. 345).

³²⁸ Engels, “Karl Marx and the revolutionary movement in Russia”.

her to survive as a great power for another two centuries, until the seeds produced their most evil fruit in 1917...

Did Peter repent of his anti-Church acts? It is impossible to say. But we know that at the end of his life "he confessed and received communion three times; while receiving holy unction, he displayed great compunction of soul and several times repeated: 'I believe, I hope!'..."³²⁹

This gives us, too, reason to hope and believe in his salvation.

Another reason for hope is the appearance of his old friend and foe, St. Metrophan, to one of his venerators and the words he then said: "If you want to be pleasing to me, pray for the peace of the soul of the Emperor Peter the Great..."³³⁰

³²⁹ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 140. See also "Smert' Imperatora Petra I kak obrazets khristianskoj konchiny" ("The Death of Peter I as a Model of Christian Death"), *Svecha Pokaiania* (The Candle of Repentance), N 1, March, 1999, pp. 6-7.

³³⁰ "Smert' Imperatora Petra I", *op. cit.*, p. 7.

III. WEST: THE AGE OF VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU

22. FRANCE'S RADICAL ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment may be described as the attempt to extend the scientific method from inanimate objects, the subject of physics and chemistry, to animate ones, and in particular to man and society. As such, the Enlightenment was necessarily anti-traditional. Thus Jesse Norman writes, "if science was now the true canon of enquiry, then tradition started to look irrelevant, for what evidential weight could tradition ever have? If nature and human history were to be judged by individual reason alone, then surely scriptural, ecclesiastical and political authority must also be judged by reason alone, and yield to individual rights? If Cartesian doubt was the order of the day then what role could there be for God and faith? Aristocratic privilege? Monarchy? Across all Europe, from Spinoza to Montesquieu to Bayle to the *philosophes* Voltaire, d'Alembert and Diderot, to David Hume and Adam Ferguson and Edward Gibbon, different thinkers began to explore the possibilities.

"These were highly unsettling developments. In Britain the official reaction was in many ways a relatively calm one, for in the early eighteenth century Britain was becoming a beacon of tolerance and openness to the rest of Europe. Voltaire's *Philosophical Letters* of 1733, written after a two-year period of exile in Britain, celebrated the British constitution, which had imposed limits on monarchical power and give the people a share of government. The British were often rather coarse and vulgar, but Britain was a place where property could not be seized without due process, and private individuals enjoyed wide freedoms of thought and expression. The contrast with the autocratic and personal monarchy of the Bourbons, the intolerance of the Church hierarchy and the political weakness of the Parlement was evident, and Voltaire's book unleashed a wave of 'Anglomania' in France..."³³¹

In spite of its intellectual debt to the English Enlightenment, the French Enlightenment was a very different creature. Unlike the English, the French Protestants and intellectuals were not free. The English had already spent their revolutionary fervour: the French revolution was still to come... Therefore the ideas of the English Enlightenment, popularized for a French audience by Voltaire in his *Letters on the English* and *Elements of Newton's Physics*, and by Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws*, acquired an altogether sharper, more revolutionary edge. English empirical science, English constitutional monarchy and English laissez-faire economics, all blessed by the spirit of toleration, were transformed in French minds into something supremely intolerant - but not yet...

The three tolerances of the English together became the single French cult of *reason*, a fiercely intolerant revolt against all revealed religion. For, as Sir Isaiah Berlin writes, the French *philosophes* were perceived to be "the first organised adversaries of dogmatism, traditionalism, religion, superstition, ignorance, oppression."³³² All in the name of reason.

³³¹ Norman, *Edmund Burke*, London: William Collins, 2013, pp. 185-186.

³³² Berlin, "My Intellectual Path", in *The Power of Ideas*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2000, p. 4.

However, “reason” for the French *philosophes* was something much more down-to-earth and utilitarian than the “reason” of the Greek pagan philosophers or the Holy Fathers. The Greek equivalent of “reason” in the Enlightenment sense was not *logos* or *nous* – that is, something very lofty, the very essence of man’s spiritual nature – but *dianoia*, the ratiocinative faculty. Reason for them was “not man’s mind as such,” writes Gerald Cragg, “but the way in which his rational faculties could be used to achieve certain specific ends. Descartes had relied on deduction; Newton had used inductive analysis in penetrating to the great secret of nature’s marvellous laws, and the spirit and method of Newtonian physics ruled the eighteenth century. Nature was invested with unparalleled authority, and it was assumed that natural law ruled every area into which the mind of man could penetrate. Nature was the test of truth. Man’s ideas and his institutions were judged by their conformity with those laws which, said Voltaire, ‘nature reveals at all times, to all men’. The principles which Newton had found in the physical universe could surely be applied in every field of inquiry. The age was enchanted with the orderly and rational structure of nature; by an easy transition that the reasonable and the natural must be synonymous. Nature was everywhere supreme, and virtue, truth, and reason were her ‘adorable daughters’. The effect of this approach was apparent in every sphere. In France history, politics, and economics became a kind of ‘social physics’. The new outlook can be seen in Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws*; thenceforth the study of man’s institutions became a prolongation of natural science. The emphasis fell increasingly on the practical consequences of knowledge... man is endowed with reason, said Voltaire, ‘not that he may penetrate the divine essence but that he may live well in this world’.”³³³

Voltaire was “France’s greatest writer, the confidant and adversary of kings, a man feared and admired in equal measure for the incomparable brilliance of his wit... Voltaire, a gaunt, short man with a wide, mocking smile, had something of the look of a devil. His grin, though, was only the half of it. Even more shocking to devout opinion – Protestant no less than Catholic – was the dawning realisation that Europe’s most celebrated writer, a man whom even his enemies could not help but admire, viewed Christianity with a hatred that bordered on fixation. For decades he had veiled it, knowing just how far he could go, skilful like no other in deploying irony, the private joke, the knowing wink.... Anonymously though he continued to publish his more shocking pasquinades, and publicly though he continued to insist on his membership of the Catholic Church, nobody was fooled. The deftness with which he mocked Christians for their god who could be eaten in a morsel of pastry, their scriptures rife with the most glaring contradictions and idiocies, their inquisitions, and scaffolds, and internecine wars, was too recognisably the work of Voltaire to be mistaken for that of anyone else. When he publicly called for ‘*infâme* – ‘the abomination’ – to be smashed, he did not need to specify his target...”³³⁴

³³³ Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason*, London: Penguin, 1970, pp. 235-236.

³³⁴ Tom Holland, *Dominion*, London: Abacus, 2019, pp. 373-374.

Nevertheless, the rabidly anti-Christian Voltaire's role-model was moderate, gentlemanly England. "Voltaire's admiration for the constitutional monarchy of English politics, as opposed to the tyrannical absolutism of the French monarchy (this was in the years between the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England, which gave Parliament power over the monarch, and the French Revolution), was linked in his mind to the experimental method of the Royal Society, and therefore of Bacon. Voltaire saw England as a country where freedom of thought was nourished, and he saw this as another outcome of the Baconian rejection of the *esprit de système* (the 'spirit of philosophical systems', which he saw as enslaving French minds) and all ideological authority."³³⁵

Hardly less admirable in Voltaire's eyes than English politics was English laissez-faire economics. "In *Les Lettres Philosophiques*, which was informed by a long stay in England, he argued that commerce was what made the English citizen free, and lauded the readiness of younger sons of peers of the realm to go into business. This he contrasted unfavourably with France in a rhetorical question loaded with irony: 'I do not know... which man is more useful to a State, a well powdered Lord who knows the precise hour at which the King rises and goes to bed, and who puts on grand airs as he plays the role of slave in the antechamber of a Minister, or a Businessman who enriches his country, gives orders from his office in Surat and Cairo, and contributes to the happiness of the world.' Voltaire also believed that economic self-interest was a less dangerous motive than religious zealotry. A flavour of the argument can be gleaned from his verdict on the Royal Exchange, the predecessor of the London Stock Exchange: 'Come into the London Exchange, a Place more respectable than many a Court. You will see assembled there representatives of every Nation for the benefit of mankind. Here, the Jew, the Mahometan and the Christian deal with one another as if they were the same Religion and reserve the name 'infidel' for those who go bankrupt. Here the Presbyterian puts his trust in the Anabaptist, and the Anglican accepts the Quaker's promissory note. On leaving these peaceful and free assemblies, some go to the Synagogue, others go for a drink; another goes to have himself baptised in a large tub in the name of the Father through the Son to the Holy Ghost; words muttered over the Infant that he doesn't understand at all; some others go to their Church to await the inspiration of God with their hat on their head. And all are content.' Voltaire's brilliant inversion of traditional assumptions about religion and money – and this was very grubby money since exchanges were then regarded as thoroughly disreputable – was on a par with Mandeville's in *The Fable of the Bees*. It was also a case of exaggerating to make a point. Despite their commercial inclination, the English still managed to look down on people who were 'in trade' – those only of the anti-trade snobbery that permeates the otherwise highly money-conscious novels of Jane Austen. Yet the point was still a good one to lob at the ruling class of Voltaire's more sclerotic homeland and at those, like his contemporary Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who thought that the pursuit of material gain led to moral impoverishment..."³³⁶

³³⁵ Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

³³⁶ Plender, *op. cit.* pp. 12-13.

Another important product of the French Enlightenment was Claude Helvétius' *On the Spirit* (1758). "It is known", writes Richard Pipes, "that Helvétius studied intensely the philosophical writings of Locke and was deeply affected by them. He accepted as proven Locke's contention that all ideas were the product of sensations and all knowledge the result of man's ability, through reflection on sensory data, to grasp the differences and similarities that are the basis of thought. He denied as categorically as did Locke man's ability to direct thinking or the actions resulting from it: for Helvétius, his biographer [Keim] says, 'a philosophical treatise on liberty [was] a treatise on effects without a cause.' Moral notions derived exclusively from man's experience with the sensations of pain and pleasure. People thus were neither 'good' nor 'bad': they merely acted, involuntarily and mechanically, in their self-interest, which dictated the avoidance of pain and the enhancement of pleasure.

"Up to this point Helvétius said nothing that had not been said previously by Locke and his French followers. But then he made a startling leap from philosophy into politics. From the premise that all knowledge and all values were by-products of sensory experience he drew the inference that by controlling the data that the senses fed to the mind – that is, by appropriately shaping man's environment – it was possible to determine what he thought and how he behaved. Since, according to Locke, the formulation of idea was wholly involuntary and entirely shaped by physical sensations, it followed that if man were subjected to impressions that made for virtue, he could be made virtuous through no act of his own will.

"This idea provides the key to the creation of perfectly virtuous human beings – required are only appropriate external influences. Helvétius called the process of educating man 'education', by which he meant much more than formal schooling. When he wrote 'l'éducation peut tout' – 'education can do anything' – he meant by education everything that surrounds man and affects his thinking, everything which furnishes his mind with sensations and generates ideas. First and foremost, it meant legislation: 'It is... only by good laws that we can form virtuous men'. From which it followed that morality and legislation were 'one and the same science'. In the concluding chapter of *L'Esprit*, Helvétius spoke of the desirability of reforming society through legislation for the purpose of making men 'virtuous'.

"This is one of the most revolutionary ideas in the history of political thought: by extrapolation from an esoteric theory of knowledge, a new political theory is born with the most momentous practical implications. Its central thesis holds that the task of politics is to make men 'virtuous', and that the means to that end is the manipulation of man's social and political environment, to be accomplished mainly by means of legislation, that is, by the state. Helvétius elevates the legislator to the status of the supreme moralist. He must have been aware of the implications of his theory for he spoke of the 'art of forming man' as intimately connected with the 'form of government'. Man no longer is God's creation: he is his own product. Society, too, is a 'product' rather than a given or 'datum'. Good government not only ensures 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' (a formula which

Helvétius seems to have devised), but it literally refashions man. The logic of Helvétius's ideas inexorably leads to the conclusion that in the course of learning about human nature man 'acquires an unlimited power of transforming and reshaping man'. This unprecedented proposition constitutes the premise of both liberal and radical ideologies of modern times. It provides the theoretical justification for using politics to create a 'new order'...

"Helvétius's theory can be applied in two ways. One may interpret it to mean that the change in man's social and political environment ought to be accomplished peacefully and gradually, through the reform of institutions and enlightenment. One can also conclude from it that this end is best attained by a violent destruction of the existing order.

"Which approach – the evolutionary or revolutionary – prevails seems to be in large measure determined by a country's political system and the opportunities it provides for intellectuals to participate in public life.

"In societies which make it possible through democratic institutions and freedom of speech to influence policy, intellectuals are likely to follow the more moderate alternative. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and the United States, intellectuals were deeply involved in political life. The men who shaped the American republic and those who led Victorian England along the path of reform were men of affairs with deep intellectual interests: of some of them it would be difficult to say whether they were philosophers engaged in statesmanship or statesmen whose true vocation was philosophy. Even the pragmatists among them kept their minds open to the ideas of the age. This interplay of ideas and politics lent political life in Anglo-Saxon countries their well-known spirit of compromise. Here the intellectuals had no need to withdraw and form an isolated caste. They acted on public opinion, which, through democratic institutions, sooner or later affected legislation.

"In England and, through England, in the United States, the ideas of Helvétius gained popularity mainly from the writings of Jeremy Bentham and the Utilitarians. It was to Helvétius that Bentham owed the ideas that morality and legislation were 'one and the same science', that man could attain virtue only through 'good laws', and that, consequently, legislation had a 'pedagogic' function. On these foundations, Bentham constructed his theory of philosophical radicalism, which greatly affected the movement for parliamentary reform and liberal economics. The preoccupation of modern Anglo-Saxon countries with legislation as a device for human betterment is directly traceable to Bentham, and, through him, to Helvétius. In the speculations of Bentham and the English liberals, there was no place for violence: the transformation of man and society was to be accomplished entirely by laws and enlightenment. But even under this reform-minded theory lay the tacit premise that man could and ought to be remade. This premise links liberalism and radicalism and helps explain why, for all their rejection of the violent methods employed by revolutionaries, when forced to choose they throw their lot in with the revolutionaries. For what separates liberals from the extreme left is disagreement over the means employed, whereas they

differ from the right in the fundamental perception of what man is and what society ought to be..."³³⁷

There were, of course, some real abuses – for example, judicial torture – that the Enlightenment philosophers rightly opposed. In general, however, the French philosophers were more radical and less reasonable than they seemed at first. Thus on the one hand, Voltaire said, "I am not an atheist, nor a superstitious person; I stand for common sense and the golden mean". "I believe in God, not the God of the mystics and the theologians, but the God of nature, the great geometrician, the architect of the universe, the prime mover, unalterable, transcendental, everlasting."³³⁸ So far, so English. But on the other hand Voltaire was also the anti-religious zealot who said: "*Écrazez l'infâme*" – that is, "Destroy the abomination" – of Christianity. As he wrote to Frederick the Great: "Your majesty will do the human race an eternal service in extirpating this infamous superstition, I do not say among the rabble, who are not worthy of being enlightened and who are apt for every yoke; I say among the well-bred, among those who wish to think."³³⁹ According to Voltaire, writes Berlin, "there are only four great ages in the West in which human beings rose to their full stature and created civilisations of which they can be proud: the age of Alexander, in which he includes the classical age of Athens; the age of Augustus, in which he includes the Roman Republic and the Empire at their best; Florence during the Renaissance; and the age of Louis XIV in France. Voltaire assumes throughout that these are elitist civilisations, imposed by enlightened oligarchies on the masses, for the latter lack reason and courage, want only to be amused and deceived, and so are naturally prey to religion, that is, for him, to abominable superstition. Only governments can 'raise or lower the level of nations'."³⁴⁰

The philosophers were possessed by a far from rational ambition. Let us take the quintessentially Enlightenment project of the *Encyclopédie*, written in twenty-eight volumes by Jean le Rond d'Alembert and Denis Diderot between 1751 and 1772. Its aim was to collect and systematize all knowledge attained to that time, all, as Diderot wrote, with a "zeal for the best interests of the human race". All very fine and incontestable. And when Diderot went on to write that "the good of the people must be the great purpose of government. By the laws of nature and of reason, the governors are invested with power to that end. And the greatest good of the people is liberty. It is to the state what health is to the individual," no English Enlightenment thinker would have disagreed with him too seriously. But it was a different matter when he declared that the aim of philosophy was "to enlarge and liberate God"! No Englishman, however free-thinking would have supposed that not only man, but even God was in chains, and was just waiting to be liberated and "enlarged" by the French philosophers!

³³⁷ Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899-1919*, London: Collins Harvill, 1990. pp. 125-126, 128.

³³⁸ Cragg, *op. cit.*, pp. 239, 237.

³³⁹ Voltaire, in Cragg, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

³⁴⁰ Berlin, "The Divorce between the Sciences and the Humanities", in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 336.

And so, in keeping with their aim of “liberating God”, the philosophers set about undermining the foundations of Christianity. They denied original sin and attacked the Church. Voltaire wrote to Frederick the Great that the Catholic church in France was “the most ridiculous, absurd and bloodthirsty that ever infected the world”.³⁴¹ But the reaction of the Catholic Church in France was firmer than might have been expected. Thus Archbishop Beaumont of Paris wrote: “In order to appeal to all classes and characters, Disbelief has in our time adopted a light, pleasant, frivolous style, with the aim of diverting the imagination, seducing the mind, and corrupting the heart. It puts on an air of profundity and sublimity and professes to rise to the first principles of knowledge so as to throw off a yoke it considers shameful to mankind and to the Deity itself. Now it declaims with fury against religious zeal yet preaches toleration for all; now it offers a brew of serious ideas with badinage, of pure moral advice with obscenities, of great truths with great errors, of faith with blasphemy. In a word, it undertakes to reconcile Jesus Christ with Belial.”³⁴²

“The Jesuits,” writes Jenkins, “succeeded in having the *Encyclopédie* banned by Rome, and some of the contributors went to jail. But such was the mood in Paris that this proved counter-productive. A campaign began for the Jesuits’ suppression, fuelled by a widespread resentment at their privileges and power. It was successful. In 1759 the Jesuits were expelled from Portugal, then from France, Austria and even Spain. Eventually, in 1773, the Pope decided he had no option but to suppress the entire order. It had become unpopular even within the church. The cardinals in Rome descended on the Jesuits’ headquarters, carted off its art collection and drank its cellars dry. The order’s leaders were imprisoned in the Castel Sant’Angelo, for no crime worse than running out of friends. The order was restored in 1814...”³⁴³

But why would the Popes remove what had been perhaps the greatest defenders of Papism? The answer may lie in the fact that, rich, powerful, well-educated and owing allegiance to a non-national power, the papacy, the Jesuits were a threat to all despotic rulers. And so “Benedict XIV (1740-58), whose moderation won him the unusual accolade of praise from Voltaire, initiated an inquiry into their affairs. They were accused of running large-scale money-making operations, also of adopting native cults to win converts at any price.”³⁴⁴

‘In 1759 they were banished from Portugal, in 1764 from France, and in 1767 from Spain and Naples. Clement XIII (1758-69) stood by the Society with the words *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint* (may they be as they are, or cease to be). But Clement XIV (1769-74), who was elected under the shadow of a formal demand by the Catholic powers for abolition, finally acquiesced. The brief *Dominus ac Redemptor noster* of

³⁴¹ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

³⁴² Archbishop Beaumont, in Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

³⁴³ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

³⁴⁴ This refers to their toleration of the cult of ancestors during their missionary work in China. The Pope eventually banned this toleration, which led to the collapse of the mission. (V.M.)

³⁴⁴ And Prussia. According to Montefiore, “The atheist Frederick [the Great]’s religious tolerance extended to welcoming the Jesuits to Prussia” (*Titans in History*, p. 281).

16 August 1773 abolished the Society of Jesus, on the grounds that it was no longer pursuing its founder's objectives. It took effect in all European countries except for Russia."³⁴⁵

The downfall of the Jesuit order, that fierce persecutor of Orthodoxy, would appear to be something to be welcomed. And indeed it was for those who were being persecuted. But Jesuitism was about to be replaced by something still more destructive of Orthodoxy: the French revolution. And in relation to the revolution the Jesuits constituted a restraining power. This illustrates a principle that we find throughout modern history: that that which is the primary evil in one era may become a restraining power against the primary evil of the succeeding era. This explains what may otherwise seem inexplicable in the behaviour of some Orthodox rulers. Thus the toleration of, and even support given by Tsars Paul I and Nicholas I to Catholicism and Jesuitism, is explained by the fact that these institutions, inimical though they were to Orthodoxy, nevertheless opposed the still greater evil of the revolution...

³⁴⁵ Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 593-594.

23. THE FUTURE GOLDEN AGE

Voltaire's most famous work, the novel *Candide* (1759), is subtitled *Optimism*, whose main theme is a satire on the idea that this is the best possible of all worlds. "Pangloss and his student Candide maintain that 'everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds.' This idea is a reductively simplified version of the philosophies of a number of Enlightenment thinkers, most notably Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz. To these thinkers, the existence of any evil in the world would have to be a sign that God is either not entirely good or not all-powerful, and the idea of an imperfect God is nonsensical. These philosophers took for granted that God exists, and concluded that since God must be perfect, the world he created must be perfect also. According to these philosophers, people perceive imperfections in the world only because they do not understand God's grand plan. Because Voltaire does not accept that a perfect God (or any God) has to exist, he can afford to mock the idea that the world must be completely good, and he heaps merciless satire on this idea throughout the novel. The optimists, Pangloss and Candide, suffer and witness a wide variety of horrors – floggings, rapes, robberies, unjust executions, disease, an earthquake, betrayals, and crushing ennui. These horrors do not serve any apparent greater good, but point only to the cruelty and folly of humanity and the indifference of the natural world. Pangloss struggles to find justification for the terrible things in the world, but his arguments are simply absurd, as, for example, when he claims that syphilis needed to be transmitted from the Americas to Europe so that Europeans could enjoy New World delicacies such as chocolate. More intelligent and experienced characters, such as the old woman, Martin, and Cacambo, have all reached pessimistic conclusions about humanity and the world. By the novel's end, even Pangloss is forced to admit that he doesn't 'believe a word of' his own previous optimistic conclusions."³⁴⁶

While rejecting the idea of Divine Providence, the Enlightenment upheld a highly optimistic philosophy of life. It could be described as a secular form of chiasm or utopianism. The philosophers believed that with the passing of prejudice, and the spread of enlightenment, a golden age would ensue automatically. So there was great emphasis on the future, not so much in the form of blueprints of a future society, as in the form of rhapsodies on the theme of how posterity, seeing the world changed through education and reason and law ("Legislation will accomplish everything", said Helvétius), would praise the enlightened men of the present generation.

"God had been dethroned as judge, and posterity was exalted in its stead. It would be more than a time of fulfilment; it would provide the true vindication of the aspirations and endeavours of all enlightened men. 'Posterity,' wrote Diderot, 'is for the philosopher what the other world is for the religious man.'"³⁴⁷

Thus the Age of Rationalism created its own mythology of the Golden Age – but for the future, not the past. And in this world, not the next. "The Golden Age, so

³⁴⁶ <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/candide/themes/>

³⁴⁷ Cragg, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

fam'd by Men of Yore, shall soon be counted fabulous no more", said Thomas Paine. And "the Golden Age of Humanity is not behind us", said Saint Simon; "it lies ahead, in the perfection of the social order". Indeed, wrote Condorcet, "no bounds have been fixed to the improvement of the human race. The perfectibility of man is absolutely infinite."

And so, writes Fr. Michael Azkoul, "if the Enlightenment repudiated 'supernatural, other-worldly, organized Christianity', "it believed in its own brave new world. The 'great book of Nature' had recorded the means by which it was to be achieved. Professor Carl Becker shows in his *Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* that nature was in fact not 'the great book' for them, but Augustine's *City of God* torn down and rebuilt with 'up-to-date' materials.' For example, Eden was replaced with 'the golden age of Greek mythology,' the love of God with the love of humanity, the saving work of Christ with the creative genius of great men, grace with the goodness of man, immortality by posterity or the veneration of future generations... The vision of the Enlightenment, as Becker affirms, was a secular copy, a distorted copy, of Christianity..."³⁴⁸

We see here a continuation of that chiliastic, Utopian trend of thought that is already evident in the pseudo-scientific utopias of Thomas More's *Utopia: the Best State of the Commonwealth* (1516) and Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun* (1601), which gave birth to Bacon's *Atlantis* (1626). The Renaissance utopias contained astonishingly modern visions of society – but secular, this-worldly visions. Thus Jacques Barzun writes: "To make existence better, which for these three Humanists means not more godly, but happier, each drives at a main goal. More wants justice through democratic equality; Bacon wants progress through scientific research; Campanello wants permanent peace, health, and plenty through rational thought, brotherly love, and eugenics. All agree on a principle that the West adopted late: everybody must work."³⁴⁹ The Enlightenment did not add anything essentially new to this: paradise is to be achieved by reason, science, eugenics, education and work...

The problem for all secular utopias is how to control the fallen nature of man. For Christians, the fall is overcome through the Grace and Truth that is in Christ, which alone can tame and transform the passions. And they must be controlled; for "[fallen] flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption" (I Corinthians 15.50). But the Utopians thought differently: "The great argument used to sustain right conduct is: 'Live according to Nature. Nature is never wrong and we err by forgetting it.' Nature here replaces God's commandments, but although Nature is His handiwork, His commandments are a good deal cleaner than Her dictates..."³⁵⁰

However, Nature needed some assistance – from an authoritarian, even communistic State. And so, as Robert Service writes, "More could not imagine that

³⁴⁸ Azkoul, *Anti-Christianity and the New Atheism*, Montreal: Monastery Press, 1984, p. 26.

³⁴⁹ Barzun, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

³⁵⁰ Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

the common man, still less the common woman, might independently attain the perfection of society without orders from above. Campanella's tract depicted a society which instituted universal fairness by means of gross intrusion into private life. More and Campanella advocated thorough indoctrination of their people..."³⁵¹

The kinship between the Renaissance and Enlightenment utopias, on the one hand, and those of twentieth-century socialism, on the other, was pointed out by Fr. Sergei Bulgakov: "Parallel with the religious individualism of the Reformation a neo-pagan individualism became stronger. It magnified the natural, unregenerated man. According to this viewpoint, man is good and beautiful by nature, which beauty is distorted only by external conditions; it is enough to restore the natural condition of man, and everything will be attained. Here is the root of the various natural law theories, and also of the newest teachings on progress and the supreme power of external reforms alone to resolve the human tragedy, and consequently of the most recent humanism and socialism. The external, superficial closeness of religious and pagan individualism does not remove their deep inner difference, and for that reason we observe in recent history not only a parallel development, but also a struggle between these two tendencies. A strengthening of the themes of humanistic individualism in the history of thought characterizes the epoch of the so-called 'Enlightenment' (*Aufklärung*) in the 17th, 18th and partly the 19th centuries. The Enlightenment drew more radical negative conclusions from the postulates of humanism: in the sphere of religion, by means of Deism, it came to scepticism and atheism; in the sphere of philosophy, through rationalism and empiricism – to positivism and materialism; in the sphere of morality, through 'natural' morality – to utilitarianism and hedonism. Materialist socialism can also be seen as the latest and ripest fruit of the Enlightenment..."³⁵²

³⁵¹ Service, *Comrades*, London: Pan Books, 2007, p. 15.

³⁵² Bulgakov, "Geroizm i Podvizhnichestvo" (Heroism and Asceticism), in *Vekhi* (Signposts), Moscow, 1909, p. 34.

24. THE RISE OF PRUSSIA

The advent of the French Enlightenment did not mean the end of traditional monarchism, least of all in France. And monarchism, or at least one-man rule, remained strong throughout Central and Eastern Europe...

Brandenburg-Prussia, the patrimony of the Hohenzollerns, was a strange state composed of three non-contiguous parts: Brandenburg with its capital in Berlin in the centre, Kleve in the Rhineland in the west and the Duchy of Prussia in the east. The Duchy became a semi-sovereign power on April 10, 1525, when the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach, "having met Luther personally, declared himself no longer the mere head of a Catholic Order, obedient to the Pope and Emperor, but the Protestant Duke of Prussia in his own right, notionally subservient only to the King of Poland."³⁵³

German Christianity in the Orthodox, pre-schism period had never consolidated itself geographically beyond Otto the Great's missionary fortress of Magdeburg on the Elbe. That meant that the vast region stretching beyond the Elbe into the Baltic was never traditionally German or Orthodox, but the home, from the time of the crusades, of a peculiar kind of Catholic militarism that now metamorphosed into the great stronghold of Protestantism, a thorn in the side both of the Orthodox East and of the Catholic West. According to one theory, much of modern German history can be seen as the gradual ascendancy of the spirit of the only partially German Duchy of Prussia, whose origins lay outside the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation", over the more traditionally German states to the West...

During the Thirty Years War, Brandenburg-Prussia, whose ruling elite, if not the people, had converted to Calvinism in 1606, manoeuvred uneasily between the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor and the Lutheran powers, and suffered much from marauding armies, especially the Swedes. However, under the very able and hard-working rule of "the Great Elector", Frederick William (1640-88), it acquired a small but efficient army and, after defeating the Swedes at Fehrbellin in 1675, a land bridge linking the Electorate to the Baltic coast and a small Baltic navy. It therefore became, as Christopher Clark writes, "a substantial regional power on a par with Bavaria and Saxony, a sought-after ally and a significant element in major peace settlements."³⁵⁴

Although Frederick-William acquired full sovereignty over East Prussia in 1657, it still retained its distinctive character and provincial patriotism. As Jenkins writes, the East Prussians still "sport the Iron Cross of their founding fathers. To sophisticated Germans, Prussians were a tribe beyond the pale, with a history and fighting tradition alien to the gentle patchwork of autonomous Germany."³⁵⁵

³⁵³ James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2018, p. 70.

³⁵⁴ Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 38.

³⁵⁵ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

In 1701 the Elector Frederick became “king in Prussia” in a lavish and very expensive ceremony that was part of what Clark calls “a wave of regalization that was sweeping across the still largely non-regal territories of the Holy Roman Empire and the Italian states at the end of the seventeenth century. Royal title mattered because it still entailed privileged status within the international community. Since the precedence accorded to crowned heads was also observed at the great peace treaties of the era, it was a matter of potentially grave practical importance...”³⁵⁶

Regalization was both a cause and an effect of the emergence of increasingly homogeneous nation-states; it satisfied the need for a unifying symbol and centre of political power. So monarchism was saved for the time being. Thus the new title of “king” acquired by Frederick I “had a psychologically integrating effect: the Baltic territory formerly known as Ducal Prussia was no longer a mere outlying possession of the Brandenburg heartland, but a constitutive element of a new royal-electoral amalgam that would first be known as Brandenburg-Prussia, later simply as Prussia.”³⁵⁷

The striking thing about Frederick I’s coronation, full of pomp and circumstance as it was, was its demotion of the Church to a secondary, auxiliary role. For the Elector *made himself a king, placing the crown upon his own head*. And he placed a crown on his wife’s head also. Only after that did the (Lutheran and Calvinist) bishops anoint him, as if the anointing – the central element in Orthodox and Catholic coronations – was merely an after-thought, a sop to religious feeling in an essentially secular act.

There was a precedent to this profanity. Only four years before, in 1697, King Charles XII of Sweden had, at his coronation, as Robert Massie writes, “refused to be crowned as previous kings had been: by having someone else place the crown on his head. Instead, he declared that, as he had been born to the crown and not elected to it, the actual act of coronation was irrelevant. The statesmen of Sweden, both liberal and conservative, and even his own grandmother were aghast. Charles was put under intense pressure, but he did not give way on the essential point. He agreed only to allow himself to be consecrated by an archbishop, in order to accede to the Biblical injunction that a monarch be the Lord’s Anointed, but he insisted that the entire ceremony be called a consecration, not a coronation. Fifteen-year-old Charles rode to the church with his crown already on his head.

“Those who looked for omens found many in the ceremony... The King slipped while mounting his horse with his crown on his head; the crown fell off and was caught by a chamberlain before it hit the ground. During the service, the archbishop dropped the horn of anointing oil. Charles refused to give the traditional royal oath and then, in the moment of climax, he placed the crown on his own head...”³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

³⁵⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

³⁵⁸ Massie, *Peter the Great*, London: Phoenix, 2001, p. 314.

From now on, in the Protestant countries, while coronation remained a quasi-sacrament, the attitude to kingship became essentially secular. To some extent, this attitude is found also in Peter the Great of Russia (although he, having received the true anointing, was able to defeat Charles and the enemies of Orthodoxy). It was certainly the attitude of Napoleon, who also placed the crown on his own head at his imperial coronation in 1804, and abolished a whole series of kingships in the countries he conquered, replacing them with his own purely secular variety...

*

“It is difficult to imagine,” writes Clark, “two more contrasting individuals than the first and the second Prussian kings. Frederick was urbane, genial, courteous, mild mannered and gregarious. He spoke several modern languages, including French and Polish, and had done much to cultivate the arts and intellectual inquiry at his court... Frederick William, by contrast, was brusque to the point of brutality... [and] was profoundly sceptical of any sort of cultural or intellectual endeavour that was not of immediate practical (by which he mainly meant military) utility.”³⁵⁹

Frederick I built up the army and the highly efficient bureaucratic state that was so brilliantly exploited by his successor and son, Frederick the Great... He was, as Jenkins writes, “cut of classic Teutonic cloth, a stern Calvinist and a meticulous bureaucrat. His civil service manual ran to seventy-five chapters, and his army was the best drilled and best equipped in Europe.”³⁶⁰

Frederick William was also responsible for introducing Pietist pastors into the Prussian army... Pietism had been introduced into Prussia in 1691, when Philipp Jakob Spener, “the Lutheran Head Chaplain to the Saxon court in Dresden, took up a senior church post in Berlin. It was a provocative appointment, to say the least: Spener was already well known as one of the leading lights in a highly controversial movement for religious reform. In 1675, he had achieved instant notoriety with the publication of a short tract called *Pious Hopes* that decried various deficiencies in contemporary Lutheran religious life. The orthodox ecclesiastical establishment, he argued, had become so absorbed in the defence of doctrinal correctness that it was neglecting the pastoral needs of ordinary Christians. The religious life of the Lutheran parish had become desiccated and stale. In a pithy and accessible German, Spener proposed various remedies. Christians might try revitalizing the spiritual life of their communities by founding groups for pious discussion – Spener called them ‘colleges of piety’ (*collegia pietatis*). The spiritual intensity of these intimate circles, he suggested, would transform nominal believers into reborn Christians with a powerful sense of God’s agency in their lives....”³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

³⁶⁰ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

³⁶¹ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

The Elector, later King Frederick I, co-opted Pietism, sponsored a highly influential Pietist educational complex under August Hermann Franke at Halle, and introduced Pietist chaplains into the army. "Among the officer corps, where the Pietist movement had a number of influential friends, it is likely that the Pietists, with their moral rigour and sacralised sense of vocation, helped to discredit an older image of the officer as a swashbuckling, rakish gambler and to establish in its place a code of officerly conduct based on sobriety, self-discipline and serious dutifulness that came to be recognized as characteristically 'Prussian'. With its once worldly and sacralised sense of vocation, a focus on public needs and its emphasis on self-denial, Franckean Pietism may also have contributed to the emergence of a new 'ethics of profession' that helped to shape the distinctive identity and corporate ethos of the Prussian civil servant."³⁶²

³⁶² Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

25. TWO CONCEPTS OF LIBERTY

Liberals and revolutionaries differ only with regard to means, not ends. Both may believe in freedom and the Enlightenment programme; but whether a modern European state develops along the peaceful, liberal path or the violent, revolutionary one depends on the degree to which gentlemen gain access to the levers of power. However, even while agreeing on ends (broadly, the Enlightenment programme), liberals and revolutionaries also differ, according to Sir Isaiah Berlin, in their concepts of liberty.

The English liberal tradition, which emerged in part as the continuance of, and in part as a reaction against, the English revolution, defined freedom in a negative way, as freedom from certain restraints on, and violence to, the individual. Thus "liberty," writes Locke, "is to be free from restraint and violence from others".³⁶³ But this freedom from restraint, paradoxically, was to be attained only by submitting to restraint in the form of law: "Where there is no law, there is no freedom."³⁶⁴ However, since right laws can be framed only through the use of reason, man's freedom "is grounded on his having reason, which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own will."³⁶⁵ The necessity for reason implies at least a minimal degree of tolerance, for reason cannot operate in a climate of compulsion.

This tradition, summed up in the four words: freedom, law, reason and tolerance, dominated the first half of the eighteenth-century, and continues to dominate political thinking in the Anglo-Saxon countries to this day.

However, from the time of Rousseau, whose thought we shall examine in more detail in the next chapter, another, positive definition of freedom gained currency – the freedom *to do what you like and be what you want*. This concept of freedom scorns every notion of restraint as foreign to the very idea of liberty; it emphasises licence or lawlessness (freedom from law) as opposed to law, emotion and intuition as opposed to reason, the people as a single mystical organism having one will as opposed to the people as individuals having many wills. And even when it admits the need for laws, it vehemently rejects the idea of the superiority of the lawgiver; for, as Demoulin put it, "My motto is that of every honourable man – no superior".

The transition between the two concepts of liberty can be seen in the following passage from Rousseau, which begins with an "English", negative, law-abiding definition of liberty, but goes on to a revolutionary definition which recognizes laws only insofar as they are an expression of "natural law", i.e. the general will of the people: "Liberty consists less in doing one's will than in not being submitted to the will of others... There is no liberty without laws, nor where there is someone above the laws: even in the state of nature man is free only by virtue of the natural

³⁶³ Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, 57.

³⁶⁴ Locke, *op. cit.*, 57.

³⁶⁵ Locke, *op. cit.*, 63.

law which commands everyone. A free people obeys, but does not serve; it has leaders, but not masters; it obeys the laws, but it obeys only the laws, and it is by dint of the laws that it does not obey men... A people is free, whatever form its government may have, when he who governs there is not a man, but an organ of the law."³⁶⁶

The difference between the concepts of freedom, freedom *from* and freedom *to*, was illuminatingly explored in a justly famous essay by Isaiah Berlin entitled *Two Concepts of Freedom*... Concerning negative freedom, freedom *from*, Berlin writes: "I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no human being interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can do what he wants. If I am prevented by other persons from doing what I want I am to that degree unfree; and if the area within which I can do what I want is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved. Coercion is not, however, a term that covers every form of inability. If I say that I am unable to jump more than 10 feet in the air, or cannot read because I am blind, or cannot understand the darker pages of Hegel, it would be eccentric to say that I am to that degree enslaved or coerced. Coercion implies the deliberate interference of other human beings within the area in which I wish to act. You lack political liberty or freedom only if you are prevented from attaining your goal by human beings. Mere incapacity to attain your goal is not lack of political freedom... 'The nature of things does not madden us, only ill will does', said Rousseau. The criterion of oppression is the part that I believe to be played by other human beings, directly or indirectly, in frustrating my wishes. By being free in this sense I mean not being interfered with by others. The wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom.

"This is certainly what the classical English political philosophers meant when they used this word.³⁶⁷ They disagreed about how wide the area could or should be. They supposed that it could not, as things were, be unlimited, because if it were, it would entail a state in which all men could boundlessly interfere with all other men; and this kind of 'natural' freedom would lead to social chaos in which men's minimum needs would not be satisfied; or else the liberties of the weak would be suppressed by the strong. Because they perceived that human purposes and activities do not automatically harmonize with one another; and, because (whatever their official doctrines) they put high value on other goals, such as justice, or happiness, or security, or varying degrees of equality, they were prepared to curtail freedom in the interests of other values and, indeed, of freedom itself. For, without this, it was impossible to create the kind of association that they thought desirable. Consequently, it is assumed by these thinkers that the area of

³⁶⁶ Rousseau, *Letters written from the Mountain*, 1764, *Oeuvres*, vol. III, ed. Gallimard, p. 841.

³⁶⁷ "All his life," writes Berlin's biographer, Michael Ignatieff, "he attributed to Englishness nearly all the propositional content of his liberalism: 'that decent respect for others and the toleration of dissent is better than pride and a sense of national mission; that liberty may be incompatible with, and better than, too much efficiency; that pluralism and untidiness are, to those who value freedom, better than the rigorous imposition of all-embracing systems, no matter how rational and disinterested, better than the rule of majorities against which there is no appeal'. All of this, he insisted, was 'deeply and uniquely English'" (*A Life of Isaiah Berlin*, p. 36). (V.M.)

men's free action must be limited by law. But equally it is assumed, especially by such libertarians as Locke and Mill in England, and Constant and Tocqueville in France, that there ought to exist a certain minimum area of personal freedom which must on no account be violated, for if it is overstepped, the individual will find himself in an area too narrow for even that minimum development of his natural faculties which alone makes it possible to pursue, and even to conceive, the various ends which men hold good or right or sacred. It follows that a frontier must be drawn between the area of private life and that of public authority. Where it is to be drawn is a matter of argument, indeed of haggling. Men are largely interdependent, and no man's activity is so completely private as never to obstruct the lives of others in any way. 'Freedom for the pike is death for the minnows'; the liberty of some must depend on the restraints of others. Still, a practical compromise has to be found.

"Philosophers with an optimistic view of human nature, and a belief in the possibility of harmonizing human interests, such as Locke or Adam Smith and, in some moods, Mill, believed that social harmony and progress were compatible with reserving a large area for private life over which neither the state nor any other authority must be allowed to trespass. Hobbes, and those who agreed with him, especially conservative or reactionary thinkers, argued that if men were to be prevented from destroying one another, and making social life a jungle or a wilderness, greater safeguards must be instituted to keep them in their places, and wished correspondingly to increase the area of centralized control, and decrease that of the individual. But both sides agreed that some portion of human existence must remain independent of the sphere of social control. To invade that preserve, however small, would be despotism. The most eloquent of all defenders of freedom and privacy, Benjamin Constant, who had not forgotten the Jacobin dictatorship, declared that at the very least the liberty of religion, opinion, expression, property, must be guaranteed against arbitrary invasion. Jefferson, Burke, Paine, Mill, compiled different catalogues of individual liberties, but the argument for keeping at authority at bay is always substantially the same. We must preserve a minimum area of personal freedom if we are not to 'degrade or deny our nature'. We cannot remain absolutely free, and must give up some of our liberty to preserve the rest. But total self-surrender is self-defeating. What then must the minimum be? That which a man cannot give up without offending against the essence of his human nature. What is this essence? What are the standards which it entails? This has been, and perhaps always will be, a matter of infinite debate. But whatever the principle in terms of which the area of non-interference is to be drawn, whether it is that of natural law or natural rights, or of utility or the pronouncements of a categorical imperative, or the sanctity of the social contract, or any other concept with which men have sought to clarify and justify their convictions, liberty in this sense means liberty from; absence of interference beyond the shifting, but always recognizable, frontier. 'The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way', said the most celebrated of its champions. If this is so, is compulsion ever justified? Mill had no doubt that it was. Since justice demands that all individuals be entitled to a minimum of freedom, all other individuals were of necessity to be restrained, if need be by force, from depriving anyone of it. Indeed, the whole function of law was the prevention of

just such collisions: the state was reduced to what Lassalle contemptuously described as the functions of a nightwatchman or traffic policeman."³⁶⁸

Berlin goes on to make the important observation that "liberty in this sense is not incompatible with some kinds of autocracy, or at any rate with the absence of self-government. Liberty in this sense is principally concerned with the area of control, not with its source. Just as a democracy may, in fact, deprive the individual citizen of a great many liberties which he might have in some other form of society, so it is perfectly conceivable that a liberal-minded despot would allow his subjects a large measure of personal freedom. The despot who leaves his subjects a wide area of liberty may be unjust, or encourage the wildest inequalities, care little for order, or virtue, or knowledge; but provided that he does not curb their liberty, or at least curb's it less than many other régimes, he meets with Mill's specification.³⁶⁹ Freedom in this sense is not, at any rate logically, connected with democracy or self-government. Self-government may, on the whole, provide a better guarantee of the preservation of civil liberties than other régimes, and has been defended as such by libertarians. But there is no necessary connexion between individual liberty and democratic rule. The answer to the question 'Who governs me?' is logically distinct from the question 'How far does government interfere with me?' It is in this difference that the great contrast between the two concepts of negative and positive liberty, in the end, consists. For the 'positive' sense of liberty comes to light if we try to answer the question, not 'What am I free to do or be?', but 'By whom am I ruled?' or 'Who is to say what I am, and what I am not, to be or do?' The connexion between democracy and individual liberty is a good deal more tenuous than it seemed to many advocates of both. The desire to be governed by myself, or at any rate to participate in the process by which my life is to be controlled, may be as deep as that of a free area for action, and perhaps historically older. But it is not a desire for the same thing. So different is it, indeed, as to have led in the end to the great clash of ideologies that dominates our world. For it is this - the 'positive' conception of liberty: not freedom from, but freedom to - which the adherents of the 'negative' notion represent as being, at times, no better than a specious disguise for brutal tyranny."³⁷⁰

Berlin now passes from the "negative" to the "positive" concept of liberty, freedom *to*: "The 'positive' sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer - deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if I were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of

³⁶⁸ Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958, pp. 7-11.

³⁶⁹ Indeed, it is arguable that in the Prussia of Frederick the Great or in the Austria of Josef II, men of imagination, originality, and creative genius, and, indeed, minorities of all kinds, were less persecuted and felt the pressure, both of institutions and customs, less heavy upon them than in many an earlier or later democracy. (Berlin's note)

³⁷⁰ Berlin, *Two Concepts*, pp. 14-16.

playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realizing them. This is at least part of what I mean when I say that I am rational, and that it is my reason that distinguishes me as a human being from the rest of the world. I wish, above all, to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for his choices and able to explain them by reference to his own ideas and purposes. I feel free to the degree that I believe this to be true, and enslaved to the degree that I am made to realize that it is not.

“The freedom which consists in being one’s own master, and the freedom which consists in not being prevented from choosing as I do by other men, may, on the face of it, seem concepts at no great logical distance from each other – no more than negative and positive ways of saying the same thing. Yet the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ notions of freedom developed in divergent directions until, in the end, they came into direct conflict with each other.

“One way of making this clear is in terms of the independent momentum which the metaphor of self-mastery acquired. ‘I am my own master’; ‘I am slave to no man’; but may I not (as, for instance, T.H. Green is always saying) be a slave to nature? Or to my own ‘unbridled’ passions? Are these not so many species of the identical genus ‘slave’ – some political or legal, others moral or spiritual? Have not men had the experience of liberating themselves from spiritual slavery, or slavery to nature, and do they not in the course of it become aware, on the one hand, of a self which dominates, and, on the other, of something in them which is brought to heel? This dominant self is then variously identified with reason, with my ‘higher nature’, with the self which calculates and aims at what will satisfy it in the long run, with my ‘real’, or ‘ideal’, or ‘autonomous’ self, or with my self ‘at its best’; which is then contrasted with irrational impulse, uncontrolled desires, my ‘lower’ nature, the pursuit of immediate pleasures, my ‘empirical’ or ‘heteronomous’ self, swept by every gust of desire and passion, needing to be rigidly disciplined if it is ever to rise to the full height of its ‘real’ nature. Presently the two natures may be represented as something wider than the individual (as the term is normally understood), as a social ‘whole’ of which the individual is an element or aspect: a tribe, a race, a church, a state, the great society of the living and the dead and the yet unborn. This entity is then identified as being the ‘true’ self which, by imposing its collective, or ‘organic’, single will upon its recalcitrant ‘members’, achieves its own, and, therefore, their, ‘higher’ freedom. The perils of using organic metaphors to justify the coercion of some men by others in order to raise them to a ‘higher’ level of freedom have often been pointed out. But what gives such plausibility as it has to this kind of language is that we recognize that it is possible, and at times justifiable, to coerce men in the name of some goal (let us say, justice or public health) which they would, if they were more enlightened, themselves pursue, but do not, because they are blind or ignorant or corrupt. This renders it easy for me to conceive of myself as coercing others for their own sake, in their, not my, interest. I am then claiming that I know what they truly need better than they know it themselves. What, at most, this entails is that they would not resist me if they were rational, and as wise as I, and understood their interests as I do. But I may go on to claim a good deal more than this. I may declare that they are actually aiming at what in their benighted state they consciously resist, because there exists within

them an occult entity – their latent rational will, or their ‘true’ purpose – and that this entity, although it is belied by all that they overtly feel and do and say, is their ‘real’ self, of which the poor empirical self in space and time may know nothing or little; and that this self in space and time is the only self that deserves to have its wishes taken into account. Once I take this view, I am in a position to ignore the actual wishes or men or societies, to bully, oppress, torture them in the name, and on behalf, of their ‘real’ selves, in the secure knowledge that whatever is the true goal of man (happiness, fulfilment of duty, wisdom, a just society, self-fulfilment) must be identical with his freedom – the free choice of his ‘true’, albeit submerged and inarticulate, self.

“This paradox has often been exposed. It is one thing to say that I know what is good for X, while he himself does not; and even to ignore his wishes for its – and his – sake; and a very different one to say that he has eo ipso chosen it, not indeed consciously, not as he seems in everyday life, but in his role as a rational self which his empirical self may not know – the ‘real’ self which discerns the good, and cannot help choosing it once it is revealed. This monstrous impersonation, which consists in equating what X would choose if he were something he is not, or at least is not yet, with what X actually seeks and chooses, is at the heart of all political theories of self-realization. It is one thing to say that I may be coerced for my own good which I am too blind to see: and another that if it is my good, I am not being coerced, for I have willed it, whether I know this or not, and am freed even while my poor earthly body and foolish mind bitterly reject it, and struggle against those who seek to impose it, with the greatest desperation.

“This magical transformation, or sleight of hand (for which William James so justly mocked the Hegelians), can no doubt be perpetrated just as easily with the ‘negative’ concept of freedom, where the self that should not be interfered with is no longer the individual with his actual wishes and needs as they are normally conceived, but the ‘real’ man within, identified with the pursuit of some ideal purpose not dreamed of by his empirical self. And, as in the case of the ‘positively’ free self, this entity may be inflated into some super-personal entity – a state, a class, a nation, or the march of history itself, regarded as a more ‘real’ subject of attributes than the empirical self. But the ‘positive’ conception of freedom as self-mastery, with its suggestion of a man divided against himself, lends itself more easily to this splitting of personality into two: the transcendent, dominant controller, and the empirical bundle of desires and passions to be disciplined and brought to heel. This demonstrates (if demonstration of so obvious a truth is needed) that the conception of freedom directly derives from the view that is taken of what constitutes a self, a person, a man. Enough manipulation with the definitions of man, and freedom can be made to mean whatever the manipulator wishes. Recent history [this was written in 1958] has made it only too clear that the issue is not merely academic...”³⁷¹

³⁷¹ Berlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

26. ROUSSEAU: (1) THE SUPREMACY OF INTERNAL FEELING

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a man of extreme contradictions and paradoxes: a man of highly objectionable character but brilliant intellectual gifts who was revered as a secular saint by many, from Hume and Kant and Shelley to Mill and Tolstoy; a man of reason but at the same time of emotion and feeling; one of the greatest figures of the Enlightenment who at the same time prefigured and inspired the Romantic Counter-Enlightenment.

Paul Johnson calls Rousseau “the first of the modern intellectuals, their archetype and in many ways the most influential of them all. Older men like Voltaire had started the work of demolishing the altars and enthroning reason. But Rousseau was the first to combine all the salient characteristics of the modern Promethean: the assertion of the right to reject the existing order in its entirety; confidence in his capacity to refashion it from the bottom in accordance with principles of his own devising; belief that this could be achieved by the political process; and, not least, recognition of the huge part instinct, intuition and impulse play in human conduct. He believed he had a unique love for humanity and had been endowed with unprecedented gifts and thoughts to increase its felicity. An astonishing number of people, in his own day and since, have taken him at his own valuation...”³⁷²

Rousseau’s root idea, and his most original, most dangerous and ultimately most influential, was the idea of the supremacy of intuition, inner feeling, over all reason and every external authority. The idea of intuition, inner feeling was closely related to that of conscience and freedom. Freedom was for Rousseau, as for Kant, the categorical imperative, and the foundation of all morality. “Both Rousseau and Kant,” writes Norman Hampson, “aspired to regenerate humanity by the free action of the self-disciplined individual conscience”. Rousseau’s concept of freedom “rested, not on any logical demonstration, but on each man’s immediate recognition of the moral imperative of his own conscience. ‘I hear much argument against man’s freedom and I despise such sophistry. One of these arguers [Helvétius?] can prove to me as much as he likes that I am not free; inner feeling, more powerful than all his arguments, refutes them all the time.’”³⁷³

Conscience was for Rousseau, as for Luther, both Pope and Church: “Whatever I feel to be right is right, what I feel to be wrong is wrong; the best of all casuists is the conscience... Reason deceives us only too often and we have earned all too well the right to reject it, but conscience never deceives... Conscience, conscience, divine instinct, immortal and heavenly voice, sure guide to men who, ignorant and blinkered, are still intelligent and free; infallible judge of good and ill who shapes men in the image of God, it is you who form the excellence of man’s nature and the morality of his actions; without you, I feel nothing within that raises me above the

³⁷² Johnson, *Intellectuals*, London: Harper Perennial, 1990, 2007, p. 2.

³⁷³ Hampson, *The First European Revolution, 1776-1815*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1969, pp. 181, 32.

beasts, nothing but the melancholy privilege of straying from error to error, relying on an understanding without rule and a reason without principle.”³⁷⁴

Harari sees the idea of the autonomy of inner feeling as the essence of the modern, twenty-first century world-view; it is Rousseau’s conscience that supplies modern humanity with the meaning it appeared to have lost with the collapse of traditional religion. “For centuries humanism has been convincing us that we are the ultimate source of meaning, and that our free will is therefore the highest authority of all. Instead of waiting for some external entity to tell us what’s what, we can rely on our own feelings and desires. From infancy we are bombarded with a barrage of humanist slogans counselling us: ‘Listen to yourself, be true to yourself, trust yourself, follow your heart, do what feels good.’ Jean-Jacques Rousseau summed it all up in his novel *Émile*, the eighteenth-century bible of feeling. Rousseau held that, when looking for life’s rules of conduct, he found them ‘in the depths of my heart, traced by nature in characters which nothing can efface. I need only consult myself with regard to what I wish to do; what I feel to be good is good, what I feel to be bad is bad.’

“Accordingly, when a modern woman wants to understand the meaning of an affair she is having, she is far less prone to blindly accept the judgements of a priest or an ancient book. Instead, she will carefully examine her feelings. If her feelings aren’t very clear, she will call a good friend, meet for coffee and pour her heart out. If things are still vague, she will go to her therapist, and tell him all about it. Theoretically, the modern therapist occupies the same place as the medieval priest, and it is an overworked cliché to compare the two professions. Yet in practice a huge chasm separates them. The therapist does not possess a holy book that defines good and evil. When the woman finishes her story, it is highly unlikely that the therapist will burst out: ‘You wicked woman! You have committed a terrible sin!’ It is equally unlikely that he will say, ‘Wonderful! Good for you!’ Instead, no matter what the woman may have done and said, the therapist is most likely to ask in a caring voice, ‘Well, how do *you* feel about what happened?’

“True, the therapist’s bookshelf sags under the weight of Freud’s and Jung’s writings and the 1,000-pages-long *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*. Yet these are not holy scriptures. The *DSM* diagnoses the ailments of life, not the meaning of life. Most psychologists believe that only human feelings are authorised to determine the true meaning of human actions. Hence no matter what the therapist thinks about his patient’s affair, and matter what Freud, Jung and the *DSM* think about affairs in general, the therapist should not force his views on the patient. Instead, he should help her examine the most secret chambers of her heart. There and only there will she find the answers. Whereas medieval priests had a hotline to God and could distinguish for us between good and evil, modern therapists merely help us get in touch with our own inner feelings.

“This partly explains the changing fortunes of the institution of marriage. In the Middle Ages marriage was considered a sacrament ordained by God, and God also

³⁷⁴ Rousseau, in Hampson, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 34.

authorised a father to marry off his children according to his wishes and interests. An extra-marital affair was consequently a brazen rebellion against both divine and parental authority. It was a mortal sin, no matter what the lovers felt and thought about it. Today people marry for love, and it is their personal feelings that give value to this bond. Hence, if the very same feelings that once drove you into the arms of one man now drive you into the arms of another, what's wrong with that? If an extramarital affair provides an outlet for emotional and sexual desires that are not satisfied by your spouse of twenty years, and if your new love is kind, passionate and sensitive to your needs – why not enjoy it?

“But wait a minute, you might say. We cannot ignore the feelings of the other interested parties. The woman and her lover might feel wonderful in each other's arms, but if their respective spouses find out, everybody will probably feel awful for quite some time. And if it leads to divorce, their children might carry the emotional scars for decades. Even if the affair is never discovered, concealing it could involve a lot of tension, and may lead to growing feelings of alienation and resentment.

“The most interesting discussions in humanist ethics concern situations like extramarital affairs, when human feelings collide. What happens when the same action causes one person to feel good and another to feel bad? How do we weigh these feelings against each other? Do the good feelings of the two lovers outweigh the bad feelings of the spouses and their children?

“It doesn't matter what you think about this particular question. It is far more important to understand the kind of arguments both sides employ. Modern people have differing ideas about extramarital affairs, but no matter what their stance, they tend to justify it in the name of human feeling rather than in the name of holy scriptures and divine commandments. Humanism has taught us that something can be bad only if it causes somebody to feel bad. Murder is wrong not because some god once said, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Rather, murder is wrong because it causes terrible suffering to the victim, to his family members, and to his friends and acquaintances. Theft is wrong not because some ancient text says, 'Though shalt not steal'. Rather, theft is wrong because when you lose your property, you feel bad about it. And if an action does not cause anyone to feel bad, there can be nothing wrong with it...”³⁷⁵

In this way did Rousseau's concept of the supremacy of inner feeling destroy traditional morality, just as his idea about the General Will destroys the traditional understanding of political power.

This destructive power was manifested especially in his novels *La Nouvelle Heloise* and *Emile*.

The first “was subtitled *Letters of Two Lovers* and modelled on Richardson's *Clarissa*. The story of the pursuit, seduction, repentance and punishment of a young

³⁷⁵ Harari, *Homo Deus*, London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 261-264.

woman, was written with extraordinary skill to appeal both to the prurient interest of readers, especially women – and especially the burgeoning market of middle-class women – and to their sense of morality. The material is often very outspoken for the time, but the final message is highly proper. The Archbishop of Paris accused it of ‘insinuating the poison of lust while seeming to proscribe it’, but this merely served to increase its sales, as did Rousseau’s cunningly worded preface, in which he asserts that a girl who reads a single page of it is a lost soul, adding however that ‘chaste girls do not read love stories’. In fact both chaste girls and respectable matrons read it and defended themselves by citing its highly moral conclusions. In short it was a natural best-seller, and became one, though most of the copies bought were pirated.

“The Rousseau cult was intensified in 1762 with the publication of *Emile*, in which he launched the myriad of ideas, on nature and man’s response to it, which were to become the staple fare of the Romantic Age but were then pristine. This book, too, was brilliantly engineered to secure the maximum number of readers. But in one respect Rousseau was too clever for his own good. It was part of his growing appeal, as the prophet of truth and virtue, to point out the limits of reason and allow for the place of religion in the hearts of men. He thus included in *Emile* a chapter entitled ‘Profession of Faith’ in which he accused his fellow intellectuals of the Enlightenment, especially the atheists or mere deists, of being arrogant and dogmatic, ‘professing even in their so-called scepticism to know everything’ and heedless of the damage they do to decent men and women, by undermining faith: ‘They destroy and trample underfoot all that men revere, steal from the suffering the consolation they derive from religion and take away the only force that restrains the passions of the rich and the powerful’. It was highly effective stuff, but to balance it Rousseau felt it necessary to criticize the established Church too, especially its cult of miracles and encouragement of superstition. This was highly imprudent, especially since Rousseau, to frustrate the book-pirates, took the risk of signing the work. He was already suspect in French ecclesiastical eyes as a double-renegade: having converted to Catholicism, he later returned to Calvinism in order to regain his Genevan citizenship. So now the Paris *Parlement*, dominated by Jansenists, took the strongest objection to the anti-Catholic sentiments in *Emile*, had the book burnt in front of the Palais de Justice and issued a warrant for Rousseau’s arrest...”³⁷⁶

Rousseau had a decisive influence on Romanticism through his concept of the “natural man”, which, as George L. Mosse writes, emphasized “that the individual was good and virtuous when removed from the fetters of civilization. In such an ideal state heart and head were unspoiled and therefore functioned properly. For Rousseau and other eighteenth-century thinkers this meant that humans were both reasonable and virtuous. However, the element of human reason in the state of nature played, for Rousseau, a lesser part than the goodness of the heart. This foreshadowed the romantic belief in the essential rightness and virtue of mankind’s proper emotions when they are left to develop freely. The concept of natural man became a widespread fad in the eighteenth century: Louis XVI and his

³⁷⁶ Johnson, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

queen had a rural village built for themselves behind their palace of the Trianon where they could play at 'natural' man and wife. Moreover, this image was associated with rural life, the kind of Arcadia which writer had idealized for centuries. It should be kept in mind that the ideal of natural man associated with rural life was not only a background for the romantic movement, but also went into the making of one of the most important preconceptions of the nineteenth century, indeed of modern times: namely, that the peasant represents the greatest virtues in a society which is growing ever more industrial and urban.

"The concept of 'natural man' was not the only element which went into the making of the romantic atmosphere. Evangelicalism in England and pietism in Germany provided important stimuli for romanticism, just as they were to be important in the making of the new middle-class morality. Both stressed 'piety of the heart' - religion as an emotional experience. Pietism was more temperate than the evangelical movement; nevertheless, the emotional appeal was present. Evangelicalism with its outright appeal to emotional conversion, 'coming to Christ', implanted an emotionalism in all classes of the English population. The emphasis upon hymn singing together with preaching as the chief outward appeals of faith played an important part. Nor can the increasing stream of oratory and moral exhortations which marked both movements be neglected. Many other causes, like the Temperance League and the Society Against Vice, depended on similar methods. All over Europe the reading public was increasing; and what they read, above all, were books of edification or moral exhortation to lead a good life. Education by exhortation was prominent in the making of middle-class morality, as Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby can show, but it also created an atmosphere congenial to life viewed as an emotional experience.

"Though Rousseau foreshadowed the romantic mood in France and evangelicalism did much to encourage it in England, Germany seemed at the head of the movement during the eighteenth century. Not only German pietism, but particularly a literary movement known as the storm and stress (*Sturm und Drang*, 1765-1785) set the romantic tone. Making its home in Weimar, the movement's importance for the cultural revival in Germany was equal to its contribution to romanticism. Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), in particular, portrayed his heroes in terms of their inner responses to life, abstracting people from their environment. In depicting the *Robbers*, for example, he made their inner conflicts and the resulting tragedy take precedence over the morality or the effects of their actions. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the greatest German man of letters of that century, passed through the Enlightenment and classicism to a romantic period. The narrative of his journeys to Italy did much to stimulate a new emphasis upon nature as emotional and sentient rather than as imprisoned within rational laws of nature."³⁷⁷

Sturm und Drang, writes Zamoyski, "was essentially an emotional revolt against all rational and moral constraint. The tenor of the passions evoked is well rendered by a description of the first night of Schiller's play *The Robbers* in 1781: 'The theatre

³⁷⁷ Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 30-31.

was like a lunatic asylum, with rolling eyes, clenched fists, hoarse uproar among the audience. Strangers fell sobbing into each other's arms, women tottered, half-fainting, to the door.'"³⁷⁸

And Rousseau, that revolutionary not only of politics and morality but also of human sensibility, was the single most important influence on these developments...

³⁷⁸ Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, p. 47.

27. ROUSSEAU (2): THE GENERAL WILL

While the French Enlightenment philosophers were admirers of English liberalism, they still believed in relatively unfettered state power concentrated in the (preferably enlightened) person of the monarch. That way, they believed, the light of reason and reasonableness would spread most effectively downward and outward to the rest of the population. Thus their outlook was still essentially aristocratic; for all their love of freedom, they still believed in restraint and good manners, hierarchy and privilege. Perhaps their Catholic education had something to do with it. Certainly, however much they railed against the despotism of the Catholic Church, they were still deeply imbued with the Catholic ideals of order and hierarchy.

However, Rousseau was different; he believed in power coming from below rather than above. Perhaps his Swiss Calvinist upbringing had something to do with that; for, as he wrote, "I was born a citizen of a free State, and a member of the Sovereign [i.e. the *Conseil Général*] of Geneva, which was considered sovereign by some".³⁷⁹ Certainly, the mutual hatred between Voltaire and Rousseau reflected to some degree the differences between the (lapsed) Catholic and the (lapsed) Calvinist, between the city fop and the peasant countryman³⁸⁰, between the civilized reformer and the uncouth revolutionary.

In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau set out to inquire "if, in the civil order, there can be any sure and legitimate rule of administration".³⁸¹ He quickly rejected Filmer's patriarchal justification of monarchy based on the institution of the family: "The most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural, is the family: and even so the children remain attached to the father only so long as they need him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved. The children, released from the obedience they owed, and the father released from the care he owed his children, return equally to independence. If they remain united, they continue so no longer naturally, but voluntarily; and the family itself is then maintained only by convention... The family then may be called the first model of political societies: the ruler corresponds to the father, and the people to the children; and all, being born free and equal, alienate their liberty only to their own advantage."³⁸²

However, this argument is not at all convincing. First, a child is neither free at birth, nor equal to his father. Secondly, the bond between the father and the son continues to be natural and indissoluble even after the child has grown up.³⁸³

³⁷⁹ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, book I, introduction; in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, London: Penguin, 1993, p. 181.

³⁸⁰ Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

³⁸¹ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, introduction, p. 181.

³⁸² Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 2, p. 182.

³⁸³ Rousseau has another, more facetious argument against Filmer: "I have said nothing of King Adam, or Emperor Noah, father of the three great monarchs who shared out the universe, like the children of Saturn, whom some scholars have recognized in them. I trust to getting thanks for my moderation; for, being a direct descendant of one of these princes, perhaps of the eldest branch,

Next, Rousseau disposes of the argument that might is right. "To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will – at the most, an act of prudence. In what sense can it be a duty?... What kind of right is that which perishes when force fails? If we must obey perforce, there is no need to obey because we ought; and if we are not forced to obey, we are under no obligation to do so... Obey the powers that be. If this means yield to force, it is a good precept, but superfluous: I can answer for its never being violated. All power comes from God, I admit; but so does all sickness: does that mean that we are forbidden to call in the doctor?... Let us then admit that force does not create right, and that we are obliged to obey only legitimate powers.

"Since no man has a natural authority over his fellow, and force creates no right, we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men."³⁸⁴

Here, then, is the theory of the social contract.

But Rousseau quickly disposes of the form of contract proposed by Hobbes, namely, that men originally contracted to alienate their liberty to a king. This is an illegitimate argument, says Rousseau, because: (a) it is madness for a whole people to place itself in slavery to a king, "and madness creates no right"; (b) the only possible advantage would be a certain tranquillity, "but tranquillity is found also in dungeons; but is that enough to make them desirable?"³⁸⁵; and (c) "if each man could alienate himself, he could not alienate his children: they are born men and free."

In any case, "to renounce liberty is to renounce being a man, to surrender the rights of humanity and even its duties... Such a renunciation is incompatible with man's nature; to remove all liberty from his will is to remove all morality from his acts... so, from whatever aspect we regard the question, the right of slavery is null and void, not only as being illegitimate, but also because it is absurd and meaningless. The words slave and right contradict each other, and are mutually exclusive. It will always be equally foolish for a man to say to a man or to a people: 'I make with you a convention wholly at your expense and wholly to my advantage; I shall keep it as long as I like, and you will keep it as long as I like.'"³⁸⁶

Now conscience, according to Rousseau, was likely to be stifled by too much education and sophistication. So he went back to the idea of the state of nature as

how do I know that a verification of titles might not leave me the legitimate king of the human race? In any case, there can be no doubt that Adam was sovereign of the world, as Robinson Crusoe was of his island, as long as he was its only inhabitant; and this empire had the advantage that the monarch, safe on his throne, had no rebellions, wars, or conspirators to fear" (*op. cit.*, I, 2, pp. 183-184).

³⁸⁴ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 3, 4; pp. 184, 185.

³⁸⁵ By contrast, the French Prime Minister after the Restoration, François Guizot, placed "the great tranquillity" at the core of his vision of the good society. See George L. Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988, p. 144.

³⁸⁶ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 4; pp. 186, 189.

expounded in Hobbes and Locke, but invested it with the optimistic, revolutionary spirit of the Levellers and Diggers. Whereas Hobbes and Locke considered the state of nature as an anarchic condition which civilization as founded on the social contract transcended and immeasurably improved on, for Rousseau the state of nature was “the noble savage”, who, as the term implied, had many good qualities.³⁸⁷ Indeed, man in the original state of nature was in many ways better and happier than man as civilized through the social contract.

In particular, he was freer and more equal. It was the institutions of civilization that destroyed man’s original innocence and freedom. As Rousseau famously thundered: “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains!”³⁸⁸

This idea did not stand the test of experience. “Among those who believed in Rousseau’s ideas,” writes Fr. Alexey Young, “was the French painter Gaughin (1848-1903). So intent was his commitment that he abandoned his family and went to Tahiti to find Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’. But, to his great dismay, he discovered that Rousseau’s conception was an illusion. ‘Primitive’ man could be just as cruel, immoral and heartless as men under the influence of the civilized world. Seeing this, Gaughin was driven to despair...”³⁸⁹

Since man is born free and sinless, according to Rousseau, and his conscience is infallible, the common man is fully equal as a moral agent to his educated social superiors and should be entrusted with full political power. Thus the social contract should be rewritten to keep sovereignty with the ruled rather than the rulers. For Hobbes, the people had transferred sovereignty irrevocably to their rulers; for Locke, the transfer was more conditional, but revocable only in exceptional circumstances. For Rousseau, sovereignty was never really transferred from the people.

Rousseau rejected the idea that the people could have “representatives” who exerted sovereignty in their name. “Sovereignty cannot be represented, for the same reason that it cannot be alienated... the people’s deputies are not, and could not be, its representatives; they are merely its agents; and they cannot decide anything finally. Any law which the people has not ratified in person is void; it is not law at all. The English people believes itself to be free; it is gravely mistaken; it is free only during the election of Members of Parliament; as soon as the Members are elected, the people is enslaved; it is nothing.”³⁹⁰ Thus representative government is “elective autocracy”.

³⁸⁷ The term “noble savage” first appears in 1672 in John Dryden’s *The Conquest of Granada* (Act 1, scene 1):

*I am as free as Nature first made man
'Ere the base Laws of servitude began
When wild in woods the noble Savage ran.*

³⁸⁸ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 1; p. 181.

³⁸⁹ Young, *The Great Divide*, Richfield Springs, N.Y.: Nikodemos, 1989, p. 21.

³⁹⁰ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, III, 15; p. 266.

Essentially Rousseau wanted to abolish the distinction between rulers and ruled, to give everyone power through direct democracy. The citizen can exercise this power only if he himself makes every decision affecting himself. But the participation of all the citizens in every decision is possible only in a small city-state like Classical Athens, not in modern states. Thus Rousseau represents a more mystical version of the direct democratism of the Greek philosophers, echoing Aristotle's *Politics*: "If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost." But the emphasis now is on equality rather than liberty...

*

In 1755 Rousseau was given the opportunity to try and put his ideas into practice, when the island of Corsica threw off the centuries-old yoke of Genoa and created its own constitution. From the 1720s, writes Adam Zamoyski, Corsica had been "in a state of intermittent revolt. In 1755 Antonio Filippo Pasquale Paoli, son of an exiled Corsican rebel and himself an officer in the Neapolitan army, sailed to his native island, ousted the Genoese colonial forces and was proclaimed '*Général de la Nation Corse*'. He was challenged by Corsican opponents backed by Genoa, and had to contract an alliance with France in order to maintain himself on the island. The only other potential ally was Catherine II of Russia, who was looking for a convenient naval base in the Mediterranean.

"Paoli had been well educated in Naples, studying under the eminent political economist Antonio Genovesi, and between bouts of fighting he demonstrated remarkable qualities as a ruler. He convoked a parliament, the *consulta*, which voted a constitution on 18 November 1755. While this gave him virtually dictatorial powers, it also allowed him to introduce an element of stability and order. He abolished oppressive feudal rights, banned the *vendetta*, and implemented a programme of smallholding cultivation according to the most modern theories. James Boswell, who visited Corsica during Paoli's rule, was deeply impressed, and on his return to England attempted to raise funds for the general. He also, less felicitously, composed an anonymously printed panegyric to the 'immortal man'.

"Realizing that it could not recapture the island, Genoa decided to sell its interest and signed Corsica over to France in 1767. A force of 25,000 French troops moved in to take over the new colony. Paoli resisted this, but after some initial successes, he was decisively defeated at Ponte-Nuovo in 1769, and forced to withdraw to the mountains. Among the faithful remnants of his army was his secretary Carlo Buonaparte and his wife, pregnant with a child who would be christened Napoleone.³⁹¹ In June 1769 Paoli and the remnant four hundred of his followers embarked on British ships, and found haven in London, where George III granted the general a pension. Frederick II of Prussia sent him a sword, inscribed '*Pugne pro Patria*' [meaning: "Fight for the fatherland"], and Catherine II of Russia,

³⁹¹ On Napoleon's complex attitude to Paoli, see Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great*, London: Penguin, 2014, chapters 1 and 2 (V.M.)

who was at that moment engaged in imposing colonial rule on Poland, sent a gracious invitation to visit her in St. Petersburg.

“In Corsica, Rousseau believed he had found a society untainted by the original sin of civilization. In his *Project de constitution pour la Corse*, written in 1765, he suggested ways of keeping it so. ‘I do not want to give you artificial and systematic laws, invented by man; only to bring you back under the unique laws of nature and order, which command to the heart and do not tyrannize the free will,’ he cajoled them. But the enterprise demanded an act of will, summed up in the oath to be taken simultaneously by the whole nation: ‘In the name of Almighty God and on the Holy Gospels, by this irrevocable and sacred oath I unite myself in body, in goods, in will and in my whole potential to the Corsican Nation, in such a way that I myself and everything that belongs to me shall belong to it without redemption. I swear to live and to die for it, to observe all its laws and to obey its legitimate rulers and magistrates in everything that is in conformity with the law.’”³⁹²

The cult of the nation, formalized in the French Revolution, began here...

Now one of the problems of democracy lies in the transition from the multiple wills of the individual citizens to the single will of the state: how was this transition to be effected without violating the will of the individual? Rousseau recognised this problem: “The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem of which the social contract provides the solution.”³⁹³

This is a major, indeed insuperable problem for most liberal theorists insofar as they recognize that individuals have different interests and wills. So any single decision expressing the collective will of the state will inevitably be in the interests of some and not of others. For Rousseau, however, it is less of a problem insofar as he holds a more optimistic view of human nature. For him, since each individual has an infallible conscience, if he finds and expresses that infallible conscience, his will is found to coincide with the will of every other individual. This general will can then express the will of every citizen individually while being common to all. “Each of us comes together to place his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will, and we in a body admit each member as an indivisible part of the whole. This act of association produces a moral and collective entity... As for the associates, they all take on the name of the people when they participate in the sovereign authority, and call themselves specifically citizens and subjects when they are placed under the laws of the State.”³⁹⁴

³⁹² Zamoyksi, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, pp. 22-23.

³⁹³ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 6, p. 191.

³⁹⁴ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 6.

On which Voltaire commented: “All that is wrong. I am certainly not prepared to hand myself over to my fellow-citizens unreservedly. I am not going to give them the power to kill me and rob me by majority vote...”³⁹⁵

The transition from Voltaire to Rousseau, from the worship of the individual to the worship of the collective, general will, is also the transition from *liberal humanism* to *socialist or nationalist humanism*. As Yuval Noah Harari writes, “Socialists believe that ‘humanity’ is collective rather than individualistic. They hold as sacred not the inner voice of each individual, but the species *Homo Sapiens* as a whole. Whereas liberal humanism seeks as much freedom as possible for individual humans, socialist humanism seeks equality between all humans. According to socialists, inequality is the worst blasphemy against the sanctity of humanity, because it privileges qualities of humans over their universal essence. For example, when the rich are privileged over the poor, it means that we value money more than the universal essence of all humans, which is the same for rich and poor alike.”³⁹⁶

Rousseau’s general will, being a kind of universal essence, is not the will of either the majority or the minority, for the general will must embrace *all*. Nor, more surprisingly, is it the will of all when all agree insofar as the will of all is sometimes wrong, whereas the general will is always right. “The general will is always upright and always tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people always have the same rectitude. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived, and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad. There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills: but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the general will remains as the sum of the differences.”³⁹⁷ The general will is therefore a mysterious entity which reveals itself only in certain special conditions: “If, when the people, being furnished with adequate information, held its deliberations, the citizens had no communication one with another, the grand total of the small differences would always give the general will, and the decision would always be good.”³⁹⁸ In other words, when the self-interest of each citizen is allowed to express itself in an unforced manner, without external pressures, a certain highest common denominator of self-interest, what Bertrand Russell calls “the largest collective satisfaction of self-interest possible to the community”³⁹⁹, reveals itself. Thus the general will is *the revealed truth*.

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³⁹⁵ Voltaire, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

³⁹⁶ Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Mankind*, London: Vintage, 2011, p. 258.

³⁹⁷ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, II, 3, p. 203.

³⁹⁸ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, II, 3, p. 203.

³⁹⁹ Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 725.

What are the conditions for the appearance of the general will? The fundamental condition is true equality among the citizenry, especially economic equality. For where there is no equality, the self-interest of some carries greater weight than the self-interest of others. This is another major difference between Rousseau and the English and French liberals. They did not seek to destroy property and privilege, but only to prevent despotism; whereas he is a much more thorough-going egalitarian.

This first condition is linked to a second condition, which is the absence of “partial associations” or parties. For the wills of partial associations, which come together as expressing some common economic or class interest, conflict with the will of the community as a whole. Therefore multi-party democracy is banned: there must be a one-party state.

For “when intrigues arise, and partial associations are formed at the expense of the great association, the will of each of these associations becomes general in relation to its members, while it remains particular in relation to the State: it may then be said that there are no longer as many votes as there are men, but only as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and give a less general result. Lastly, when one of these associations is so great as to prevail over all the rest, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a single difference; in this case there is no longer a general will, and the opinion which prevails is purely particular. It is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to make itself known, that there should be no partial society in the state and that each citizen should express only his own opinion.”⁴⁰⁰

A third condition (here Rousseau harks back again to Athens) is that the citizen body should consist only of men. For women, according to Rousseau, are swayed by “immoderate passions” and require men to protect and guide them.

Such a system appears at first sight libertarian and egalitarian (except in regard to women). Unfortunately, however, the other side of its coin is that when the general will has been revealed – and in practice this means when the will of the majority has been determined, for “the votes of the greatest number always bind the rest”, – there is no room for dissent. For in joining the social contract, each associate alienates himself, “together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others. Moreover, the alienation being without reserve, the union is as perfect as it can be, and no associate has anything more to demand: for, if the individuals retained certain rights, as there would be no common superior to decide between them and the public, each, being on one point his own judge, would ask to be so on all; the state of nature would thus continue, and the association would necessarily become inoperative or tyrannical. Finally, each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is no associate over which he does not acquire the same right as he yields over himself, he gains an equivalent for

⁴⁰⁰ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, II, 3, pp. 203-204.

everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has..."⁴⁰¹

"In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free..."⁴⁰²

Forced to be free – here the totalitarian potentialities of Rousseau's concept of positive freedom become painfully clear. Thus of all the eighteenth-century philosophers, Rousseau is the real prophet of the revolution. The others, especially Voltaire, paved the way for it, but it was Rousseau who gave it its justification, its metaphysical, quasi-mystical first principle.

But the most striking characteristic of this principle, considering it was proclaimed in "the Age of Reason", was its *irrationality*. For the general will was not to be deduced or induced by any logical or empirical reasoning, nor identified with any specific empirical phenomenon or phenomena. It was not the concrete will of any particular man, or collection of men, but a quasi-mystical entity that welled up within a particular society and propelled it towards truth and righteousness.

This accorded with the anti-rational, passionate nature of the whole of Rousseau's life and work. As Hume said of him: "He has only *felt* during the whole course of his life."⁴⁰³ Thus while the other philosophers of the Age of Reason believed, or did not believe, in God or the soul or the Divine Right of kings, because they had reasons for their belief or unbelief, for Rousseau, on the other hand, religion was just a feeling; and as befitted the prophet of the coming Age of Unreason, he believed or disbelieved for no reason whatsoever. So religious belief, or the lack of it, was not something that could be objectively established or argued about.

True, in his ideal political structure, Rousseau insisted that his subjects should believe in a "civil religion" that combined belief in "the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of sinners; the sanctity of the social contract and the law".⁴⁰⁴ If any citizen accepted these beliefs, but then "behaved as if he did not believe in them", the punishment was death.⁴⁰⁵ However, the only article of this faith he argued for was the social contract...

Thus, as Barzun writes, "Rousseau reminds the reader that two-thirds of mankind are neither Christians nor Jews, nor Mohammedans, from which it follows that God cannot be the exclusive possession of any sect or people; all their

⁴⁰¹ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 6; pp. 191-192.

⁴⁰² Rousseau, *op. cit.*, I, 7; p. 195. More gently put, the people must be trained "to bear with docility the yoke of public happiness".

⁴⁰³ Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 717.

⁴⁰⁴ Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 286; quoted in Gascoigne, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

⁴⁰⁵ Gascoigne, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

ideas as to His demands and His judgements are imaginings. He asks only that we love Him and pursue the good. All else we know nothing about. That there should be quarrels and bloodshed about what we can never know is the greatest impiety.”⁴⁰⁶

So Rousseau may also be seen to be the godfather of ecumenism...

Superficially, this irrationalist attitude seems similar to that of Pascal, who said: “The heart has its reasons, of which reason is ignorant”. But Pascal, while pointing to the limits of reason, did not abandon reason; he sought the truth with great intellectual earnestness. Rousseau, on the other hand, in both his life and his work, appeared quite deliberately to abandon reason and surrender himself to irrational forces. In these forces he saw freedom and nobility, while others saw only slavery to the basest instincts. The revolution would soon allow the world to judge who was right...

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Eighteenth-century ideas about society, wrote L.A. Tikhomirov, though pagan and materialist in essence, can nevertheless not be understood except in the context of the Christian society that Western Europe still was – or, more precisely, “a Christian society, but one that has renounced Christ”, to use Aksakov’s phrase. This is especially true of the idea of the general will. Thus “in the very concept of the 18th century about society there is a clearly materialised reminiscence of the Church. From the Church was copied the idea of society as a certain collectivity defined exclusively by the spiritual nature of man. The cosmopolitanism of the new society, its mysterious people’s will, which as it were saturates it completely, which in some incomprehensible way rules all while remaining infallible in all its private mistakes, - all these are echoes of the Christian Church. They are in all points ‘the Kingdom that is not of this world’, which is squeezed into, without being contained in, the bounds precisely of ‘this world’...

“Contemporary society, torn apart by this basic contradiction, is not conscious of it intellectually and even denies it. The materialist understanding of life is so strongly rooted that people for the most part are simply incapable of seriously paying attention to the action of the spiritual element. ‘What contradiction is here?’ they say. ‘In truth, the valuable element of Christianity is constituted by its moral concepts and its lofty conception of personality. And it is this that the new era has held onto. It has cast out only the outdated, mystical element of Christianity. Isn’t that natural? Isn’t that how all progress comes about in the world, holding on to everything valuable from the past and throwing out the unnecessary old rags?’ In this, however, the present age is mistaken. It doesn’t understand that it is impossible to throw out the mystical principles from Christianity without thereby destroying the social significance of the personality created by it. Historically Christian moral concepts have to the highest degree exerted a positive influence on earthly, social life. However, this takes place only when the Christian remains

⁴⁰⁶ Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

completely a Christian, that is, when he lives not for this earthly life, and does not seek the realisation of his ideals in this life, does not put his soul into it. It turns out completely differently if the Christian remains without guidance by Divine authority, without a spiritual life on earth and without this spiritual activity of his having its final ends beyond the grave. Then he remains with infinite demands before an extremely finite world, which is unable to satisfy them. He remains without discipline, because he knows nothing in the world higher than his own personality, and he bows before nothing if for him there is no God. He is not capable of venerating society as a material phenomenon, nor bow down even before a majority of personalities like his, because from their sum there still emerges no personality more lofty than his own. The lot and social role of such a person is extremely unhappy and harmful. He is either an eternal denier of real social life, or he will seek to satisfy his strivings for infinity in infinite pleasures, infinite love of honour, in a striving for the grandiose which so characterises the sick 18th and 19th centuries. The Christian without God is completely reminiscent of Satan. Not in vain did the image of unrestrained pride so seduce the poets of the 18th century. We all – believers or non-believers in God – are so created by Him, so incapable of ripping out of ourselves the Divine fire planted by Him, that we involuntarily love this spiritual, immeasurably lofty personality. But let us look with the cold attention of reason. If we need only to construct well our earthly, social life, if nothing else exists, then why call those qualities and strivings lofty and elevated which from an earthly point of view are only fantastic, unhealthy, having nothing in common with earthly reality? These are the qualities of an abnormal person. He is useful, they will say, for his eternal disquietude, his striving for something different, something other than that which is. But this striving would be useful only if his ideals were basically real. But the disquietude of the Christian deprived of God knocks the world out of the status quo only in order to drag it every time towards the materially impossible.

“They err who see in the 18th and 19th centuries the regeneration of ancient ideas of the State. The pagan was practical. His ideals were not complicated by Christian strivings for the absolute. His society could develop calmly. But the lot of a society that is Christian in its moral type of personality, but has renounced Christ in the application of its moral forces, according to the just expression of A.S. Aksakov, will be reduced to eternal revolution.

“This is what the 18th century’s attempt to create a new society also came to. Philosophy succeeded in postulating an ideal of society such as a personality forged by eighteen centuries of Christian influence could agree to bow down to. But what was this society? A pure mirage. It was constructed not on the real laws and foundations of social life, but on fictions logically deduced from the spiritual nature of man. Immediately they tried to construct such a society, it turned out that the undertaking was senseless. True, they did succeed in destroying the old historical order and creating a new one. But how? It turned out that this new society lives and is maintained in existence only because it does not realise its illusory bases, but acts in spite of them and only reproduces in a new form the bases of the old society.

“It is worth comparing the factual foundations of the liberal-democratic order with those which are ascribed to it by its political philosophy. The most complete contradiction!

“Rousseau, of course, was fantasizing when he spoke of the people’s will as supposedly one and always wanting only the good and never going wrong. But one must not forget that he was not speaking of that people’s will which our deputies, voters and journalists talk about. Rousseau himself grew up in a republic and he did not fall into such traps. He carefully qualified himself, saying that ‘there is often a difference between the will of all (*volonté de tous*) and the general will (*volonté générale*).

“Rousseau sincerely despised the will of all, on which our liberal democratism is raised. Order and administration are perfect, he taught, only when they are defined by the general will, and not by the egoistic, easily frightened and bribed will of all. For the creation of the new, perfect society it is necessary to attain the discovery and activity precisely of the general will.

“But how are we to attain to it? Here Rousseau is again in radical contradiction with the practice of his disciples. He demands first of all the annihilation of private circles and parties. ‘For the correct expression of the general will it is necessary that there should be no private societies in the State and that every citizen should express only his own personal opinion’ (*n’opine que d’après lui*). Only in this case does one receive a certain sediment of general will from the multitude of individual deviations and the conversation always turns out well. With the appearance of parties everything is confused, and the citizen no longer expresses his own will, but the will of a given circle. When such individual interests begin to be felt and ‘small societies (circles, parties) begin to exert influence on the large (the State), the general will is no longer expressed by the will of all’. Rousseau therefore demands the annihilation of parties or at least their numerical weakening. As the most extreme condition, already unquestionably necessary, it is necessary that there should exist no party which would be noticeably stronger than the rest. If even this is not attained, if ‘one of these associations (parties) is so great as to dominate all the others, then the general will no longer exists and the only opinion that is realisable is the individual opinion.’

“In other words, democracy, the rule of the people’s will, no longer exists.

“Just as decisively and insistently does Rousseau demonstrate that the people’s will is not expressed by any representation. As a sincere and logical democrat, he simply hates representation, he cannot denounce it enough. When the citizens are corrupted, he says, they establish a standing army so as to enslave society, and they appoint representatives so as to betray it.

“He also reasons about representative rule in the section on the death of the political organism. Neither the people’s autocracy, he says, nor the people’s will can be either handed over or represented by the very nature of things.

“It is not difficult to imagine what Rousseau would have said about our republics and constitutional monarchies, about the whole order of liberal democratism, which is maintained in existence exclusively by that which its prophet cursed. This order is wholly based on representation, it is unquestionably unthinkable without parties, and, finally, the administration of the country is based unflinchingly on the dominance of one or another party in parliament. When there is no such dominance, administration is ready to come to a stop and it is necessary to dissolve parliament in the hope that the country will give the kind of representation in which, in the terminology of Rousseau, there exists no people’s will, but only ‘individual opinion’.

“And this political system, as the height of logicity, is consecrated by the all-supporting fiction of the people’s will!...”

Thus Rousseauism is not democratic in the usual sense. “Properly speaking, the principle of the people’s will requires direct rule by the people. Even on this condition the principle would not produce any good results. In Switzerland there is the right of appeal to the people’s vote (referendum) and the presentation of the basic laws for confirmation to the direct vote of the people. No useful results proceed from this for the reasonableness of the law; moreover, the practice of such a luxury of democratism is possible only in very unusual circumstances. In essence this is a system of ‘self-indulgence’, and not a serious resource of legislative construction.

“But the most important question is: what is this ‘people’s will’? Where, and in what, does it really exist? The people firmly wants one thing: that things should go well. A people with a history, which constitutes something united in distinction from its neighbours, which has not yet been shattered into insuperably hostile groups, has another will: that affairs in the country should go in a familiar spirit to which it is historically accustomed and which it trusts.

“And then in the innumerable individual cases from the solution of which the government is formed, the people has no will except in extreme cases – such as war or peace or the handing over of its salvation to such-and-such a popular person.... But in the everyday questions of government there is no people’s will. How can I have a will in relation to that of which I have no comprehension? In every question a few think well, a few think something, and 99 out a hundred – exactly nothing. Ivan has some understanding of one question, but Theodore not, while on another Theodore has some ideas, but Ivan not. But in each case there is the huge majority that understands nothing and has no other will except that everything should go well.

“It is from this majority that they demand that it should express its own opinion and its own will! But, you know, it’s simply comical, and besides - harmful. Let us suppose that there are a hundred people who understand the given question, and several million who do not. To demand a decision from the majority means only to drown the hundred knowing voices in the hundreds of thousands who have no thoughts on the matter!

“The people, they say, can listen to those who know; after all, it wants the best for itself. Of course. But the people who are knowledgeable are, in the first place, occupied with their work, which is precisely why they are familiar with the question; secondly, they by no means exercise their capabilities in oratory or the technique of agitation. In connection with the art of stultifying the crowd, flattering it, threatening it, attracting it – this disastrous, poisonous art of agitation – people will always be beaten down by those who have specially devoted themselves to political intrigue. And people are specially chosen to be intriguers, they are suitable for this trade because of their innate capabilities; they then exercise their capabilities; and then finally they are shaped into a party... But how is the man of action to fight against them? This is quite impossible, and in fact the people that is placed in this situation always goes, not for those who know, but for those who are skilled in political intrigue. It plays a most stupid role and cannot get out of it, even if they are completely aware of their stupid situation. I, for example, completely understand the role of the political intriguer and despise it, but if they were to force me to give my vote for measures which I am personally unable to weigh up myself, then of course I have not the slightest doubt that I would be fooled, and crafty people would shield me from the people who know and are honourable.

“Such is the reality of the people’s will. It is a toy of crafty people even if we have unmediated rule by the people. But unmediated rule by the people is practically impossible. It is impossible to collect, and it is impossible to turn the whole people into legislators. Somebody has to sow the bread and work in the factories. Finally, everyone has his own private life, which is dearer to him than politics. In generally, one has to resort to representation.

“Theoretically this is senseless. One can hand over one’s right as a citizen. But one cannot hand over one’s will. After all, I’m handing it over for future time, for future decisions, on questions that have not yet arisen. Therefore in choosing a deputy, I give him the right to express that will of mine that I do not yet myself know. Electing representatives would have a realisable meaning only if I were to hand over my right as a citizen, that is, if I simply said that I entrust the given person to carry out my political affairs and that I will not quarrel with or contradict whatever he does lawfully until the end of his term of office. But such a handing over of the very right of the people’s autocracy is the idea of Caesarism, and not parliamentarism...

“...A parliamentary deputy is obliged to express another person’s will. For a man with his own ideas this is not at all enticing, quite the opposite. He will enter a Constitutive Assembly, but not a parliament. He will rather remain at his own work and with his own ideas... Generally speaking, for a person who is able to make his own way in something more useful, the significance of being a deputy is not enticing. Moreover, it requires such external capacities as most of the best people do not have. Glibness of speech, pushiness, a capacity for intrigue,

superficial convictions. Such are the people elected for the trade of representation...⁴⁰⁷

“In general, in laying claim to the deputyship, I must join some party. I will be pushed forward not by the people, but by the party. I will be obliged to it for everything, I will depend on it, I will have to take it into account. The people is – for him who is being elected – the last thing to worry about. It has to be incited to give its vote, but it is not at all necessary to learn what its vote is. The election campaign is a hunt for votes, but in no way a poll of the people. Hares are not asked whether they want to land up on the table, they are caught; their own desires are interesting only in order to clarify how precisely they can best be caught. That is exactly how interested they are in the people during elections.

“And so the candidacies are put forward. Noise, fuss, walls plastered with proclamations and names, journeys, conferences, false rumours, mutual slanders, loud words, avaricious promises, promises that are consciously false, bribes, etc. The people goes crazy: before it knew little, now it cannot make out anything at all. The greatest art of this hunt does not consist in a preliminary preparation of the people, but in some concluding surprise, which will snatch away votes at the last minute without giving time to think again. Finally the triumphant moment has arrived, the votes have been collected and counted, the ‘will of the people’ ‘has said its word’, and the representatives of the nation gather in the *Palais Bourbon*.

“What happens then? During the elections they still had to reckon with the voters. But having received the votes and gathered in the palace, the representatives of the people can completely forget about it right until the approach of the following elections. During this period they live exclusively their own party’s life, developing all the qualities of cliquishness. The deputy, who in theory represents the will of the voters, has real obligations only in relation to his party...⁴⁰⁸

For, as Benjamin Disraeli said: “Damn your principles. Stick to your party...”

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Madame Germaine de Stael: “In a democratic state, one must be continually on guard against the desire for popularity. It leads to aping the behaviour of the worst. And soon people come to think that it is of no use – indeed, it is dangerous – to show too plain a superiority over the multitude which one wants to win over” (*On Literature and Society* (1800), in Barzun, *op. cit.*, p. 451). (V.M.)

⁴⁰⁸ Tikhomirov, “Demokratia liberal’naia i sotsial’naia” (“Liberal and Social Democracy”), in *Kritika Demokratii* (A Critique of Democracy), Moscow: Moskva, 1997, pp. 116-119, 165-170.

28. HUME: THE IRRATIONALITY OF RATIONALISM

At the core of the Enlightenment, writes A.C. Grayling, is “the idea that the methods and concepts of science should be applied in all domains of enquiry, as far as is consistent with the subject matter in question. Newton was enough of a scientist, despite his occult interests and hopes, to close his *Optics* (published in 1704) with the words, ‘if natural philosophy in all its parts, by pursuing this Method [i.e. scientific method], shall at length be perfected, the bounds of moral philosophy will also be enlarged’. By ‘moral philosophy’ he meant, as his contemporaries meant likewise, all of ethics, politics, economics, psychology and history. This makes the Enlightenment what it was: an extension of the scientific approach to wider domains of interest. It is the idea that underlies the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d’Alembert. Its consequences include among them the major political revolutions of the eighteenth century. Writing in the mid-eighteenth century David Hume [1711-1776] noted that there had been ‘a sudden and sensible change in the opinions of men within these last fifty years, by the progress of learning and liberty’. At the time he wrote these words they were more true of England than most other parts of Europe, and of the British colonies in North America; but they were true enough everywhere to be an important part of the explanation for the great revolution that transformed politics and society in those colonies and France, and eventually large parts of the world...”⁴⁰⁹

Hume more than anyone contributed to this vast expansion of the Enlightenment project. For “all of ethics, politics, economics, psychology and history” came within the purview of his, and his Scottish countryman Adam Smith’s, purview, not to mention theology and philosophy. Shocking and unacceptable though his conclusions were, he had the great merit of exposing the flimsy foundations of the whole Enlightenment project by a process of *reductio ad absurdum* – while remaining perhaps the most brilliant of the Enlightenment philosophers.

Hume, writes Sir Alistair MacFarlane, “is usually represented as completing an ‘empiricist’ movement started by John Locke (1632-1704) and continued by George Berkeley (1685-1753), but their approaches were very different. Locke made a valiant attempt to establish that all knowledge derived from experience. He regarded the mind as a ‘blank slate’ on which experience somehow inscribed knowledge. To articulate this idea, Locke differentiated between the *primary qualities* of objects, such as their solidity, shape and extension, and their *secondary qualities*, such as colour, taste, or other sensations they induce. Berkeley went further, claiming that there was no need to invoke the existence of matter at all, only experiences and the minds that perceived them. Finally Hume, the supreme sceptic, argued that we had no more warrant for believing in minds continuing through time than for believing in the existence of matter. From this intellectual ferment and upheaval, modern philosophy began to emerge via the work of Immanuel Kant...”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ Grayling, *The Age of Genius*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 259-260.

⁴¹⁰ MacFarlane, “David Hume (1711-1776)”, *Philosophy Now*, 119, April/May, 2017, p. 38.

Hume was unique among the rationalist philosophers of the eighteenth-century in claiming to prove, by the method of “experimental philosophy”, or reductionism, the irrationality of reason itself – that is, considered on its own and without any other support. His conclusion was that in real life reason is always buttressed and supplemented by faith. But then he went on to try and “demonstrate” that faith – faith not only in God, but in any enduring, objective reality – is itself irrational...

Hume’s *A Treatise of Human Nature* was written in 1739-40, shortly after he had had a nervous breakdown. It was subtitled ‘An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects’. This indicated the final end of the Enlightenment Programme: to subdue absolutely everything, even religion and morality, to the “experimental method”.

Hume first disposes of the idea of substance. Since our idea of the external world is derived entirely from impressions of sensation, and since we can never derive from sensation alone the idea of an object existing independently of our sensations, such an idea does not really exist at all. Instead, “the idea of a substance... is nothing but a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination and have a particular name assigned to them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection.”⁴¹¹

Following the same reasoning, Hume also disposes of the idea of the soul or self. There is no sense-impression which corresponds to the idea of a permanently existing self. For “self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable... and consequently there is no such idea.”⁴¹²

The most famous example of Hume’s method of reductive method is his analysis of causation. When we say that A causes B, the word “causes” does not correspond to any impression of sensation. All that we actually see is that events of the class A are constantly followed by events of the class B. This constant conjunction of A and B predisposes the mind, on seeing A, to think of B. Thus a cause in nature “is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other.”⁴¹³

Bertrand Russell analysed Hume’s teaching into two parts: “(1) When we say ‘A caused B’, all that we have a right to say is that, in part experience, A and B have

⁴¹¹ Hume, in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, New York: Image Books, 1964, volume 5, part II, p. 74.

⁴¹² Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁴¹³ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

frequently appeared together or in rapid succession, and no instance has been observed of A not followed or accompanied by B. (2) However many instances we may have observed of the conjunction of A and B, that give no reason for expecting them to be conjoined on a future occasion, though it is a cause of this expectation, i.e. it has been frequently observed to be conjoined with such an expectation. These two parts of the doctrine may be stated as follows: (1) in causation there is no indefinable relation except conjunction or succession; (2) induction by simple enumeration is not a valid argument...

“If the first half of Hume’s doctrine is admitted, the rejection of induction makes all expectation as to the future irrational, even the expectation that we shall continue to feel expectations. I do not mean merely that our expectations may be mistaken; that, in any case, must be admitted. I mean that, taking even our firmest expectations, such as that the sun will rise to-morrow, there is not a shadow of a reason for supposing them more likely to be verified than not...”⁴¹⁴

Thus empiricism is shown to be irrational. As Copleston writes, “the uniformity of nature is not demonstrable by reason. It is the object of belief rather than of intuition or demonstration.”⁴¹⁵ We cannot help having such beliefs; for “whatever may be the reader’s opinion at this present moment,... an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world.”⁴¹⁶ However, such belief cannot be justified by reason; for it “is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures.”⁴¹⁷

Hume’s attitude to belief in God was predictably agnostic, if not strictly atheistic. We cannot say that God is the cause of nature because we have never seen a constant conjunction of God, on the one hand, and nature, on the other. Also, “I much doubt,” he says, “that a cause can be known only by its effect.”⁴¹⁸ At most, Hume concedes, “the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence.”⁴¹⁹

In *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, published posthumously in 1779, Hume wrote: “For aught we know *a priori*, matter may contain the source, or spring, of order originally, within itself, as well as the mind does.” As Edward Skidelsky points out, “This is the seed from which the various 19th-century theories of evolution – of which Darwin’s is only the most famous – spring... After Hume, it is only a matter of time before agnosticism reigns supreme. The perseverance of belief is attributed to mere ignorance or else to a wilful ‘sacrifice of the intellect’. Unbelievers, on the other hand, are congratulated for their disinterested pursuit of truth ‘wherever it may lead’.”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 693.

⁴¹⁵ Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁴¹⁶ Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 697.

⁴¹⁷ Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 697.

⁴¹⁸ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁴¹⁹ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁴²⁰ Skidelsky, “England’s doubt”, *Prospect*, July, 1999, p. 34.

Morality is disposed of as thoroughly as the idea of God. "Reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will"; it "can never oppose passion in the direction of the will". For "'Tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger."⁴²¹ And in his essay justifying suicide he wrote: "the life of a man is of no greater important to the universe than that of an oyster."⁴²²

Reason can oppose a passion only by directing the mind to other passions tending in the opposite direction. For "it is from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises towards any object."⁴²³ Hume's conclusion is that "reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."⁴²⁴

Nor is this necessarily a bad thing, according to Hume... "In delineating the workings of propensities integral to human existence, Hume noted that Christian theologians and Platonists alike had condemned the appetites, the former deploring them as sinful, the latter demanding their mastery by reason. For Hume, by contrast, feelings were the true springs of such vital social traits as the love of family, attachment to property and the desire for reputation. Pilloried passions like pride were the very cement of society. Dubbing its denigrators 'monkish', Hume defended pride when well regulated; indeed, magnanimity, that quality attributed to all the greatest heroes, was 'either nothing but a steady and well-establish'd pride and self-esteem, or partakes largely of that passion'. Besides, 'hearty pride' was essential to society, whose hierarchy of ranks, fixed by 'our birth, fortune, employments, talents or reputation', had to be maintained if it were to function smoothly. A person needed pride to acquit himself well in his station - indiscriminate humility would reduce social life to chaos. Much that had traditionally been reproved as egoistically immoral he reinstated as beneficial."⁴²⁵

Hume's essential idea was that, in Edwin Burt's words, "Reason is a subjective faculty which has no necessary relation with the 'facts' we seek to know. It is limited to tracing the relations of our ideas, which themselves are already twice removed from 'reality'. And our senses are equally subjective, for they can never know the 'thing in itself', but only an image of it which has in it no element of necessity and certainty - 'the contrary of every matter of fact is still possible'."⁴²⁶

Hume's significance lies in his rational demonstration of the impotence of reason, of the fact that it can prove the existence of nothing - not only of God, Providence and the immortal soul, but even of material objects and causality, the bedrock of empirical explanation. But a dead-end for rationalism can only mean an opening for irrationalism. If reason can only serve passion rather than rule it, then the last moral barrier to the overturning of all traditional values is removed. And

⁴²¹ Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, book II, section 3.

⁴²² Hume, *Of Suicide*, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 482,

⁴²³ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁴²⁴ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁴²⁵ Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁴²⁶ Burt, *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, pp. 593-594; in Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

indeed, in Paris, where Hume was fêted much more than in his native Scotland, the revolution against eighteenth-century rationalism was only a few years away.

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Hume's hard-headed empiricism extended also to his historical writing and his political philosophy, which at least had the virtue of exposing the weak foundations on which the Whig version of history and the Lockean theory of the social contract were based.

In his *History of England* (1757), writes Tombs, "Hume wanted to efface the dangerous Whig-Tory 'party rage', which celebrated conflict and was not in his view a basis for rational and peaceful politics. He went about this principally by demolishing every Whig shibboleth with grim relish. Saying that he would 'hasten thro' the obscure and uninteresting period' of Anglo-Saxon England, he dismissed it as 'extremely aristocratical', oppressive and violent. There was no 'Norman Yoke': the Conquest had been beneficial, teaching the 'rude' Saxons 'the rudiments of science and cultivation'. The medieval struggles of parliaments were the work of a 'narrow aristocracy' and gave no benefit to the people; and Magna Carta brought 'no innovation in the political or public law of the country'. Anyway, freedom was not born in England: 'Both the privileges of the peers and the liberty of the commons' were copied from France...

"Liberty, said Hume, came not from resistance to the Crown, as the Whigs maintained, but from its growing power: 'It required the authority almost absolute of the sovereign... to pull down those disorderly and licentious tyrants [the barons] who were equally enemies to peace and to freedom.' The Tudors (as he was the first to call them) had laid the foundations of a civilized absolute monarchy, for Hume the best form of government then available. In the Civil War, the royalists had been right to defend legal authority, on which true liberty depended. The ideas of Pym and Hampden were 'full of the lowest and most vulgar hypocrisy'. 'Cromwel' [sic] had taken power by 'fraud and violence'. The Puritans 'talked perpetually of seeking the Lord, yet still pursued their own purposes; and have left a memorable lesson to posterity, how delusive, how destructive that principle is by which they were animated.' True liberty, he insisted, was not ancient but modern, a result especially of the growth of commerce and towns. It was not, therefore, an ancient Teutonic inheritance.

"Hume's boasted impartiality amounted to being scathing about everyone. But while claiming to be a 'sceptical Whig', he trampled on the Whigs with particular gusto: their 'pretended respect for antiquity' was only to 'cover their turbulent spirit and their private ambition'. Observing the political agitation of the 1760s, he wrote that the English 'roar Liberty, tho' they have apparently more liberty than any people in the World; a great deal more than they deserve'. History should teach them to be grateful for what they had, which was not the product of heroic struggle, but of 'a great measure of accident with a small ingredient of wisdom and foresight'.

“Hume claimed that he had been ‘assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even devastation’. Yet his book rapidly became the biggest-selling book of history to date, and it made him ‘not merely independent, but opulent’ – a reflection of most people’s anti-Roundhead sentiments. Hume was indeed detested by Whigs, who accused him of being a Jacobite; he was even attacked in Parliament by Pitt the Elder. He retorted that ‘I have the impudence to pretend that I am of no party’; but it is hard to imagine a more effective Tory history than one that ascribes liberty to the power of the Crown...”⁴²⁷

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As for the theory of the social contract, for Hume there never was any such thing as a “state of nature” – “men are necessarily born in a family-society at least.”⁴²⁸ The initial bonds between men are not contractual, but sexual and parental: “Natural appetite draws members of the two sexes together and preserves their union until a new bond arises, their common concern for their offspring. ‘In a little time, custom and habit operating on the tender minds of the children makes them sensible of the advantages which they reap from society, as well as fashions them by degrees for it, by rubbing off those rough corners and untoward affections which prevent their coalition.’ The family, therefore (or, more accurately, the natural appetite between the sexes), is ‘the first and original principle of human society’. The transition to a wider society is effected principally by the felt need for stabilizing the possession of external goods.”⁴²⁹

Men could continue living in primitive societies like those of the American Indians without the formal structure of government if it were not that quarrels over property led to the need for the administration of justice. “The state of society without government is one of the most natural states of men, and must subsist with the conjunction of many families, and long after the first generation. Nothing but an increase of riches and possessions could oblige men to quit it.”⁴³⁰

Later, quarrels between tribes lead to the emergence of war leaders. Then, during the peace, the war leader continues to lead. And so an ad hoc arrangement dictated by necessity and the need to survive would generate a permanent government. This is a gradual, organic process propelled by “necessity, inclination and habit” rather than an explicit, rational agreement.

Indeed, not only are governments not formed on the basis of consent: “almost all the governments which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest or both, without any pretence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people... The face of the earth is continually changing, by the increase of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the

⁴²⁷ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp.265-266.

⁴²⁸ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁴²⁹ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁴³⁰ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there anything discernible in all these events but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of? Even when elections take the place of force, what does it amount to? It may be election by a few powerful and influential men. Or it may take the form of popular sedition, the people following a ringleader who owes his advancement to his own impudence or to the momentary caprice of the crowd, most of whom have little or no knowledge of him and his capacities. In neither case is there a real rational agreement by the people."⁴³¹

English political liberalism, we may recall, arose from the need to justify the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the Protestant William of Orange usurped the throne. William's rule was tacitly consented to as being more in accord with natural law and reason than the despotism of James II, who was deemed to have broken some kind of contract with his citizens. But Hume undermines both the contractual and the rational elements in this justification, reducing the whole duty of allegiance to naked self-interest. In this way he is closer to Hobbes than to Locke - and to Marx than to J.S. Mills....

"Granted that there is a duty of political allegiance, it is obviously idle to look for its foundation in popular consent and in promises if there is little or no evidence that popular consent was ever asked or given. As for Locke's idea of tacit consent, 'it may be answered that such an implied consent can only have place where a man imagines that the matter depends on his choice'. But anyone who is born under an established government thinks that he owes allegiance to the sovereign by the very fact that he is by birth a citizen of the political society in question. And to suggest with Locke that every man is free to leave the society to which he belongs by birth is unreal. 'Can we seriously say that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners and lives from day to day by the small wages which he acquires?'

"The obligation of allegiance to civil government, therefore, 'is not derived from any promise of the subjects'. Even if promises were made at some time in the remote past, the present duty of allegiance cannot rest on them. 'It being certain that there is a moral obligation to submit to government, because everyone thinks so, it must be as certain that this obligation arises not from a promise, since no one whose judgement has not been led astray by too strict adherence to a system of philosophy has ever yet dreamt of ascribing it to that origin.' The real foundation of the duty of allegiance is utility or interest.

'This interest I find to consist in the security and protection which we can enjoy in political society, and which we can never attain when perfectly free and independent.' This holds good both of natural and of moral obligation. 'It is evident that, if government were totally useless, it never could have a place, and that the sole foundation of the duty of allegiance is the advantage which it procures to society by preserving peace and order among mankind.' Similarly, in the essay *Of the Original Contract* Hume observes: 'If the reason be asked of that obedience

⁴³¹ Hume, in Copleston, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer, Because society could not otherwise subsist; and this answer is clear and intelligible to all mankind.'

"The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this view is that when the advantage ceases, the obligation to allegiance ceases. 'As interest, therefore, is the immediate sanction of government, the one can have no longer being than the other; and whenever the civil magistrate carries his oppression so far as to render his authority perfectly intolerable, we are no longer bound to submit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must also cease.' It is obvious, however, that the evils and dangers attending rebellion are such that it can be legitimately attempted only in cases of real tyranny and oppression and when the advantages of acting in this way are judged to outweigh the disadvantages.

"But to whom is allegiance due? In other words, whom are we to regard as legitimate rulers? Originally, Hume thought or inclined to think, government was established by voluntary convention. 'The same promise, then, which binds them (the subjects) to obedience, ties them down to a particular person and makes him the object of their allegiance.' But once government has been established and allegiance no longer rests upon a promise but upon advantage or utility, we cannot have recourse to the original promise to determine who is the legitimate ruler. The fact that some tribe in remote times voluntarily subjected itself to a leader is no guide to determining whether William of Orange or James II is the legitimate monarch.

"One foundation of legitimate authority is long possession of the sovereign power: 'I mean, long possession in any form of government, or succession of princes'. Generally speaking, there are no governments or royal houses which do not owe the origin of their power to usurpation or rebellion and whose original title to authority was not 'worse than doubtful and uncertain'. In this case 'time alone gives solidity to their right and, operating gradually on the minds of men, reconciles them to any authority and makes it seem just and reasonable'. The second source of public authority is present possession, which can legitimize the possession of power even when there is no question of its having been acquired a long time ago. 'Right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority, maintained by the laws of society and the interests of mankind.' A third source of legitimate political authority is the right of conquest. As fourth and fifth sources can be added the right of succession and positive laws, when the legislature establishes a certain form of government. When all these titles to authority are found together, we have the surest sign of legitimate sovereignty, unless the public good clearly demands a change. But if, says Hume, we consider the actual course of history, we shall soon learn to treat lightly all disputes about the rights of princes. We cannot decide all disputes in accordance with fixed, general rules. Speaking of this matter in the essay *Of the Original Contract*, Hume remarks that 'though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard by which any controversy can ever be decided. To say, for example, with Locke that absolute government is not really civil government at

all is pointless if absolute government is in fact accepted as a recognized political institution. Again, it is useless to dispute whether the succession of the Prince of Orange to the throne was legitimate or not. It may not have been legitimate at the time. And Locke, who wished to justify the revolution of 1688, could not possibly do so on his theory of legitimate government being founded on the consent of the subjects. For the people of England were not asked for their opinion. But in point of fact William of Orange was accepted, and the doubts about the legitimacy of his accession are nullified by the fact that his successors have been accepted. It may perhaps seem to be an unreasonable way of thinking, but 'princes often seem to acquire a right from their successors as well as from their ancestors.'"⁴³²

Thus just as Hume had argued that there was no rational reason for believing in the existence of objects, or causative forces, or the soul, or God, or morality, so he argued that there was no rational reason for believing that a given government was legitimate. Or rather, governments are legitimate for no other reason than that they survive, whether by force or the acquiescence of public opinion. Legitimacy, according to Hume, is a matter of what the people, whether individually or collectively, consider to be in their self-interest. But since there is no objective way of measuring self-interest, it comes down in the end to a matter of taste, of feeling. And since there is no arguing about tastes, there is also by implication no arguing with a revolutionary who wishes to destroy society to its foundations...

No traditional believer, or even sane person, can accept Hume's philosophy in all its implications; but his fearless exposure of the false foundations of Western thought is invaluable.

⁴³² Copleston, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-153.

IV. EAST: THE AGE OF CATHERINE THE GREAT

29. THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE BALKAN ORTHODOX

It was hard to know which were the worse masters for the Orthodox of Eastern Europe – the Turks or the Austrians. The Turks kept their Christian subjects in poverty and ignorance, and there was a steady stream of New Martyrs of the Turkish yoke in all the Orthodox countries, especially in Greece. As for the Austrians, though superficially more “enlightened” than the Turks, they were a still greater threat to the faith of the Orthodox. In Romania, there was a third kind of oppressor, the Greek Phanariots, who served as regents for the Sultans...

Great danger threatened the Orthodox living in the Roman Catholic Empire of Austria-Hungary. Thus the Corfiot Eugene Voulgaris preached as far as the court of the Catherine II on the dangers of Austro-Hungarian Catholicism to the Orthodox of the Balkans.

The Austrian assault on Orthodoxy began as a result of the victories of the great French general, Eugene of Savoy, over the Turks. He was a man, writes E.H. Gombrich, “who Louis XIV wouldn’t have in his army on account of his plain appearance. In the years that followed he took country after country from the Turks [culminating in the Battle of Zenta in 1697]. The sultan was forced to give up all of Hungary, which then became part of Austria. These victories brought much wealth and power to the imperial court at Vienna, and now Austria too began to build magnificent castles and many fine monasteries in a sparkling new style which they called Baroque. Meanwhile, Turkish power continued to decline...”⁴³³

The change in the balance of power in the region was marked particularly by the Treaty of Karlowitz (or Karlovtsy) in 1699, when the Habsburgs acquired Hungary and Slavonia.

However, as Simon Winder writes, “the end of Ottoman rule in Central Europe raised immediately difficult questions about whether or not these new conquests were a reintegration of lost lands that had in the past been undoubtedly part of ‘the West’ or whether these were lands irredeemably tainted by ‘Easterners’”. The old Habsburg core, running from Lake Constance in the west to the Military Frontier in the east, was some three hundred miles across. The addition in a generation of the old Ottoman territories more than doubled the monarchy’s width, taking it to only a hundred and fifty miles from the Black Sea. The monarchy which had once been unmistakably Alpine, German and Italianate was now very different. Most ‘eastern’ of all was that the new territories were religiously pluralistic and in that sense liberal, with Lutheran Saxons, Jewish Jews, Calvinist Hungarians and Orthodox Serbs and Romanians. This picture would have been even more complicated if so many Muslims had not fled the advance of the ‘Holy League’, seeking safety in Bosnia and Thrace.

“The triumph of the West therefore perversely released a huge wave of Catholic intolerance on these religiously patchwork territories. This renewed religious

⁴³³ Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*, London: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 208.

intolerance had begun even before the Siege of Vienna with increasing discrimination against Protestants in Royal Hungary.”⁴³⁴

The persecution extended also to Orthodox Serbs and Romanians in the newly conquered territories...

The danger was particularly acute in Transylvania, which came under Hungarian dominion in 1687, and where many Romanians lived... As Barbara Jelavich writes, “the Romanian Orthodox majority of the population was effectively blocked from political influence. The control of the province lay in the hands of the Hungarians; of the Szeklers, who were related to the Hungarians and spoke the same language; and of the Germans, called Saxons, descendants of twelfth-century immigrants. The Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian churches were recognized, but not the Orthodox.”⁴³⁵

However, “in order to curb the Protestant influence in Transylvania,” writes Dan Ioan Mureşan, “Emperor Leopold issued a series of privileges in 1697 inviting the Romanians to union with the Church of Rome. The social and political emancipation implied by this document was too attractive for an ecclesiastical elite long constrained to a low-grade status. In 1698 the metropolitan of Transylvania, Athanasie Anghel, was consecrated in Walachia by the metropolitan, assisted by Dorotheus of Jerusalem, and in his signed Profession of Orthodoxy disapproved of both the liturgical interference of Calvinism and Roman Catholic dogmas. But scarcely had he returned to Transylvania, when the metropolitan organized two successive local synods (1698, 1700) that recognized the pope’s primacy, on the basis of the scrupulous retention of the Byzantine rite and the concessions of the imperial privilege of 1697. [This unia was formalized by a synod of bishops on September 4, 1700.] In April 1701 in Vienna in the presence of the emperor, Athansie accepted becoming a simple bishop under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Esztergom and to have the pope as his patriarch, severing all the ancient relations with the ‘schismatic’ Eastern Church. This surprising decision prompted his excommunication by the Orthodox patriarchs and strong opposition in southern Transylvania around the monasteries protected by the prince Brâncoveanu; meanwhile, the bishop of Maramureş did the same with the help of the Church of Moldavia. The successive Orthodox revolts of Visarion Sarai in 1744 and of Sofronie in 1761 obliged the Austrian authorities to accept the religious division of the Transylvanian church - roughly, Greek Catholic [Uniate] to the north of the river Mures, and Greek Orthodox to the south. In 1784, Emperor Joseph II promulgated the Edict of Tolerance and appointed a Serbian bishop of Transylvania, subject to the Serbian metropolitan of Karlowitz....”⁴³⁶

During the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1741-1780), the Romanian Orthodox of Transylvania and the Banat suffered great persecution from the Hungarian Catholics.

⁴³⁴ Winder, *Danubia*, London: Picador, 2013, p. 192.

⁴³⁵ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: vol. 2, Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 6.

⁴³⁶ Mureşan, “The Romanian Tradition in the Orthodox Church”, in Augustine Casiday, *The Orthodox Christian World*, London: Routledge, pp. 147-148.

Among those martyred for the faith then were SS. Bessarion, Sophronius and Oprea, and the Priests Moses and John.⁴³⁷

Thus St. Bessarion (Sarai) was a Serb who was born in Bosnia in 1714. Longing for the monastic life, he was tonsured at the Monastery of Saint Sava in the Holy Land in 1738. He returned to Serbia and lived in a cave for several years as a hesychast, and received from God the grace of working miracles.

About this time there was a great deal of unrest in the regions of the Banat and Transylvania because many Romanian Orthodox Christians had been forced into union with Rome. At Karlovits, Patriarch Arsenius had heard of St. Bessarion's holy and ascetical life, and asked to see him. After ordaining him to the holy priesthood, he sent him to defend the Orthodox Faith northwest of the Carpathian Mountains.

St. Bessarion left for the Banat in January of 1774, and was warmly received by the local people. Hundreds of people came to hear him preach, and many of them returned to the Orthodox Church. He encouraged his listeners not to abandon the faith which their fathers had passed down to them, but to remain firm and steadfast in it.

Preaching at Timishoara, Lipova-Arad, Deva, Orashtie, Salishtea of Sibiu, and other places, he would set up a wooden cross in the middle of each village, and people would gather to hear him. In each place, he was able to bring most of the people back into the fold of the Orthodox Church. This, of course, did not please the Roman Catholic authorities.

On April 26, 1744, St. Bessarion was arrested by the Austrian army while on his way to Sibiu. They took him to Vienna, where he was placed on trial, and then thrown into the Kufstein prison on the orders of Empress Maria Teresa. There he endured much suffering because of his confession of the Orthodox Faith. After about a year in chains and tortures, he surrendered his soul to God.

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Further east, in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, rebellion was seething against the Ottoman Empire. In 1711 Prince Demetrius Cantemir of Moldavia had taken the side of Peter the Great in his war with the Turks. But Peter lost, and Demetrius had to flee into exile in Russia.

In Wallachia, Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688 to 1714) was martyred for refusing to convert to Islam. For "on 15 August 1714, the Feast of the Dormition, ... he and his four sons and his advisor Ianache were brought before Sultan Ahmed III of Turkey. Diplomatic representatives of Austria, Russia, France and England were also present. After all of his fortune has been seized, in exchange for the life

⁴³⁷ Hieromonk Makarios, *The Synaxarion*, Ormylia (Chalkidike), 1998, October 21, pp. 450-454.

of his family he was asked to renounce the Orthodox Christian faith. He reportedly said: 'Behold, all my fortunes and all I had, I have lost! Let us not lose our souls. Be brave and manly, my beloved! Ignore death. Look at how much Christ, our Savior, has endured for us and with what shameful death he died. Firmly believe in this and do not move, nor leave your faith for this life and this world.' After this, his four sons, Constantin, Ștefan, Radu and Matei and advisor Ianache were beheaded in front of their father."⁴³⁸

It was not only princes who suffered... From the day of his consecration, St. Anthimus the Georgian, Metropolitan of Wallachia, fought tirelessly for the liberation of Wallachia from all foreign oppressors. On the day he was ordained he addressed his flock: "You have defended the Christian Faith in purity and without fault. Nevertheless, you are surrounded and tightly bound by the violence of other nations. You endure countless deprivations and tribulations from those who dominate this world.... Though I am unworthy and am indeed younger than many of you – like David, I am the youngest among my brothers – the Lord God has anointed me to be your shepherd. Thus I will share in your future trials and griefs and partake in the lot that God has appointed for you."

His words were prophetic: In 1714, as we have seen, the Turks executed the Wallachian prince Constantine Brâncoveanu, and in 1716 they executed Stefan Cantacuzino (1714-1716), the last native prince of Wallachia.

During this time, Anthimus gathered around him a group of loyal boyar patriots determined to liberate their country from Turkish and Phanariot domination. But Nicholas Mavrokordatos, the Phanariot appointed to rule the Principalities in the Sultan's name, became suspicious, and he ordered Anthimus to resign as metropolitan. When Anthimus failed to do so, he filed a complaint with Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople. Then a council of bishops, which did not include a single Romanian clergyman, condemned the "conspirator and instigator of revolutionary activity" to anathema and excommunication and declared him unworthy to be called a monk.

But Nicholas Mavrokordatos ("who reigned, intermittently between 1730 and 1769, six times in Wallachia and four in Moldavia!"⁴³⁹) was still dissatisfied and claimed that to deny Anthimus the title of Metropolitan of Hungro-Wallachia was insufficient punishment. He ordered Anthimus to be exiled far from Wallachia, to St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai. Metropolitan Anthimus, beloved of the Romanian people, was escorted out of the city at night since the conspirators feared the reaction of the people. However, Anthimus never reached Mount Sinai. On September 14, 1716, a band of Turkish soldiers killed him and cast his body into the river...

This rebelliousness of the Romanians, as Runciman writes, "frightened the Sultan and played into the hands of the Phanariots who wished to govern the

⁴³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Br%C3%A2ncoveanu.

⁴³⁹ Lucian Boia, *Romania*, London: Redakction, 2006, p. 75.

Principalities from Constantinople. The Phanar disliked any sort of Roumanian separation. It wished to keep the Ottoman Empire intact until the whole could be transferred to the Greeks of Constantinople. Its influence at the Sublime Porte secured the establishment of a new policy. Henceforward Phanariots from Constantinople should govern the Principalities. This had been the aim of the great Exaporite [Alexander Mavrocardato]. Shortly before his death he had obtained the Moldavian throne for his oldest son, Nicholas, whose wife, Cassandra Cantacuzena, had Bassaraba blood. Nicholas had been displaced soon afterwards by Cantemir; but in 1710 he was appointed to the Wallachian throne and proved his loyalty to the Sultan by spending two years in captivity in an Austrian prison. The Porte was impressed. It decided to entrust the thrones to the Mavrocardato clan and their kinsmen the Ghikas and the Rakovitzas..."⁴⁴⁰

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Though no friend of the ideal of Romanian freedom, Nicholas Mavrocardato and his successors did some good things for the Romanians. "Due to [the three Phanariot families'] connivance with the patriarchate, they initiated restored relations between the Great Church and the Romanian metropolitanates. Enlightened princes, they took measures to improve the situation of the Church and decided to put an end to the servitude of the peasantry in both Moldavia and Wallachia. It was under the Phanariot regime that Damashin of Râmnic accomplished the introduction of Romanian as a liturgical language, diffusing far and wide all the necessary liturgical books by means of the press. Metropolitan George IV introduced Romanian liturgical books in the Church of Moldavia and this movement was accelerated by even the Greek metropolitan Nikephorus after 1743. Romanian and Greek cultures were in this way collaborating to replace the old Slavonic tradition. These books were also largely used in the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania, unifying the Romanian language."⁴⁴¹

"Phanariot rule in the Principalities compared well with that of most Pashas in other parts of the Empire and with the rule of the last native princes. The corruption was not excessive by eighteenth-century standards. Justice was fairly honestly administered, without excessive delays. But the Princes were hampered by their uncertainty of tenure. For example, Constantine Mavrocardato, the Exaporite's grandson, was a conscientious and enlightened ruler who issued a reformed constitution for each Principality, making the incidence of taxation fairer and its collection less wasteful; and he improved the lot of the serfs, whom he planned entirely to liberate. But, though between 1730 and 1769 he reigned for six periods in Wallachia and four in Moldavia, the longest of these periods lasted for only six months. Such frequent coming and going made good government and a consistent policy almost impossible. In particular, the uncertainty encouraged the Princes to extract all the money that they could from their subjects. The Principalities were naturally rich and the princely income large; but Moldavia had to pay a yearly tribute of some 7,000 gold pounds to the Sultan, and Wallachia a

⁴⁴⁰ Runciman, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

⁴⁴¹ Mureșan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

yearly tribute of some 14,000 pounds. By 1750 the Moldavian throne cost the successful candidate roughly 30,000 gold pounds, and the Wallachian roughly 45,000. Transference from one throne to the other cost about 20,000 gold pounds. In a good year Moldavia might produce up to 180,000 gold pounds in taxes and Wallachia up to 300,000. But the Prince had not only to receive his outlay and pay the annual tribute. He had to maintain his court and administration; he had constantly to bribe Turkish officials, and he was expected to give generous financial support to the Patriarchate. In consequence he taxed his people to the utmost. If he remitted one tax, he invented another. The Roumanians began to sigh nostalgically for the less efficient but less exacting rule of their native princes...

“In view of the financial burden why did anyone ever wish to be Prince? Partly the desire came from a love of pomp and of titles and a taste for power, even though power was limited. A British visitor in 1817 remarked on ‘the extraordinary phenomenon of a pure despotism exercised by a Greek Prince who is himself at the same time an *abject slave*’. But chiefly it was in pursuit of the Imperial idea, the rebirth of Byzantium. Under Phanariot princes a neo-Byzantine culture could find a home in the Principalities. A Greek-born nobility could root itself in lands there; Greek academies could educate citizens for the new Byzantium. There, far better than in the shadowy palaces round the Phanar, with Turkish police at the door, Byzantine ambition could be kept alive. In Roumania, in Rum beyond the Danube, the revival of New Rome could be planned.

“But the plans needed the co-operation of the Church. The Patriarch had become the pensioner of the Phanariots, but he was still the head of the Orthodox community. The Patriarchate gained much from the connection. If from 1695 to 1795 there were only thirty-one Patriarchal reigns, in contrast with the sixty-one between the years 1595 and 1695, this was due to Phanariot influence at the Sublime Porte. Though the sum to be paid to the Sultan for the confirmation of a Patriarchal election was still high, the Phanariots saw to it that it was not now increased and they paid the greater part of it. They used their power and their wealth to ease the burden on the Great Church. But the Great Church had to repay them for their help. The reforms of 1741 and 1755, by reducing the power of the synod and therefore of the lay officials that dominated it, freed the Church to some extent from their influence over appointments. But they imposed their ideas upon it; they forced it to become an instrument of their policy.

“Many of the Phanariots’ ideas were excellent. They had a high regard for education. There had been several scholars and distinguished authors amongst them; and many of the princes, especially those of the Mavrocordato family, were men of wide culture, able to converse on equal terms with the most sophisticated visitors from the West. Under their influence the Patriarchal Academy of Constantinople had been revitalized. The academies founded at Bucharest and Jassy by the Hellenized princes of the seventeenth century were encouraged and enlarged. Greek scholars flocked to them, preferring to teach there rather than in the restricted atmosphere of Constantinople.... The Phanariot example was copied by wealthy patrons throughout Greek lands, who founded academies at Smyrna, in Chios, at Janina, at Zagora on Pelion and at Dimitsana in the Peloponnese, and

elsewhere. These schools were devoted to the necessary task of improving Greek lay education; and their founders and patrons were most of them men who had themselves been educated in the West. Their model was more the University of Padua than anything in the old Byzantine tradition. The Greek Fathers of the Church might still be studied; but the emphasis was, rather, on Classical philology and ancient and modern philosophy and science. The professors were loyal members of the Orthodox Church, conscientiously opposed to Latins and Protestants alike; but they were themselves affected by the occidental fashions of the time, the tendency towards rationalism and the dread of anything that might be labelled as superstition. They wanted to show that they and their pupils were as enlightened as anyone in the West.

“It was good for the Church to have to meet an intellectual challenge; but the challenge was too abrupt. The strength of the Byzantine Church had been the presence of a highly educated laity that was deeply interested in religion. Now the laity began to despise the traditions of the Church; and the traditional elements in the Church began to mistrust and dislike modern education, retreating to defend themselves into a thickening obscurantism. The cleavage between the intellectuals and the traditionalists, which had begun when Neo-Aristotelianism was introduced into the curriculum of the Patriarchal Academy, grew wider. Under Phanariot influence many of the higher ecclesiastics followed the modernist trend. In the old days Orthodoxy had preferred to concentrate on eternal things and modestly to refuse to clothe faith in the trappings of modish philosophy. The Phanariots in their desire to impress the West had no use for such old-fashioned notions. Instead, seeing the high prestige of ancient Greek learning, they wished to show that they were by culture as well as by blood, the heirs of ancient Greece. Their sons, lively laymen educated in the new style, were now filling the administrative posts at the Patriarchal court. As a result the Patriarchate began to lose touch with the great body of the faithful, to whom faith meant more than philosophy and the Christian saints more than the sophists of pagan times.

“Above all, the Phanariots needed the support of the Church in the pursuit of their ultimate political aim. It was no mean aim. The *Megali Idea*, the great idea of the Greeks, can be traced back to days before the Turkish conquest. It was the idea of the Imperial destiny of the Greek people. Michael VIII Palaeologus expressed it in the speech that he made when he heard that his troops had captured Constantinople from the Latins; though he called the Greeks the *Romaioi*. In later Palaeologan times the word Hellenes reappeared, but with the conscious intention of connecting Byzantine imperialism with the culture and traditions of ancient Greece. With the spread of the Renaissance a respect for the old Greek civilization had become general. It was natural that the Greeks, in the midst of their political disasters, should wish to benefit from it. They might be slaves now to the Turks, but they were of the great race that had civilized Europe. It must be their destiny to rise again. The Phanariots tried to combine the nationalistic force of Hellenism in a passionate if illogical alliance with the oecumenical traditions of Byzantium, a New Rome that should be Greek, a new centre of Greek civilization that should embrace the Orthodox world. The spirit behind the Great Idea was a mixture of neo-Byzantinism and an acute sense of race. But, with the trend of the modern

world the nationalism began to dominate the oecumenicity. George Scholarius Gennadius had, perhaps unconsciously, foreseen the danger when he answered a question about his nationality by saying that he would not call himself a Hellene though he was Hellene by race, nor a Byzantine though he had been born in Byzantium, but, rather, a Christian, that is, an Orthodox. For, if the Orthodox Church was to retain its spiritual force, it must remain oecumenical. It must not become a purely Greek Church.

“The price paid by the Orthodox Church for its subjection to its Phanariot benefactors was heavy. First, it meant that the Church was run more and more in the interests of the Greek people and not of Orthodoxy as a whole. The arrangement made between the Conquering Sultan and the Patriarch Gennadius had put all the Orthodox within the Ottoman Empire under the authority of the Patriarchate, which was inevitably controlled by Greeks. But the earlier Patriarchs after the conquest had been aware of their oecumenical duties. The autonomous Patriarchates of Serbia and Bulgaria had been suppressed when the two kingdoms were annexed by the Turks; but the two Churches had continued to enjoy a certain amount of autonomy under the Metropolitans of Peć and of Tirnovo or Ochrid. They retained their Slavonic liturgy and their native clergy and bishops. This did not suit the Phanariots. It was easy to deal with the Churches of Wallachia and Moldavia because of the infiltration of Greeks into the Principalities, where anyhow the medieval dominance of the Serbian Church had been resented. The Phanariot Princes had not interfered with the vernacular liturgy and had, indeed, encouraged the Roumanian language at the expense of the Slavonic. The upper clergy was Graecized; so they felt secure. The Bulgarians and the Serbs were more intransigent. They had no intention of becoming Graecized. They protested to some effect against the appointment of Greek metropolitans. For a while the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć was reconstituted, from 1557 to 1755. The Phanariots demanded tighter control. In 1766 the autonomous Metropolitanate of Peć was suppressed and in 1767 the Metropolitanate of Ochrid. The Serbian and Bulgarian Churches were each put under an exarch appointed by the Patriarch. This was the work of the Patriarch Samuel Hantcherli, a member of an upstart Phanariot family, whose brother Constantine was for a while Prince of Wallachia until his financial extortions alarmed not only the tax-payers but also his ministers, and he was deposed and executed by the Sultan’s orders. The exarchs did their best to impose Greek bishops on the Balkan Churches, to the growing anger of both Serbs and Bulgarians. The Serbs recovered their religious autonomy early in the nineteenth century when they won political autonomy from the Turks. The Bulgarian Church had to wait till 1870 before it could throw off the Greek yoke. The policy defeated its own ends. It caused so much resentment that when the time came neither the Serbs nor the Bulgarians would cooperate in any Greek-directed move towards independence; and even the Roumanians held back. None of them had any wish to substitute Greek for Turkish political rule, having experienced Greek religious rule....”⁴⁴²

⁴⁴² Runciman, *The Great Church*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 377-380. Thus, as J. Frazee writes, “the first Greek had been appointed to the patriarchate of Peć in 1737 at the insistence of the Dragoman Alexandros Mavrokordatos on the plea that the Serbs could not be trusted. The

“Everywhere,” writes Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, “former bishops who were native Bulgars and Serbs were deposed and replaced by Greeks. This canonical abuse of power was accompanied by forced ‘Grecizing’, particularly in Bulgaria, where it later served as the basis of the so-called Bulgarian question.

“This same sad picture prevailed in the East as well, in the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, where Orthodox Arabs became the victims of this forced unification. All these offenses, stored up and concealed – all these unsettled accounts and intrigues – would have their effect when the Turkish hold began to slacken and the hour for the rebirth of the Slavic peoples drew near...”⁴⁴³

Even in the eleventh century, when Emperor Basil II “the Bulgar-slayer” destroyed the First Bulgarian empire, and demoted the Bulgarian patriarchate to archiepiscopal status, he did not destroy the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church. Moreover, he appointed a Bulgarian as archbishop of Ochrid.⁴⁴⁴ And two centuries later, the Greeks were prepared to grant autocephaly to the Serbian Church... In the eighteenth century, however, the Greeks achieved – through the agency of the Turks – the suppression of Slavic ecclesiastical independence. Moreover, if, earlier,

Phanariots began a policy which led to the exclusion of any Serbian nationals in the episcopacy” (*The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1853*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 7, note 1). Again, Noel Malcolm writes: “By 1760, according to a Catholic report, the Patriarch in Peć was paying 10,000 scudi per annum to the Greek Patriarch. In 1766, pleading the burden of the payments they had to make under this system, the bishops of many Serbian sees, including Skopje, Niš and Belgrade, together with the Greek-born Patriarch of Peć himself, sent a petition asking the Sultan to close down the Serbian Patriarchate and place the whole Church directly under Constantinople... The primary cause of this event was not the attitude of the Ottoman state (harsh though that was at times) but the financial oppression of the Greek hierarchy. In the Hapsburg domains, meanwhile, the Serbian Church based in Karlovci continued to operate, keeping up its de facto autonomy.” (*Kosovo*, London: Papermac, 1998, p. 171). Again, Stanoe Stanoevich writes: “The Patriarchate of Constantinople was aspiring to increase its power over all the Serbian lands in the hope that in this venture the Greek hierarchy and Greek priesthood would abundantly increase their parishes. The intrigues which were conducted for years because of this in Constantinople produced fruit. By a firman of the Sultan dated September 13, 1766, the Peć patriarchate was annulled, and all the Serbian lands in Turkey were subject to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Immediately after this the Greek hierarchy, which looked on the Serbian people only as an object for material exploitation, began a struggle against the Serbian priesthood and against the Serbian people” (*Istoria Srpskogo Naroda* (History of the Serbian People), Belgrade, 1910, p. 249 (in Serbian)). Again, Mark Mazower writes: “A saying common among the Greek peasants,’ according to a British traveller, was that ‘the country labours under three curses, the priests, the *cogia bashis* [local Christian notables] and the Turks, always placing the plagues in this order.’ In nineteenth-century Bosnia, ‘the Greek Patriarch takes good care that these eparchies shall be filled by none but Fanariots, and thus it happens that the... Orthodox Christians of Bosnia, who form the majority of the population, are subject to ecclesiastics alien in blood, in language, in sympathies, who oppress them hand in hand with the Turkish officials and set them, often, an even worse example of moral depravity.’ The reason was clear: ‘They have to send enormous bribes yearly to the fountainhead.’ This story of extortion and corruption spelled the end of the old Orthodox ecumenicism, created bitterness between the Church and its flock, and - where the peasants were not Greek speakers - provoked a sense of their exploitation by the ‘Greek’ Church which paved the way for Balkan nationalism.” (*The Balkans*, London: Phoenix, 2000, pp. 61-62)

⁴⁴³ Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, London: Harvill, 1963, p. 280.

⁴⁴⁴ Dvorkin, *op. cit.*, p. 678.

in the eleventh century, they had had some excuse in that the Byzantine Empire was indeed the Empire of Christian Rome, and recognized as such throughout the Orthodox world, in the eighteenth century they were not even an independent nation-state, but slaves of the godless Turks...

It was not only the Slavs who did not want to be Graecized. We have seen that the Romanians were groaning under the tax burden imposed by the Phanariots. And "in 1752, Moldavian metropolitan Iacov of Putna convened a synod that formally interdicted Greeks from becoming prelates in Moldavia. The reaction paved the way to new Russian influence. The Russian-Austrian-Ottoman wars occasioned the continual presence of the Russian armies in the principalities throughout the eighteenth century. When Empress Catherine II took drastic measures against monasticism in Russia (1764), it was in Romanian monasteries, organized on traditional Athonite rules, that highly spiritual Russian figures found a haven."⁴⁴⁵

The most famous of the Russian *startsy* in Romania was Paisy Velichkovsky (1722-94), who, after some years on Athos, ruled the communities of Dragomirna and Neamț... He went to extreme lengths to see that his monks did not remain under the Austrian yoke. When the Russians and Turks concluded peace after a six-year war in 1774, "the Roman Catholic Empress (Austrian Empress Maria Theresa) began to demand of the Turkish Sultan those parts of the Moldavian land which he had promised her (for her help in the war). And so the Germans took the monastery of Dragomirna under their rule. Then our Father [Paisy] shed many tears: he wept bitterly over the devastation of the souls of the brethren and, on the other hand, he was crushed that the monastery should remain under the rule of the Papists, with whom the Eastern Church can never have spiritual peace. Likewise, the brethren also greatly grieved and bitterly wept...

"The Elder was so apprehensive about heresies and schism that... he left his monastery with all its possessions, movable and immovable, and went to Moldavia, saying to his brethren: "Fathers and brothers, whoever wishes to obey and follow his Elder, the sinful Paisy, let him come with me; but I give no one a blessing to stay in Dragomirna. For it is impossible to escape heresies while living in the court of the heretics. The Pope of Rome roars like a lion in other kingdoms also and seeks whom he may devour; he gives no peace even in the Turkish kingdom and constantly disturbs and offends the Holy Eastern Church, and how much more in the Austrian realm does he devour the living."⁴⁴⁶

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Towards the end of the century the Austrian Emperor Joseph II introduced a certain measure of religious freedom in his empire, including for the Orthodox Christians. (He also emancipated the Jews and the serfs.) However, other measures

⁴⁴⁵ Mureșan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁴⁴⁶ Schema-Monk Metrophanes, *Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1976, p. 158.

introduced by him caused great harm to the Orthodox. Thus the first known Masonic lodge in Serbia, "Probitas" from Petrovaradin, was founded in 1785.⁴⁴⁷ This was a sure sign of strong western influence; for, as we read in the *life* of the Serbian Martyr Theodore Sladich: "In the late eighteenth century, many confused Serbs who had grown weary under the Turkish yoke and who wanted nothing of the Roman heresy, decided to turn to the 'new' ideas of the Enlightenment which came first to Voyvodina from Western Europe via Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and other European university centers. One of these ideas was the reduction of the number of holy days celebrated, in order to facilitate new economic plans and conditions. Some one hundred holy days were to be erased from the liturgical calendar. Also, under the Turkish system, Serbian clerical education was rather limited. Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790), 'the enlightened despot' in Vienna, with the blessing of Metropolitan Moses Putnik (1781-1790) in Srenski Karlovci (Lower Karlovac), advocated the closing of a number of monasteries in order to generate revenue to build various educational institutions. One supporter of this idea was the famous Serbian man of the Age of Reason, Dositheus Obradovich (1739-1811). Beginning as a monk in the Monastery of New Hopovo, he then left for Western Europe, returning to Vojvodina and later to Serbia as a humanist philosopher, a fierce critic of Church practices, and as Serbia's first Minister of Education! In the end, this opting for the rationalism of the so-called Western European Enlightenment created within the pious Serbian peasantry a tremendous distrust of Church leadership, an abiding disdain for Church life and practices, and a many-faceted regression which was to last well into the nineteenth century.

"With all this in mind, it can now be easily ascertained why pious Serbs everywhere especially venerate St. Theodore Sladich. Quite often in his lifetime he was approached by both propagandists of the Latin Unia and by Serbian converts to Western rationalism who wanted him to leave the Church and embrace 'modernistic' ways of thought and living. Theodore was an ardent Orthodox and, due to his love for liturgical ritual and the vision of the doctrines of the Church, he became an outspoken proponent against the Latin Unia and the rationalistic innovations of Western Europe... In regard to rationalism and so-called 'modern' education, Theodore responded by explaining that the source of every true knowledge flowed from the Church – that all worldly knowledge can never replace that which a true Christian receives in church, God Himself educates the believer wholly: by acting upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the splendor of the images and of the building in general, by the fragrance of the incense, by the veneration of the Gospels, Cross and icons, by the singing and by the reading of the Scriptures. And most importantly, as Theodore once said: 'In no way can secular education bring about the greatest mystery offered by the Church: the cleansing from sins'."⁴⁴⁸

St. Theodore and 150 of his followers were burned to death by the Turks in 1788.

⁴⁴⁷ "Exhibition of Masons – 'Free Masonry in Serbia 1785-1918'", <https://ilovezrenjanin.com/kultura/izlozba-o-masonima-slobodno-zidarstvo-u-srbiji-1785-2018/>

⁴⁴⁸ Fr. Daniel Rogich, *Serbian Patericon*, vol. I, Forestville, CA: St. Paisius Abbey Press, 1994, pp. 150-152.

30. BIRONOVSHCHINA: THE GERMAN PERSECUTION OF ORTHODOXY

“Unlike after the reign of Ivan IV”, writes Hosking, after Peter “there was no disintegration, no Time of Troubles. But by the same token, there was no reaching across the social divide [between the new nobility and the rest of the country]. On the contrary, the chasm continued to widen during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. Peter had set Russia on the road to what the Marquis de Custine a century later prophesied would be ‘the revolt of the bearded against the shaved’”⁴⁴⁹ – that is, the Russian revolution.

In sharp contrast to the relative stability of succession under the Muscovite tsars, every single change of monarch from the death of Peter I in 1725 to the assassination of Paul I in 1801 was a violent coup d’état involving the intervention of the Guards regiments and their aristocratic protégés. The result was perhaps the nadir of Russian statehood, when the state was governed by children or women under the control of a Masonic aristocratic élite whose own support came, not from the people but from the army. Thus “in the course of thirty-seven years, Russia had, sardonic commentators remark, six autocrats: three women, a boy of twelve, an infant, and a mental weakling.”⁴⁵⁰

Before his death Peter had instituted a new method of determining the succession to the throne. Abolishing primogeniture, which he called “a bad custom”, he decreed “that it should always be in the will of the ruling sovereign to give the inheritance to whomever he wishes”.⁴⁵¹ However, it was only through a struggle for power among the nobles, Peter’s favourites, that his successor was determined.

This turned out to be his wife Catherine I, who was backed by the most ruthless of the favourites, Menshikov. A woman on the throne, writes Lebedev, “had never happened before in Great Russia. Moreover, she was not of the royal family, which nobody in Russia could ever have imagined up to that time.”⁴⁵²

Catherine soon died, and was succeeded by the fourteen-year-old Peter II, grandson of Peter the Great through his murdered son Alexei. He died on his wedding day, and was succeeded by Anna Ioannovna, daughter of Peter’s brother, Tsar Ivan. During her reign the government came to be dominated by three German advisers – Biron (her lover), Osterman and Münnich, - and Franco-German culture became dominant at court and in the aristocracy.

The way Anna Ioannovna came to the throne illustrates how the Orthodox autocracy had deteriorated... Seven members of the Privy Council, consisting mainly of Dolgorukys and Golitsyns, met to decide the succession. Prince Dmitri

⁴⁴⁹ Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁴⁵⁰ N. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 242.

⁴⁵¹ Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

⁴⁵² Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

Golitsyn argued for Anna of Courland. “‘She was born in our midst from a Russian mother and a good old family,’ he said – in other words, she was no upstart Empress Catherine and she had neither faction, nor known views, and she was single. Golitsyn suggested that ‘to make our lives easier and provide ourselves with more freedoms,’ Anna would be a figurehead, forced to accept only limited powers.

“‘Although we might achieve this,’ mused one of the Dolgorukys, ‘we might not hold on to power.’

“‘We’ll hold on to it all right,’ replied Golitsyn, dictating the terms to be offered to Anna, ending with the words: ‘Should I not fulfill any part of this promise, I shall be deprived of the Russian throne.’ This plan has been compared to the monarchy dominated by a landed oligarchy that developed in England after the Glorious Revolution forty years earlier, but really it was a brazen Dolgoruky power-grab, meagerly camouflaged by highfalutin ideals. To pull it off, they had to get to Anna before she discovered that this was just the scheme of six old aristocrats. So they closed the gates of Moscow and dispatched a Golitsyn and a Dolgoruky to offer her their conditions: the tsar would no longer be able to marry, appoint an heir, declare war, levy taxes or spend revenues – without the permission of the Council. This would have constituted the greatest change in Russian government between 1613 and 1905.”⁴⁵³

Through the conditions they imposed on Anna, writes Lebedev, “in essence the ‘superiors’ thereby abolished the Autocracy!”⁴⁵⁴

“As soon as this news spread through the Lefortovo Palace, the race was on to beat the cabal to Anna. Karl Gustav von Löwenswolde, a Baltic courtier who had been one of Anna’s lovers, dispatched a courtier to reach her first.

“That night, on 18 January [1730], Anna went to bed in the dreary town of Mitau not knowing that she was already empress of Russia.

“She learned the astonishing news from Löwenswolde. So on the 25th, when Princes Vasily Lukich Dolgoruky (uncle of Ivan and Ekaterina) and Mikhail Golitsyn (brother of Dmitri) arrived to offer her the throne, she knew what to expect. Now thirty-seven years old, a swarthy, deep-voiced scowler, she had cheeks ‘as big as a Westphalian ham’ and a face that her mother’s fool had compared to a bearded Muscovite: ‘Ding-dong here comes Ivan the Terrible!’ After twenty years of humiliation, this tsar’s daughter would have agreed to anything to get out of Courland. ‘I promise to observe the conditions without exception.’ She wrote – and prepared to leave for Moscow, where the Guards were now seething with outrage at the aristocratic coup...

⁴⁵³ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 150.

⁴⁵⁴ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

“... Many officers believed that autocracy was the only system that could govern Russia; and all resented the machinations of Dolgorukys and Golitsyns. The senior officers – the Generalitet – were organized by Osterman to sign a petition. Meanwhile Anna cultivated the Preobrazhensky Guards, served them with vodka with her own hand and declared herself their colonel.

“On 25 February in the Kremlin, when Anna majestically greeted the elite in the company of the Golitsyns and Dolgorukys, Prince Alexei Cherkassky, Russia’s richest man and figurehead of the Generalitet, presented the petition asking her to rule as autocrat.

“‘What right have you got, prince, to presume to make law?’ asked Vasily Lukich Dolgoruky.

“‘As much as a Dolgoruky. You’ve deceived the empress!’ insisted Cherkassky, supported by the Guards, who offered to kill Anna’s enemies. Instead, the empress invited the Golitsyns and Dolgorukys to dinner. Afterwards, they returned to the hall where the Generalitet asked her to assume absolute power – but she feigned confusion. ‘The conditions I signed in Mitau weren’t the wish of the people?’

“‘*Nyet!*’ roared the Guards.

“Turning on the cabal, Anna said, ‘That must mean you have deceived me!’ She sent for the signed conditions. ‘So this isn’t necessary,’ she declared, as she slowly tore the paper in half...”⁴⁵⁵

So only five years after the despotism of Peter the Great, the Russian autocrats had to appeal to “the will of the people” in order to justify their power! This illustrates the important truth that when a true symphony between Church and State is destroyed, the State veers between the seemingly opposite poles of despotism and democracy, unfettered absolutism and unbridled people-power. And if the Russian autocracy recovered, nevertheless the foundations had been seriously shaken...

No sooner was Peter dead than thoughts about the restoration of the patriarchate re-surfaced. “The very fact of his premature death,” writes Zyzykin, “was seen as the punishment of God for his assumption of ecclesiastical power. ‘There you are,’ said Archbishop Theodosius of Novgorod in the Synod, ‘he had only to touch spiritual matters and possessions and God took him.’ From the incautious words of Archbishop Theodosius, Theophan [Prokopovich] made a case for his having created a rebellion, and he was arrested on April 27 [1725], condemned on September 11, 1725 and died in 1726. Archbishop Theophylact of Tver was also imprisoned in 1736 on a charge of wanting to become Patriarch. On December 31, 1740 he again received the insignia of hierarchical rank and died on May 6, 1741.”⁴⁵⁶ For propagandizing the idea of the patriarchate Archimandrite

⁴⁵⁵ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, pp. 151-152.

⁴⁵⁶ See his short biography at http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_f/feofilakt_lopatin.php (V.M.)

Marcellus Rodyshevsky was imprisoned in 1732, was later forgiven, and died as a Bishop in 1742.⁴⁵⁷ Also among the opponents of Peter's Church reform was Bishop George Dashkov of Rostov, who was put forward in the time of Peter I as a candidate for Patriarch... After the death of Peter, in 1726, he was made the third hierarch in the Synod by Catherine I. On July 21, 1730, by a decree of the Empress Anna, he, together with Theophylact, was removed from the Synod, and on November 19 of the same year, by an order of the Empress Anna he was imprisoned, and in February, 1731 took the schema. He was imprisoned in the Spasokamenny monastery on an island in Kubensk lake, and in 1734 was sent to Nerchinsk monastery - it was forbidden to receive any declaration whatsoever from him... Thus concerning the time of the Empress Anna a historian writes what is easy for us to imagine since Soviet power, but was difficult for a historian living in the 19th century: 'Even from a distance of one and a half centuries, it is terrible to imagine that awful, black and heavy time with its interrogations and confrontations, with their iron chains and tortures. A man has committed no crime, but suddenly he is seized, shackled and taken to St. Petersburg or Moscow - he knows not where, or what for. A year or two before he had spoken with some suspicious person. What they were talking about - that was the reason for all those alarms, horrors and tortures. Without the least exaggeration we can say about that time that on lying down to sleep at night you could not vouch for yourself that by the morning that you would not be in chains, and that from the morning to the night you would not land up in a fortress, although you would not be conscious of any guilt. The guilt of all these clergy consisted only in their desire to restore the canonical form of administration of the Russian Church and their non-approval of Peter's Church reform, which did not correspond to the views of the people brought up in Orthodoxy.'

"But even under Anna the thought of the patriarchate did not go away, and its supporters put forward Archimandrite Barlaam, the empress' spiritual father, for the position of Patriarch. We shall not name the many others who suffered from the lower ranks; we shall only say that the main persecutions dated to the time of the Empress Anna, when the impulse given by Peter to Church reform produced its natural result, the direct persecution of Orthodoxy. But after the death of Theophan in 1736 Bishop Ambrose Yushkevich of Vologda, a defender of the patriarchate and of the views of Marcellus Rodyshevsky, became the first member of the Synod..."⁴⁵⁸

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Anna's reign was also known as *Bironovshchina*, that is, the period in which her German favourite, Biron, was the *de facto* ruler, subjecting the Orthodox Church to a true persecution.

⁴⁵⁷ He tried to explain that "the patriarchate is not only the oldest but also the only lawful form of government (understanding by the patriarchate the leadership of the Church by one of her bishops)" (Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, p. 263). (V.M.)

⁴⁵⁸ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, p. 261.

"In Biron's time," writes Bessmertny, "hundreds of clergy were tonsured, whipped and exiled, and they did the same with protesting bishops - and there were quite a few of those. 6557 priests were forced into military service, as a consequence of which in only four northern dioceses 182 churches remained without clergy or readers." ⁴⁵⁹

"This is what happened in Russia," writes Zyzykin, "when the State secularization which had begun under Alexis Mikhailovich led to the dominion of the State over the Church, while the authority in the State itself was in the hands of genuine Protestants, who did not occupy secondary posts, as under Peter, but were in leading posts, as under the Empress Anna. The ideology of royal power laid down under Peter remained throughout the period of the Emperors; the position of the Church in the State changed in various reigns, but always under the influence of those ideas which the secular power itself accepted; it was not defined by the always unchanging teaching of the Orthodox Church"⁴⁶⁰ - the symphony of powers.

In Biron's time, wrote Bishop Ambrose of Vologda, "they attacked our Orthodox piety and faith, but in such a way and under such a pretext that they seemed to be rooting out some unneeded and harmful superstition in Christianity. O how many clergymen and an even greater number of learned monks were defrocked, tortured and exterminated under that pretense! Why? No answer is heard except: he is a superstitious person, a bigot, a hypocrite, a person unfit for anything. These things were done cunningly and purposefully, so as to extirpate the Orthodox priesthood and replace it with a newly conceived priestlessness [*bezpopovshchina*]...

"Our domestic enemies devised a stratagem to undermine the Orthodox faith; they consigned to oblivion religious books already prepared for publication; and they forbade others to be written under penalty of death. They seized not only the teachers, but also their lessons and books, fettered them, and locked them in prison. Things reached such a point that in this Orthodox state to open one's mouth about religion was dangerous: one could depend on immediate trouble and persecution."⁴⁶¹

Biron's was a time "when our enemies so raised their heads that they dared to defile the dogma of the holy faith, the Christian dogmas, on which eternal salvation depends. They did not call on the aid of the intercessor of our salvation, nor beseech her defense; they did not venerate the saints of God; they did not bow to the holy icons; they mocked the sign of the holy cross; they rejected the traditions of the apostles and holy fathers; they cast out good works, which attract eternal reward; they ate during the holy fasts, and did not want even to hear about mortifying

⁴⁵⁹ Bessmertny, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁴⁶⁰ Zyzykin, *op. cit.*, part III, p. 263.

⁴⁶¹ Bishop Ambrose, in Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

the flesh; they laughed at the commemoration of the reposed; they did not believe in the existence of gehenna."⁴⁶²

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The humiliation of the Russians and Russianness under Biron was accompanied by the first real resurgence of Jewish influence since the heresy of the Judaizers in the fifteenth century.

Thus Solzhenitsyn writes, citing Jewish sources: "In 1728, under Peter II, 'the admission of Jews into Little Russia was permitted, as being people who were useful for trade in the region', first as a 'temporary visit', but 'of course, the temporary visit was turned into a constant presence'. Reasons were found. Under Anna this right was extended in 1731 to the Smolensk province, and in 1734 - to Slobodskaya Ukraine (to the north-east of Poltava). At the same time the Jews were allowed to rent property from landowners, and to take part in the wine trade. And in 1736 the Jews were permitted to transport vodka also to the state taverns of Great Russia.

"Mention should be made of the figure of the financier Levi Lipmann from the Baltic area. When the future Empress Anna Ioannovna was still living in Courland, she had great need of money, 'and it is possible that already at that time Lipman had occasion to be useful to her'. Already under Peter he had moved to Petersburg. Under Peter II he 'became a financial agent or jeweller at the Russian court.' During the reign of Anna Ioannovna he received 'major connections at the court' and the rank of Ober-Gofkommissar. 'Having direct relations with the empress, Lipmann was in particularly close touch with her favourite, Biron... Contemporaries asserted that... Biron turned to him for advice on questions of Russian state life. One of the consuls at the Prussian court wrote... that "it is Lipmann who is ruling Russia".' Later, these estimates of contemporaries were subjected to a certain re-evaluation downwards. However, Biron 'transferred to him [Lipmann] almost the whole administration of the finances and various trade monopolies'. ('Lipmann continued to carry out his functions at the court even when Anna Leopoldovna... exiled Biron'.)"⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² Metropolitan Demetrius Sechenov of Novgorod, in Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁴⁶³ Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti Let Vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, pp. 26-27.

31. HOLY BAPTISM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

“The one great theological controversy within Orthodoxy during the eighteenth century”⁴⁶⁴ concerned the proper procedure for receiving converts from heretical churches. The Orthodox Church believes that she alone is the steward of the Grace of the Mysteries of Christ, of which the first is Holy Baptism. In times of sharp confrontation with heretics, this point is emphasized, and heretics who seek admission to the Orthodox Church are re-baptized (strictly speaking: baptized for the first time), indicating that they were not members of the True Church before. Thus in 1620 the Russian Church under Patriarch Philaret decreed that Catholic converts to Orthodoxy should be re-baptized.

The Greek Church at the time adopted a more condescending approach, allowing Catholics to be received by chrismation alone (in which, however, the baptismal grace was believed to be imparted). In the eighteenth century, by contrast, Russian practice under the influence of Peter’s westernism became laxer, while the Greek practice became stricter. However, even in Russia pressure was growing for a stricter practice. Thus “in 1718 Peter the Great wrote to ask the Patriarch Jeremias III of Constantinople whether he should rebaptize converts and was told that it was unnecessary.”⁴⁶⁵ But in saying so Jeremias did not speak for the whole of his Church.”⁴⁶⁶ And in fact in 1755 the Constantinopolitan Synod under Patriarch Cyril V decreed baptism for all converts from Catholicism. This was felt to be especially necessary because Catholics no longer practiced triple immersion baptism, but only sprinkling, which, strictly speaking, is not baptism at all insofar as the Greek word *baptizo* literally means “immerse repeatedly”.

The decree of 1755 was also influenced by the success of Catholic propaganda in the Middle East, as Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia writes: “In 1724 a large part of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch submitted to Rome; after this the Orthodox authorities, fearing that the same thing might happen elsewhere in the Turkish Empire, were far stricter in their dealings with Roman Catholics. The climax in anti-Roman feeling came in 1755, when the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem declared Latin baptism to be entirely invalid and demanded that all converts to Orthodoxy be baptized anew. ‘The baptisms of heretics are to be rejected and abhorred,’ the decree stated; they are ‘waters which cannot profit... nor give any sanctification to such as receive them, nor avail at all to the washing away of sins’.”⁴⁶⁷

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⁴⁶⁴ Runciman, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

⁴⁶⁵ However, the patriarch did say that they needed chrismation (Decree no. 3225 dated 31 August, 1718, *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossijskoj Imperii s 1649*, vol. 5, St. Petersburg, 1830, p. 586). (V.M.)

⁴⁶⁶ Runciman, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

⁴⁶⁷ Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware), *The Orthodox Church*, London: Penguin, 1964, p. 98. The chief theologian arguing in favour of rebaptism was the Chiot layman Eustratios Argenti. Paradoxically, in a council in Moscow in 1766-67, the Russian Church renounced this practice and went back to chrismating converts under the pressure of some Greeks who were present.

With the increased penetration of Catholic influence into the Western Russian lands, the uncanonical practice of sprinkling began to be employed even in Orthodox baptisms, which elicited the following important encyclical on the question in 1754 by Archbishop Nikiphor of Sylvania and Kherson: "Because of my rank I am obligated to watch everything and see that everything be preserved fully and is not altered. Firstly, I draw your attention to Holy Baptism, which is the door to all the mysteries, the beginning of our salvation, the absolution of sins and reconciliation with God. It is the gift of adoption since in baptism we become the sons of God and the heirs of Christ, putting on Christ our Lord, by the word of Holy Apostle Paul: 'As many of you that have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' Without this, salvation is not possible. 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' (John 3:5)

"Discussing the holy mystery, I must point out that:

"1) The very word or name of this mystery, in the language initially used by the enlightened apostles to communicate the good news of the Gospel to us, actually means immersion, not pouring or sprinkling.

"2) The first institutor of baptism—the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, entered the River Jordan, and, having immersed Himself, was baptized.

"3) The Apostle Philip went down to the water with the eunuch, in order to baptize him. "...and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8,38).

"4) The Orthodox Church, according to apostolic tradition, has always baptized through immersion. This is seen in the 7th canon of the 2nd Ecumenical Council, which speaks of immersion; in the second homily concerning the performance of mysteries by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, it clearly states: 'Ye have confessed the salvific confession, and having immersed yourselves thrice in water, came forth out of it,' and in the words of St. Basil the Great: 'Through three immersions and the same number of invocations is the great mystery of Baptism performed.'

"5) The immersion into water, and specifically a triple immersion, and also a triple coming out of the water was not instituted arbitrarily or accidentally, but as the image of the Resurrection of Christ on the third day. 'The water,' says blessed Basil, 'has the symbolic meaning of death, and accepts the body as into a coffin.' How then, do we liken ourselves to the One Who descended into hell, imitating His burial through baptism? The bodies of those who are baptized in water are buried, in a certain sense. Consequently, baptism mystically represents the laying aside of bodily cares, by the word of the apostle: 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ' (Col. 2: 11). St. Cyril, in his commentary on the above words, says: "Thus, with the help of these signs you have represented the three-day burial of Christ because, as our Saviour was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, so in the first coming up from the water you symbolized the first day of His sojourn under the earth, and through your immersion, you symbolized the night. For, as one who walks in the night sees

nothing, and he who walks during the day does so in light, so you, having immersed yourself in water saw nothing, as if you saw nothing in the night, and having come forth from the water, you see everything as in daylight. You were both dead and then born. So the salvific water was for you both a coffin and a mother. Although we neither actually die, nor get buried, nor are we nailed to the cross, but only simulate this symbolically, we, however, do indeed achieve salvation. Christ was truly crucified, truly buried, and truly resurrected. He granted all this to us, so that we, in imitating His passions, would become partakers of them and indeed would achieve salvation.

'6) The Orthodox Church the world over to the present time baptizes through three-fold immersion and bringing-forth out of the water. The Greek, Arabic, Bulgarian, and Serbian churches all baptize in this way. Thus it is done in the Russian Church. Each one of these churches has a vessel in which it immersed unclothed infants with the invocation of the name of the Holy Trinity. There is no doubt that this practice of baptizing infants was the same in all of Little Russia. Holy Prince Vladimir, who lived and reigned in Kiev, accepted the faith and all its church ritual from the Greeks, who, both then and now, baptize through immersion. Does it not seem strange that those who had Greeks as their teachers, and those who were baptized by the Greeks, now do not baptize through immersion?

"All in all, I think there is basis to the assumption that the practice of baptizing through pouring on of water began in Kiev, and then spread throughout Little Russia. Such departure came from the time when the Uniates gained power over the Kievan metropolia. In the Roman Church, up to the 12th century, or better said, to the end of the 13th century, baptism through immersion was practiced. But then they began to baptize not only by pouring, but also by sprinkling. As a result, the Little Russians are the only Orthodox people who set aside immersion in favour of pouring. This has given schismatics reason to accuse us of neglecting apostolic tradition, which is preserved without change in the whole of the Orthodox Church. They accuse us of following the example of the papists who, along with various incorrect deletions, had the audacity to change Holy Baptism as well. The divine apostle Paul praised the Corinthians highly for their preservation of tradition with the following words: 'Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the Ordinances, as I delivered them to you' (I Corinthians 11:2). He entreats the Thessalonians to hold fast to traditions: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle' (II Thessalonians 2:15).

"The method of baptism by triple immersion is indeed apostolic tradition, which the Orthodox Church firmly and unswervingly adheres to from apostolic times to this day. St. Basil rather clearly points out the danger which lies in excluding anything that has been passed down to us from the mystery of Holy Baptism: "There is tribulation when someone dies without baptism, or when something in the mystery of baptism as it has been handed down to us is omitted."

"Why is it that we make omissions in something of such great importance? Why do we not keep this holy and apostolic tradition (i.e. baptism through immersion),

as it is kept by the entire Orthodox Church? What reason, what excuse can we give to explain why this mystery is performed differently by us? Why is it not performed the way it was handed down by the holy apostles, the way the holy fathers taught, the way the whole Orthodox Church always performed it and performs it even now? Perhaps someone will say that it is dangerous to immerse infants in water? But this excuse can be likened to one of which the royal prophet prayed about thus: 'Do not incline my heart into words of evil, to make excuse for excuses in sins.' The lives of His Imperial Highness, the Emperor and Great Prince Paul Petrovich and his royal children are very precious. They, however, without any hesitation and by the grace of God, were baptized by triple immersion in quite a deep vessel, which I saw with my own eyes in the imperial church. If such an example is not enough, then the example of the countless infants around the whole world, which the Church baptizes every day, or better said, every hour, by triple immersion with no danger to their lives, should suffice. Finally, if someone would say that cold water in the winter time could be dangerous for an infant's health, he must know that there is no law which states that the water used in baptism must be cold or near freezing. It is possible to use water at room temperature, which is not as cold as that which is found outside.

"Enough has been said, my beloved children in Christ, and honorable priests. Enough has been said for you not to baptize through pouring, but through immersion. Thus you will be among the first in Little Russia to set a holy example, and to achieve glory by preserving apostolic tradition. Likewise, by serving and keeping ancient traditions of the Church, you will be deserving of a reward from God. Having said all this, so that no one ignores this edict under the pretext that there were no concise directives, by our archpastoral authority we decree that all those under our spiritual rule:

"1) Strive that in every church there be a silver or copper vessel (or one made out of some other appropriate metal) which would have the shape of a bell or tub: narrow at the bottom, and as deep as it is wide, practical for use.

"2) Instruct priests everywhere that over the said vessel containing water the appropriate prayers be pronounced, and that infants be baptized in this holy water through triple immersion with the invocation of one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity with each immersion. In a word – that all be done in the same manner as the baptisms which take place in Great Russia.

"3) Strictly insist that the holy water after baptism not be disposed of in some unclean place, but poured out carefully, with due respect, into the basin where the priest washes his hands. The baptismal vessel should not be used for any other purpose, and should be kept in the church among the holy vessels.

"Besides this we decree that in every church there should be two smaller vessels made of silver, copper, or brass – one to hold holy chrism, which must always be stored in the church in an appropriate place, and another to hold holy oil, which is used during baptism. This vessel, along with a pair of scissors must be kept in a clean box, which must be decorated appropriately, so that those who are outside the faith would not have cause to accuse.

“For those who are obedient and are willing to comply with this edict, we promise God's blessings, eternal glory and our pastoral blessing.”⁴⁶⁸

It is clear from the archbishop's testimony that in the decades since the Kievan metropolia had been joined to Moscow, the uniate practice of pouring instead of immersion had penetrated into the Church in Ukraine (or perhaps it had done so even earlier). Whether the situation would have been better if Kiev had remained under Constantinople is impossible to say. However, this fact was important not only for the Ukrainians but also for the Russians, because, as we shall see, the Russian Old Ritualist schismatics seized on any evidence of western influence in their assault on the Russian Church and State...

Meanwhile, the Greeks continued with their strict practice, as is evidenced early in the nineteenth century by St. Nicodemos of Mount Athos, who declared that the baptism and paptism administered by heretics and schismatics was unacceptable, and that they ought to be baptized when they return to the Orthodoxy of the Catholic [i.e. Orthodox] Church for the following reasons:

“First, because there is but one baptism, and because this is to be found only in the Catholic [Orthodox] Church. Heretics and schismatics, on the other hand, being outside of the Catholic Church, have, in consequence, not even the one baptism.

“Secondly, the water used in baptism must first be purified and be sanctified by means of prayers of the priests, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit; afterwards it can purify and sanctify the person being baptized therein. But heretics and schismatics are neither priests, being in fact rather sacrilegists; neither clean and pure, being in fact impure and unclean; neither holy, as not having any Holy Spirit. So neither have they any baptism.

“Thirdly, through baptism in the Catholic Church there is given a remission of sins. But through the baptism administered by heretics and schismatics, inasmuch as it is outside of the Church, how can any remission of sins be given?

“Fourthly the person being baptized must, after he is baptized be anointed with the myrrh prepared from olive oil and various spices, which has been sanctified by visitation of the Holy Spirit. But how can a heretic sanctify any such myrrh when as a matter of fact he has no Holy Spirit because of him being separated from there on account of heresy and schism?

“Fifthly, the priest must pray to God for the salvation of the one being baptized. But how can a heretic or a schismatic be listened to by God when, as we have said, he is a sacrilegist and a sinner (not so much on account of his works, but rather on account of the heresy or schism, these being the greatest sin of all sins), at a time when the Bible says that God does not listen to sinners.

⁴⁶⁸ Archbishop Nikiphor, *Against Baptism By Pouring*, translated in *Orthodox Life*, January-February, 1990, oo. 16-19.

“Sixthly, because the baptism administered by heretics and schismatics cannot be acceptable to God as baptism, since they are enemies and foes of God, and are called anti-Christ by John.”

32. TSARITSA ELIZABETH

By the mercy of God, the Empress Anna died, and although Biron was appointed regent the next day, the Germans fell out amongst themselves. So in 1741, after the brief reign of Ivan VI, Elizabeth, a daughter of Peter the Great, came to the throne. Known as “the Russian Venus” because of her great beauty, she was sensual, extravagant and vain, a true daughter of her father. Nevertheless, she restored Russianness and Orthodoxy to the State.

Serhii Plokyh writes: “Anna’s rule produced a widespread sense of resentment and anti-Western feeling among the imperial elites. With Anna’s death and the accession to the Russian throne of Peter’s daughter Elizabeth in 1741, the anti-Western attitude became a sea change. Elizabeth was regarded and fashioned herself as a quintessentially Russian princess, and it was ‘the faithful sons of Russia’, the guards officers, who brought her to power as a true Russian princess. A clear indication of the change was the simple fact that while Elizabeth, like Anna, remained officially unmarried, her favourite and morganatic husband was not a ‘German’ but a ‘Russian’. The son of a Ukrainian Cossack and, in the appellation of the time, a Little Russian, Oleksii Rozum made his way to St. Petersburg as a talented singer and became Elizabeth’s favourite courtier before her ascension to the throne. Once she took the throne, the former Cossack became a count, and later field marshal under the name Alexei Razumovsky.⁴⁶⁹ Having little interest in affairs of state, Razumovsky, unlike Biron, kept a low profile: court regulars referred to him as the ‘night emperor’.

“The rule of Elizabeth also witnessed a backlash against foreigners in the Russian service. What had begun as a trickle under Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich became a flood during the reign of his son, Peter I, and continued under his successors. Resentment and distrust of foreigners in government were accompanied by an unprecedented growth of Russian national assertiveness. It was during Elizabeth’s rule that key discussions took place about the empire’s history and literary language – two major elements of all nation-building projects in early modern Europe. Peter’s all-Russian empire was about to acquire an all-Russian nation, all-Russian history and all-Russian language – all during the age of Elizabeth.

“‘Origines gentis et nominis Russorum’, or ‘The Origins of the Russian People and Name’, was the title of a talk given by Gerhard Friedrich Müller at a meeting of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences on August 23, 1749. Müller was an ethnic German who came to St. Petersburg in 1725, the year in which Tsar Peter I had founded the Imperial Academy of Sciences as a research and teaching institution. The presentation did not go well. Müller’s research pointed to the Scandinavian origins of the Rus’ name and dynasty. These conclusions would have been

⁴⁶⁹ Alexei’s nephew, Andrei Kirillovich Razumovsky (1752-1836), was the Russian Ambassador to the Congress of Vienna in 1815. He commissioned the famous “Razumovsky” quartets (opus 59, nos. 1, 2 and 3) of Ludwig van Beethoven, and Beethoven dedicated his fifth and sixth symphonies to him. (V.M.)

welcomed by many Muscovite rulers of previous centuries, including Ivan the Terrible, who traced his origins through the Rurikids to Emperor Augustus and considered himself a German. But in 1747, Müller's arguments were found not only unpatriotic but also damaging to Russia's prestige. The academy cancelled his scheduled longer presentation and appointed a commission to look into his research. Müller's address set off the first academic debate in Russian historiography, and the outcome influenced its development for decades, if not centuries to come.

"Patriotic fever was running high in St. Petersburg in the wake of another Russian war with Sweden (1741-1743). But the academy's negative reaction to Müller's conclusion was more than a reflection of a short-lived patriotic upswing. Imperial officials had been greatly concerned about patriotism in the academy since the beginning of Elizabeth's rule. In the early 1740s, the academy was hit by defections – scholars, most of them Germans, were leaving the Russian service and going to Europe to publish research conducted in the Russian Empire. This was a blow to Russia's prestige, to say nothing of its academic potential. In 1744, the authorities posted guards in the academy's buildings, restricting access to its library, archives, and research materials. Foreigners were no longer to be trusted.

"Two years later, the imperial court intervened in the affairs of the academy by appointing a new president. He was Kirill Razumovsky (Kyrylo Rozumovsky), the younger brother of the empress's favourite, Aleksei Razumovsky. A recent graduate of the University of Göttingen, he was only eighteen at the time of the appointment. His age seemed less important than his closeness to Elizabeth and the fact that he was the first 'Russian' president of the academy, which had been chaired, controlled, and run largely by foreigners – four previous presidents had come from abroad.

"It fell to Razumovsky and his close adviser Grigorii Teplov, a former disciple of Prokopovych and an adjunct at the academy, to deal with the 'historiography crisis'. They appointed a commission to investigate and debate Müller's findings. The debates in the academic commission took up twenty-meetings between the fall of 1749 and the spring of 1750. Müller's main opponent in the historiographic debates was an ethnic Russia, Mikhail Lomonosov. The son of a fisherman from Russia's north, Lomonosov was known largely for his accomplishments as a chemist. But then new age of national mobilization called for universality, and he branched out of the sciences into history and linguistics, becoming an amateurish but also forceful and influential supporter of the nativist approach to both. Lomonosov argued that Müller's work glorified 'the Scandinavians or Swedes', while 'doing almost nothing to illuminate our history'. Kirill Razumovsky took Lomonosov's side in the historiographic debate on the origins of Rus'. The print run of Müller's dissertation on that subject was destroyed.

"For Lomonosov the main inspiration in his debates with Müller was the outdated and often inaccurate Kyivan *Synopsis* of 1674. But it was the ideas of the book rather than the facts that mattered most. This book on the origins of the Rus' nation had finally found not only publishers but also readers in Russia who

appreciated its focus on the origins of the nation, as opposed to the state and dynasty. Lomonosov wanted the academy to adopt the *Synopsis* as its standard history textbook. In accepting its historical explanation of the origins of the Rus' people, Lomonosov embraced a historical myth that stressed the unity of the Great and Little Russian heirs to the medieval Kyiv state, separating them from the European West..."⁴⁷⁰

Not only Russianness but also Orthodoxy was restored under Elizabeth.⁴⁷¹ "Chistovich writes: 'The Synod remembered its sufferers under Elizabeth; a true resurrection from the dead took place. Hundreds, thousands of people who had disappeared without trace and had been taken for dead came to life again. After the death of the Empress Anna the released sufferers dragged themselves back to their homeland, or the places of their former service, from all the distant corners of Siberia – some with torn out nostrils, others with their tongue cut out, others with legs worn through by chains, others with broken spines or arms disfigured from tortures.' The Church preachers under Elizabeth attributed this to the hatred for the Russian faith and the Russian people of Biron, Osterman, Minikh, Levenvold and other Lutheran Germans who tried to destroy the very root of eastern piety. They were of this opinion because most of all there suffered the clergy – hierarchs, priests and monks..."⁴⁷²

In 1742 the Synod was restored its right to make the initial judgement on clerical offenders, even with regard to political matters. "The Synod," writes Vladimir Rusak, "was re-established in its former dignity, as the highest ecclesiastical institution with the title 'Ruling'.

"The members of the Synod (Archbishop Ambrose Yushkevich of Novgorod, Metropolitan Arseny Matseyevich of Rostov, both Ukrainians) gave a report to the empress in which they wrote that if it was not pleasing to her to restore the patriarchate, then let her at least give the Synod a president and body composed only of hierarchs. In addition, they petitioned for the removal of the post of over-procurator. The empress did not go to the lengths of such serious reforms, but she did agree to return to the clergy its property and submit the College of Economics to the Synod."⁴⁷³

However, writes Fr. Alexei Nikolin, "there was a significant rise in the significance of the over-procurator, whose post was re-established (during the reign of Anna Ivanovna it had been suspended). Prince Ya.P. Shakhovskoj, who was appointed to the post, was given the right to give daily personal reports to the empress, who entrusted him personally with receiving from her all the ukazes and oral directives for the Synodal administration. Thereby, however, there arose a very ambiguous state of affairs. On the one hand, the Synod's affairs were being reported directly to the supreme power, but on the other the idea of the State's

⁴⁷⁰ Plokhy, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-48.

⁴⁷¹ The first move in that direction was taken shortly after Peter's death, in 1728, when Stefan Yavorsky's anti-Lutheran tract, *Kamen Vero* (The Rock of Faith), was published.

⁴⁷² Zyzynkin, *op. cit.*, part III, p. 262.

⁴⁷³ Vladimir Rusak, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi*, 1993, p. 273.

interest, and its priority over the ecclesiastical interest, was being constantly emphasized. The strengthening of the over-procurator's power was aided by an *ukaz* of the empress introducing a new system of Church administration in the dioceses – the consistories. In these institutions a leading role was acquired by the secretaries, who were appointed by the over-procurator, controlled by him and accountable to him. However, the noticeable tendency evident in these years towards a strengthening of the over-procurator's executive power in the Church was restrained by the personal goodwill of the empress towards the clergy."⁴⁷⁴

Elizabeth "ordered crackdowns on Old Believers. There had been ineffective decrees to expel the Jews in 1727 and 1740. [She] ordered these decrees to be applied."⁴⁷⁵

In December, 1742, the tsaritsa forbade residence to Jews throughout the Empire, since "from such haters of the name of Christ the Saviour great harm for our subjects must be expected". 140 Jews were expelled from Ukraine. But then the wax trade reported to the Senate that "banning the Jews from bringing in merchandise will bring with it a diminution of state income". The Senate itself added its voice to this complaint, telling the empress that her decree had caused great harm to trade in Ukraine and the Baltic, with a corresponding loss in customs receipts. But the empress replied: "I do not want any profit from the enemies of Christ"... However, it seems likely that the empress' decree, like similar earlier decrees, remained a dead letter...⁴⁷⁶

"On Elizabeth's accession to the throne," writes V.F. Ivanov, "a popular movement appeared, directed against foreigners, which established itself in the two following reigns. The lower classes were waiting for the expulsion of the foreigners from Russia. But nothing, except some street brawls with foreigners, took place.

"A reaction began against the domination of the foreigners who despised everything Russian, together with a weak turn towards a national regime...

"During the 20 years of Elizabeth's reign Russia relaxed after her former oppression, and the Russian Church came to know peaceful days...

"The persecution of the Orthodox Church begun under Peter I and continued under Anna Ivanovna began to weaken somewhat, and the clergy raised their voices...

"Under Elizabeth there began the elevation to the hierarchical rank of Great Russian monks, while earlier the hierarchs had been mainly appointed from the Little Russians...

⁴⁷⁴ Nikolin, *Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo* (Church and State), Moscow, 1997, p. 96.

⁴⁷⁵ Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 183, note.

⁴⁷⁶ Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 29.

“Under Elizabeth the Protestants who remained at court did not begin to speak against Orthodoxy, whereas in the reign of Anna Ivanovna they had openly persecuted it. Nevertheless, Protestantism as a weapon of the Masons in their struggle with Orthodoxy had acquired a sufficiently strong position in the previous reigns. The soil had been prepared, the minds of society were inclined to accept the Freemasons.

“‘In the reign of Elizabeth German influence began to be replaced by French,’ an investigator of this question tells us. ‘At this time the West European intelligentsia was beginning to be interested in so-called French philosophy; even governments were beginning to be ruled by its ideas... In Russia, as in Western Europe, a fashion for this philosophy appeared. In the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna a whole generation of its venerators was already being reared. They included such highly placed people as Count M. Vorontsov and Shuvalov, Princess Dashkova and the wife of the heir to the throne, Catherine Alexeyevna. But neither Elizabeth nor Peter III sympathized with it.

“Individual Masons from Peter’s time were organizing themselves. Masonry was developing strongly...”⁴⁷⁷

Nevertheless, “in society people began to be suspicious of Masonry. Masons in society acquired the reputation of being heretics and apostates... Most of Elizabethan society considered Masonry to be an atheistic and criminal matter...

“The Orthodox clergy had also been hostile to Masonry for a long time already. Preachers at the court began to reprove ‘animal-like and godless atheists’ and people ‘of Epicurean and Freemasonic morals and mentality’ in their sermons. The sermons of Gideon Antonsky, Cyril Florinsky, Arsenius Matseyevich, Cyril Lyashevetsky, Gideon Krinovsky and others reflected the struggle that was taking place between the defenders of Orthodoxy and their enemies, the Masons.”⁴⁷⁸

It was in Elizabeth’s reign that the Secret Chancellery made an inquiry into the nature and membership of the Masonic lodges. The inquiry found that Masonry was defined by its members as “nothing else than the key of friendship and eternal brotherhood”. It was found not to be dangerous and was allowed to continue, “although under police protection”.⁴⁷⁹

Masonry was particularly strong in the university⁴⁸⁰ and among the cadets. “The cadet corps was the laboratory of the future revolution. From the cadet corps there came the representatives of Russian progressive literature, which was penetrated with Masonic ideals....

⁴⁷⁷ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 160, 161, 162-163.

⁴⁷⁸ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 165, 166.

⁴⁷⁹ Rhoda, “Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”.

⁴⁸⁰ The only Russian university at that time was Moscow university, founded in 1755. (V.M.)

According to Ivanov, "Towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna Masonry openly revealed its real nature. At this time a bitter struggle was developing in the West between Austria and Prussia for the Austrian succession. In 1756 there began the Seven-Year war, in which Russia took an active part.

"The Mason Frederick II was again striving to subject Russia to his influence.

"This aim was to be attained completely by means of the defeat of the Russian army and her capitulation before the 'genius' commander.

"And one has to say that everything promised victory for Frederick II over the Russian army.

"He had a very well trained, armed and provisioned army with talented officers.

"Frederick was undoubtedly helped by the Masons - Germans who had taken high administrative and military posts in Russia.

"The noted James Cate, the great provincial master for the whole of Russia, was a field-marshal of the Russian army, but in fact carried out the role of Frederick's spy; in 1747 he fled [Russia] to serve him and was killed in battle for his adored and lofty brother.

"In general the Russian army was teeming with Prussian spies and Russian Mason-traitors.

"The Russian army was deliberately not prepared...

"And at the head of the Russian army the Masons placed Apraxin, who gave no orders, displayed an unforgivable slowness and finally entered upon the path of open betrayal.

"The victory at Gross-Egersford was won exclusively thanks to the courage and bravery of the Russian soldiers, and was not used as it should have been by the Russian commander-in-chief. Apraxin had every opportunity to cross conquered Prussia, extend a hand to the Swedes in Pomerania and appear before the walls of Berlin. But instead of moving forward he stopped at Tilsit and refused to use the position that was favourable for the Russian army... Apraxin was only fulfilling his duty of a Mason, which obliged him to deliver his lofty brother, Frederick II, from his woes...

"But this was not the only help extended to Prussia by the Russian Masons. In 1758, instead of Apraxin, who was placed on trial, Fermor was appointed as commander-in-chief. He was an active Mason and a supporter of Frederick II. Fermor acted just like Apraxin. He displayed stunning inactivity and slowness. At the battle of Tsorndof the commander-in-chief Fermor hid from the field of battle. Deserted and betrayed by their commander-in-chief the Russian army did not panic...

“With the greatest equanimity the soldiers did not think of fleeing or surrendering...

“Frederick II had everything on his side: complete gun crews, discipline, superior weapons, the treachery of the Russian commander-in-chief. But he did not have enough faith and honour, which constituted the strength and glory of the Christ-loving Russian Army.

“The help of the dark powers was again required: and the Russian Masons for the third time gave help to Frederick II.

“At first it was suggested that Fermor be replaced by Buturlin, whom Esterhazy quite justly called ‘an idiot’, but when this did not happen, they appointed Peter Saltykov to the post of commander-in-chief. The soldiers called him ‘moor-hen’ and openly accused him of treachery. At Könersdorf the Russian commanders displayed complete incompetence. The left wing of the Russian army under the command of Golitsyn was crushed. At two o’clock Frederick was the master of Mulberg, one of the three heights where Saltykov had dug in. By three o’clock the victory was Frederick’s. And once again the situation was saved by the Russian soldiers. The king led his army onto the attack three times, and three times he retreated, ravaged by the Russian batteries. ‘Scoundrels’, ‘swine’, ‘rascals’ was what Frederick called his soldiers, unable to conquer the Russian soldiers who died kissing their weapons.

“‘One can overcome all of them (the Russian soldiers) to the last man, but not conquer them,’ Frederick II had to admit after his defeat.

“The victory remained with the Russian soldiers, strong in the Orthodox faith and devotion to the autocracy....”⁴⁸¹

Frederick was saved because Elizabeth died unexpectedly in 1761 – this was the so-called “Great Miracle of the House of Brandenburg”. She was succeeded by Peter III, a grandson of Peter the Great who nevertheless preferred the Germany he had been brought up in to Russia. So he stopped the war against Prussia, and planned to join Prussia in attacking Denmark because of its rivalry with his native Holstein.

This alienated many senior officers, and prepared the way for the coup against him by another German – Catherine the Great. But the days when Germans could walk over Russianness and Orthodoxy were over. Whatever judgement one makes of the personal piety of Catherine, she stood up for both...

⁴⁸¹ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 169, 170, 171-172.

33. CATHERINE THE GREAT: (1) THE NOBILITY

Nicholas Riasanovsky writes of Tsar Peter III: "His reign of several months, best remembered in the long run for the law abolishing the compulsory state service of the gentry, impressed many of his contemporaries as a violent attack on everything Russian and a deliberate sacrifice of Russian interests to those of Prussia. While not given to political persecution and in fact willing to sign a law abolishing the security police, the new emperor threatened to disband the guards, and even demanded that icons be withdrawn from the churches and that Russian priests dress like Lutheran pastors, both of which orders the Holy Synod did not dare execute. In foreign policy Peter III's admiration for Frederick the Great led to the withdrawal of Russia from the Seven Years' War, an act which probably saved Prussia from a crushing defeat and deprived Russia of great potential gains. Indeed, the Russian emperor refused to accept even what Frederick the Great was willing to give him for withdrawing and proceeded to make an alliance with the Prussian king."⁴⁸²

Although Peter III's manifesto giving freedom from obligatory state service to the nobility was, not unnaturally, applauded by the nobles, within a few months, on June 28, 1762, they staged a coup which soon led to his death in rather mysterious circumstances. His wife Catherine, a German, cooperated with the coup that brought her to the throne, a coup that was organized by the Masons Panin and Gregory Orlov and the French Count Saint Germain...⁴⁸³

Catherine's accession to the throne was doubly illegal. Not only in that it took place over the dead body of her husband, but also in that she usurped the legitimate claim to the throne of her son, the future Tsar Paul I. Catherine was in fact a usurper; the lawful monarch should have been her son. Always conscious of this, she did not simply dislike her son: she did everything in her power to humiliate him. As Alexander Bokhanov writes, "she was not ashamed even to deny the paternity of her lawful son [that is, that Tsar Peter III was his father]! Catherine had an instinctive dislike of Paul Petrovich; we can even speak of a kind of maniacal syndrome."⁴⁸⁴ Her hatred of him went so far as to deprive him of the possibility of bringing up his own sons Alexander and Nicholas, and to refuse him all participation in state affairs.

"The new regime," writes Isabel de Madariaga, "proceeded at once to rally the support of the groups that really mattered: the army, provincial officials and the Church. The plotters themselves were well placed to win over the soldiers with assurances that the Danish campaign [in alliance with Prussia] would be called off, and the men evidently welcomed Catherine's accession with real rejoicing. The very limited degree of opposition in the army came from some of the officers, who may have taken seriously their oath of allegiance to Peter. No such scruple seemed to worry the Church hierarchy, which showed no hesitation whatever in

⁴⁸² Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

⁴⁸³ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁴⁸⁴ Bokhanov, *Pavel I (Paul I)*, Moscow: Veche, 2010, p. 78.

administering the oath of allegiance to Catherine to those who had only six months previously sworn allegiance to Peter III. The first manifesto issued by the new government on 28 June 1762 showed its awareness of the most emotionally vulnerable points of popular opinion. It stressed that Catherine had taken power because of the danger to the Orthodox faith, and the insult to the Russian army implicit in the country's 'enslavement' to her worst enemy, namely Prussia, the policy supported by Peter..."⁴⁸⁵

The pattern of succession to the throne in eighteenth-century Russia – usually through a coup and engineered by noble army officers – recalls the pattern of succession in Old Rome, the Rome of the pagan emperors. And this link with the First, Old Rome, as opposed to the New Rome of Byzantium, was emphasized by Catherine, as it had been by Peter the Great. As Gary Marker writes, "the precedent of the Roman Empire... shaped the regime's own sense of identity. The classical influence found ubiquitous expression – medals and coins depicting Catherine as a Roman centurion, the statue of Minin and Pozharskii (the national heroes of the Time of Troubles) draped in Roman togas, the classical columns on St. Isaac's Cathedral and numerous governmental buildings in St. Petersburg, and the odes and panegyrics celebrating Catherine the Great. An exemplar of the latter is an ode by Mikhail Lomonosov, the prominent scholar and patriotic thinker, who sought to pay homage to the new empress: 'Sciences, celebrate now: Minerva has Ascended the Throne.'

"These classical images not only linked Russia to contemporary Europe (where a revival of classical antiquity was in full swing), but also suggested ties to the accepted foundation of imperial authority – ancient Greece and Rome. Significantly, classicism functioned to separate Russia's 'imperia' from the lineage of the contiguous Byzantine and Mongol Empires, which it had traditionally invoked to legitimize territorial claims and even validate the mantle of rulership. But eighteenth-century expansion to the east, south, and west had little to do with the Byzantine and Mongol legacies; hence the soaring leap across space and time to establish cultural ties with classical empires – which had made similar grandiose claims – became an ideological imperative..."⁴⁸⁶

Catherine's preference, like that of Peter the Great, for the classicism of the First Rome over the Orthodoxy of the Second Rome, was reflected in her dislike of the old capital of Moscow. She considered it to be "a 'seat of idleness', and even its previous history seemed to hold little charm. 'Never can a people have been confronted by more objects of fanaticism,' she fulminated, 'more miraculous images at every step, more churches, more men of the cloth, more useless servants in the houses – and what houses, what dirt...' For all that, Catherine understood that Moscow's iconic fortress occupied a special place in Russian hearts. She chose the city for her coronation, she remained in the capital for months thereafter, and she returned several times for state affairs over the course of her reign. When it

⁴⁸⁵ De Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, London: Phoenix Press, 2002, p. 30.

⁴⁸⁶ Marker, "The Age of Enlightenment 1740-1801", in Gregory L. Frazee, *Russia. A History*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 133.

came to parks and landscape and exotic ball, no European ruler of the times was more ambitious. Her principal efforts focused on St. Petersburg and the suburban palaces with which she planned to surround it, but she could not leave Moscow alone..."⁴⁸⁷

Nevertheless, while St. Petersburg flourished, old Moscow decayed, and this showed where Catherine's real heart lay... Ruling in the image of the pagan Roman emperors, Catherine was as remote from the ordinary Christian people as they had been... The Muscovite tsars had created a *Chelobitnij Prikaz* that enabled the ordinary people to bring their complaints directly to the tsar. Even Peter, while creating the beginnings of a powerful bureaucracy, had retained sufficient control over the bureaucrats to ensure that he was not cut off from the people and remained the real ruler of the country. "But after his death, as Tikhomirov explained, "the supreme power was cut off from the people, and at the same time was penetrated by a European spirit of absolutism. This latter circumstance was aided by the fact that the bearers of supreme power were themselves not of Russian origin during this period, and the education of everyone in general was not Russian. The imitation of administrative creativity continued throughout the eighteenth century."⁴⁸⁸

This tendency reached its peak under Catherine the Great, who followed in the absolutist spirit of Peter the Great. "The first changes in the structure and spirit of the government in Russia undertaken by the new regime all tended to the strengthening of the direct personal control of the sovereign over the institutions of central and local government and their personnel. At a time when Catherine might have been expected to woo the nobility in order to consolidate her precarious hold on the throne, no concession whatsoever was made to noble ambition. No outright attack was made on the vested interests of the high aristocracy. But by playing off the partisans of the imperial council against the partisans of the Senate Catherine succeeded in killing the one, and downgrading the other. Meanwhile the procuracy, under Catherine's obedient servant, Vyazemsky, with his subordinate network of procurators, served increasingly as the *oko gosudarevo*, the 'eye of the sovereign' and the effective instrument of her policy and her power..."⁴⁸⁹

Catherine's first act was to reward her co-conspirators handsomely with money and serfs. This pattern became the rule during her reign as the number of those who needed to be rewarded (mainly her lovers) increased, as well as the numbers of serfs "on the market" through the conquest of new territories and the expropriation of church lands. Thus she took away about a million peasants from the Church, while giving about a million previously free (state) peasants into the personal possession of the nobility.⁴⁹⁰ She also imposed even tighter restrictions on the movement of serfs. And she introduced the system into the Ukraine...

⁴⁸⁷ Merridale, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

⁴⁸⁸ Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

⁴⁸⁹ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁴⁹⁰ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

In 1767, writes Janet Hartley, “Catherine summoned an assembly, called the Legislative Commission, which comprised almost 60 elected representatives from many of the social groups that made up Russia’s population. There were no serf representatives, but members included state peasants (peasants on non-noble land), townspeople, non-Russians – and, of course, nobles.

“Catherine presented the assembly with the so-called *Instruction (Nakaz)*, which famously recommended liberal, humanitarian political theories. She used the most modern writings on politics and law from French and Italian thinkers of the time to provoke debate.

“In an autocracy like Russia, these were radical proposals indeed. But, to a large extent, proposals are all they remained. The *Instruction* had little impact on the ground in Russia – it triggered no emancipation of the serfs...” This was because the *Instruction* explicitly declared: “It would be improper suddenly or by means of a general law to liberate a large number of [serfs].” Encouraged, continues Hartley, “the nobles made it clear that their main desire was to keep their exclusive right to own serfs – and, without their support, it was impossible for Catherine to modify, let alone abolish, serfdom...”⁴⁹¹

At the same time, there were clauses supporting autocracy – more accurately, western-style enlightened despotism, – for example: “The sovereign is absolute... It is better to obey the law under one master than to please several... The purpose of autocracy is not to deprive people of their natural freedom, but to guide their actions so as to attain the maximum good...”

It is likely, according to Tim Blanning, ‘that the Commission’s primary purpose was to consolidate Catherine’s hold on the throne... By bringing noble deputies from all over the Empire to Moscow, she reminded the magnates of the traditional alliance between Tsars and the lesser nobility. By confronting the nobility as a class with a large number of deputies from other sections of society, she attached the latter more firmly to her person and demonstrated to the former that they were not the only force in Russian society. By simply calling the Commission and having its members solemnly recognize her dependence on those who had brought her to power, she legitimized the coup of 1762 and reduced her dependence on those who had brought her to power. When the Commission had fulfilled its task, she discarded it, using the Turkish War as a convenient pretext. Better informed and less naïve than Catherine’s sycophantic coterie of French admirers like Voltaire, who compared her favourably with Lycurgus and Solon and dubbed the *Nakaz* ‘the most beautiful monument of the century’, the foreign diplomats in Russia were under no illusions as to the real purpose of the Commission. The British ambassador reported that: ‘By these and other similar measures, glittering enough to dazzle the eyes of the Russians, the power of Her Imperial Majesty increases

⁴⁹¹ Hartley, “Hypocrite, reactionary, usurper, sex maniac”, *BBC History Magazine*, October, 2019, p. 58.

every day, and is already arrived to such a degree that this prudent princess thinks herself strong enough to humble the guards, who placed her upon the throne.”⁴⁹²

Be that as it may, Catherine’s reign represents the recovery of the nobility to the dominant position they had lost under Ivan the Terrible and the seventeenth-century Tsars. With this dominance of the nobility came the dominance of westernism in all its forms. As Richard Pipes writes: “It has been said that under Peter [the Great] Russia learned western techniques, under Elizabeth western manners, and under Catherine western morals. Westernization certainly made giant progress in the eighteenth century; what had begun as mere aping of the west by the court and its élite developed into close identification with the very spirit of western culture. With the advance of westernization it became embarrassing for the state and the *dvorianstvo* [nobility and civil servants] to maintain the old service structure. The *dvorianstvo* wished to emulate the western aristocracy, to enjoy its status and rights; and the Russian monarchy, eager to find itself in the forefront of European enlightenment, was, up to a point, cooperative.

“In the course of the eighteenth century a consensus developed between the crown and the *dvorianstvo* that the old system had outlived itself. It is in this atmosphere that the social, economic and ideological props of the patrimonial regime were removed....

“*Dvoriane* serving in the military were the first to benefit from the general weakening of the monarchy that occurred after Peter’s death. In 1730, provincial *dvoriane* frustrated a move by several boyar families to impose constitutional limitations on the newly elected Empress Anne. In appreciation, Anne steadily eased the conditions of service which Peter had imposed on the *dvorianstvo*...

“These measures culminated in the Manifesto ‘Concerning the Granting of Freedom and Liberty to the Entire Russian Dvorianstvo’, issued in 1762 by Peter III, which ‘forever, for all future generations’ exempted Russian *dvoriane* from state service in all its forms. The Manifesto further granted them the right to obtain passports for travel abroad, even if their purpose was to enroll in the service of foreign rulers – an unexpected restoration of the ancient boyar right of ‘free departure’ abolished by Ivan III. Under Catherine II, the Senate on at least three occasions confirmed this Manifesto, concurrently extending to the *dvorianstvo* other rights and privileges (e.g. the right, given in 1783, to maintain private printing presses). In 1785 Catherine issued a *Charter of the Dvorianstvo* which reconfirmed all the liberties acquired by this estate since Peter’s death, and added some new ones. The land which the *dvoriane* held was now recognized as their legal property. They were exempt from corporal punishment. These rights made them – on paper, at any rate – the equals of the upper classes in the most advanced countries of the west.”⁴⁹³

⁴⁹² Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815*, London: Penguin, 2008, p. 245.

⁴⁹³ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, London: Penguin, 1995, pp. 132, 133.

Lebedev writes that “nobility itself was now also transferred by heredity insofar as the nobles had been completely freed from the obligation to serve anywhere. They could send their serfs to forced labour *without trial*, apply physical punishments to them, buy and sell them (‘exchange them for wolfhounds’...) Catherine II forbade only the sale of families of peasants one by one, but (this became usual) ordered them to be sold in families. But in practice this ruling was violated pretty often.”⁴⁹⁴

At the same time, Catherine added a crucial qualification to the manifesto: “at every time necessary to the Russian Autocracy, when the service of the *dvorianstvo* is necessary and needful to the general good, then each noble is bound at the first summons from the Autocratic Authority to spare neither labour nor life itself for the service of the State.”

But while still tied to the Autocracy in this way, the noble had never had it so good as in Catherine’s reign. As Sir Geoffrey Hosking writes, “they possessed certain secure rights, including that of private property in land. This was an unprecedented situation in Russian society, and, in the absence of a similar charter for peasants, it consolidated in practice their right to buy and sell the serfs who occupied that land as if they too were private property.

“Catherine’s reforms thus took the first step towards creating a civil society in Russia, but at the cost of deepening yet further the already considerable juridical, political and cultural gap between the nobles and the serfs among whom they lived. Serfs became mere chattels in the eyes of their masters, objects which could be moved around or disposed of at will, as part of a gambling debt, a marriage settlement or an economic improvement scheme. In practice, they could normally be sold as commodities, without the land to which they were theoretically attached, and without members of their own families.

“Lords had judicial and police powers over their serfs, as well as economic ones, which meant that they could punish serfs in any way they saw fit: they could flog them, send them to the army or exile them to Siberia. Theoretically, they were not permitted to kill a serf, but if a harsh flogging or other ill-treatment caused a serf’s death, there was very little his fellow peasants could do about it. Not that the great majority of lords were remotely so brutal or careless. But the mentality induced by this impunity nevertheless blunted the lord’s sense of responsibility for the consequences of his own actions.”⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁴ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁴⁹⁵ Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 158. “Only extreme cruelty in relation to serfs (and that in the rarest cases!), sadistic torture and murder was punished, insofar as all this sickened the ‘moral feelings’ of the nobles, who considered themselves an ‘enlightened’ class. They paid no attention at all to ‘ordinary’ cruelty, it was in the nature of things. The serfs no longer *vowed allegiance* to the Tsars, and their testimonies were not admitted in court and they themselves could not take anybody to court. Their whole life, destiny, land and property were the personal property of the landowners. By forbidding the transfer of peasants from their lords in Little Russia, Catherine II began to spread *serfdom into the Ukraine*.” (Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 227).

Catherine also gave the nobles the rights to trade and to organize local associations that would elect local government officials. All this would seem to indicate the influence on Catherine of Diderot and Montesquieu, who had advocated the creation of aristocratic “intermediate institutions” between the king and the people such as the *parlements* and Estates General in France; he believed that “no monarch, no nobility, no nobility, no monarch.” However, Montesquieu’s aim had been that these institutions and the nobility should check the power of the king. Catherine, on the other hand, was attempting to buttress her power by buying the support of the nobles.⁴⁹⁶ For in exchange for the privileges the Manifesto gave them, as Marker writes, “they abdicated nearly all political pretensions”.⁴⁹⁷

However, “all of these material advantages coexisted uneasily with a deepening moral discomfort among the service nobility over the legitimacy of their special privilege. Although most still served, they were no longer bound to do so. Educated and literary nobles freely invoked the language of freedom, rights, and virtue at the very moment when they legally became the sole group in Russian society with the right to hold fellow subjects as virtual slaves...”⁴⁹⁸

If the sovereign and the nobility were coming closer together, this only emphasized the gulf between this nobility and the masses of the Russian people. Even their concept of Russianness was different. As Hosking writes, “the nobles’ Russianness was very different from that of the peasants, and for that matter of the great majority of merchants and clergy. It was definitely an imperial Russianness, centred on élite school, Guards regiment and imperial court. Even their landed estates were islands of European culture in what they themselves often regarded as an ocean of semi-barbarism. The Russianness of the village was important to them, especially since it was bathed in childhood memories, but they knew it was something different.”⁴⁹⁹

Above all, the Russianness of the nobles was different from that of the peasants because the latter was based on Orthodoxy. They had different ideals - those of the French Enlightenment - which, however, did not sit well with their privileged status. The Empress was in a similar predicament, living a life of extreme privilege while reading and corresponding with the French philosophers about freedom...

The separate, non-Russian and non-Orthodox culture of the upper classes was reinforced by the education system, which was extended beyond Peter the Great’s Cadet Corps and designed to train the nation’s bureaucrats. “In 1786 Catherine issued a National Statute of Education, which provided for a two-tier network of schools, primary at the *uezd* [county] level, secondary in the *guberniia*, which were to be coeducational, free of charge (that is, financed by state and local community), and open to all classes of the population except serfs. The new educational program

⁴⁹⁶ Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁴⁹⁷ Marker, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁴⁹⁸ Marker, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁴⁹⁹ Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

made no use of the existing network of church schools: the statute propounded a secular, Enlightenment ideology strongly influenced by Prussian and Austrian models. Pupils were issued with a handbook outlining the 'Duties of Man and Citizen', whose religious outlook was deist rather than Orthodox. Among the aims of education were 'a clear and intelligent understanding of the Creator and His divine law, firm belief in the state, and true love for the fatherland and one's fellow citizens.

"In practice, not much of Catherine's planned network materialized in her reign or for some decades afterward. Nevertheless, the aim had been declared, and the principle laid down that education was nondenominational, indeed largely secular, and was not the preserve of the privileged or of males, but that it should be open to all, free of charge, with a ladder leading from the lowest to the highest level. Perhaps because these principles were necessary to draw enough qualified personnel into state service, they passed into the life-blood of Russia's pedagogues and educational officials and survived all later attempts to narrow them. The system remained democratic, cosmopolitan, and secular in spirit..."⁵⁰⁰

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Andrzej Walicki writes: "Although Catherine's domestic and foreign policies served the best interests of the nobility, the most outspoken aristocratic opposition to absolutism came to a climax in her reign. At times this opposition claimed to be rooted in the ancient boyar traditions of the pre-Petrine age – the traditions of the Land Assemblies and the Boyar Duma – but basically it was the product of Westernization. What its leaders wanted in principle was to replace autocracy by a monarchical system of the Western European type. Their ideas stemmed from the political philosophy of Montesquieu, with its emphasis on the importance of uninterrupted continuity, and their outlook is well summed up in the phrase, 'no monarch no nobility, no nobility no march, but there may be a despotic prince.'

"The ideological representative of the extreme right wing of the opposition was Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov (1733-1790). During the meetings of the Legislative Commission he had shown himself to be an excellent orator and an ardent defender of the traditional rights of the ancient nobility, which felt its very existence threatened by Peter's Table of Ranks. Only the monarch should have the right to confer nobility, Shcherbatov argued. Ennoblement as an automatic privilege attached to a given military or bureaucratic rank led to careerism and servility and transformed the monarchy into a despotic bureaucracy. Shcherbatov also opposed all concessions to the peasantry (e.g., legal limitations of serfdom) or to the merchants (e.g., the establishment of merchant manufactories) – opposed anything, in fact, that might help to undermine the traditional privileges of the autocracy and hereditary nobility, who were, to him, the mainstay of honor and liberty, the only section of society capable of maintain its independence without recourse to servility or flattery. In his unpublished articles Shcherbatov stated openly that the political system in Russia was not monarchy but despotism, the

⁵⁰⁰ Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 255.

worst form of government, or rather misgovernment, 'a tyranny where there are no laws but the crazy whims of the despot'.

"As a historian (he was the author of a seven-volume *History of Russia* to the year 1610), Shcherbatov propounded the view that despotism was not a form of government native to Russia. The former Russian princes and tsars had shared their power with the boyars, and the alliance of tsar and boyars, which was strictly adhered to by both sides, was the main factor in the uninterrupted growth of Russian strength. In order to reconcile this conception with the despotic but politically successful reign of Ivan the Terrible, Shcherbatov was forced to divide Ivan's reign into two periods. The first period was beneficial to Russia, for the tsar still restrained his passions and took the advice of the Boyar Duma; in the second period he became a bloody tyrant, murdered his advisers, and brought ruin upon the country..."⁵⁰¹

Shcherbatov was half-right. Russia was traditionally certainly not a despotism. It was a symphony-of-powers monarchy on the Byzantine model that was based on two autonomous pillars, one political under the Grand Prince or Tsar, and other ecclesiastical under the Metropolitan or Patriarch. The boyars might advise and influence the tsar, but they did not share power with him; the tsar was not "allied" with the boyars, but their master. Despotism was avoided in ancient Rus', not thanks to the boyars, but because the Church remained powerful and kept the tsar within the traditional customs and beliefs and mores of Orthodoxy. Ivan did indeed become a bloody tyrant in the second half of his reign, but not because he refused to rule with the boyars but because he refused to accept any restraint or exhortation coming from any quarter – and especially the Church, the guardian of Russia's traditional way of life. The tsar or grand prince was above all the estates of the nation – except the Church. The despotism of the eighteenth-century Petersburg autocracy consisted precisely in its subjection of the Church to itself.

Shcherbatov argued in his *Discourse on the Corruption of Morals in Russia* that the despotism introduced into Russia by Peter the Great had corrupted the morals of the nation. Unfortunately, while his general thesis was correct, he allowed himself to be influenced by the anti-meritocratic bias of his own class: "In olden times, Shcherbatov pointed out, life in Russia was simple and untouched by excessive luxury. The upbringing of children was completely subordinated to religion, and although this encouraged some irrational and superstitious belief [?], it also inculcated a healthy fear of God's law. Noble status was not attached to rank in government service but, on the contrary, rank was decided by the prestige and traditions of the noble family. This principle favored the flowering of civic virtues, for it restrained the personal ambitions of individuals, subordinating them to the interests of family and estate.

"Shcherbatov's assertion that Peter the Great's reforms introduced a formerly unknown 'voluptuousness' into Russian life has some authority, for he personally knew many people who still remembered Peter's reign. In many respects,

⁵⁰¹ Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 26-27.

therefore, his *Discourse* has the weight of a historical document and gives us an insight into how much Peter's reforms did for the emancipation of the individual from the domination of tradition and religious belief... The 'voluptuousness' of the *Discourse* is nothing other than individualism, whose first primitive stirrings are sometimes repellent..., a Schcherbatov's long list of examples of demoralization, careerism, and profligacy (largely taken from the life of the court and the newly created court aristocracy) bears witness.

"Shcherbatov drew special attention to the individualization of personal relations and to the consequent changes in the attitudes to women. In Peter's reign it became customary for the bride and bridegroom to meet before the wedding, joint 'assemblies' were organized for men and women, and more attention was paid to personal appearance. 'Passionate love unknown in earlier primitive conditions, began to hold sway over sensitive hearts.' The only hairdresser in Moscow was besieged by her clients - for feastdays some of them came to her three days in advance and had to sleep sitting upright for three nights in order not to spoil their coiffure. Dandies of both capitals vied with each other in extravagance and fashionable dress. Peter, Shcherbatov submitted, had no great love of luxury himself, but he encouraged excess in others in order to stimulate industry, handicrafts, and trade.

"Another cause of the corruption of morals was the bureaucratic hierarchy established by Peter, which encouraged personal ambition and placed government officials above the nobility. 'Is it possible,' Shcherbatov asked, 'for people who from early youth tremble at the stick in the hands of their superiors to preserve virtue and strength of character?' The brutal suddenness of the reforms had been injurious to the nation's morals. Peter had waged too radical a war on superstition; Shcherbatov compared him to an inexperienced gardener who prunes his trees too far. 'There was less superstition, but also less faith; the former servile fear of hell disappeared, but so did love of God and His holy laws.'"⁵⁰²

Of course, Shcherbatov's own prejudices, common to those of his class, are evident here. For example, the loss of the former "servile" fear of hell was surely part of the causes of the general "voluptuousness" rather than one of its regrettable consequences. The association between despotism and a decline of morality in the ruling class is observed throughout history. However, the main cause both of the decline in faith and of the general "voluptuousness" of the Russian nobility was probably the spread of rationalist Enlightenment ideas during Catherine's reign..

⁵⁰² Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

34. CATHERINE THE GREAT: (2) UKRAINE AND TURKEY

Catherine developed a new concept of the place of Russia in the world. "Russia," she wrote in the very first line of her *Instruction* for government in 1767, "is a European power." "The next paragraph," writes Simms, "went on to say that Russia had become a great power by being European, that is 'by introducing the manners and customs of Europe'. What Catherine had in mind here was not the Europe of representative institutions, but that of princely absolutism. This was because, as the second chapter of her 'instruction' explained, 'the extent of the [tsarist] Dominion requires an absolute power to be vested in that person who rules over it,' in order to expedite decisions. The 'intention and end of Monarchy,' she continued, 'is the glory of their citizens, of the state and of the monarchy', that is, territorial expansion and military success. 'From this glory,' Catherine added, 'a sense of liberty arises in a people governed by monarch, which... may contribute as much to the happiness of the subjects as even liberty itself.' In other words, Russians would find compensation for their lack of freedom in the glory of their state as a European great power."⁵⁰³

But this was directly contrary to the ordinary Orthodox Russian's concept of his state. First of all, to him Russia was not a European power in the sense of just another of the Catholic or Protestant states of the West. She was the Third Rome, the successor of Byzantium. And her aim was not her own glory, or the glory of her citizens, but the glory of God and of Orthodoxy. Catherine made some concessions to these sentiments, always insisting on her Orthodoxy and gladly adopting the traditional aim of the Russian tsars of liberating Constantinople and the Balkans from the Muslim yoke. (That is why she called her grandson Constantine in anticipation of the desired event.) But under the cloak of traditionally Orthodox aspirations, she pursued a typically West European agenda of Great Power politics and territorial expansion. This is not to say that her victories did not bring genuine benefit to the Orthodox. But, as in the case of Peter the Great, we have to ask: were the sovereign's secular achievements on the battlefield and elsewhere sufficient to offset the spiritual harm she inflicted?

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Since 1686 the Russian empire comprised large parts of what had once been Kievan Rus' and which we should now call Ukraine and Belarus; the Russian nation was now understood to be divided into three parts: the Great Russians in the north, the Little Russians in the south, and the White Russians in the west. These sub-nations of the one Russian nation were considered to be equal in rights: Little Russians, especially clergy, had been accorded many favours and promotions in Peter the Great's time. The question was: how would Catherine deal with them in the context of the revived Russian national imperial feeling of the later eighteenth century?

⁵⁰³ Simms, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

“Hopes were high,” writes Serhii Plokyh, “in the capital of the Hetmanate [Kiev], and at first they appeared to be justified. Catherine began her rule with a small concession to her loyal hetman and the Little Russian elites, reinstating the Hetmanate’s traditional court system in 1763. The Cossack officer council asked for more, and [the last Hetman, Kyril] Razumovsky threw in an additional request: he wanted the hetman’s office to become hereditary and stay in his family.

“But Catherine’s gratitude had its limits [even to former lovers], and her reaction was swift. In 1764, she summoned Razumovsky to St. Petersburg and removed him as hetman, compensating him later with the title of field marshal. More important, she abolished the office of hetman altogether. It was the third and final liquidation of the office of Cossack leader, the first two having occurred under Peter and Anna Ivanovna. It would take Catherine another two decades to eliminate all the institutions of the Hetmanate, including its system of military regiments, but the empress took her time and stayed her course. At stake was the formation of an empire whose regions would all be governed from the center according to Enlightenment principles of rational government and universal laws. The hodge-podge of long-established customs and special privileges accumulated in the course of history was to yield to well-ordered and homogeneous bureaucratic norms.

“Even so, prudence called for a gradual transition to the new practices. In February 1764, a few months before the abolition of the hetman’s office, Catherine wrote to the procurator-general of the Senate – the empire’s legislative, judicial, and administrative body – and de facto chief of Catherine’s political police (‘secret expedition’), Prince Aleksandr Viazemsky: ‘Little Russia, Livonia, and Finland are provinces governed by confirmed privileges, and it would be improper to violate them by abolishing them all at once. To call them foreign and deal with them on that basis is more than erroneous – it would be sheer stupidity. These provinces, as well as Smolensk, should be Russified as gently as possible so that they cease looking to the forest like wolves... When the hetmans are gone from Little Russia, every effort should be made to eradicate from memory the period and the hetmans, let alone promote anyone to the office.’

“Catherine first turned the Hetmanate into the province of Little Russia and then divided it into the vicereencies of Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Novhorod-Siverskyi. The abolition of the Hetmanate and the gradual elimination of its institutions and military structure ended the notion of partnership and equality between Great and Little Russia imagined by generations of Ukrainian intellectuals. Once incorporated into the administrative system of the empire, the former Hetmanate was dwarfed by the huge Russian state. Out of close to fifty imperial vicereencies at the end of the eighteenth century, only three represented the former Hetmanate. The special status of the former Cossack polity was gone, its officer class integrated, though not without difficulty, into the Russian nobility and expected to serve the interest of the all-Russian nation. The Little Russians maintained their attachment to their traditional homeland, which they continued to call a ‘fatherland’, but for most of them there was no longer a contradiction between loyalty to their historical *patria* and to the Russian Empire.

“Accordingly, the lands of the former Hetmanate continued to supply cadres for the empire. Young Cossack officers, such as Oleksandr Bezborodko and Petro Zavadovsky, enjoyed Catherine’s support and made spectacular careers in St. Petersburg. Bezborodko served as her secretary and eventually as one of the architects of imperial foreign policy; Zavadovsky became the highest official in the empire’s educational system. The westward-looking alumni of the Kyivan Academy were needed as much by the empress, who proclaimed Russia a European state, as they had been by Peter I. But whereas Peter had summoned clerics to the capital, Catherine brought in secular elites. Given the Kyivan graduates’ good knowledge of Latin, they were considered ideal candidates for training as medical doctors, and 60 percent of the empire’s doctors in Catherine’s time were Ukrainians.

“Ukrainians constituted a significant part of the intellectual elite, with Hryhorii Kozytsky, Vasyl Ruban, and Fedir Tumansky, all natives of the Hetmanate, becoming publishers of some of the first Russian journals. Kozytsky, who was one of Catherine’s secretaries, published the journal *Vsiakaia viachina* (Anything and Everything, 1769-1770) on her behalf; Ruban published *Starina i novizna* (Antiquity and Novelty, 1772-1773); and Tumansky served much later as the publisher of the first historical journal in the Russian Empire, *Rosiiskii magazine* (Russian Magazine, 1792-1794). They were among the early ‘nationalists’ who helped form an emerging Russian identity that embraced the new Russian literary language and associated nation with empire more closely than ever before. According to Liah Greenfeld, a distinguished student of early European nationalism, as many as half the ‘Russian’ intellectuals promoting the idea of a Russian nation were in fact ‘Little Russians’, or Ukrainians...”⁵⁰⁴

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However one may evaluate it in other respects, Catherine’s reign was outstandingly successful in one respect – militarily. Through her great military commanders – Rumyantsev, Suvorov, Potemkin and Ushakov – Catherine defeated the Turks in the south and the Poles in the west, while the rebels in the east under Pugachev were easily disposed of.

As Tim Blanning writes, “The outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia [in 1768] posed the great ‘Eastern Question’. The scale of Russian victories, which included the astonishing feat of sending a fleet from the Baltic to the Mediterranean to destroy the Turkish fleet at Chesme in June 1770 (a battle to compare with Lepanto or Trafalgar), raised the possibility of a Russian conquest of the entire Balkan peninsula and the expulsion of the Turks from Europe.”⁵⁰⁵

This, the first Russo-Turkish war (1768-1774) was ended by the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji (today Kaynardzhe in Bulgaria), by which Russia acquired

⁵⁰⁴ Plokhly, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

⁵⁰⁵ Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815*, London: Penguin, 2008, p. 588.

significant territories on the northern coast of the Black Sea, including the towns of Kerch and Kinburn and the coast between the rivers Bug and Dnieper. And in 1783 the Crimea was annexed to Russia by an agreement with the Turks. "Russia now dominated the Black Sea, and it looked as if Catherine were setting her sights on reclaiming Constantinople for Orthodox Christianity."⁵⁰⁶

On August 17, 1787, the Turks imprisoned the Russian ambassador, Count Bulgakov, in the Seven Towers of the Topkapi Palace in Constantinople, "which, writes Blanning, "was their ceremonial way of declaring war... [This] activated the defensive alliance between Catherine the Great and Joseph II [of Austria] concluded in 1781, which required each party to come to the assistance of the other if attacked by a third party...

"... It was not until 1788 that the war began in earnest. It did not go well for the allies. Despite increasingly desperate pleas from Joseph, the Russian commander-in-chief, Prince Potemkin, stayed resolutely on the defensive. Nor was there any chance that the Russian fleet might appear in the Mediterranean to inflict another Chesme, for the British declined the necessary assistance to transfer it from the Baltic, and a rumour began to spread that the mercurial Gustavus III of Sweden would take advantage of Russian commitments in the south to launch an invasion through Finland (which indeed he did, in July). During the course of a long, hot summer, the Austrian army began to fall prey to their oldest enemies – shortage of food and disease. Its inability to seize the initiative in August, when a Turkish force broke into the Banat of Temesvar, inflicting terrible devastation...

"... The Austrian position began to improve even before the end of 1788, when their Russian allies at last began to get moving. The Swedish invasion of 1788 had soon come to a halt, when the Finnish officers mutinied and the Danes threatened to open up a second front. Indeed, only the diplomatic intervention of Prussia and Great Britain saved Gustavus III from total disaster. The armistice they mediated in September relieved, if it did not end, pressure on Catherine the Great in the north. Better news still came at the end of 1788 when at long last the Russians captured the great Turkish fortress of Ochakov, which controlled the estuary of the Dnieper and was the key to the Black Sea coast between the Bug and the Dniester. As a result, the campaign of 1789 went very much better for both allies, ending with a series of Austrian victories in Transylvania and Moldavia and climaxing with their capture of Belgrade on 8 October."⁵⁰⁷

However, the Austrians' war against the Turks had given the Prussians the opportunity to invade Austrian territory in the Netherlands. Therefore at the Convention of Reichenbach in July, 1790, "in return for Prussia's agreement to demobilize and halt the campaign of subversion in Belgium and Hungary, Leopold [Joseph' successor] undertook to conclude his war with the Turks on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*. Although this involved giving up all the conquered territory, including the great prize of Belgrade, and thus recognizing continued

⁵⁰⁶ Hartley, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁵⁰⁷ Blanning, *op. cit.*, pp. 611, 614, 615.

Turkish hegemony in the Balkans, the agreement rescued the Habsburg Monarchy from what had seemed certain disintegration. An immediate dividend was paid when an Austrian army reconquered Belgium in November 1790...⁵⁰⁸

As for the Russian war, “a joint initiative in March [1791] by the British and the Prussians to restrain Catherine’s appetite for Turkish territory by forcing her to give up Ochakov ended in humiliating failure. Then a further surge of Russian victories brought a preliminary peace at Galatz on 11 August, by which the Turks ceded all the territory between the Bug and the Dniester, including Ochakov.”⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ Blanning, *op. cit.*, pp. 615-616.

⁵⁰⁹ Blanning, *op. cit.*, pp. 619.

35. CATHERINE THE GREAT: (3) POLAND

After her victory over the Ottoman Empire, Catherine turned her attention to Poland, from where Russian troops had been expelled in 1789 and where a new constitution giving the hereditary kingship to Saxony, had been voted on...

Even after the union of the Eastern Ukraine with Russia in 1686, very extensive formerly Russian lands still remained under Polish control. However, in 1717, as a result of civil war between King Augustus II and his nobles, Poland fell under the effective control of Russia. And so Poland's domination of the South Russian lands from the fourteenth century onwards began to be reversed...

Poland was ruled by a weak monarchy that was paralyzed by its over-powerful and rebellious nobility, whose frequent application of their right to a *liberum veto* in the Polish Sejm, or parliament, tended to paralyze all constructive work for the state (this was abolished in 1791). For Poland, since its union with Lithuania, as Montefiore writes, "was an awkward union of two separate realms, a constitutional contradiction with two governments and one parliament, which was elected by the entire nobility and in which every delegate had a veto. This parliament, the Sejm, chose its kings, leaving royal elections open to foreign machinations. Poland's idiosyncratic rules, overmighty magnates and widespread bribery often left the country languishing in anarchic limbo."⁵¹⁰

The history of the 17th and 18th centuries was to show the superiority of the Russian system. Thus while Russia went from strength to strength, finally liberating all the Russian lands from the oppressive tyranny of the Poles, Poland grew weaker under its powerless elective monarchy. "Attempts at reviving the moribund structure," writes the Anglo-Polish historian Adam Zamoyski, "met with opposition from the neighbouring powers of Russia, Austria and Prussia, for whom a powerless buffer state was convenient. They also came up against apparently bottomless depths of obscurantism and suspicion among the petty nobility which made up the country's electorate.

"It was a section of this petty nobility, the *szlachta*, led by a clutch of equally obtuse magnates, that launched an insurrection in 1768 in the form of the Confederation of Bar. It began as a rebellion against King Stanislaw Augustus and his reforming policies, but it quickly shifted its principal sights on Russia, whose troops were stationed in Poland. Russia had backed the election of the king but, ironically, by this stage also opposed most of his enlightened policies. France backed the rebels, mainly in order to embarrass Russia, sending military advisers and money. But these could not affect the outcome. After five years of sporadic fighting the rebellion was crushed. The international crisis it had helped to provoke was defeated in 1772 by Poland's three neighbours helping themselves to slices of her territory in an act known as the first partition of Poland. This was denounced by one French diplomat as '*nationicide*'.

⁵¹⁰ Montefiore, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

“The Confederation of Bar was a curious phenomenon. It based its views of itself on an imagined deal past, when the Poles were supposedly all brave and uncorrupted Sarmatians. Nostalgia for lost virtue fused with opposition to the king’s attempts to modernize the country; the defence of noble privilege was confused with republican mythology; Catholic devotionism mixed up with tribal instincts. With its luridly expressed rejection of the alleged corruption of the Warsaw court, the movement set itself up as the defender of the nation’s honour, its morals, its very soul. Its first marshal, Jósef Pulaski, set the tone in a speech at Bar on 10 June 1768. ‘We are to die so that the motherland may live; for while we live the motherland is dying,’ he began, and carried on in much the same pathological vein. This was something more than the accepted notion of ‘*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*’; it actually demanded death as the price of the nation’s life which, in this case, had little to do with actual political liberty. The Barians entertained a mythopoeic conviction that their ancestors, the legendary Sarmatians, had lived in a kind of ideal republican anarchy. It was this state of being this Eden, they were dying to recover. These and other sentiments were echoed in an abundance of political poetry, woven on a loom of Catholic mysticism.”⁵¹¹

Finally, by the end of the eighteenth century Poland ceased to exist as an independent State, being divided up three ways between Prussia, Austria and Russia in three stages, or partitions, in 1772, 1793 and 1795.

In spite of the weakness of the Polish state throughout the eighteenth century, the persecution of the Orthodox living in Poland did not cease. The Polish nobility did everything they could to deny the non-Roman Catholic Christians (the Orthodox, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists) political rights until well into the eighteenth century. And they continued to try and keep the uniates, i.e. those Orthodox who had been beguiled into Catholicism after the Unia of Brest-Litovsk, from reverting to Orthodoxy.

Moreover, they continued to cover the crimes of the Jews against the Orthodox Christians that had been one of the causes of the pogroms committed by Khmelnitsky’s Cossacks.

Thus in 1690 a six-year-old Orthodox child by the name of Gabriel, who lived in Grodno province, was kidnapped by a Jew and ritually slaughtered, “as was confirmed by a judicial investigation. St. Gabriel was crucified, his side was pierced and he was punctured by various instruments until all his blood came out and he died. The body of the child was cast into a field, but was soon discovered and given over to a Christian burial, while his tormentors received their due reward. 30 years later, in 1720, the relics of St. Gabriel were uncovered and found to be incorrupt.”⁵¹²

⁵¹¹ Zamoyski, *Holy Madness. Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, pp. 24-25.

⁵¹² Archimandrite Nikon (Ivanov), Protopriest Nicholas (Likhomanov), *Zhitia Russkikh Sviatykh* (Lives of the Russian Saints), Tutaev, 2000, vol. I, p. 392.

The Orthodox Christians in Poland, writes A.P. Dobroklonsky, “suffered every possible restriction. In 1717 the Sejm deprived them of their right to elect deputies to the Sejms and forbade the construction of new and the repairing of old churches; in 1733 the Sejm removed them from all public posts. If that is how the government itself treated them, their enemies could boldly fall upon them with fanatical spite. The Orthodox were deprived of all their dioceses and with great difficulty held on to one, the Belorussian; they were also deprived of the brotherhoods, which either disappeared or accepted the unia. Monasteries and parish churches with their lands were forcibly taken from them... From 1721 to 1747, according to the calculations of the Belorussian Bishop Jerome, 165 Orthodox churches were removed, so that by 1755 in the whole of the Belorussian diocese there remained only 130; and these were in a pitiful state... Orthodox religious processions were broken up, and Orthodox holy things subjected to mockery... The Dominicans and Basilians acted in the same way, being sent as missionaries to Belorussia and the Ukraine – those ‘lands of the infidels’, as the Catholics called them, – to convert the Orthodox... They went round the villages and recruited people to the unia; any of those recruited who carried out Orthodox needs was punished as an apostate. Orthodox monasteries were often subjected to attacks by peasants and schoolboys; the monks suffered beatings, mutilations and death. ‘How many of them,’ exclaimed [Bishop] George Konissky, ‘were thrown out of their homes, many of them were put in prisons, in deep pits, they were shut up in kennels with the dogs, they were starved by hunger and thirst, fed on hay; how many were beaten and mutilated, and some even killed!’... The Orthodox white clergy were reduced to poverty, ignorance and extreme humiliation. All the Belorussian bishops were subjected to insults, and some even to armed assault....

“The Orthodox sought defenders for themselves in Russia, constantly sending complaints and requests to the court and the Holy Synod. The Russian government according to the eternal peace of 1686 had reserved for itself the right to protect the Orthodox inhabitants of Poland, and often sent its notes to the Polish court and through its ambassadors in Poland demanded that the Orthodox should be given back the dioceses that had been granted to them according to the eternal peace and that the persecutions should cease; it also wrote about this to Rome, even threatening to deprive the Catholics living in Russia of freedom of worship; more than once it appointed special commissars to Poland for the defence of the Orthodox from abuse and in order to investigate complaints. But the Polish government either replied with promises or was silent and dragged out the affair from one Sejm to another. True, there were cases when the king issued orders for the cessation of persecutions... But such instructions were usually not listened to, and the persecution of the Orthodox continued. Meanwhile the Russian government insufficiently insisted on the carrying out of its demands.

“Only from the time of Catherine II did the circumstances change. On arriving at her coronation in Moscow, George Konissky vividly described for her the wretched condition of the Orthodox in Poland and besought her intervention (1762). A year later all the Orthodox of Poland interceded with her about this. The empress promised her protection and made the usual representation to the Polish court. At that time a new king, Stanislaw Poniatovsky, had been established, with

her assistance, on the Polish throne. George Konissky personally appeared before him and described the sufferings of the Orthodox in such a lively manner that the king promised to do everything to restore the rights of the Orthodox (1765) and actually issued a decree on the confirmation of their religious rights, demanding that the uniate authorities cut short their violence. However, the uniate and Catholic authorities were not thinking of obeying the king. Their spite against the Orthodox found fresh food for itself. In 1765-1766, amidst the Russian population of Poland, and mainly in Little Russia, a powerful mass movement against the unia had begun. Its heart was the Orthodox see of Pereyaslavl headed by Bishop Gervasius Lintsevsky and the Motroninsky monastery led by Abbot Melchizedek Znachko-Yavorsky. Multitudes of the people went there and were there inspired to the task of returning from the unia to Orthodoxy. Crowds of people gathered everywhere in the villages; together they swore to uphold the Orthodox faith to the last drop of their blood, they restored Orthodox churches and restored Orthodox priests provided for them by Gervasius. They persuaded uniate priests to return to Orthodoxy, and if they refused either drove them out of the parishes or locked the churches. Whole parishes returned to Orthodoxy. The uniate authorities decide to stop this movement. The uniate metropolitan sent a fanatical zealot for the unia, the official Mokritsky, to the Ukraine with a band of soldiers. The Orthodox churches began to be sealed or confiscated; the people were forced by beatings to renounce Orthodoxy. Abbot Melchizedek was subjected to tortures and thrown into prison. There were even cases of killings for the faith... This violence elicited a fresh representation from the Russian court. Moreover, the courts of Prussia, England, Sweden and Denmark demanded that the Poles reviewed the question of the dissidents (Orthodox and Protestants) at the Sejm and protected their rights. However, the Sejm that took place in 1766 still further restricted their religious liberty. The Catholic bishops Soltyk and Krasinsky by their epistles stirred up the people against the dissidents; the Pope himself (Clement XIII) tried to persuade Stanislaw not to make concessions. Then the dissidents began to act in a more friendly manner towards each other. In Torn and Slutsk conferences of noblemen were convened, and in other places up to 200 similar unions appeared with the aim of obtaining rights for the non-Catholics of Poland. In her turn Russia, in order to support these demands, moved her army into Poland. Relying on it, the Russian ambassador in Poland Repin demanded a review of the question of the dissidents at the new Sejm in 1767. When at this Sejm the Catholic bishops Soltyk, Zalusky and some others continued to resist any concessions in favour of the dissidents, Repin arrested them and the Sejm agreed upon some important concessions: everything published against the dissidents was rescinded, complete freedom of faith and Divine services was proclaimed, they were given the right to build churches and schools, convene councils, take part in Sejms and in the Senate, educate children born from mixed marriages in the faith of their parents – sons in the faith of their fathers and daughters in the faith of their mothers, and forcible conversions to the unia were forbidden. These decrees were confirmed by a treaty between Russia and Poland in 1768. It was then decided that the Belorussian see should remain forever in the power of the Orthodox together with all the monasteries, churches and church properties, while the monasteries and churches that had been incorrectly taken from them were to be returned. For this a special mixed commission of Catholics and dissidents – the latter led by George Konissky

- was appointed. In these circumstances the movement among the uniates that had begun before was renewed with fresh force. Most of them - sometimes in whole parishes - declared their desire to return to Orthodoxy; these declarations were addressed to George Konissky, presented to Repin and written down in official books; even the uniate bishops turned to the king with a request that they be allowed to enter into discussions concerning a reunion of the uniates with the Greco-Russian Church. But the indecisiveness of the Polish and Russian governments hindered the realization of these desires. Comparatively few parishes succeeded in returning to Orthodoxy, and then the matter of their reunion was stopped for a time. Immediately the Russian army left the boundaries of Poland, the Polish fanatics again set about their customary way of behaving. Bishop Krasinsky of Kamenets went round Poland in the clothes of a pilgrim and everywhere stirred up hatred against the dissidents; the papal nuncio fanned the flames of this hatred in appeals to the clergy, and sometimes also in instructions to the people. Those who were discontented with the Sejm of 1767 convened the conference of Bar in order to deprive the dissidents of the rights that had been granted them. Again there arose a persecution of the Orthodox, who could not stand the violence. In Trans-Dnieper Ukraine, under the leadership of the zaporozhets Maxim Zhelezniak, a popular uprising known as the Koliivschina began. The anger of the rebels was vented most of all on the landowners, the Jews, the Catholic priests and the uniate priests. They were all mercilessly beaten up, their homes were burned down, their property was looted; even the whole of the small town of Uman was ravaged. The rebellion enveloped the whole western region. The Polish government was not able to cope with it. The Russian armies under Krechetnikov came to its aid. The revolt was put down. But unfortunately, Krechetnikov and Repin, listening to the insinuations of the Poles and not seeing the true reasons for the rebellion, looked on it as an exclusively anti-state peasants' rebellion, and so they themselves helped in destroying that which stood for Orthodoxy and Russian nationality in the Ukraine. Gervasius and Melchizedek, being suspected of rebellion, were retired; the Orthodox people, being accused of stirring up the people, had to hide in order to avoid punishment. The uniate priests took possession of many Orthodox parishes; in many places the Orthodox were forced to appeal with requests to perform needs to parishless priests coming from Moldavia and Wallachia. Fortunately, in 1772 there came the first division of Poland, in accordance with which Belorussia with its population of 1,360,000 was united with Russia. At this the Polish government was obliged to take measures to pacify the Orthodox who remained in their power, but in actual fact nothing was done. A new woe was then added to the already difficult position of the Orthodox: With the union of Belorussia with Russia not one Orthodox bishop was left within the confines of Poland, and for ordinations the Orthodox were forced to turn to Russia or Wallachia. Only in 1785 did the Russian government, with the agreement of the Polish king, appoint a special bishop for them, Victor Sadkovsky, with the title of Bishop of Pereyaslavl and vicar of Kiev, with a salary and place of residence in Slutsk monastery. But when, with his arrival, another movement in favour of Orthodoxy arose among the Ukrainian uniates, the Poles were disturbed. Rumours spread that another Koliivschina was being prepared and that the clergy were inciting the people to rebel. Whatever Victor did to quash these rumours, they continued to grow. They began to say that arms for a planned beating up of the

Catholics and uniates were being stored in the hierarchical house and in the monasteries. In accordance with an order of the Sejm, Victor was seized and taken in fetters to Warsaw, where he was thrown into an arms depot (1789); some Orthodox priests were subjected to the same treatment; many were forced to save themselves by fleeing to Russia. The whole of the Orthodox clergy were rounded up to swear an oath of allegiance to the king. After this the thought was voiced in the Sejm of 1791 of freeing the Orthodox Church within the confines of Poland from Russian influence by making it independent of the Russian Synod and transferring it into the immediate jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Pinsk congregation, made up of representatives of the clergy and brotherhoods, did indeed work out a project for the conciliar administration of the Church. But it was not fated to be put into effect. Soon there followed, one after the other, the second (1793) and third (1795) divisions of Poland, in accordance with which Russia acquired all the ancient Russian lands with the exception of Galicia, and the Lithuanian region with a population of more than 4 million.

“With the union of Belorussia and the south-western regions to Russia there finally came to an end the age-old sufferings of the Orthodox there. At the same time there came the right opportunity for the uniates to throw off the fetters of the unia that had been forcibly imposed upon them. The Belorussian Archbishop George Konissky received many declarations from uniate parishes wishing to return to Orthodoxy. Although the Russian government did not allow him to do anything about these declarations without special permission, and itself did not give permission for about 8 years, the striving of the uniates for Orthodoxy did not wane. When, finally, permission was given, up to 130,000 uniates went over to Orthodoxy. In the south-western region an energetic assistant of George Konissky in the work of uniting the uniates was Victor Sadkovsky, who had been released from prison and raised to the see of Minsk (1793). With the permission of the government, he published an appeal to the uniates of his diocese urging them to return to Orthodoxy. Soon, on the orders of the government, the same was done in the Belorussian region. Moreover, the government told local authorities to remove all obstacles that might appear in the unification of the uniates on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy and landowners, and threatened the guilty with responsibility before the law, while at the same time forbidding their forcible union. The appeals had an extraordinary success. In less than a year (from the middle of 1794 to the beginning of 1795), more than one-and-a-half million uniates had joined the Orthodox Church; the numbers of those united by the end of the reign of Catherine II came to no less than two million.”⁵¹³

The liberation of millions of Orthodox peasants from their Polish and Jewish persecutors, under whom they had suffered already for centuries, and the return of millions of uniates to their original faith and Church, was undoubtedly a great triumph of Orthodoxy. As Catherine put it, Russia was resuming sovereignty over “lands and citizens that once belonged to the Russian Empire, which are inhabited by their fellow-countrymen and are illuminated by the Orthodox faith.”

⁵¹³ Dobroklonsky, *Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi* (A Guide to the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, pp. 651-652.

However, the bitter fact was that the cost of the annexation of Eastern Poland and the liberation of the Orthodox Christians came at a very high cost – not only in terms of the thousands of people killed, but in another very important respect. For it meant the inclusion into the Russian empire of many millions of Poles and Jews who were bitterly hostile both to Russia and to the Orthodox faith, and who were to cause continual civil strife in the western territories right up to the First World War.

Serhii Plokhy writes: “‘One Pole is a charmer; two Poles – a brawl; three Poles – well, this is the Polish question,’ quipped Voltaire. The Russian Empire acquired more than three Poles as a result of the partitions enthusiastically supported by the French philosophe, and, as for the Polish question, it was presenting an ever greater challenge to its Russian overlord. Catherine II, who did not believe in special treatment of lands annexed to the empire, abandoned the traditional practice of the Russian tsars, who had tolerated broad autonomy for newly acquired territories, including the Hetmanate and the Baltic provinces, for decades or even centuries. The annexed Polish lands were given no special status, which created tension between the imperial center and its new periphery.

“Many in the St. Petersburg imperial establishment, including some of those appointed to rule in Poland, were sympathetic to fellow aristocrats in that country and considered the partitions both unjust and imprudent as an assertion of Russian interests in Europe. The sense of guilt towards a conquered but not fully vanquished neighbor was something new for the Russian imperial psyche and presented a special challenge to the rulers. Poland had been a regional power with a highly developed sense of its own imperial mission and an elite loyal to its state and fatherland. A full-fledged political nation, it was not prepared to give up the ideal of independent statehood. The resentment of the Polish nobility, which considered itself culturally superior to the conquerors (much more so than the elite of the Hetmanate had in the seventeenth century), created an additional problem for the traditional modus operandi of the Russian Empire. Its usual strategy had been to make a deal with local elites at the expense of the lower classes and thus establish its supremacy. A deal was made in this case as well, but the local elite was not fully cooperative and occasionally refused to cooperate at all.

“The Russian Empire’s Polish question never remained in the purely theoretical realm, limited to the soul-searching of intellectuals. More than once the Poles took arms in hand, not just to make their voices heard or negotiate a better deal with the empire, but to throw off Russian rule altogether and restore the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in its pre-partition boundaries. They were marching forward with their heads turned back. For the Russian Empire, the Poles were dangerous enemies. The advent of nationalist ideology, with its emphasis on linguistic and ethnic particularism, created another obstacle to the successful integration of the annexed territories. The Polish nobles were not only bearers of a political culture opposed to absolutism, and adherents of a religion that the Russian Orthodox elites had always regarded with utmost suspicion, but as Western Slavs were ethnically distinct from the East Slavic core of the Russian imperial nation, and busily

establishing the foundations of modern Polish identity based on a distinct history, political culture, language, literature, and religion..."⁵¹⁴

As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes, "from the point of view of the interests of Great Russia, it was necessary to pacify Poland, but not seize the age-old Polish and purely Lithuanian lands. This wrong attitude of Russia to the neighbouring peoples then became a 'mine' that later more than once exploded with bad consequences for Russia..."⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ Plokhy, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

⁵¹⁵ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 232.

36. CATHERINE THE GREAT: (4) THE JEWS

Catherine's reign is a textbook illustration of the important historical principle that we find exemplified in many historical epochs: that the very victories of a regime, especially if they are achieved in an aggressive war, can sow the seeds of its eventual fall – whether through financial exhaustion, or imperial over-reach, or the incorporation of irreconcilable enemies into the body politic...

On Catherine's accession to the throne, as Isabel de Madariaga writes, "there were very few Jews in Russia, where settlement had not been allowed in Muscovite days. But Jews had settled in Polish Ukraine, and a few communities in Little Russia had survived the ferocious pogroms carried out by Bogdan Khmel'nitsky's Cossacks in the seventeenth century. A few Polish Jewish prisoners of war had settled in Russia proper and their presence was winked at, but Jews were not allowed into Moscow. Catherine I issued an ukaz in 1727 ordering the expulsion of all Jews from Russia and Little Russia – a law which was not implemented since Jews were far too necessary to the Little Russian economy. Eighteenth-century religious intolerance reached its zenith when a Jew was convicted in 1738 of having converted a naval officer to Judaism. Both were burnt alive on 15 July 1738 in St. Petersburg. A more effective edict of expulsion was dictated by Elizabeth in 1742, and by her order the distinguished Sephardi court physician, Antonio Nunes Ribeiro Sanches, was forbidden to return to his post in Russia and deprived of his honorary membership of the Academy of Sciences.

"Four or five days after her accession Catherine attended a routine session of the Senate, to find on the agenda a proposal dating from Peter III's days to admit Jews to settle in Russia. The empress doubted the wisdom of beginning her reign with a measure marking such a deviation from her proclaimed intention of defending the Orthodox faith. She was rescued from her predicament by a senator who proposed examining Elizabeth's decision on a previous project of the same kind. On reading the empress's words: 'I wish to derive no benefit from the enemies of Jesus Christ', Catherine was emboldened to postpone the question. The manifesto inviting foreigners to settle in Russia, issued on 4 December 1762, explicitly excluded Jews..."⁵¹⁶

According to Lebedev, she "was convinced that it was impossible to forbid the entrance of the Jews into Russia, it was necessary to let them in. But she considered it dangerous to do this at the very beginning of her reign, since she understood that she had to deal with the Russian people, 'a religious people', who saw in her 'the defender of the Orthodox Faith', and that the clergy were extremely upset by Peter III's order on the expropriation of the Church's land-holdings. Moreover, she had been shown the resolution of Elizabeth Petrovna on the entrance of the Jews..."⁵¹⁷

However, the successive partitions of Poland forced her to look at the question again; for through them the Russian empire acquired, according to one estimate,

⁵¹⁶ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

⁵¹⁷ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

as many as a million Jews, according to another - 1.36 million.⁵¹⁸ Administering this vast new population and territory with its mixed population of Russians, Poles and Jews would have been a major problem for any State. In this case, when the newly subject populations were fanatically anti-Russian and anti-Orthodox, the problem was still greater. As the worried empress wrote: "What seemed a child's game is becoming a most serious matter. The Russian state has bumped into the most numerous Jewish masses in Europe."⁵¹⁹ The problem was made still worse by the fact that the Jewish population constituted a "State within the State", being governed by its rabbis and the *kahal*. It was they who indoctrinated their people into the anti-Christian world-view of the Talmud, which in Russia, as in Byzantium and so many other Christian states, made cooperation between the Christian state and the Jewish population so difficult.

The problem of the *kahal* could not be ducked. The authorities had a responsibility both to the Russian peasants who were exploited by it economically and to those ordinary Jews who suffered from its despotism. Nevertheless, Catherine, - influenced, no doubt, by the *Toleranzpatent* (1782) of her fellow "enlightened despot", Joseph II of Austria - at first tried to duck it by adopting the easier expedient of acting like a liberal... Hence her *ukaz* of May 7, 1786 proclaiming equality for the Jews, which has been called "the first official statement of the civil equality of the Jews in Europe".⁵²⁰

Solzhenitsyn writes: "When the Jews passed under the authority of the Russian State, the whole of this internal system in which the *kahal* hierarchy was interested was preserved. And, as Yu. I. Hessen presupposes with that irritation that by the middle of the 19th century had grown among enlightened Jews against the ossified Talmudist tradition, 'the representatives of Jewry's ruling class did all they could to convince the [Russian] government of the necessity of keeping the age-old institution in being, since it corresponded to the interests both of the Russian authorities and of the Jewish ruling class'; 'the *kahal* together with the rabbinate possessed the fullness of power, and not infrequently abused this power, stealing public resources, trampling on the rights of poor people, incorrectly imposing taxes and taking revenge on personal enemies'. At the end of the 18th century one of the governors of the region joined to Russia wrote in a report: 'the rabbi, the spiritual court and the *kahal*, "yoked together by close bonds, and having in their power and disposing even of the very conscience of the Jews, lords it over them on their own, without any reference to the civil authorities"'. "

"And when, in the 18th century, there developed in Jewry the powerful religious movement of the Hassidim, on the one hand, and on the other, the enlightenment movement of Moses Mendelssohn towards secular education, the

⁵¹⁸ Martin Gilbert, *The Dent Atlas of Russian History*, London: Dent, 1993, p. 42; Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.* However, David Vital (*A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 89) gives 400,000, while Hartley (*op. cit.*, p. 15) gives "anything between 155,000 and 900,000 persons, but probably closer to the lower figure".

⁵¹⁹ Catherine II, in Oleg Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow, 1998, p. 237.

⁵²⁰ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

kahals energetically suppressed both the one and the other. In 1781 the Vilnius rabbinate declared *kherem* [anathema] on the Hassidim, and in 1784 a congress of rabbis in Mogilev declared the Hassidim to be 'outside the law' and their property 'escheated'. After this the common people in some towns destroyed the houses of the Hassidim, that is, they caused an intra-Jewish pogrom. The Hassidim were persecuted in the most cruel and dishonourable way, they were not even spared false political denunciations against them to the Russian authorities. However, in 1799, on the denunciation of the Hassidim, the authorities arrested the members of the Vilnius *kahal* for expropriating taxes they had collected. Hassidism continued to spread, in some provinces with particular success. The rabbinate delivered the books of the Hassidim to public burning, while the Hassidim spoke out as defenders of the people against the abuses of the *kahals*. 'At that time the religious struggle put into the shade, as it would seem, the other questions of Jewish life.'

"The part of Belorussia united to Russia in 1772 was constituted by the Polotsk (later the Vitebsk) and Mogilev provinces. It was declared to them in the name of Catherine that the inhabitants of this region 'whatever race or calling they might be' would from now on [retain] the right publicly to practise their faith and possess private property'. Moreover, they would be given 'all those rights, freedoms and privileges that her subjects enjoyed of old'.⁵²¹

"Thus the Jews were made equal in rights with the Christians – they had been deprived of this in Poland. Moreover, a special addition was made concerning the Jews, that their communities 'would be left and preserved with all those freedoms that they now... enjoy' – that is, nothing would be taken from what they enjoyed in Poland. True, the power of the *kahals* was thereby preserved, and the Jews through their *kahal* organization still remained cut off from the rest of the population, and did not yet enter directly into that mercantile-industrial estate that corresponded to their main occupations.

"At first Catherine was wary both of the hostile reaction of the Polish nobility, which had lost power, and of the unpleasant impression [her decree] produced on her Orthodox subjects..."

"But," continues Solzhenitsyn, "being sympathetic towards the Jews and expecting from them economic benefit for the country, Catherine was preparing for them still greater rights. Already in 1778 there was extended to the Belorussian region the recent measure that applied to the whole of Russia: those who possessed capital up to 500 roubles from now on constituted the estate of the town-dwellers [*meshchane*], and those who had more – the estate of the merchants [*kuptsy*], the three guilds, in accordance with their wealth, and were freed from poll tax, and would pay 1% from the capital that they had 'declared in accordance with conscience'.

⁵²¹ David Vital writes: "'Her Imperial Majesty's love of her fellow men [*chelovekoliubie*]' did not permit her to exclude the Jews from the valour with which she treated all her subjects, provided they, for their part, were loyal, obedient, and engaged in occupations that were appropriate to their status (*zvanie*)" (*op. cit.*, p. 84). (V.M.)

“This decree had a special, great significance: it destroyed the national isolation of the Jews that had prevailed to that time (Catherine wanted to destroy it). It also undermined the traditional Polish view of the Jews as a non-State element. It also undermined the *kahal* structure, and the coercive power of the *kahal*. ‘From this moment there begins the process of the introduction of the Jews into the Russian State organism... The Jews widely used the right of registering among the merchants’ – so that, for example, in Mogilev province 10% of the Jewish population were declared to be merchants (and of the Christians – only 5.5%). The Jewish merchants were now freed from paying taxes to the *kahal* and were no longer obliged, in particular, to seek permission from the *kahal* for every trip, as before: they now had to deal only with the common magistrate, on common terms. (In 1780 the Jews of Mogilev and Shklov met Catherine with odes.)

“With the departure of the Jewish merchants the State rubric ‘Jew’ also ceased to exist. All the rest of the Jews now had to be categorized in some estate, and it was evident that they could be categorized only as town-dwellers. But at first there were few who wanted to transfer, because the annual poll tax from town-dwellers at that time was 60 kopecks, while from the Jews it was 50 kopecks. However, no other path remained to them. And from 1783 the Jewish town-dwellers, like the Jewish merchants, had to pay their taxes, not to the *kahal*, but to the magistrate, on common terms, and receive a passport for a journey from him, too.

“This movement was strengthened by a general municipal decree of 1785, which envisaged only estates, and by no means nations. According to this decree, all the town-dwellers [and therefore all the Jews) received the right to participate in local administration according to estates and to take up public posts. ‘According to the conditions of that time, this meant that the Jews became citizens with equal rights... Entering the merchant and town-dweller classes in the capacity of members with equal rights was an event of major social significance’, and was meant to turn the Jews into ‘a social force of which it was impossible not to take account, thereby raising their moral self-esteem’. This also alleviated the practical task of defending their vital interests. ‘At that time the mercantile-industrial class, as also the municipal societies, enjoyed broad self-rule... Thus into the hands of the Jews, on an equal basis with the Christians, was handed considerable administrative and judicial power, thanks to which the Jewish population acquired strength and significance in social-state life.’ There were now burgomeisters and ratmans and judges from the Jews. At first in the major towns a limitation was applied: that there should be no more Jews than Christians in elected posts. However, in 1786 ‘Catherine sent the Belorussian governor-general an order signed in his own hand’: that equal rights for the Jews ‘in municipal-estate self-rule... should “unfailingly and without any delay be brought into effect”, while non-fulfillers of the decree “would be punished by law”’.⁵²²

⁵²² “In 1785 and again in 1795 (on the occasion of the Third Partition),” writes Vital, “the principle that Jewish town-dwellers and merchants were entitled to treatment on an equal footing with all other town-dwellers and merchants was authoritatively restated. Allowance was made for Jews of the appropriate class to serve as electors to municipal office and to be elected themselves. But precisely what social class or classes Jews should be permitted to belong to was (and would remain)

“Let us note that in this way the Jews received civil equality of rights not only in distinction from Poland, but earlier than in France or the German lands. (Under Frederick II there was a very powerful oppression of the Jews.) And, which is still more significant: the Jews in Russia from the beginning had that personal freedom which the Russian peasants were not to have for a further 80 years. And paradoxically: the Jews received even greater freedom than the Russian merchants and town-dwellers: the latter lived unfailingly in the towns, while the Jewish population, not following their example, ‘could live in the uyezds settlements, occupied, particularly, in the wine trade’. ‘Although the Jews lived in large numbers not only in the towns, but also in the villages, they were registered in the municipal societies... included into the estates of the merchants and town-dwellers’. ‘By reason of the nature of their activity, surrounded by unfree peasantry, they played an important economic role – the [village] trade was concentrated in their hands, they leased various sections of the landowners’ sources of income, and sold vodka in the taverns’ – and thereby ‘assisted in the spread of drunkenness’. The Belorussian administration pointed out that ‘the presence of Jews in the villages has a harmful effect on the economic and moral condition of the peasant population, since the Jews... develop drunkenness among the local population’. ‘In the reports of the local administration, mention was made, incidentally, that the Jews led the peasants into drunkenness, idleness and poverty by giving them vodka on credit...’ But ‘the wine industry was a tempting source of income’ – both for the Polish landowners and for the Jewish middlemen.

“It is natural that the civil gift received by the Jews could not fail to bring with it a reverse threat: it was evident that the Jews had to submit to the common rule, stop the wine trade in the villages and leave them. In 1783 it was published that “a direct rule obliges each citizen to determine his trade and craft, a decent wage, and not wine distilling, as being an industry not appropriate for him”, and if a landowner permits the distilling of vodka in the village “to a merchant, a town-dweller or Jew”, then he will be considered a breaker of the law’. And then: ‘they began to thrust the Jews out of the villages and into the towns, so as to distract them from their age-old pursuits... the leasing of wine distilleries and taverns’.

“It goes without saying that for the Jews the threat of being thrown out of the villages looked, not like a State tidying-up measure, but like a special measure against their national-confessional group. In being clearly deprived of such a profitable industry in the villages, and being moved to the town, the Jewish town-dwellers fell into a thick net of intra-municipal and intra-Jewish competition. The Jews became very upset, and in 1784 a deputation from the *kahals* to St. Petersburg

a vexed question. Clearly, they were not peasants (*krestyaniny*). They were certainly not serfs (*krepostnye*). They were not of the gentry (*dvoryanstvo*). They might be merchants (*kuptsy*), but membership of the guilds of merchants, especially the higher guilds, was a costly affair and few Jews were of the requisite wealth and standing to join them; and, in any event, such membership entailed rights to which the ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ people (*korennoe naselenie*), namely the ethnic Russian (and of course the Polish) merchants, objected. That left the class of town-dwellers (*meshchantsvo*); but the fact was that the great majority of the Jews of Russia and Poland at this time were *not* town-dwellers...” (Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85). (V.M.)

to lobby for the rescinding of this measure. (At the same time the *kahals* calculated: with the help of the government they would get back the fullness of the power over the Jewish population that they had lost.) But the reply in the name of the empress was: 'Since the people of the Jewish confession have already entered into a condition equal with others, it behoves them in all cases to observe the rule established by Her Majesty that everyone in accordance with his calling and condition should enjoy the benefits and rights without distinction of confession or nation.'

"However, she had to take account of the concentrated strength of the highly involved Polish landowners. Although in 1783 the administration of the Belorussian region had forbidden them from farming out or leasing the wine distilleries 'to people who do not have the right to it, "especially the Jews",... the landowners continued to farm out the wine distilleries to the Jews. This was their right', the well-established heritage of age-old Polish customs.

"And the Senate did not dare to compel the landowners. And in 1786 it rescinded the transfer of the Jews to the towns. For this the following compromise was worked out: let the Jews be considered as having been moved to the towns, but retain their right to temporary absence in the countryside. That is, let them remain in the village, wherever they lived. The Senate's decree of 1786 allowed the Jews to live in the villages, and 'the landowners were allowed to farm out the production and sale of spirits to the Jews, while the Christian merchants and town-dwellers did not receive these rights.'

"Moreover, the lobbying of the *kahal* delegation to St. Petersburg did not remain completely without success. It did not obtain what it asked for, the establishment of separate Jewish courts for all law-suits between Jews, but (1786) the *kahals* were given back a significant part of the administrative rights and oversight over the Jewish town-dwellers, that is, the majority of the Jewish population: the apportionment not only of public duties, but also the collection of the poll-tax, and once again the regulation of the right of absence from the community. That meant that the government saw its own practical interest in not weakening the power of the *kahal*.

"In general throughout Russia the whole of the mercantile-industrial estate (merchants and town-dwellers) did not enjoy freedom of movement and was tied to the place of its registration (so that by their departure they not lower the capacity of pay of their municipal societies). But for Belorussia in 1782 the Senate made an exception: the merchants could go from town to town 'in accordance with the convenience of their commerce'. This rule again gave the advantage to the Jewish merchants.

"However, they began to use this right more broadly than it had been defined: 'the Jewish merchants began to be registered in Moscow and Smolensk'. 'The Jews began to settle in Moscow soon after the reunion of the Belorussian region in 1772... At the end of the 18th century there was a significant number of Jews in Moscow... Some Jews, having registered among the local merchants, started to

trade on a large scale... But other Jews sold foreign goods in their flats or coaching inns, and also by delivering to houses, which at that time was completely forbidden.'

"And in 1790 'the Moscow society of merchants made a judgement' that in Moscow there had appeared from abroad and from Belorussia 'a very large number of Jews', some of whom had registered straight into the Moscow merchants and were using forbidden methods of trading, by which they were causing that trade 'very significant harm and disturbance', while the cheapness of their goods indicated that they were contraband. Moreover, 'the Jews, as is well-known, clip coins; it is possible that they will do this also in Moscow'. And in response to 'their cunning schemes' the Moscow merchants demanded the removal of the Jewish merchants from Moscow. But the Jewish merchants in their turn presented 'a complaint... that they were no longer being received among the Moscow and Smolensk merchants'.

"The 'Council of the Empress' reviewed the complaints. In accordance with the unified Russian law it found that the Jews did not have the right 'to be registered into the Russian mercantile towns and ports', but only in Belorussia. They said that "'no benefit is foreseen" from allowing the Jews into Moscow'. And in December, 1791 an imperial decree was issued 'on not allowing the Jews to be registered in the inner provinces', while they could go to Moscow 'only for definite periods on business'. The Jews could enjoy the rights of the merchants and town-dwellers in Belorussia. But Catherine added a softener: the Jews were given the right to live and be registered as town-dwellers also in newly-acquired New Russia - in the governor-generalship of Yekaterinoslav and in the province of Tauris (soon this would be the Yekaterinoslav, Tauris and Kherson provinces). That is, she opened to the Jews new and extensive provinces into which Christian merchants and town-dwellers, in accordance with the general rule, were not allowed to settle from the inner provinces...

"The pre-revolutionary *Jewish Encyclopaedia* writes: by the decree of 1791 'a beginning was made to the Pale of Settlement, although unintentionally. Under the conditions of the general structure of society and the State at that time, and of Jewish life in particular, the government could not have had in mind to create for the Jews a special oppressive situation, or of introducing exclusive laws for them, in the sense of limiting their rights of residence. According to the circumstances of that time, this decree did not contain in itself anything that could put the Jews in this respect in a less favourable position by comparison with the Christians... The decree of 1791 did not introduce any limitation in the rights of the Jews in respect of residence, it did not create a special 'pale', and even 'before the Jews were opened new provinces into which according to the general rule it was not allowed to move'; 'the centre of gravity of the decree of 1791 did not lie in the fact that they were Jews, but in the fact that they were trading people; the question was viewed not from a national or religious point of view, but only from the point of view of usefulness'.

“And so this decree of 1791, which was even advantageous for Jewish by comparison with Christian merchants, with the years was turned into the basis of the future ‘Pale of Settlement’, which lay like a dark shadow on the existence of the Jews in Russia almost to the revolution itself...”⁵²³

The Pale of Settlement, writes, Niall Ferguson, “was established by Catherine II in 1791, though it was not precisely delineated until 1835. It consisted of Russian-controlled Poland and fifteen *gubernia* (provinces): Kovno, Vilno, Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Volhynia, Podolia, Bessarabia (after its acquisition in 1881), Chernigov, Poltava, Kiev (except for the city of Kiev itself), Kherson (except the town of Nikolaiev), Ekaterinoslav and Tavrida (apart from Yalta and Sevastopol). Jew were not permitted to enter, much less reside in, the Russian interior. In today’s terms, the Pale extended in a broad strip from Latvia and Lithuania, through eastern Poland and Belarus, down to western Ukraine and Moldova. There were in fact exceptions to the residence restriction. In 1859 Jewish merchants who were members of the first guild, the highest social rank to which a Russian businessman could aspire, were permitted to reside and trade all over Russia, as were Jewish university graduates and (after 1865) artisans. There were thus communities of Jewish merchants in all the principal Russian cities: St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev and Odessa. Some other Jews chose to live illegally outside the Pale, but they were subject to periodic round-ups by the authorities (a characteristic feature of Jewish life in Kiev).”⁵²⁴

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However, there was a last twist to Catherine’s Jewish policy. De Madariaga writes: “With the second and third partitions of Poland, new areas with substantial populations were annexed by Russia (the gubernii of Volynia and Podolia in 1793, the gubernii of Vilna and Grodno in 1795). In general the same civil and religious rights were extended to these Jews as in Belorussia. But in 1794 Catherine inaugurated a major departure from previous Russian policy. An ukaz of 23 June 1794 decreed that the Jewish population should pay double the tax paid by the Christian members of the corresponding estate. At the same time the area of authorized Jewish settlement was widened to include the three guberniya of Little Russia (Kiev, Chernigov and Novgorod Seversk).

“Various explanations of the decree of 1794 have been put forward. Did it represent a beginning of government anti-semitism? Was it a purely revenue raising measure during a financial crisis designed to offset Jewish exemption from the recruit levy? Did it represent fear of the Jews as carriers of the seditious ideas of the French Revolution? Or did it respond to the desire of the government to move people from the more densely populated western borders to the lightly settled southern lands acquired from the Porte at the peace of Jassy? For those who

⁵²³ Solzhenitsyn, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-42.

⁵²⁴ Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 59.

emigrated escaped all taxation for a while, and in the long run contributed to the development of one of the great cities of Russian Jewry, Odessa...⁵²⁵

The hypothesis of fear of the Jews as carriers of the seditious ideas of the French Revolution is likely to be at least part of the explanation. For the role of the Jews in that revolution was well known – they had been emancipated just before the Terror began, and the link between Jewry and the revolution became stronger and clearer throughout the following century. Therefore once the decision had been taken – precisely in order to stop the spread of the revolutionary contagion⁵²⁶ - to annex Poland rather than simply control it, it was inevitable that a stricter attitude would have to be taken to the Polish Jews also.

⁵²⁵ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 508.

⁵²⁶ As De Madariaga writes, “with the passage of time the dangers of ‘Jacobinism’ became ever clearer to the Russians. The ‘seed’ had struck such deep root that it was impossible for governments, anxious to prevent the established order from being overturned by ‘absurd equality and transient freedom’, to allow a Polish government to subsist. Past experience showed that it was impossible to make friends of the Poles” (*op. cit.*, p. 448).

37. CATHERINE THE GREAT: (5) THE PUGACHEV REBELLION

Seeing the increasing alienation of their sovereigns from traditional Orthodoxy, sections of the simple people took action to liberate, as they saw it, the Russian tsardom from foreign and heterodox influence. The key to the success of the rebellion of Emelyan Pugachev in 1774 “was his rejection of secularism in church and state and his campaign of hatred against the nobility, with their Westernized ways.”⁵²⁷ Thus while superficially a rebellion for the sake of freedom, and the rights of Cossacks and other minorities, it was the very opposite of a democratic rebellion in the western style. For Pugachev did not seek to destroy the institution of the tsardom: on the contrary, he proclaimed himself to be Tsar Peter III, the husband of the Empress Catherine. He was claiming to be the real Tsar, who would restore the real Orthodox traditions of pre-Petrine Russia – by which he meant Old Ritualism. For he was “blessed for the kingdom” by the Old Ritualist “elder” Philaret, whom he in turn promised would become “patriarch” when he conquered Moscow...

As we have seen, a false legitimism, as opposed to liberalism, was also characteristic of the popular rebellions in the Time of Troubles. K.N. Leontiev considered it to be characteristic also of Stenka Razin’s rebellion in 1671, and saw this legitimism as another proof of how deeply the Great Russian people was penetrated by the Byzantine spirit: “Almost all of our major rebellions have never had a Protestant or liberal-democratic character, but have borne upon themselves the idiosyncratic seal of false-legitimism, that is, of that native and religious monarchist principle, which created the whole greatness of our State.

“The rebellion of Stenka Razin failed immediately people became convinced that the tsar did not agree with their ataman. Moreover, Razin constantly tried to show that he was fighting, not against royal blood, but only against the boyars and the clergy who agreed with them.

“Pugachev was cleverer in fighting against the government of Catherine, whose strength was incomparably greater than the strength of pre-Petrine Rus'. He deceived the people, he used that legitimism of the Great Russian people of which I have been speaking.”⁵²⁸

“The slogan of Pugachev’s movement,” writes Ivanov, “was The Freedom of the Orthodox Faith. In his manifestos Pugachev bestowed ‘the cross and the beard’ on the Old Ritualists. He promised that in his new kingdom, after Petersburg had been destroyed, everyone would ‘hold the old faith, the shaving of beards will be strictly forbidden, as well as the wearing of German clothes.’ The present churches, went the rumour, would be razed, seven-domed ones would be built, the sign of the cross would be made, not with three fingers, but with two. In Pugachev the people saw the longed-for lawful tsar. It was in this that the power of Pugachev’s

⁵²⁷ Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁵²⁸ Leontiev, “Vizantinizm i Slavianstvo” (“Byzantinism and Slavism”), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavism), Moscow: “Respublika”, 1996, p. 105.

movement consisted. There is no doubt that economic reasons played a significant role in this movement. The dominance of foreigners and Russian rubbish under Peter I and of the Masonic oligarchy under his successors had created fertile soil for popular discontent. The Masonic oligarchy acted in its own egoistic interests, despising the needs and interests of the people."⁵²⁹

However, the Church and most of the people still recognized Catherine as the lawful anointed sovereign, and the hierarchs of the Church publicly called on the people to reject the pretender. As a result, "it is not surprising that Pugachev dealt cruelly with the clergy. From their midst he created at this time no fewer than 237 martyrs for faithfulness to the throne."⁵³⁰

The main reason why the main mass of the people and the clergy rejected Pugachev was that the eighteenth-century sovereigns, while being despotic in their administration and non-Russian in their culture, never formally renounced the Orthodox faith, and even defended it at times.

Thus "Peter I," writes A. P. Dobroklonsky, "who allowed himself a relaxed attitude towards the institutions of the Church, and even clowning parodies of sacred actions, nevertheless considered it necessary to restrain others. There was a case when he beat Tatishchev with a rod for having permitted himself some liberty in relation to church traditions, adding: 'Don't lead believing souls astray, don't introduce free-thinking, which is harmful for the public well-being; I did not teach you to be an enemy of society and the Church.' On another occasion he subjected Prince Khovansky and some young princes and courtiers to cruel physical punishments for having performed a blasphemous rite of burial on a guest who was drunk to the point of unconsciousness and mocked church vessels. While breaking the fast himself, Peter I, so as not to lead others astray, asked for a dispensation for himself from the patriarch. Anna Ioannovna, the former duchess of Courland, who was surrounded by Germans, nevertheless paid her dues of veneration for the institutions of the Orthodox Church; every day she attended Divine services, zealously built and adorned churches, and even went on pilgrimages. Elizabeth Petrovna was a model of sincere piety: she gave generous alms for the upkeep of churches, the adornment of icons and shrines both with money and with the work of her own hand: in her beloved Alexandrovskaja sloboda she was present at Divine services every day, rode or went on foot on pilgrimages to monasteries, observed the fast in strict abstinence and withdrawal, even renouncing official audiences. There is a tradition that before her death she had the intention of becoming tonsured as a nun. Even Catherine II, in spite of the fact that she was a fan of the fashionable French philosophy, considered it necessary to carry out the demands of piety: on feastsdays she was without fail present at Divine services; she venerated the clergy and kissed the hands of priests..."⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183.

⁵³⁰ Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 579.

⁵³¹ Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 717-718.

Moreover, the eighteenth-century sovereigns undoubtedly served the ends of Divine Providence in other important ways. Thus it was under Peter I, and with his active support, that the Russian Spiritual Mission in Beijing was established.⁵³² Again, it was towards the end of the eighteenth century that the Russian mission to Alaska began. And it was under Catherine especially that the age-old persecutor of Russian Orthodoxy, Poland, was humbled, literally disappearing from the map of Europe, while Ottoman Turkey was driven from the north shore of the Black Sea, thus enabling the fertile lands of southern Russia to be colonized and exploited. In 1774 in the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji, the Turks granted the Russians the right to build an Orthodox church in Constantinople and to make representations on behalf of it "and those who served it". "This article," writes Alexis Alexandris, "had far-reaching effects for it provided a basis for a Russian intervention in Turkey, which gradually grew into a virtual protectorate over Ottoman Orthodox Christians."⁵³³ These important triumphs, which were essential for the survival of the Orthodox Empire into the next century (although they created their own problems, as we shall see), would have been impossible, given Russia's lack of economic development, without a very authoritarian power at the helm.

The eighteenth-century rulers of Russia can be seen *both* as forerunners of the Antichrist, insofar as they undermined the traditional Orthodox way of life in Russia, *and* as restrainers of the Antichrist, one of the chief functions of the Roman emperor in Orthodox eschatological thought, in that they built up a mighty state that was able to defend what was left of the Orthodox way of life in the next century while spreading that way of life by missionary means to other peoples. Thus they made possible both the glorious victory of 1812 over the French Antichrist, and the catastrophic surrender of 1917 to the Soviet Antichrist. And so it was in the eighteenth century that Russia finally emerged on the world stage as the universalist empire of the Third Rome, the heir of the Second, New Rome of Byzantium – only to fall, in the twentieth century, to the pagan spirit of the First Rome that these same eighteenth-century rulers had re-implanted in her.

In the nineteenth century it was remarked, with some justice, that the Orthodox Church since Catherine had been "in paralysis". However, a better metaphor might be "kept from falling by a straitjacket". For it must be remembered that at this low point in Russia's spiritual progress, a rigid straitjacket or encasing may well have been necessary.

Thus with regard to religion, as Mikhail Pogodin commented, "if the ban on apostasy had been lifted, half the Russian peasants would have joined the *raskol* [Old Ritualists], while half the aristocrats would have converted to Catholicism."⁵³⁴ And if this remark is an exaggeration, it nevertheless contains this kernel of truth: that the greater initiative and responsibility given to the Church and people in a

⁵³² Dr. Jeremias Norman, "The Orthodox Mission to the Chinese", *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XVIII, N 1, 2001, pp. 29-35.

⁵³³ Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918-1974*, Athens: Center for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, p. 25.

⁵³⁴ Pogodin, in Hosking, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

true autocracy with a real symphony of powers would have been too great a burden for the Russian Church and people to sustain at this time. They were simply not prepared for it.

For sometimes the body needs to regain its strength before the soul can begin the process of regeneration. A broken limb needs to be strapped in a rigid encasing of plaster of Paris until the break has healed, the plaster can be removed and the restored limb is strong enough to step out without any support. In the same way, the straitjacket of "Orthodox absolutism" on the Church, contrary to the Orthodox ideal though it was, was perhaps necessary until the double fracture in Russian society caused by Petrine westernism and the Old Ritualist schism could be healed...⁵³⁵

De Madriaga notes that Catherine, "set herself the task of continuing [Peter the Great's] policies but by diametrically opposite means. Thus where Peter indiscriminately imported the form and the substance of European thought and customs, Catherine neglected the form and went for the substance. Where Peter denigrated Russia in the interests of westernization, Catherine, the foreigner, extolled the native virtues of Russia and Russians, and imbued them with a high sense of their equality with, if not their superiority over, Western Europe. Where Peter used terror, Catherine used persuasion."⁵³⁶

Indeed, it was in her softening of the harsh life and attitudes of Peter's reign by what she saw as the best products of western thought and practice that she earned the title of an "enlightened despot" together with her contemporaries Frederick of Prussia and Joseph of Austria. Of course, however "enlightened" she may have been, she remained a despot, retaining an iron fist within her feminine velvet glove. And one of the main criticisms of her reign was that while not surrendering any of her own power as despot, she did not radically change the despotism wielded by the nobles over the serfs, and even extended the system into the Ukraine. However, she tried hard to alleviate the lot of the serfs, whose life, though hard, was probably no harder than that of the English peasants and easier than that of the French.⁵³⁷ She truly abhorred torture, and even managed to see that the greatest rebel of her reign, Pugachev, was executed before he could be tortured.⁵³⁸

Moreover, as De Madariaga points out, there were strong reasons why she did not meddle with the basic hierarchical structure of society. "Thus it was not fear of the nobility which prevented Catherine from intervening decisively in the vexed field of serfdom. It was rather the conviction, particularly deeply rammed home by the Pugachev revolt, that the time was not yet ripe to tackle a problem so closely linked with public order, finance and military strength. Russia was not yet rich

⁵³⁵ "Before the Pugachev revolt the Old Believers seemed to present no political threat to [Catherine] and she took steps to stop persecution and renewed the offer [made by Peter] of amnesty to all who returned from abroad. In 1769 the right to give evidence in court was restored to them" (De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 122).

⁵³⁶ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 581.

⁵³⁷ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, ch. 35.

⁵³⁸ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

enough, nor well-governed enough, there was indeed not *enough* government throughout the country, to enable it to cope with the massive social upheaval implicit in a change in the status of the serfs... Yet where Catherine could narrow down the range of those entitled to own serfs, reduce the ways by which people were enserfed, and increase the security of those who had been freed, she did so. The empress's remark to the Baltic official, Dahl, comes to mind: 'Wherever you touch [the peasant question], it does not yield.'"⁵³⁹

It did not yield, above all, because the nobility would not yield; and since the nobility provided all the administrators and military officers, she could not afford, and would not have been able to, change the system – Catherine's reign was indeed the golden age of the Russian nobility.

⁵³⁹ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 585.

38. CATHERINE THE GREAT: (6) THE CHURCH AND THE FREEMASONS

Absolute monarch that she was, Catherine was no supporter of the traditionally Orthodox “symphonic” model of Church-State relations. Thus “[the Archbishop of Novgorod],” she wrote to Voltaire, “is neither a persecutor nor a fanatic. He abhors the idea of the two powers”.⁵⁴⁰ In another letter she speaks of “the stupid principle of the two powers”.⁵⁴¹ And in her correspondence with the Austrian Emperor Joseph II she calls herself “the head of the Greek Church in the sense of power”.⁵⁴² Under Peter, the election of bishops had been as follows: the Synod presented two candidates for the episcopacy of a vacant see to the monarch, and he chose one of them. The newly elected bishop then had to swear an oath that included recognizing the monarch as “supreme Judge” of the Church. Catherine did not change this arrangement; and she restricted the power of the bishops still further in that out of fear of “fanaticism”, as Rusak writes, “cases dealing with religious blasphemies, the violation of order in Divine services, and magic and superstition were removed from the competence of the spiritual court...”⁵⁴³

With the power of the bishops restricted, it was not surprising that dangerously heretical ideas from the West were allowed to penetrate the country; there was relatively little censorship until the very last years of Catherine’s reign.

One of the most important channels of westernization was Freemasonry, the origins of which in Russia go back to the reign of Peter the Great.

“There is no doubt,” writes V.F. Ivanov, “that the seeds of Masonry were sown in Russia by the ‘Jacobites’, supporters of the English King James II, who had been cast out of their country by the revolution and found a hospitable reception at the court of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich.

“Independently of the Masonic propaganda of the Jacobite Masons, the Russians had learned of the existence of the mysterious union of free stonemasons during their journeys abroad. Thus, for example, Boris Petrovich Sheremetev had got to know Masonry during his travels. Sheremetev had been given a most triumphant meeting on Malta. He took part in the great feast of the Maltese order in memory of John the Forerunner, and they had given him a triumphant banquet there. The grand-master had bestowed on him the valuable Maltese cross made of gold and diamonds. On returning to Moscow on February 10, 1699, Sheremetev was presented to the Tsar at a banquet on February 12 at Lefort’s, dressed in German clothes and wearing the Maltese cross. He received ‘great mercy’ from the Tsar, who congratulated him on becoming a Maltese cavalier and gave him permission to wear this cross at all times. Then a decree was issued that Sheremetev should be accorded the title of ‘accredited Maltese cavalier’.

⁵⁴⁰ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁵⁴¹ Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁵⁴² Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁵⁴³ Rusak, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

“‘The early shoots of Russian Masonry,’ writes Vernadsky, ‘were particularly possible in the fleet, since the fleet had been created entirely on western models and under western influence.

“‘In one manuscript of the Public library the story is told that Peter was received into the Scottish degree of St. Andrew, and ‘made an undertaking that he would establish this order in Russia, a promise which he carried out (in the form of the order of St. Andrew the First-Called, which was established in 1698)...

“‘Among the manuscripts of the Mason Lansky, there is a piece of grey paper on which this fact is recorded: ‘The Emperor Peter I and Lefort were received into the Templars in Holland.’

“‘In the Public library manuscript ‘A View on the Philosophers and the French Revolution’ (1816), it is indicated that Masonry ‘existed during the time of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich. Bruce was its great master, while Tsar Peter was its first inspector.’”⁵⁴⁴

Russians joined the lodges, according to Hosking, because they “‘became a channel by which young men aspiring to high office or good social standing could find acquaintances and protectors among their superiors; in the Russian milieu this meant an easier and pleasanter way of rising up the Table of Ranks...”⁵⁴⁵

There were, however, deeper, more sinister reasons for Masonry’s success. “‘Freemasonry,” writes Andrzej Walicki, “‘had a dual function: on the one hand, it could draw people away from the official Church and, by rationalizing religious experience, could contribute to the gradual secularisation of their world view; on the other hand, it could attract people back to religion and draw them away from the secular and rationalistic philosophy of the Enlightenment. The first function was fulfilled most effectively by the rationalistic and deistic wing of the movement, which set the authority of reason against that of the Church and stood for tolerance and the freedom of the individual. The deistic variety of Freemasonry flourished above all in England, where it had links with the liberal movement, and in France, where it was often in alliance with the encyclopaedists. The second function was most often fulfilled by the mystical trend, although this too could represent a modernization of religious faith, since the model of belief it put forward was fundamentally anti-ecclesiastical and postulated a far-reaching internalisation of faith founded on the soul’s immediate contact with God.”⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ 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, pp. 95-96. Keith founded his Russian lodge in 1741-1742, and left Russia in 1747. One contemporary Masonic source writes: “‘One Russian tradition has it that Peter became a Mason on trip to England and brought it back to Russia. There is no hard evidence of this...” (Richard I. Rhoda, “Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”, paper delivered at Orient Lodge no. 15 on June 29, 1996, <http://members.aol.com/houltonme/rus.htm>)

⁵⁴⁵ Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, London: Harper Collins, 1997, pp. 164-165.

⁵⁴⁶ Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 19.

Educated Russians, though not uninfluenced by the rationalist side of Masonry, were especially drawn by its mystical side. For while their faith in Orthodoxy was weak, they were by no means prepared to live without religion altogether. "Finding myself at the crossroads between Voltaireanism and religion", wrote the Rosicrucian Nikolai Novikov, "I had no basis on which to work, no cornerstone on which to build spiritual tranquillity, and therefore I fell into the society."⁵⁴⁷

Paradoxically, therefore, the success of Masonry, was largely due to a re-awakening of interest in spiritual matters among the nobles...

The conversion of Tsar Peter to Masonry, if it is a fact, was the fulfilment of the fervent hopes of western Masons such as the philosopher Leibnitz, who in 1696 had written to Ludolph: "If only the Muscovite kingdom inclined to the enlightened laws of Europe, Christianity would acquire the greatest fruits. There is, however, hope that the Muscovites will arise from their slumbers. There is no doubt that Tsar Peter is conscious of the faults of his subjects and desires to root out their ignorance little by little."⁵⁴⁸ According to K.F. Valishevsky, Leibnitz "had worked out a grandiose plan of scientific undertakings, which could be achieved with the help of the Muscovite monarch and in which the greatest German philosopher marked out a role for himself. Leibnitz studied the history and language of Russia."⁵⁴⁹ And it was Leibnitz, together with his pupil Wolf, who played the leading role in the foundation of the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁵⁵⁰

In Catherine's reign there were about 2500 Masons in about 100 lodges in St. Petersburg, Moscow and some provincial towns.⁵⁵¹ "By the middle of the 1780s," writes Dobroklonsky, Masonry "had even penetrated as far as Tobolsk and Irkutsk; Masonic lodges existed in all the more or less important towns. Many of those who were not satisfied by the fashionable scepticism of French philosophy or, after being drawn by it, became disillusioned by it, sought satisfaction for their heart and mind in Masonry".⁵⁵²

Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "The freemasons of Catherine's reign maintained an ambivalent relationship with the Church. In any event, the formal piety of freemasonry was not openly disruptive. Many freemasons fulfilled all church 'obligations' and rituals. Others emphatically insisted on the complete immutability and sacredness of the rites and orders 'particularly of the Greek religion'. However, the Orthodox service, with its wealth and plasticity of images and symbols, greatly attracted them. Freemasons highly valued Orthodoxy's tradition of symbols whose roots reach back deeply into classical antiquity. But every symbol was for them only a transparent sign or guidepost. One must ascend

⁵⁴⁷ Novikov, in Janet M. Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650-1825*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 232

⁵⁴⁸ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁵⁴⁹ Valishevsky, *Petr Velikij* (Peter the Great), in Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁵⁵⁰ Ivanov, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁵⁵¹ Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵² Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 664.

to that which is being signified, that is, from the visible to the invisible, from 'historical' Christianity to spiritual or 'true' Christianity, from the outer church to the 'inner' church. The freemasons considered their Order to be the 'inner' church, containing its own rites and 'sacraments'. This is once again the Alexandrian [Gnostic] dream of an esoteric circle of chosen ones who are dedicated to preserving sacred traditions: a truth revealed only to a few chosen for extraordinary illumination."⁵⁵³

"Who became freemasons?" asks Janet Hartley. "The Russian historian Vernadsky estimated that in 1777 4 of the 11-member Council of State, 11 of the 31 gentlemen of the bedchamber, 2 of the 5 senators of the first department of the Senate, 2 of the 5 members of the College of Foreign Affairs and the vice-president of the Admiralty College were masons (there were none known at this date in the War College). A large number of the noble deputies in the Legislative Commission were masons. Members of the high aristocracy and prominent figures at court were attracted to freemasonry, including the Repnins, Trubetskoi, Vorontsovs and Panins. Special lodges attracted army officers (like the Mars lodge, founded at Iasi in Bessarabia in 1774) and naval officers (like the Neptune lodge, founded in 1781 in Kronstadt). There were masons amongst the governors of provinces established after 1775 (including A.P. Mel'gunov in Yaroslavl' and J.E. Sievers in Tver'), and amongst senior officials in central and provincial institutions. Almost all Russian poets, playwrights, authors and academics were masons. Other lodges had a predominantly foreign membership, which included academics, members of professions, bankers and merchants....

"Catherine II had little sympathy for the mystical elements of freemasonry and their educational work and feared that lodges could become venues for conspiracies against the throne. In the 1790s, at a time of international tension following the French Revolution, Catherine became more suspicious of freemasonry, following rumours that Grand Duke Paul... was being induced to join a Moscow lodge. In 1792 (shortly after the assassination of Gustavus III of Sweden), [the Rosicrucian] Novikov's house was searched and Masonic books were found which had been banned as harmful in 1786. Novikov was arrested and sentenced, without any formal trial, to fifteen years imprisonment, though he was freed when Paul came to the throne in 1796. In 1794, Catherine ordered the closure of all lodges."⁵⁵⁴

"I made a mistake," said Catherine, "let us close our high-brow books and get down to our ABC."⁵⁵⁵

Catherine was not wrong to suspect the Masons. Already in 1781, in Frankfurt, the Illuminati "had decided to create in Russia two capitularies 'of the theoretical degree' under the general direction of Schwartz. One of the capitularies was ruled by Tatishchev, and the other by Prince Trubetskoj. At a convention of the Mason-

⁵⁵³ Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.

⁵⁵⁴ Hartley, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-235.

⁵⁵⁵ Catherine II, in Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 662.

Illuminati in 1782 Russia was declared to be 'the Eighth Province of the Strict Observance'. It was here that the Masons swore to murder Louis XVI and his wife and the Swedish King Gustavus III, which sentences were later carried out. In those 80s of the 18th century Masonry decreed that it should strive to destroy the monarchy and the Church, beginning with France and continuing with Russia. But openly, 'for the public', and those accepted into the lower degrees, the Masons said that they were striving to end enmity between people and nations because of religious and national quarrels, that they believed in God, that they carried out charitable work and wanted to educate humanity in the principles of morality and goodness, that they were faithful citizens of their countries and kings..."⁵⁵⁶

However, Russia did not follow the path of France at this time because eighteenth-century Russian Masonry, unlike its contemporary French counterpart, was not very radical in its politics. Thus Novikov, according to Pipes, must be classified as "a political conservative because of his determination to work 'within the system', as one would put it today. A freemason and a follower of Saint-Martin, he thought all evil stemmed from man's corruption, not from institutions under which he lived. He mercilessly exposed 'vice' and promoted with such enthusiasm useful knowledge because of the conviction that only by improving man could one improve mankind. He never questioned the autocratic form of government or even serfdom. This stress on man rather than the environment became a hallmark of Russian conservatism."⁵⁵⁷

Another conservative Mason was Prince Michael Shcherbatov, who represented the extreme right wing of the aristocratic opposition to Catherine. He was a monarchist who believed in the close alliance of tsar and aristocrats, and opposed all concessions to the peasantry or the merchants. He believed that Russia's traditional autocracy had been replaced by despotism under Peter, who treated the aristocrats brutally and opened the way for widespread "voluptuousness" in Russian life.

If Shcherbatov represented a nobleman pining nostalgically for the non-despotic orderliness of pre-Petrine Russia, Count Nikita Panin and Alexander Radishchev represented a more radical, forward-looking element. Panin and his brother had already, as we have seen, taken part in the coup against Peter III which brought Catherine to the throne. But when Catherine refused to adopt Nikita's plan for a reduction in the powers of the autocrat and an extension of the powers of the aristocratic Senate, they plotted to overthrow her, too. Their plot was discovered; but Catherine pardoned them... Nothing daunted, Nikita wrote a *Discourse on the Disappearance in Russia of All Forms of Government*, intended for his pupil, Crown Prince Paul, in which he declared: "Where the arbitrary rule of one man is the highest law, there can be no lasting or unifying bonds; there is a state, but no fatherland; there are subjects, but no citizens; there is no body politic whose members are linked to each other by a network of duties and privileges."⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁶ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁵⁵⁷ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

⁵⁵⁸ Walicki, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

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Alexander Radishchev was a young noble who had been sent to Germany by Catherine II to study law. He was perhaps the first real *intelligent* in the nineteenth-century understanding of the word – that is, an intellectual openly criticizing the autocracy from a liberal, westernizing point of view. Thus he wrote an ode to Universal Freedom. And his *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790), writes Pipes, “exposed the seamier sides of Russian provincial life... [He] drank deeply at the source of the French Enlightenment, showing a marked preference for its more extreme materialist wing (Helvétius and d’Holbach).”⁵⁵⁹

“Modelled in outward form on Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*,” writes De Madariaga, “Radishchev’s book expresses in the language of sensibility a passionate critique of the evils man inflicts on man, including serfdom, and an equally passionate belief in the ability of man to find within himself the means – truth, justice – to achieve reform. In episodes arising at each staging post he describes the inhumanity of the recruit levy, the abuse of serf labour, the defenceless state of serf women belonging to lecherous landlords, the verdicts of corrupt judges and the sufferings of honest ones. He uses the technique of the ‘bundle of papers found by accident’ to produce a plan for the emancipation of the serfs, preceded by a devastating indictment of slavery in general and Russian serfdom in particular.⁵⁶⁰ He issued the warning: ‘Do you now know... what destruction threatens us and in what peril we stand?’ And he went on to stress that the serfs, driven desperate by oppression, and with no glimmer of hope for the future, were merely waiting their chance to revolt. Then ‘the destructive force of bestiality’ would break loose, ‘round about us we shall see sword and prison. Death and fiery desolation will be the reward for our harshness and inhumanity.’ Radishchev openly referred to the horrors of the Pugachev revolt, in which the serfs ‘had spared neither sex nor age’ and ‘had sought more the joy of vengeance than the benefit of broken shackles’. The danger was mounting, he warned, and the serfs would respond to the appeal of the first demagogue... Realizing that ‘the supreme power was not strong enough to cope with a sudden change of opinions’, Radishchev proposed a gradual emancipation of the serfs. All domestic serfdom should be abolished at once, but peasants should first be granted full ownership of their private plots and then be allowed to buy their freedom for a fixed sum. Other targets of Radishchev’s criticism were ranks awarded merely for court service, and censorship, even of pornography: let venal girls be censored, but not the productions of the mind, however dissolute, since no book has ever infected one with venereal disease.

⁵⁵⁹ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

⁵⁶⁰ He writes that serfdom “is a custom worthy of savages, a custom that signifies a heart of stone and a total lack of soul... And we Slavs, sons of *slava* [glory], glorious among earth-born generations, both in name and deed, benighted by the darkness of ignorance, have adopted this custom, to the shame of past centuries, to the shame of this age of reason, we have kept it inviolate even to this day.” (V.M.)

“Radishchev submitted his book anonymously to the chief of police of St. Petersburg in charge of censorship, who took it, after a cursory glance, to be no more than a travelogue *à la Sterne*, approved it, and returned it to the customs office, whence it had been submitted. Radishchev took the opportunity to add a few more passages, including a reference to the French Revolution, before printing and distributing it.

“Catherine read the ‘Journey’ in June 1790, when she was already beginning to exercise a secret quarantine against possible French contagion. In April 1790, orders had been issued to guard against the machinations of a club set up in Paris to organize foreign propaganda. The police were told to keep a discreet watch on its possible activities in Russia and to forbid all secret meetings and conventicles of Masonic lodges and other such ‘concealed and absurd gatherings’. Catherine’s views on Radishchev’s ‘Journey’ can be followed in her secretary’s diary and above all in her own marginal notes on her copy of the book.

“The empress commented adversely on Radishchev’s criticism of landowners and on his emotional portrayal of the condition of the serfs, which she utterly rejected since, in common with many Russians, including e.g. Fonvizin, she sincerely believed that ‘the Russian peasants under good masters were better off than anywhere in the world’. She secretly noted Radishchev’s proposals for emancipation, but was outraged by his warning of the impending revenge of the serfs. She saw in him a man worse than Pugachev (whom Radishchev *had* condemned), inciting the peasants to bloody rebellion. Not only peasants, but the people in general were being roused to disregard the authority of rulers, tsars, emperors, magnates and officials, noted Catherine, and Radishchev was comparing himself to Franklin as ‘the inciter to rebellion’. Here Catherine detected the ‘French poison’ with which Radishchev was infected and which manifested itself even more clearly in several stanzas of an Ode to Liberty which he had included in the ‘Journey’. The poem was originally written in 1781-3, with reference to the American Revolution, and contained lengthy tirades against the despotism of priests and kings. Radishchev calls on the spirits of Brutus and William Tell, and praises Cromwell by whom the ‘king was brought to the block’. But Cromwell also incurs the writer’s condemnation for having seized power from Charles I, and destroyed the freedom of England. On the well-known allegorical scene of the dream, in which a blind ruler is portrayed sitting in glory, surrounded by sycophantic courtiers, and is suddenly enabled to see by the pilgrim Truth the dreadful reality, the poverty and corruption, the horrors of war, where the commander-in-chief, instead of fighting, ‘wallows in luxury and pleasure’, Catherine merely remarked: ‘The author is maliciously inclined.’ It was not therefore this particularly savage denunciation of her own government and of Potemkin which aroused her anger, it was the effort to introduce French revolutionary principles into Russia: the violent overthrow of established authority and of the social order.

“It did not take long for Catherine to identify the author, and Radishchev was soon arrested and taken to the Peter and Paul fortress. He was interrogated at length by Sheshkovsky (head of the Secret Expedition of the Senate) who based

many of his questions on Catherine's marginal notes. Radishchev was not, according to all the available evidence, subjected to any physical duress let alone any form of torture, though incarceration in the grim fort was in itself a terrifying enough experience.

"Radishchev's answers and admissions suggest that his arrest aroused him out of a dream world into the world of reality; he woke up to the unwisdom of the manner in which he had expressed himself, particularly in the heated atmosphere of the 1790s. He declared that his main object had been the winning of literary acclaim. He denied any intention of attacking the present Russian form of government, and the Statute of 1775 in particular; he intended only to point to certain practical shortcomings, as reported by public opinion. He had not intended to arouse peasants against landowners; he had only wished to force bad landowners to be ashamed of their cruelty. He admitted that he hoped for the freedom of the serfs, but by means of legislative action such as that already undertaken by the empress, when she had banned the sale of serfs or the assignation of state peasants to industrial enterprises, or when she had regulated the treatment of industrial serfs, or forbidden the corporal punishment of soldiers without a court martial.

"Without thus going back on the substance of what he had written, Radishchev, aware of the possible consequences to his family, did his best to minimize its consequences by admitting that his language had been exaggerated and insulting, and his accusations against government officials wild. He threw himself on Catherine's mercy. But in spite of his appeals, he was tried by the St. Petersburg criminal court on charges of sedition and *lèse majesté*, and sentenced to death on 24 July 1790, a sentence which had to be passed to the Senate and the empress for confirmation. The Senate, as might be expected, confirmed the verdict on 8 August. Not until 4 September was Radishchev put out of his misery, on hearing that Catherine had commuted the death penalty, on the occasion of the peace with Sweden, to the loss of his status as a noble, and ten years' exile in Ilimsk, a remote fort in Siberia. Roughly dragged away in chains almost at once, Radishchev's lot was much alleviated thanks to A.R. Vorontsov. When he informed Catherine that the condemned man was in irons, she ordered them to be removed at once; and Vorontsov gave Radishchev a total of 500 rubles to equip him with adequate clothing and supplies. He was allowed to break his journey several times - he took sixteen months to reach Ilimsk - and Vorontsov gave him an annual allowance of 500, then 800, then 1000 rubles during his exile..."⁵⁶¹

We have dwelt at length on Radishchev because he represents the first truly modern, westernised Russian. His thought, his relationship with the autocracy, and even the relative gentleness of his exile in Siberia, were to be repeated many times in the nineteenth century intelligentsia - from the Decembrists to Dostoyevsky to Lenin... He was the forerunner of the revolutionaries, and the *Journey* has been called "the first trial balloon of revolutionary propaganda in

⁵⁶¹ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, pp. 542-545.

Russia.”⁵⁶² The ideas of duty, of self-sacrifice, of God and immortality play no part in Radishchev’s thought. Nothing of the sacred, of the veneration due to that which is established by God, remains. Only: “The sovereign is the first citizen of the people’s commonwealth”, and: “Wherever being a citizen is not to his advantage, he is not a citizen.” Such ideas lead logically to the self-annihilation of society. In his personal case, they led to suicide...

“There are grounds for assuming,” writes Walicki, “that this act was not the result of a temporary fit of depression. Suicide had never been far from his thoughts. In the *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* he wrote: ‘If outrageous fortune hurl upon you all its slings and arrows, if there is no refuge left on earth for your virtue, if, driven to extremes, you find no sanctuary from oppression, then remember this: you are a man, call to mind your greatness and seize the crown of bliss which they are trying to take from you. Die.’”⁵⁶³

Radishchev clearly exemplifies the bitter fruits of the westernizing reforms of Peter the Great and his successors. It was this mad, proud striving for mastery of one’s life, without acknowledgement of the Master, God, that was to lead much of Europe to a kind of collective suicide in the next age. And its appearance in Orthodox Russia, leading to the shackling and poisoning of the only source of all true spiritual life, the Orthodox Church, was the result, in large part, of the westernism of Peter I and Catherine II, whose main agents and promoters were the Masonic lodges...

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Among the most radical and dangerous Freemasons of Catherine’s reign were the over-procurators of the Holy Synod.

“The first over-procurator in the reign of Catherine II,” writes Vladimir Rusak, “was Prince A. Kozlovsky, who was not particularly distinguished in anything, but under whom the secularization of the Church lands took place.

“His two successors, according to the definition of Kartashev, were ‘bearers of the most modern, anti-clerical, enlightenment ideology’. In 1765 there followed the appointment of I. Melissino [a “deeply anti-clerical Mason”⁵⁶⁴] as over-procurator. His world-view was very vividly reflected in his ‘Points’ – a project for an order to the Synod. Among others were the following points:

“3)... to weaken and shorten the fasts...

⁵⁶² Olga Eliseeva, “Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Sibir” (“Journey from Petersburg to Siberia”), *Rodina* (Homeland), N 3, 2004, p. 48.

⁵⁶³ Walicki, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁵⁶⁴ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

“5)... to purify the Church from superstitions and ‘artificial’ miracles and superstitions concerning relics and icons: for the study of this problem, to appoint a special commission from various unblended-by-prejudices people;

“7) to remove something from the long Church rites; so as to avoid pagan much speaking in prayer, to remove the multitude of verses, canons, troparia, etc., that have been composed in recent times, to remove many unnecessary feast days, and to appoint short prayer-services with useful instructions to the people instead of Vespers and All-Night Vigils...

“10) to allow the clergy to wear more fitting clothing;

“11) would it not be more rational completely to remove the habit of commemorating the dead (such a habit only provides the clergy with an extra excuse for various kinds of extortions)...

“In other points married bishops, making divorces easier, etc., were suggested.

“As successor to Melessino there was appointed Chebyshev, a Mason, who openly proclaimed his atheism. He forbade the printing of works in which the existence of God was demonstrated. ‘There is no God!’ he said aloud more than once. Besides, he was suspected, and not without reason, of spending large sums of Synodal money.

“In 1774 he was sacked. In his place was appointed the pious S. Akchurin, then A. Naumov. Both of them established good relations with the members of the Synod. The last over-procurator in the reign of Catherine II was the active Count A. Musin-Pushkin, the well-known archaeologist, a member of the Academy of Sciences, who later revealed the ‘Word on Igor’s Regiment’. He took into his hands the whole of the Synodal Chancellery. Being a Church person, he did not hinder the members of the Synod from making personal reports to the empress and receiving orders directly from her.”⁵⁶⁵

The best hierarchs of the time were inhibited from attending Synodal sessions by the impiety of most of the over-procurators. Thus Metropolitan Platon of Moscow protested “on seeing that the over-procurators in the Synod (Melessino and Chebyshev) were penetrated with the spirit of freethinking, and that the opinions of the members of the Synod were paralyzed by the influence of the then all-powerful in church matters spiritual father of the empress, Protopriest Ioann Pamphilov”.⁵⁶⁶

Few were those who, in this nadir of Russian spirituality, had the courage to expose the vices of Russian society while proposing solutions in the spirit of a truly Orthodox piety.

⁵⁶⁵ Rusak, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-276.

⁵⁶⁶ Dobroklonsky, *op. cit.*, p. 549.

One of the few was St. Tikhon, Bishop of Zadonsk. Coming from a very poor family, he both rebuked tsars and nobles for their profligate lives and injustice to their serfs, and criticized the western education they were giving their children: "God will not ask you whether you taught your children French, German or Italian or the politics of society life – but you will not escape Divine reprobation for not having instilled goodness into them. I speak plainly but I tell the truth: if your children are bad, your grandchildren will be worse... and the evil will thus increase... and the root of all this is our thoroughly bad education..."⁵⁶⁷

Another righteous one was Metropolitan Arseny (Matseyevich) of Rostov, a firm believer in the independence of the Church who rejected Catherine's expropriation of the monasteries in 1763-1764, saying that the decline of monasticism in Russia might in the end lead "to atheism". He also refused to swear an oath of allegiance to her as "Supreme Judge" of the Church. He had refused to do this also in the reign of Elizabeth; and she, a true believer, had not punished him for this. But Catherine was different: she had him defrocked and exiled to the Therapontov monastery, where Patriarch Nikon had once been kept. But since he continued to write letters against secularization, he was deprived of monasticism, and under the name of "Andrew the Liar" was incarcerated for life in the prison of the castle in Revel (Tallinn). There he died in 1772, after accurately prophesying the fates of those bishops who had acquiesced in his unjust sentence.⁵⁶⁸

With Arseny in prison, the other hierarchs meekly submitted to Catherine expropriating ecclesiastical lands. Already between 1762 and 1764 the number of monasteries was reduced from 1072 to 452, and of monastics – from 12,444 to 5105! In exchange, the Church was put on the State's payroll. Thus, according to De Madariaga, "the total income made available to the state from Church lands amounted to some 1,366,299 r.p.a. From this sum, the state paid to the Church about 462,868 r.p.a. in the years 1764-8. Over the years, state income from the church peasants rose steadily, reaching 3,648,000 r. in 1784. The state grant to the Church also rose to 540,000 r.p.a in 1782, 710,000 in 1792 and 820,000 in 1796. A further 115,000 r.p.a. was allotted to the almshouses for retired officers and soldiers and funds were made available to seminaries. The state thus made a very good bargain at the expense of the Church..."⁵⁶⁹

With the hierarchs in paralysis, it is not surprising that in the eighteenth century the lower clergy were in a still more humiliating condition, and were even subjected to physical violence by governors and landowners. As De Madariaga writes: "The relationship of the local authorities with the clerical estate was complex and the extent of their jurisdiction limited. In principle members of the

⁵⁶⁷ St. Tikhon, in Nadejda Gorodetzky, *Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk*, London: S.P.C.K., 1976, p. 127.

⁵⁶⁸ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 221. Metropolitan Arseny has recently been canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate. While he was still alive Archimandrite Theophylact of the Novotorzhsk Borisoglebsk monastery said that St. Demetrius of Rostov had appeared to a certain deacon in a dream and said to him: "Do you know that you have a God-pleaser who is incomparably greater than I still living on earth – his Eminence Metropolitan Arseny." For this story the Senate decreed: "to defrock Theophylact, deprive him of his monasticism and exile him to Irkutsk monastery".

⁵⁶⁹ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

clerical estate came under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities but in practice much depended on rank: whereas a church dignitary, or an abbot, would be respected by governors and voyevodas, the local village priest or local church servants were often arrested with impunity, particularly if there was any suspicion of connivance with peasant disorders. But the Church authorities called on the civil authorities for legal support in such important matters as combatting heresy and sacrilege, preventing proselytizing activities of other faiths and the conversion of infidels to Orthodoxy. This task was particularly important in those guberniia [provinces] containing large Tartar populations, e.g. Kazan'. The civil authorities dealt with the Old Believers, and it was their function to attempt to prevent the acts of collective self-immolation by fire which occasionally occurred among the more extreme groups. In addition the civil authorities, both at the request of the ecclesiastical authorities and on their own initiative, prosecuted those of all classes who failed to attend confession and communion, and to appear regularly at church, those guilty of adultery and evil living, etc."⁵⁷⁰

"The secularization of church lands, and the ensuing legislation, affected the parish priest in a number of ways. To begin with, in the 1760s a number of taxes on the priests were abolished now that the bishops had a fixed income. But the income of the urban or rural parish priest still remained low and insecure... The death of a wife could be a fatal blow, since widowers were not allowed to officiate, nor could they remarry. The position of a priest too old to fulfill his duties and of the dependents of a deceased priest remained very difficult unless a relative could be speedily inducted..."⁵⁷¹

As Lebedev writes, "the age-old Russian home and church schools for children were forbidden as not being scientific and aiding superstition. The local authorities were ordered 'from the highest levels' to introduce 'correct' schools with good teaching. But at that time for a series of reasons they were not able to do this, while the schools of the old 'amateur' type disappeared both in the cities and in the countryside. And it turned out that 'the enlightened age of Catherine' laid a beginning to the wide spreading of illiteracy and ignorance in the masses of the Great Russian people, both in the lower classes of the city population and even more in the country. In the cities... schools and gymnasia were built mainly for the higher classes. It was at that time that lycea for men and the women's Smolny institute appeared... There they studied the secular sciences thoroughly, but it was necessary to teach something spiritual there as well! The imperial power understood that it was impossible not to teach religion. But in the interests of the authorities the Orthodox Faith and Church and Orthodox education were used as a means to educating the 'new breed' of noble (above all noble) fathers and mothers in the spirit of devotion to the authorities, a definite 'morality' and the honourable fulfillment of duty. But in 'society' at that time the Law of God was considered to be a purely 'priestly' subject. It was ordered that 'children should not be infected with superstition and fanaticism', that is, they were not to speak to them about the Old Testament punishments of God or about miracles and the Terrible Judgement

⁵⁷⁰ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁵⁷¹ De Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

(!), but they were to instill in them primarily 'the rules of morality', 'natural (!) religion and 'the importance of religious tolerance'. We shall see later what kind of 'new breed' of people were the products of this kind of 'Law of God' ..."⁵⁷²

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Russia under Catherine plumbed a nadir in her spiritual life... And yet, as so often in history, we see that the seeds of revival were being sown even at this time. For it was precisely in the reign of Catherine that St. Paissy Velichkovsky was laying the foundation for the revival of Russian monasticism in the nineteenth century that would produce such beautiful fruits as the elders of Optina. And it was in her reign that a young man called Seraphim was instructed by the Kievan hermit Dositheus to enter the monastery of Sarov and practice the Jesus prayer, which proved to be the beginning of his ascent to the summit of spiritual perfection... For history remains the domain, not only of psychological, sociological, political and economic laws, but also of that which is in principle unpredictable - the interaction of the free will of man and the grace of God...

St. Paissy had fled from Russia to Moldavia to Mount Athos and back to Moldavia in search of the true monastic life and a spiritual guide who could teach him the prayer of the heart as described by the hesychast Holy Fathers. In the end, not finding a guide, he had to agree to becoming a spiritual guide himself, and soon built up a very large monastic community under his direction. This huge growth of monasticism under St. Paissy coincided, as Sergius Bolshakoff writes, with "the secularization of the monastic estates" under Catherine, which "reduced the number of the Russian monasteries for men to 325 'Shtatnie' monasteries, supported by the state, and 160 'Zashtatnie' monasteries, without any assistance from the state. The same reform limited the membership of the 'Shtatnie' monasteries. They were divided into three classes. Fifteen monasteries of the first class were allowed to have thirty-three monks each. Forty-one monasteries of the second class were permitted to have seventeen each, while one hundred monasteries of the third class were reduced to twelve monks each. The 'Zashtatnie' monasteries were treated far worse. Only four received permission to have thirty monks, while 154 were reduced to seven monks, the superior included. In these conditions man aspirants to monastic life, unable to enter Russian monasteries, migrated abroad, a few to Mount Athos but the majority to the Romanian principalities. According to Archimandrite Theophan of Novoezersk, by 1778, Paissy's community numbered over 1,000 monks, mainly Russians. A number of these Russian monks returned home in 1779, 1787 and 1801. These monks revived Russian monasticism."⁵⁷³

And so, on the one hand, the results of the transformation of the Russian State in the eighteenth century from an autocracy into an absolutist state were spiritually disastrous (even if they had some good results in the secular realm). And on the other hand, while groaning beneath this western yoke, the people retained its

⁵⁷² Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

⁵⁷³ Bolshakoff, *Russian Mystics*, Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1980, pp. 92-93.

Orthodox faith, making possible the slow, not always steady, and unfortunately incomplete, but nevertheless real return of Russia to its pre-Petrine traditions from the reign of the Emperor Paul (1796-1801) onwards. Thus while the eighteenth century represented the lowest point yet in Russian statehood, Russia still remained recognizably Russia, the chief bearer and defender of the true faith in God in the world...

V. WEST: MASONRY AND REPUBLICANISM

39. THE ORIGINS OF FREEMASONRY

During the eighteenth century, in spite of the spread of Enlightenment ideas, the old despotic order still reigned in Europe; and with rulers such as Frederick the Great in Prussia and Catherine the Great in Russia turning in practice against some of the Enlightenment ideas they embraced in theory it was clear that the “mystery of iniquity” needed a new stimulus to recover its momentum and propel it towards its goal. That stimulus came in the form of an element that was already well known to European history, but which only now began to acquire a dominant position in politics - Jewish power. One major channel of Jewish influence, as we have seen, was finance; a second was Freemasonry, which because of its close links with Jewry is often called “Judaeo-Masonry”.

The main targets of the Masons were: the hierarchical principle, respect for tradition, the Church and the Monarchy. These were old targets: the roots of anti-authoritarianism in both Church and State go back at least to the eleventh-century Papacy. The Masonic contribution was use an already existing sceptical and rationalist climate of opinion to intensify and give direction and a certain quasi-mystical force to the revolutionary movement, “the mystery of iniquity”.

Since belief in the existence of a Masonic conspiracy against civilization is often taken as evidence of madness, or at any rate of political incorrectness, it is necessary to assert from the beginning that, as L.A. Tikhomirov rightly says, “it is strange to attribute to the Masons the whole complexity of the evolution of human societies. One must not have the idea that people lived happily and in a healthy state, but then the Masonic organization appeared and corrupted them all. It is necessary to know the laws of the development of societies, which would be such as they are if the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem had never taken place. In general the study of Masonry can be fruitful only on condition that it is conducted scientifically. Only such a study is capable of clarifying the true level of influence of this or that secret society on the evolution of peoples and states.”⁵⁷⁴

While Tikhomirov has no doubts about the existence of the Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy, he nevertheless insists that the blame for the destruction of society lies “most of all not on some premeditatedly evil influence of the Masons or whatever other organisation, but on the false direction of our own constructive activities.”⁵⁷⁵ For “there has never been a man or a society which has not been corrupted through his or its own free will.”⁵⁷⁶ In other words, the Masons would have no power over society if society had not voluntarily abandoned its own defensive principles and institutions.

⁵⁷⁴ Tikhomirov, “K voprosu o masonakh” (“Towards the Question on the Masons”), *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), in *Kritika Demokratii* (A Criticism of Democracy), Moscow, 1997 pp. 330-331.

⁵⁷⁵ Tikhomirov, “V chem nasha opasnost?” (“In What does the Danger to Us Consist?”), *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), *op. cit.*, p. 333.

⁵⁷⁶ Tikhomirov, “Bor’ba s Masonstvom” (“The Struggle with Masonry”), in *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), p. 336.

As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: "In evaluating the role of the Jewish core of World Masonry, two extremes are possible: the complete denial of any Judaeo-Masonic secret plot and secret leadership of world processes, and the extreme exaggeration of the degree and size of this leadership (when it seems that 'they' are everywhere and everything is ruled by 'them')... In fact, it is all not like that. The life of the world, even the development of its scientific-technical and industrial civilization is a very weird and changeable combination of elemental, ungovernable processes and planned, governable processes. In the final analysis everything is truly ruled by the Providence of God, but in such a way that the free will of man is not abolished. For that reason in their successful moments it can seem, and seems, to the Judaeo-Masons, who really are striving for ever greater subjection of the processes of global life to themselves, that to an ever greater degree it is by their own, human powers that everything is achieved..."⁵⁷⁷

Some have ascribed the origins of Freemasonry as far back as the Babylonian Exile, when the Pharisees were forced to use what came to be called Masonic symbols, gestures and handshakes in order to communicate with each other. Since there is next to no hard evidence for this, we shall not discuss it, nor any of the other theories of the very early origins of Freemasonry...

According to Masonic theory, "Free", "Speculative" or "Symbolic" Masonry began when the meeting-places, or lodges, of the "Operative" Masons, the stonemasons who built the medieval cathedrals, gradually began to decline in importance with the decline in their craft, and they were joined by intellectuals who used the lodges for their own intellectual, and often heretical or occult, activities. One of the first modern "speculative" Masons was the English antiquarian and astrologer, Elias Ashmole, who was initiated in 1646 and died in 1692.⁵⁷⁸ Another early Mason was Sir Christopher Wren. Christopher Hodapp, a Mason, writes: "The Great London Fire had destroyed much of the city [of London] in 1666, and rebuilding it took decades. Freemason Christopher Wren had designed an astonishing number of the new buildings, and construction projects were everywhere. One of the biggest was the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral. It started in 1673 and took almost 40 years to complete. Operative Masons came from all over England to work on the project, and many joined the Lodge of St. Paul. By 1710, the great cathedral was complete, and many lodges disbanded as Masons returned to their hometowns. By 1715, there were just four London city lodges left."⁵⁷⁹

Even at this very early stage, Masonry aroused suspicion. Thus in 1698 a certain Mr. Winter circulated a leaflet in London warning "all godly people in the City of London of the Mischiefs and Evils practised in the Sight of God by those called Freed Masons... For this devilish Sect of Men are Meeters in secret which swear

⁵⁷⁷ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 407.

⁵⁷⁸ Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 22; G. Toppin, "Starred First", *Oxford Today*, vol. 12, N 1, Michaelmas term, 1999, pp. 32-34.

⁵⁷⁹ Hodapp, *Freemasons for Dummies*, Indianapolis: Wiley, 2005, pp. 30-31.

against all without their Following. They are the Anti Christ which was to come, leading Men from fear of God."⁵⁸⁰

The traditional official birthday of Masonry is July 24, 1717, when the four remaining London lodges met in a pub in St. Paul's churchyard and created a Great Lodge as their ruling centre.⁵⁸¹ The first grandmaster was a nobleman, and the leaders of English Masonry to the present day have tended to be members of the royal family. Consonant with this royal connection, there was nothing revolutionary in a political sense in early English Masonry. Thus when Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian minister and master of Lodge number 17 of London, drew up the *Constitutions* of Masonry in 1723, great emphasis was laid on the Masons' loyalty to King and country: "A mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation. If a brother should be a rebel against the state, he is not to be countenanced in his rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy man; and if convicted of no other crime, though the brotherhood must and ought to dismiss his rebellion, and give no umbrage or ground of political jealousy to the government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the lodge, and his relation to it remains indefeasible."⁵⁸²

The Masons, writes O.F. Soloviev, called themselves "men of good will, peace-lovers, builders of the future just construction of society and at the same time patriots of their own fatherlands, law-abiding subjects and citizens, as is emphasized in all the constitutional documents. They went towards the highest ideals not through the preaching of abstract truths, but by serving their own peoples. They did not wall themselves off by an invisible wall from their compatriots, but completely shared their destiny with all their woes and sufferings. They were distinguished by a striving to help those around them, to draw a middle line between extremes and introduce at any rate a little humanism into the bonds of war that have been inevitable up to now."⁵⁸³

That was the theory. But in the order's secrecy, in the religiosity of its three degrees, and in its subversive political influence, a great danger to the powers that be was discerned; and in 1736 Pope Clement XII anathematized it. Moreover, "it was gradually revealed that the ritual humility of Symbolical Masonry had ceased to satisfy the leaders of the 'obediencies', scions of the ruling dynasties and nobility, who strove to elaborate the inner decoration of the lodges and especially the rituals. The desired basis for reform was found in the specially transformed legend of the fate of the knightly order of the Templars, whose leader de Molay and his fellows had perished on the gallows in Paris in 1517 in accordance with the inquisitors' false [?] accusations of terrible heresies. The Templars began to be portrayed as the

⁵⁸⁰ Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁵⁸¹ The original lodges were numbers 1 to 4. However, in Scotland, the Kilwinning Lodge, which called itself "the Mother Lodge of Scotland" and claimed to go back to 1140, rejected the claims of the English Grand Lodge and called itself Lodge no. 0 (Hodapp, *op. cit.*, p. 26).

⁵⁸² Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁵⁸³ O.F. Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veka* (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow, 1998, p. 15.

immediate forerunners of the 'free Masons', which required the introduction of several higher degrees into their order, to signify the special merits and great knowledge of individually chosen adepts. One of the initiators of the reform, the Scottish nobleman A. Ramsay, declared in 1737: 'Our forefathers the crusaders wanted to unite into one brotherhood the subjects of all states', so as in time to create 'a new people, which, representing many nations, would unite them in the bonds of virtue and science'. After the introduction of several higher degrees with luxurious rituals, a series of associations formed several systems, including the highly centralized system 'of strict observance' with rigorous discipline for its adepts, that was significantly developed in the German lands, in Russia and in Sweden."⁵⁸⁴

And so, within twenty years of its official birthday, Masonry had developed from a talking-shop for liberal intellectuals into a new religion tracing its roots to the Templars and beyond. This reinforced suspicions about its antichristian nature. At this point, however, the noble membership of the order proved useful. The Masons were saved from persecution by their success in recruiting members from the aristocracy, whose names were immediately published to show how "respectable" Masonry was. Moreover, a ban was placed on political discussions in the English lodges. For Anderson's *Constitutions* stipulated that "a Mason is a peaceable subject to the Civil Power, wherever he resides or works, and is never to be concern'd in Plots and Conspiracies against the Peace and Welfare of the Nation."

But if English Masonry by and large respected this ban, this was certainly not to be the case with its daughter lodges in Europe and America. Thus St. Andrew's lodge in Boston became "a hotbed of sedition" at the time of the American revolution.⁵⁸⁵ Moreover, the *Constitutions* clearly witnessed both to Masonry's revolutionary potential and to its religious nature. Its religiosity is particularly

⁵⁸⁴ Soloviev, *op. cit.*, p. 17. Thus Piers Paul Read writes: "Andrew Ramsay, a Scottish Jacobite exiled in France who was Chancellor of the French Grand Lodge in the 1730s, claimed that the first FreeMasons had been StoneMasons in the crusader states who had learned the secret rituals and gained the special wisdom of the ancient world. Ramsay made no specific claim for the Templars, probably because he did not wish to antagonise his host, the King of France; but in Germany another Scottish exile, George Frederick Johnson, concocted a myth that transformed 'the Templars... from their ostensible status of unlearned and fanatical soldier-monks to that of enlightened and wise knightly seers, who had used their sojourn in the East to recover its profoundest secrets, and to emancipate themselves from medieval Catholic credulity'.

"According to the German FreeMasons, the Grand Masters of the Order had learned the secrets and acquired the treasure of the Jewish Essenes which were handed down from one to the other. James of Molay [the last Grand Master of the Order], on the night of his execution, had sent the Count of Beaulieu to the crypt of the Temple Church in Paris to recover this treasure which included the seven-branched candelabra seized by the Emperor Titus, the crown of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and a shroud. It is undisputed that in evidence given at the trial of the Templars, a sergeant, John of Châlons, maintained that Gérard of Villiers, the Preceptor of France, had been tipped off about his imminent arrest and so had escaped on eighteen galleys with the Templars' treasure. If this were so, what happened to this treasure? George Frederick Johnson said that it had been taken to Scotland, one of his followers specifying the Isle of Mull." (*The Templars*, London: Phoenix Press, 2001, pp. 303-304)

⁵⁸⁵ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

obvious when in one and the same breath they both disclaim any interest in religion and then claim to profess "the best [religion] that ever was, or will or can be..."⁵⁸⁶

What is this religion? In some formulations it is like the Deism that was becoming fashionable in England, in which God, "the Great Architect of the Universe", is seen as creating and activating the laws of nature, and then playing no further part in history. In others it is closer to Pantheism. Thus the *Constitutions* declare: "[Masons are]... oblig'd... to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is to be good men and true, or men of honour and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasion they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union, and the means of consolidating true friendship among persons that have remained at a perpetual distance. .. The religion we profess... is the best that ever was, or will or can be..., for it is the law of Nature, which is the law of God, for God is nature. It is to love God above all things and our neighbour as our self; this is the true, primitive, catholic and universal religion agreed to be so in all times and ages."⁵⁸⁷

"God is nature..." This is clearly pantheism, which re-entered European religious and philosophical thought, if not through the Templars, then through the Kabbalists and the Jewish-Dutch philosopher Spinoza. No amount of Christian terminology can disguise this fact.

However, those who entered the Masonic lodges in the eighteenth century almost all had a Jewish or Christian background, so pantheism, a characteristic of eastern paganism, could not (yet) become the official religion of the sect. Therefore the Masonic god, as was revealed in one of the degrees of initiation, remained officially personal. He was "*Jah-Bul-On*". "Jah" clearly refers to the Jehovah of the Old Testament, whom Christians identify with Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. But "Bul" and "On" have their roots in Canaanite idolatry. "Bul" is "Baal", while the word "On", sometimes falsely identified with the Egyptian Osiris, can actually be found in *Hosea* 4.15: "Judah, do not go up to Gilgal, and do not go up to the House of On". Blessed Theodoret of Cyrus comments on this passage: "'On' is the name of the idol in Bethel; it does not mean 'eternal' - that is, living - as some commentators imagined; instead, it is a Hebrew word, not Greek. The other Hebrew-speaking translators clearly informed us of this: Aquila and Theodotion rendered it 'useless house', and Symmachus 'house of iniquity'."⁵⁸⁸

So the Masonic god is in fact a blasphemous mixture of the name of the True God and the names of his greatest enemies...

⁵⁸⁶ Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁵⁸⁷ Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁵⁸⁸ Theodoret, *Commentaries on the Prophets*, volume 3: commentary on the Twelve Prophets, Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006, p. 50.

The famous American Masonic leader of the nineteenth century, Albert Pike, also drew attention to the Masons' worship of the Egyptian god *Osiris*. "Osiris," we read in *Wikipedia*, "was the brother and husband of Isis, with Horus being considered his posthumously begotten son. In the Old Kingdom (2686 - 2181 BC) the pharaoh was considered a son of the sun god Ra who, after his death, ascended to join Ra in the sky. Osiris was the judge of the dead and the underworld, and the agency that granted all life, including sprouting vegetation and the fertile flooding of the Nile River. He was described as 'He Who is Permanently Benign and Youthful' and the 'Lord of Silence'. The kings of Egypt were associated with Osiris in death - as Osiris rose from the dead so they would be in union with him, and inherit eternal life through a process of imitative magic."⁵⁸⁹

The distant, but real similarity between Osiris and Christ made him an ideal substitute for Christ in the Masonic imagination. The importance of Osiris in Masonic ritual is demonstrated in Mozart's famous aria "O Isis and Osiris" in *The Magic Flute* (1791). According to Pike, "Osiris had a rival: 'Long known as... Adonai [another name for Jehovah, the Lord of the Bible];... the rival of Bal and Osiris'."⁵⁹⁰

In fact, according to Phillip Darrell Collins and Paul David Collins, "Bal and Osiris were one and the same, representing the 'invisible God' worshipped 'beyond the orb [sun]'. This was the reason for Pike's capitalization of the word 'Sun'. He was not referring to the corporeal 'orb' that provides earth with daylight, but an 'invisible God' whose identity was known only to a few."⁵⁹¹

This is clearly Lucifer, or Satan...

So closer examination reveals Masonry in its developed form to be a kind of Manichaeism dualism. There are two gods, Christ and Satan, of whom the one, Christ, is hated, and the other, Satan, is adored. As Pike wrote: "To the crowd we must say: we worship a God, but it is the God one adores without superstition. To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the brethren of the 32nd, 31st and 30th degrees: all of us initiates of the high degrees should maintain the Masonic religion in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine. If Lucifer were not God, would Adonai, the God of the Christians, whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy and hatred of man, his barbarism and repulsion for science, would Adonai and his priests calumniate him? Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonai is also God... religious philosophy in its purity and youth consists in the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonai."⁵⁹²

"We have the testimony of [the former Mason and investigator of Masonry] Copin Albancelli, whom we can in no way suspect of making up things, when he

⁵⁸⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris>.

⁵⁹⁰ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, Richmond, Virginia: J.L. Jenkins, 1942, p. 697.

⁵⁹¹ Collins and Collins, *The Ascendancy of the Scientific Dictatorship*, New York: iUniverse, 2004, p. 204.

⁵⁹² Pike, in A.C. de la Rive, *La Femme et l'Enfant dans la Franc-Maçonnerie Universelle* (The Woman and the Child in Universal Freemasonry), p. 588.

declares positively that he had genuine documents about this in his hands. I, he says, had the opportunity several years ago to find a proof that there exist certain Masonic societies which are satanic societies, not in the sense that the devil used to come personally to preside at their meetings, as that charlatan Leo Taxil says, but in the sense that their members confess the cult of Satan. They adore Lucifer as being supposedly the true God and are inspired by an irreconcilable hatred against the Christian God.' They even have a special formula casting 'curses' on Him and proclaiming the glory of and love for Lucifer..."⁵⁹³

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When we examine the rites and religious practices of Masonry, and especially of its higher degrees, a strongly Jewish element is immediately apparent. As an example, let us take the Masonic practice of wearing aprons. Michael Hoffman, following John L. Brooke, writes: "The Babylonian Talmud claims that the forbidden tree in the Garden, from which Adam ate was a fig: 'Rabbi Nehemiah holds that the tree of which Adam ate was the fig tree ' (BT Berakoth 40a). The Kabbalah teaches that the leaves of this fig tree conveyed powers of sorcery and magic (Zohar 1:56b Bereshit). Consequently, in the rabbinic mind, the aprons worn by Adam and Eve, being made from the leaves of the fig tree, were garments that gave the wearers magic powers. These aprons made from fig leaves had the power to give the bearer to enjoy 'the fruits of the world-to-come' (BT Bava Metzia 114b). It is with this rabbinic understanding that Freemasons and Mormons wear these aprons in their own rituals."⁵⁹⁴

Moreover, there is a significant personal input of Jewry into Masonry, especially at the highest levels. For the three symbolical degrees of Masonry are supplemented by thirty higher levels, which in turn are crowned by what has been called "invisible Masonry". And "all this impenetrably dark power is crowned, according to the conviction and affirmation of Copin Albancelli, by still another level: the Jewish centre, which pursues the aims of the universal lordship of Israel and holds in its hands both visible Masonry with its 33 degrees and the invisible degrees of invisible Masonry or 'Illuminism' ..." ⁵⁹⁵

"It is true, of course," writes Bernard Lazare, "that there were Jews connected with Freemasonry from its birth, students of the Kabbala, as is shown by certain rites which survive. It is very probable, too, that in the years preceding the outbreak of the French Revolution, they entered in greater numbers than ever into the councils of the secret societies, becoming indeed themselves the founders of secret associations. There were Jews in the circle around Weishaupt, and a Jew of Portuguese origin, Martinez de Pasquales, established numerous groups of Illuminati in France and gathered around him a large number of disciples whom he instructed in the doctrines of re-integration. The lodges which Martinez

⁵⁹³ Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, p. 448.

⁵⁹⁴ Michael Hoffman, *Judaism Discovered*, Independent History and Research, 2008, p. 198.

⁵⁹⁵ Tikhomirov, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

founded were mystic in character, whereas the other orders of Freemasonry were, on the whole, rationalistic in their teachings.... There would be little difficulty in showing how these two tendencies worked in harmony; how Cazotte, Cagliostro, Martinez, Saint-Martin, the Comte de Saint Germain and Eckartshausen were practically in alliance with the Encyclopaedists and Jacobins, and how both, in spite of their seeming hostility, succeeded in arriving at the same end, the undermining, namely, of Christianity.

“This, too, then, would tend to show that though the Jews might very well have been active participants in the agitation carried on by the secret societies, it was not because they were the founders of such associations, but merely because the doctrines of the secret societies agreed so well with their own.”⁵⁹⁶

Thus Freemasonry was not controlled by the Jews, according to Lazare. Nevertheless, Judaism and Masonry had a great deal in common: Anti-Christianity, a taste for a Kabbalistic type of mysticism, revolutionary politics and many members of Jewish blood.

But this is only the beginning. It is when one enters into the details of the rites, especially the rites of the higher degrees, that the resemblances become really striking. “The connections are more intimate,” wrote a Parisian Jewish review, “than one would imagine. Judaism should maintain a lively and profound sympathy for Freemasonry in general, and no matter concerning this powerful institution should be a question of indifference to it...

“The spirit of Freemasonry is that of Judaism in its most fundamental beliefs; its ideas are Judaic, its language is Judaic, its very organisation, almost, is Judaic. Whenever I approach the sanctuary where the Masonic order accomplishes its works, I hear the name of Solomon ringing everywhere, and echoes of Israel. Those symbolic columns are the columns of the Temple where each Hiram’s workmen received their wages; they enshrine his revered name. The whole Masonic tradition takes me back to that great epoch when the Jewish monarch, fulfilling David’s promises, raised up to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a religious monument worthy of the creator of Heaven and earth – a tradition symbolised by powerful images which have spread outside the limits of Palestine to the whole world, but which still bear the indelible imprint of their origin.

“That Temple which must be built, since the sanctuary in Jerusalem has perished, the secret edifice at which all Masons on earth labour with one mind, with a word of command and secret rallying-points – it is the moral sanctuary, the divine asylum wherein all men who have been reconciled will re-unite one day in holy and fraternal Agapes; it is the social order which shall no longer know fratricidal wars, nor castes, nor pariahs, and where the human race will recognise and proclaim anew its original oneness. That is the work on which every initiate

⁵⁹⁶ Lazare, *Antisemitisme* (Antisemitism), pp. 308-309; De Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

pledges his devotion and undertakes to lay his stone, a sublime work which has been carried on for centuries."⁵⁹⁷

This talk of universal fraternity in the rebuilding of the Temple is deception. If there is fraternity, it is a Jewish fraternity. "As for the final result of the messianic revolution," writes Batault, "it will always be the same: God will overthrow the nations and the kings and will cause Israel and her king to triumph; the nations will be converted to Judaism and will obey the Law or else they will be destroyed and the Jews will be the masters of the world. The Jews' international dream is to unite the world with the Jewish law, under the direction and domination of the priestly people – a general form... of imperialism..."⁵⁹⁸

The main aim of Freemasonry, as of Judaism, is the return to Zion to rebuild the Temple of Solomon. And this alone should be enough to warn us of its Antichristianity, insofar the Lord decreed that "not one stone [of the Temple] shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24.2). Moreover, every attempt to rebuild it has been destroyed by the Lord, as happened when Julian the Apostate tried to rebuild it in the fourth century.

The rites of Freemasonry themselves declare that the secret aim of the rebuilding of the Temple is to undo the work of Christ on the Cross. Thus the 18th or Rosicrucian Degree⁵⁹⁹ speaks of the ninth hour of the day as "the hour when the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain and darkness overspread the earth, when the true Light departed from us, the Altar was thrown down, the Blazing Star was eclipsed, the Cubic Stone poured forth Blood and Water, the Word was lost, and despair and tribulation sat heavily upon us. It goes on to exhort the Masons: "Since Masonry has experienced such dire calamities it is our duty, Princes, by renewed labours, to retrieve our loss."

The Reverend Walter Hannah justly comments: "For any Christian to declare that Masonry experienced 'a dire calamity' at the Crucifixion, or that Masons suffered a 'loss' at the triumphant death of our Saviour on the Cross which the Excellent and Perfect Princes of the Rose Croix of Heredom can by their own labour 'retrieve' seems not only heretical but actually blasphemous. The only interpretation which makes sense of this passage would appear to be that it is not the death of our Lord which is mourned, but the defeat of Satan."⁶⁰⁰ Indeed, for "the eclipse of the Blazing Star" can only mean the defeat of Satan, while the Cubic Stone pouring forth Blood and Water can only mean the triumph of Christ on the Cross - Christ, Who is "the Stone that the builders rejected" which became "the chief Corner-Stone" of the New Testament Church (Matthew 21.42), having been rejected as "the wrong shape" by the leaders of Old Israel. As the Apostle Peter said to the Sanhedrin: "This [Christ] is the Stone which was rejected by you builders [Jews, Masons], which has become the chief Corner-Stone" (Acts 4.11).

⁵⁹⁷ *La Vérité Israélite* (The Israelite Truth), 1861, vol. 5, p. 74; De Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

⁵⁹⁸ G. Batault, *Le Problème Juif* (The Jewish Problem); De Poncins, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

⁵⁹⁹ Rosicrucianism was founded as a separate order in Masonry in 1757 in Frankfurt, and counted among its leading adepts the charlatans Saint-Germain and Calioastro.

⁶⁰⁰ Hannah, *Darkness Visible*, London: Augustine Press, 1952, p. 203.

Any Temple which does not have Christ as the chief Corner-Stone is an abomination to God and will be destroyed by Him just as the Old Testament Temple was destroyed; for “whoever falls on this Stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to power” (Matthew 21.44). It is in the same Rosicrucian Degree that initiates are told to walk over the Cross of Christ...⁶⁰¹

*

And so Masonry is revealed as a web of deceit whose outer layers are liberalism, scientism, and rationalism; whose inner layers are the overthrow of the existing world order in both Church and State; and whose innermost sanctum is the most explicit Antichristianity, the worship of Satan.

The first power in the West clearly to see the threat of Masonry was the Vatican – which, of course, had little influence in America. Catholicism made no radical distinction between English and French Masonry. In 1738 Masonry of all kinds was condemned by Pope Clement XII, in 1751 – by Benedict XIV, in 1821 – by Pius VII, in 1825 – by Leo XII, in 1829 – by Pius VIII, in 1832 and 1839 – by Gregory XVI, in 1846, 1864, 1865, 1873 and 1876 – by Pius IX, and in 1884 – by Leo XIII. The latter’s bull, *Humanum Genus*, declared of the Freemasons: “Their ultimate aim is to uproot completely the whole religious and political order of the world... This will mean that the foundation and the laws of the new structure of society will be drawn from pure Naturalism.”⁶⁰²

The Popes were right (in this, but not, of course, in many other things). And yet they were powerless to stem the tide of naturalism and unbelief that was sweeping Europe on the eve of the French Revolution. Nor could the revolution planned by the Grand Orient of Paris be prevented by the Vatican, for the simple reason that the Vatican had started the whole long process of apostasy herself: from Papism to Humanism to Protestantism, from Deism to the Enlightenment and Freemasonry, and on into the still more bloody and blasphemous future – it had all begun in Rome, when the first heretical Popes broke away from the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine Autocracy. The Papacy was therefore compromised; and if deliverance from the rapid growth of Masonry was to come it could only come from the Orthodox Church and that Autocracy that now stood in the place of Byzantium – the Third Rome of Russia...

⁶⁰¹ H.T. F. Rhodes, *The Satanic Mass*, London: Jarrolds, 1968, p. 219-220.

⁶⁰² Count Leon de Poncins, *Freemasonry and the Vatican*, London: Britons Publishing Company, 1968, p. 31. The bull went on: “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 the permission of the people, so that, when the popular will changes, rulers of States 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 power in 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...”

40. FREEMASONRY AND ECUMENISM

Of course, the Masons did not advertise their Satanism. Instead, they attached themselves to the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, which was *indifferentism*, or what we would now call *ecumenism*. As religious passions cooled in Europe after the end of the religious wars, the Masons took the lead in preaching religious tolerance; and many were deceived into thinking that they could be Christians and Masons at the same time.

Ecumenism has deep roots in European paganism. In a sense the Roman Empire was ecumenist, since it embraced all religions so long as they did not constitute a threat to the worship of the State. Thus in the year 384, Symmachus, the pagan leader of the Roman Senate, wrote to the Emperor Theodosius the Great, appealing to him to be tolerant towards the pagans because, as he said, many paths led to God... He chose the wrong emperor to appeal to, because St. Theodosius was the most anti-ecumenist of Christians.

An excellent definition of the folly of ecumenism as understood by the Romans was given by St. Leo the Great in the fifth century: "Rome..., though it ruled almost all nations, was enthralled by the errors of them all, and seemed to itself to have fostered religion greatly, because it rejected no falsehood." It was only the Christians and the Jews who did not accept the Roman thesis that all religions are to be respected. They asserted, by contrast, that "all the gods of the pagans are demons" (Psalm 95.5).

The origins of ecumenism go back to Asia Minor in the second century, to Apelles, a disciple of the heretic Marcion. As the Athonite Elder Augustine writes: "Apelles, the head of the numerous sect, venerable both for his life and for his age, wanted to undertake the pacification and unification of all the shoots of the heretic Marcion under a single rule and authority. With this aim he exerted all his powers to come into contact with all the leaders of the sects, but had to admit that it was impossible to persuade each sect to abandon its unreasonable dogmatic teaching and accept that of another. Having come away from his attempts at mediation with no fruit, he decided a bridge had to be built, a way of living together peaceably, or a mutual tolerance of each other, with a single variety of 'faith'...

"Starting from this point of view, he established an atheist dogma of unity, which has been called, after him, 'the atheist dogma of Apelles', with the notorious slogan: '... We don't have to examine the matter thoroughly, everyone can remain in his faith; for those who hope on the Crucified One,' he declared, 'will be saved so long as they are found to have good works.' Or, to put it more simply: 'it is not at all necessary to examine the matter - the differences between us - but everyone should retain his convictions, because,' he declared, 'those who hope on the Crucified One will be saved so long as they are found to practise good works!...' It would be superfluous to explain that this atheist dogma of Apelles was first formulated by the heretic Marcion himself (whom St. Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, called 'the first-born of Satan') and is entirely alien to the Christians. We Christians love the heterodox and we long for a real and holy union with them

- when they become sober and believe in an Orthodox manner in our Lord Jesus Christ, abandoning their heretical and mistaken beliefs and 'their distorted image of Christ' (see Eusebius, *History*, bk. 5, 13-15; Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Dodecabiblon*, bk. 2, chapter 13, para. 3)."⁶⁰³

Apelles' dogma was condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, but reappeared at a later date. Thus the twelfth-century Arab philosopher and doctor Avveroes pleaded for a kind of union between Christians, Jews, Muslims and pagans that was avidly discussed in western scholastic circles.⁶⁰⁴

Again, the variant of Apelleanism known as uniatism - that is, the union between Roman Catholicism and other religions - appeared after the schism of 1054. As Elder Augustine explains: "After the canonical cutting off of the Latins from the Church as a whole in 1054, that is, after their definitive schism and anathematisation, there was also the acceptance, or rather the application, of the atheist dogma of Apelles. The Catholic (=Orthodox) Church of Christ condemned the heresies of the Nestorians, Monophysites and Monothelites in the (Third, Fourth and Sixth) Ecumenical Councils. It anathematised the heretics and their heretical teachings and declared those who remained in the above-mentioned heresies to be excommunicate. The apostate 'church' of Rome took no account of the decisions of these Ecumenical Councils, but received into communion the unrepentant and condemned Nestorian, Monophysite and Monothelite heretics without any formality, with only the recognition of the Pope as Monarch of the Church. And not only the heretics, but also many others after this, were received into communion with only the recognition of the Monarchy of the blood-stained beast that presided in it."⁶⁰⁵

However, Apelleanism in its modern, ecumenist variety is a product of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestants rejected the idea of the Church as "the pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Timothy 3.15) and vaunted the power of the individual mind to find the truth independently of any Church. This led to a proliferation of Protestant sects, which in turn led to attempts to achieve unity by agreeing on a minimum truth, which in turn led to the idea that all faiths are true "in their own way". Thus the Anglican Settlement of the mid-sixteenth century was a kind of Protestant Unia. The Anglican Church was allowed to retain some of the outward trappings of Catholicism, but without its central pivot, the papacy, which was replaced by obedience to the secular monarch as head of the Church. Being a politically motivated compromise from the beginning, Anglicanism has always been partial to ever more comprehensive schemes of inter-Church and inter-faith union, and many leaders of the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century were Anglicans.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰³ Monk Augustine, "To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou", *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites* (Mount Athos), 121, September-October, 1990, pp. 33-34, 1

⁶⁰⁴ Monk Augustine, "To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou", *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites*, 120, July-August, 1990, pp. 21-21.

⁶⁰⁵ Monk Augustine, "To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou", *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites*, 120, July-August, 1990, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁰⁶ V. Moss, "Ecucommunism", *Living Orthodoxy*, September-October, 1989, vol. XI, N 5, pp. 13-18.

In 1614 there appeared the first modern ecumenist, George Kalixtos, a man famous, according to Elder Augustine, “for the breadth of his knowledge and his ‘eirenic’ spirit in tackling various questions, including ecclesiastical ones. Propelled by this spirit, he declared that there was no need of, nor did he even seek, the union of the various Churches... Nevertheless, he did demand their mutual recognition and the retaining of reciprocal ‘love’ through the reciprocal tolerance of the manifold differences of each ‘Church’...”⁶⁰⁷

As religious passions cooled round Europe at the end of the Thirty Years War, the Freemasons took the lead in preaching religious tolerance and indifference. The ecumenism of Masonry was linked to the crisis of faith in the Anglican church in the early eighteenth century, and in particular to the loss of faith in the unique truth and saving power of Christianity.

Thus “in 1717,” wrote William Palmer, “a controversy arose on occasion of the writings of Hoadly, bishop of Bangor, in which he maintained that it was needless to believe in any particular creed, or to be united to any particular Church; and that sincerity, or our own persuasion of the correctness of our opinions (whether well or ill founded) is sufficient. These doctrines were evidently calculated to subvert the necessity of believing the articles of the Christian faith, and to justify all classes of schismatics or separatists from the Church. The convocation deemed these opinions so mischievous, that a committee was appointed to select propositions from Hoadly’s books, and to procure their censure; but before his trial could take place, the convocation was prorogued by an arbitrary exercise of the royal authority...”⁶⁰⁸

Hardly coincidentally, 1717, the year in which Hoadly’s heretical views were published, was the same year in which the Grand Lodge of England was founded. And we find a very similar doctrine enshrined in Dr. Anderson’s *Constitutions*: “Let a man’s religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the glorious architect of heaven and earth.” In accordance with this principle, Jews were admitted to the Masonic lodges as early as 1724.⁶⁰⁹

But English Masonry went further than English ecumenism in positing that underlying all religions there was a “true, primitive, universal religion”, a religion “in which all men agree”: “A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charged in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet, ‘tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is to be good Men and

⁶⁰⁷ Monk Augustine, “To atheon dogma tou Oikoumenismou Prodromou tou Antikhristou”, *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites*, 121, September-October, 1990, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁰⁸ Palmer, *A Compendious Ecclesiastical History*, New York: Stanford & Swords, 1850, p. 165.

⁶⁰⁹ Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, but whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the Centre of Union and the Means of Conciliating true Friendships among Persons that must have remained at a perpetual Distance."

A new and extremely deceptive concept was here introduced into the bloodstream of European thought: "that Religion in which all men agree". *There is no such thing...* Even if we exclude the "stupid Atheists" and "irreligious Libertines" (of whom there are very many), we still find men disagreeing radically about the most fundamental doctrines: whether God is one, or one-in-three, or more than three, whether He is to be identified with nature or distinguished from it, whether He is evolving or unchanging, whether or not He became incarnate in Jesus Christ, whether or not He spoke to Mohammed, whether or not He is coming to judge the world, etc. Upon the answers to these questions depend our whole concept of right and wrong, of what it is "to be good Men and true". Far from there being unanimity among "religious" people about this, there is bound to be most radical disagreement...

A critical role in the development of ecumenism was played by Rousseau, who insisted that men should believe in a "civil religion" that combined belief in "the existence of an omnipotent, benevolent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of sinners; the sanctity of the social contract and the law".⁶¹⁰ If any citizen accepted these beliefs, but then "behaved as if he did not believe in them", the punishment was death. As Jacques Barzun writes: "Rousseau reminds the reader that two-thirds of mankind are neither Christians nor Jews, nor Mohammedans, from which it follows that God cannot be the exclusive possession of any sect or people; all their ideas as to His demands and His judgements are imaginings. He asks only that we love Him and pursue the good. All else we know nothing about. That there should be quarrels and bloodshed about what we can never know is the greatest impiety."⁶¹¹

Now Ecumenism may be described as religious egalitarianism, the doctrine that one religion is as good as any other. When combined, as it was in the lodges of Europe and America, with political and social egalitarianism, the doctrine that one *person* is as good as any other, it made for an explosive mixture - not just a philosophy, but a programme for revolutionary action. And this revolutionary potential of Masonry became evident very soon after it spread from England to the Continent...

⁶¹⁰ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, London: Penguin Books, p. 286.

⁶¹¹ Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 387.

41. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: (1) THE REBELLION BEGINS

“By the 1750s.” writes Simon Jenkins, “Europe was bursting with too many egos for its own stability. In 1756, eight years after the War of the Austrian Succession, Frederick of Prussia made another unprovoked invasion, this time of the adjacent territory of Saxony, to add to Silesia. This antagonized his two most powerful neighbours, Austria and Russia. Like the biblical dog returning to its vomit, the continental powers again lined up for the battle. With territory rather than succession an issue, France this time allied with Russia, Austria and Spain, to confront the upstart Prussia. Britain’s new leader, William Pitt (1756-61 and 1766-8) sided with Prussia, though only to the extent of paying subsidies to its army. His purpose, like Walpole’s, was opportunistic, to use a European war to gain territory overseas. He was later to boast that his strategy was ‘to win Canada on the banks of the Elbe’.”⁶¹²

“Pitt then made the bold decision... to send 32 battalions of redcoats to America, leaving only 6 for Germany. Meanwhile, of France’s 395 battalions, only 12 were in America and 4 in India. In 1758 the French were driven out of the Ohio valley, from where they had been threatening New England. Then came the *annus mirabilis* of 1759. “At Minden (Hanover) in August the small force of six British battalions helped to rout the French, apparently after advancing by mistake. At Quebec in September, the young and neurotic General James Wolfe (‘Young is he?’ said George II. ‘Then I hope he will bite some of my other generals’) captured the town by a death-or-glory attack up steep cliffs, and was killed at the moment of victory. The French prepared a knock-out blow: to invade weakly defended England. But in November, in one of the most audacious naval actions in history, the British fleet under Admiral Sir Edward Hawke, in the midst of a storm, chased the French into Quiberon Bay, Brittany, and sank or drove aground the core of the French navy. It was ‘akin to a Miracle,’ wrote Hawke, ‘that half our ships was not ashore in the pursuit of the Enemy, upon their own coast.’ Had that happened, England would have been open to invasion, and history might have taken a very different path. As it was, Quiberon Bay ended France’s last hope of victory.

“The British had gained the upper hand in India, too, defeating the Nawab of Bengal at the historical battle of Plessey in 1757 thanks to the daring and guile of a Company clerk turned soldier, Robert Clive. Madras withstood a French siege (its garrison church had prudently been built with a bomb-proof roof) and its army took the main French base at Pondicherry. Finally, after Spain had belatedly entered the war on the side of France in 1762, the British grabbed the rich colonial prizes of Havana and Manila – the latter by a scratch force from Madras of Indians, British, Germans and French prisoners, excited by the prospect of loot...”⁶¹³

“These gains were recognized in the 1763 Treaty of Paris. In Europe, the war was declared a draw. Saxony retained its independence but Austria did not regain

⁶¹² Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁶¹³ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

Silesia. The treaty was more significant overseas. It distributed the new lands of the Americas between the European powers. Spain regained Cuba but gave Florida to Britain. France lost everything east of the Mississippi, but regained sugar-rich Martinique and Guadeloupe. British colonies and trading posts sprouted everywhere, served by its untrammelled navy. The imperialist Victorian historian John Robert Seeley remarked that Britain seemed 'to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind'.

An empire acquired almost "in a fit of absence of mind" would soon shrink. For, as the Anglo-Irish politician, Edmund Burke put it, "A great empire and little minds go ill together..."⁶¹⁴ The roots of the American War of Independence lay in the European Seven Years' War...

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The British colonies in North America, writes Tombs, [though] of growing significance because of their swelling population, were less spectacular sources of wealth [than India or the West Indies]: societies of small towns and agricultural villages, they were mainly purchasers of manufactured goods from furniture to hair powder, and suppliers of commodities such as tobacco, rice, furs and indigo. But they were different from other colonies in being generally seen as extensions of Britain. There is no sign that they were growing apart from the mother country – indeed there was increasing integration as colonists imported ideas and fashions as well as goods..."⁶¹⁵

But "filthy lucre" has a tendency to break up even the closest of unions...

Now the Seven Years' War had been expensive - "The war had doubled the national debt, from £70,000,000 to £140,000,000"⁶¹⁶, - and the British, not unnaturally, wanted to limit the amount they spent to defend the colonists, or at any rate recoup some of their expenses through taxation.

Moreover, in 1763 there was an Indian revolt, called Pontiac's, which, according to Bernard Simms, "exposed colonial defence structures". As a result, the British "moved swiftly to put imperial defence on a stable footing. First, in October 1763 it issued a Proclamation that there should be no settlement west of the Appalachians. This measure was designed to conciliate the Indians living there; to allay Franco-Spanish fears of untrammelled British colonial expansion; and to reduce the perimeter to be defended by the already overstretched crown forces..."⁶¹⁷

But, as Sir Winston Churchill wrote, the parcelling out of the vast new lands acquired as a result of the Seven Years' War "led to further trouble with the

⁶¹⁴ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

⁶¹⁵ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

⁶¹⁶ Starkey, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

⁶¹⁷ Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 121.

colonists. Many of them, like George Washington, had formed companies to buy these frontier tracts from the Indians, but a royal proclamation [that of 1763] restrained any purchasing and prohibited their settlement. Washington, among others, ignored the ban and wrote to his land agent ordering him 'to secure some of the most valuable lands in the King's part [on the Ohio], which I think may be accomplished after a while, notwithstanding the proclamation that restrains it at present, and prohibits the settling of them at all; *for I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but this I must say between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians.*' (italics – WSC). This attempt by the British government to regulate the new lands caused much discontent among the planters, particularly in the Middle and Southern colonies."⁶¹⁸

The colonists, according to Simms, "expected to be awarded the Ohio Valley as the fruit of their struggles. No man or ministry, they felt, should set limits to the march of an empire. An 'expansionist' lobby now began to make its presence felt in the colonial assemblies of North America. They articulated a vision not just of territorial growth but of greatness: a single unified British geopolitical space on the continent, from sea to shining sea, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. Imperialist aggrandizement was thus part of the American project well before independence. It was in fact the reason why the Revolution took place..."⁶¹⁹

And yet the issue of the parcelling out of the new colonial lands was not the main issue that caused the Revolution. The real issue arose as a result of the first attempt by the British to levy direct taxes on the Americans. This was the Stamp Act of 1765, which aroused considerable opposition both in America and in Britain. The little state parliaments, instead of fighting each other, found a common enemy for the first time and unanimously opposed the Stamp Act.

Through the efforts of Burke and Pitt in the British parliament, the Act was repealed.⁶²⁰ Yet, as Bobrick writes, "a dragon seed had been sown"⁶²¹, and the argument continued. In 1766 the British Parliament, reaffirming its authority, passed a Declaratory Act "stating that Parliament did have the right in principle to legislate for America, even if it prudently refrained in practice". Or, as Samuel Johnson put it more pugnaciously in his pamphlet, *The Patriot* (1774): "He that accepts protection stipulates obedience. We have always protected the Americans; we may, therefore, subject them to government,' and Parliament had the right to impose taxes 'on part of the community for the benefit of the whole'."⁶²²

In accordance with this reasoning, the British affirmed, as David Reynolds writes, that "the British Parliament had full authority to make laws 'to bind the colonies and people of America in all cases whatsoever'. So the underlying issue

⁶¹⁸ Churchill, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, London, 1957, volume III, pp. 151-152.

⁶¹⁹ Simms, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁶²⁰ Thus Edmund Burke "considered the Americans as standing at that time and in that controversy, as England did to King James II in 1688" (Almond, *op. cit.*, p. 63). Cf. Russell Kirk, "A Revolution not Made but Prevented", *The Intelligent Conservative*, August, 2012.

⁶²¹ Bobrick, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁶²² Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

became clear: Britain wanted more revenue from America to pay for defence [of the Americans themselves against the French and the Indians], and claimed that she had the right to enforce such a tax, whereas the colonists claimed that this could be raised only with the consent of their legislatures."⁶²³ For as the Massachusetts senator, Patrick Henry, put it, there could be "no taxation without representation." And, as James Madison said in 1800, "the fundamental principle of the Revolution was that the colonies were co-ordinate members with each other and Great Britain of an empire united by a common sovereign, and that the legislative power was maintained to be as complete in each American parliament as in the British parliament."⁶²⁴

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Duties were imposed, and then withdrawn. Then the quartering of British soldiers on American citizens, led to conflicts, which in turn led to the temporary suspension of the Massachusetts and New York assemblies. As a result, writes Tombs, "Successive governments were understandably eager to extricate themselves from the American morass without losing face. Most colonists too had had enough. A new Prime Minister, Lord North, appointed in 1770, had the seemingly clever idea of abolishing existing duties, leaving only a light duty on tea from India to maintain the principle of Parliament's taxation powers, but actually making tea cheaper [and smugglers out of pocket]. Such a duty would be difficult for the Patriots [opponents of the British Crown] to oppose, and the income would help pay colonial governors, making them less dependent on the local taxes voted by their assemblies. But the crisis had gone beyond such political finesse. A range of public grievances and private interests – not always very avowable, such as smuggling and land speculation – had pushed influential colonial Patriots to the point of rebellion. At the same time, public opinion in England was growing impatient with what seemed selfish, unreasonable and lawless demands. So when in December 1773 a group of Patriots (including tea smugglers) threw a shipload of tea into the sea in the 'Boston Tea Party', it was seen as a moment of truth: 'whether we will govern America' North told the Commons, 'or whether we will bid adieu to it'. London ordered the closure of the port of Boston as a punishment, and it abolished many Massachusetts political rights, believing that moderate colonial opinion would rally or at least acquiesce.

"At least as serious – though far less remembered by history – was the Quebec Act (1774), which placed that new colony, with vast territories in the west, in the hands of a royal governor without an elected assembly. This placed a barrier in the way of the western expansion of the existing colonies, which they regarded as their right of conquest. If further proof of London's sinister aims were needed, the Act gave legal recognition and financial endowment to Catholicism, the religion of the overwhelming majority of the French-speaking population. This was a necessary step towards acquiring their loyalty, but to colonial Patriots it amounted to be 'popery and slavery'. Consequently, 'every tie of allegiance is broke by the Quebec

⁶²³ Reynolds, *America, Empire of Liberty*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 59.

⁶²⁴ Madison, in Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 163.

Act,' declared the Patriot Arthur Lee, and it set the colonies on the path of outright rebellion. A Continental Congress of delegates from Patriot communities met in Philadelphia in September to coordinate resistance. In England, the Whigs were equally outraged. Moreover, there were many on both sides of the Atlantic who, whatever their political sympathies, feared sending 'armed legions of *Englishmen*... to cut the throats of *Englishmen*.' Chatham and Burke appealed for conciliation. The latter proposed a looser and more diverse empire 'of many states': 'We must govern America, according to [its true] nature... and not according to our own imaginations; not according to abstract theories... the temper and character which prevail in our colonies, are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human act... An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.' The North government offered compromise. Leading colonial politicians were reluctant to break with the mother country, on whose protection they ultimately relied. Benjamin Franklin, for example, hoped that another war with France and Spain would reunite the empire. A Second Continental Congress in 1775 still denied any intention of 'separating from Great Britain and establishing independent states'. But Patriot hotbeds, especially in New England, no longer sought compromise, and shooting began at Lexington, Massachusetts, in April 1775, followed by a pitched battle at Bunker Hill, outside Boston, in June. In August the Crown issued a Proclamation of Rebellion..."⁶²⁵

In June the commander of the American forces was named as George Washington, descended from English royalists loyal to Charles I on his father's side, and John Ball, the famous medieval rebel preacher and proto-socialist, on his mother's.⁶²⁶ Adam Zamoyski writes: "He was an ambitious and energetic Virginia country gentlemen who had applied his talents and connections to furthering his ascent in the world. This involved the acquisition of large expanses of land and the assumption of a position within the ruling oligarchy of Virginia. He calculated wisely, manoeuvred with skill, and did not turn his nose up at string-pulling in the pursuit of wealth and status. He ended up with nearly 100,000 acres, progressing from burgess to judge, and from captain to lieutenant-colonel and command of the Virginia Regiment. He distinguished himself in action against the French and their Indian allies in 1755 and his reputation soared locally. He sought to seal this with royal approval, and petitioned for a regular commission in the British Army. When this was rejected, he took it as a snub.

"Like other colonial country gentlemen, Washington lived stylishly on the profits of his tobacco-crop. But in the second half of the eighteenth century the price of tobacco began to slide, while that of carriages, clothes, silverware, china, servants' liveries, and all the other finished goods which could only be imported from England began to rise. On the other hand, laws made at Westminster for the protection of Indian land stood in the way of his plans for expanding his estate. Washington's attitude towards the metropolis began to sour, and by the late 1770s he was turning into a republican. But these were not convictions reached at once or inspired by the reading of Voltaire, and they did not alter the fact that

⁶²⁵ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 351-353.

⁶²⁶ Bobrick, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

Washington was culturally an Englishman. And every evening he and his officers loyally toasted the king at dinner in camp.

“While the hostilities deepened the divide and created martyrs to be honoured and victims to be avenged, they also produced a resurgence of loyalist feeling in the colonies. There were plenty of those whose interests were closely tied to British rule. These ‘Tories’ were not only wealthy landowners and magistrates; the arguments cut across families, and there were many interests at stake. The unassimilated Dutch, Germans and French Huguenots feared that independence would lead to cultural and political ascendancy by the dominant English element. The same was true of the Scots, while the Indians and the blacks were preponderantly ‘Tory’.

“The Continental Congress spent the next year trying to bring about honourable conciliation. But in the spring of 1776 the political agitator Thomas Paine, newly arrived from England, published a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*, in which he argued against the British constitution and the principle of monarchy, and strongly put the case that the only alternative to total submission was independence. It was one of those instances of a book finding its time. His vigorous and intransigent view of the situation concentrated minds and persuaded many of the necessity of separating from the mother country.⁶²⁷ The Westminster government continued to aggravate the situation by haughty mismanagement, and on 4 July 1776, the Congress passed a Declaration of Independence from Britain.

“This was a constitutionally dubious act with no real democratic basis. Only one in five of the inhabitants of the colonies was in any sense active in the cause of independence, and there were at least 500,000 declared loyalists (out of a population of 2,500,000) at the beginning of the war. Coercion and bullying of loyalists turned into a legal persecution after the Declaration of Independence. Committees of Public Safety established themselves in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and elsewhere, passing sentences in kangaroo courts. Passive loyalists were deprived of their civil rights. They were prohibited from collecting debts, buying or selling land, and in some cases practising their profession. Loyalists who spoke out or published their opinions could be fined imprisoned and disenfranchised. Those considered to be dangerous were imprisoned, ill-treated or exiled. With time, confiscation of property became general. In outlying or frontier areas, lynch law replaced such niceties. Even so, large numbers flocked to serve in loyalist units. Rebel slave-owners took preventive measures, locking up their slaves and even deporting them from the vicinity of loyalist areas or British forces... Many English officers declined to accept commands in the American colonies and some resigned their commissions rather than fight in what they saw as a civil war.”⁶²⁸

⁶²⁷ *Common Sense* (1776) and *The American Crisis* (1776-83) were probably, to that time, the most widely read works ever to appear in the English language after the Bible. And among the most influential; for as John Adams said, “Without the pen of the author of *Common Sense*, the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain.”⁶²⁷ (V.M.)

⁶²⁸ Zamoycki, *Holy Madness*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, pp. 17-19.

42. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: (2) THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

With the exception of a failed attack on Quebec, the first battles of the Revolutionary War took place in 1775-76 at Concord and Lexington, Bunker's Hill, Boston and Charleston. These went well for the rebels. The question now was: could they unite finally to break the umbilical cord with Great Britain? Such an Act would have many advantages, including the possibility of concluding an alliance with a foreign power, notably France. This was a real possibility since the fall of Finance Minister Turgot and the appointment of Charles de Gravier, comte de Vergennes, as Foreign Minister in May, 1776.

On June 7, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia tabled a resolution to the Continental Congress "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved of all allegiance to the British Crown and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved. That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign alliances. That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation."

It was decided to postpone a vote on the resolution until July 1 in order to allow delegates to confer with their state governments and, if possible, come to a united position. Meanwhile, the drafting of a Declaration was entrusted to a committee, including John Adams, who commissioned Thomas Jefferson of Virginia to write the draft. On July 1, a debate on the resolution was held, and on July 2 it was passed "with New York abstaining, Delaware divided, and Pennsylvania and South Carolina still opposed...."

"Congress then proceeded to go through the text of the declaration itself...."

"Jefferson remained indignant about the revisions for the rest of his life. In all, close to a hundred changes were made and the text cut by about a fourth. Adams himself believed that Congress, while making some judicious emendations, had also 'obliterated some of the best of it.'⁶²⁹

The most famous, striking and revolutionary part of the Declaration is its preamble: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

⁶²⁹ Bobrick, op. cit., pp. 197, 198., 200.

There is nothing radically new in this Declaration, nothing as radically new as the “general will” of Rousseau (who had died two years earlier). As Jacques Barzun writes: “No new Idea entailing a shift in forms of power – to mark of revolutions – was proclaimed. The 28 offences that King George was accused of had long been familiar in England. The language of the Declaration is that of protest against abuses of power, not of proposals for recasting the government on new principles.”⁶³⁰

At the same time, as Tombs writes, “America’s flattering foundation myth [as contained in the Declaration] is itself of immense historic importance. It drew on Enlightenment ideas, particularly those of Locke and Montesquieu, to give a universal significance to the traditional rhetoric of ‘free-born Englishmen’, and so provided Europe with a new vista of optimism. We can see the difference if we compare the United States and Canada: the latter, however admirable, has never excited the world with the promise of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’...”⁶³¹

More precisely, the Declaration took the Lockean principles of the English “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 and applied them more generally, thereby showing that Lockean liberalism was dangerously open-ended, tending to its own destruction. For it showed that if parliament placed limits on the king in the name of the people and natural law, there was no reason why limits should not also be placed on parliament by other estates of the realm, even colonials, in the name of the same principles.

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A novelty of the Declaration was the idea that guaranteeing “the pursuit of happiness” is the primary purpose of governments and a right of the governed. Norman Stone writes: “‘The pursuit of happiness’, in the foundation charter of the United States, has always struck foreigners as funny. That is a misunderstanding of the original, which was just a polite way of saying ‘money’.”⁶³² Indeed, Jefferson was once asked why he had substituted “happiness” for the traditional Lockean emphasis on “property”. He replied that since the secure possession of property was an important condition of happiness, there was no real contradiction. However, this was the first time in history that “the pursuit of happiness” had been taken to be one of the purposes of the State, and the failure to achieve this end as a justification for revolution.

“This was not, of course,” writes J.S. McClelland, “to say that it was government’s business to regulate the details of people’s lives to make sure that they were cheerful, but it did mean that a very exact sense emerged of government’s duty to provide those conditions in which rational men could pursue

⁶³⁰ Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 397.

⁶³¹ Tombs, *The English and their History*, p. 363.

⁶³² Stone, *The Atlantic and its Enemies*, London: Penguin, 2011, pp. 298-299.

happiness, that is further their own interests, without being hindered unnecessarily either by government or by their fellow men. This was more radical than it sounds, because in eighteenth-century political thought it meant that government's capacity to promote the happiness of its subjects, however negatively, was connected with the vital question of the legitimacy of government. No political theory ever invented, and no actual government since the Flood, had ever had as its proclaimed intention the idea of making men miserable. All governments more or less claim that they have their subjects' happiness at heart, but most governments have not based their claims to be entitled to rule directly on their happiness-creating function. The reason why governments do not typically base their claim to rule on their capacity to increase happiness is obvious enough, because to do so would be to invite their subjects to judge whether their governments are competent or not. Indeed, it could be argued that most of the justifications for forms of rule which have been on offer since Plato are all careful to distinguish between questions about legitimacy and questions about happiness..."⁶³³

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However, the greatest novelty of the Declaration – its only truly revolutionary element – was the idea of *universal rights* based on that of *universal equality*.

Mark Almond writes: "The Declaration... was greeted with incredulity by the British. The British *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1776 ridiculed the idea of equality: 'We hold, they say, these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal.' In what are they created equal? Is it in size, strength, understanding, figure, civil or moral accomplishments, or situation of life?"⁶³⁴

The British had a point: the equality of men is far from self-evident from a humanist point of view. In fact, the only real justification for it is *religious*, presupposing the Christian faith: that all men are made in the image of God, and that Christ died for all men equally, so that all men equally should be the object of Christian love. But that all men equally should be the object of Christian love is not the same as saying that all men are in fact equal. In any case, from a humanist perspective – and all major political thinkers by now were humanists, not real Christians – the foundations of egalitarianism were different.

Neither the English in their "Glorious Revolution" of 1689 nor the Americans in their American Revolution of 1776 consistently applied Lockean principles of democratism and egalitarianism. For both were oligarchical societies consisting of white, property-owning, males excluding slaves and women. The Founding Fathers had no intention of extending the franchise beyond their own class; and what they meant by "equality" was being treated on equal terms with other Englishmen (on both sides of the Atlantic) of similar wealth and breeding...

⁶³³ McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought*, Routledge: London, 1996, pp. 354-355.

⁶³⁴ Almond, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

This was explicitly admitted by Alexander Hamilton at the Constitutional Convention on 1787: "I believe the British government forms the best model the world ever produced... All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well born, the other the mass of the people... The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second... Nothing but a permanent body can check the impudence of democracy..."⁶³⁵

So much for democracy from one of the original American oligarchs... And so much, ironically, for the rights of ordinary Americans to rebel against the British "tyranny" – or, more accurately, parliamentary oligarchy...

Nevertheless, for all their British tastes and their admiration for the British political system, the Founding Fathers aimed to go beyond it. To the *American* idea, whose essence was freedom based on universal equality. "The American idea" writes Norman Cantor, "was that of a 'New Order of the World' in which the privileges, discriminations, and prejudices of Europe were to be superseded (so said the American Revolution of 1776) by a new era of freedom in human history..."⁶³⁶

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There was in fact the embryo of such an idea in the philosophy of John Locke, who affirmed that universal equality had existed in an original state of nature. Ironically, he had believed this incarnation to exist across the Atlantic, not among the American colonials, but in the primitive, pre-colonial societies of the American Indians. For "In the beginning," he said, "all the world was *America*, and more so than that is now; for no such thing as *Money* was anywhere known."

Locke's thinking contained both a conservative, oligarchical and traditionalist tendency, and a more radical, democratic-egalitarian and universalist tendency. Both tendencies influenced the American Founding Fathers, but there was an inescapable tension between them, and therefore between those who wanted to restore the past in a conservative spirit and those who wanted to drive forward to a brave new world of the future.

Ofir Haivry and Yoram Hazony describe the two tendencies thus: "First, there were those who admired the English constitution that they had inherited and studied. Believing they had been deprived of their rights under the English constitution, their aim was to regain these rights. Identifying themselves with the tradition of Coke and Selden, they hoped to achieve a victory against royal absolutism comparable to what their English forefathers had achieved in the Petition of Right and Bill of Rights. To individuals of this type, the word *revolution* still had its older meaning, invoking something that 'revolves' and

⁶³⁵ Hamilton, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

⁶³⁶ Cantor, *The Sacred Chain*, London: HarperCollins, 1996, p. 239.

would, through their efforts, return to its rightful place—in effect, a restoration. Alexander Hamilton was probably the best-known exponent of this kind of conservative politics, telling the assembled delegates to the constitutional convention of 1787, for example, that ‘I believe the British government forms the best model the world ever produced.’⁶³⁷ Or, as John Dickinson told the convention: “Experience must be our only guide. Reason may mislead us. It was not reason that discovered the singular and admirable mechanism of the English constitution.... Accidents probably produced these discoveries, and experience has given a sanction to them.” And it is evident that they were quietly supported behind the scenes by other adherents of this view, among them the president of the convention, General George Washington.

“Second, there were true revolutionaries, liberal followers of Locke such as Jefferson, who detested England and believed—just as the French followers of Rousseau believed—that the dictates of universal reason made the true rights of man evident to all. For them, the traditional English constitution was not the source of their freedoms but rather something to be swept away before the rights dictated by universal reason. And indeed, during the French Revolution, Jefferson and his supporters embraced it as a purer version of what the Americans had started. As he wrote in a notorious letter in 1793 justifying the revolution in France: ‘The liberty of the whole earth was depending on the issue of the contest. . . . [R]ather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated.’

“The tension between these conservative and liberal camps finds rather dramatic expression in America’s founding documents. First, the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Jefferson in 1776, is famous for resorting, in its preamble, to the Lockean doctrine of universal rights as ‘self-evident’ before the light of reason. Similarly, the Articles of Confederation, negotiated the following year as the constitution of the new United States of America, embody a radical break with the traditional English constitution. These Articles asserted the existence of thirteen independent states, at the same time establishing a weak representative assembly over them without even the power of taxation, and requiring assent by nine of thirteen states to enact policy. The Articles likewise made no attempt at all to balance the powers of this assembly, effectively an executive, with separate legislative or judicial branches of government.

“The Articles of Confederation came close to destroying the United States. After a decade of disorder in both foreign and economic affairs, the Articles were replaced by the Constitution, drafted at a convention initiated by Hamilton and James Madison, and presided over by a watchful Washington, while Jefferson was away in France. Anyone comparing the Constitution that emerged with the earlier Articles of Confederation immediately recognizes that what took place at this convention was a reprise of the Glorious Revolution of 1689. Despite being adapted

⁶³⁷ He went on to say: “All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well born, the other the mass of the people... The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second... Nothing but a permanent body can check the impudence of democracy.” (V.M.)

to the American context, the document that the convention produced proposed a restoration of the fundamental forms of the English constitution: a strong president, designated by an electoral college (in place of the hereditary monarchy); the president balanced in strikingly English fashion by a powerful bicameral legislature with the power of taxation and legislation; the division of the legislature between a quasi-aristocratic, appointed Senate and a popularly elected House; and an independent judiciary. Even the American Bill of Rights of 1789 is modelled upon the Petition of Right and the English Bill of Rights, largely elaborating the same rights that had been described by Coke and Selden and their followers, and breathing not a word anywhere about universal reason or universal rights.”⁶³⁸

This silence was just as well in the year of the French Revolution...

⁶³⁸ Haiyry and Hazony, “What is Conservatism?” *American Affairs*, Summer, 2017, vol. I, no. 2.

43. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: (3) THE RELIGION OF LIBERTY

The American nation was born in the quest for what it saw as liberty. But it could remain free in the long run, according to the Founding Fathers, only if the people remained uncorrupted, that is, faithful to the fundamental principles of morality and religion. Apart from any other consideration, even the best of political systems and legal codes will not compel obedience if there is no religious motivation for obeying the law. Thus President John Adams wrote: "We have no government capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and religion... Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people." As John Miltimore writes, "most of the Framers [of the Constitution] believed religion was indispensable to their republican experiment. George Washington, Gouverneur Morris, Samuel Adams, and Benjamin Rush all, like Adams, explicitly stated that good government cannot exist absent sound religious principles."⁶³⁹

According to the social scientist Charles Murray, *religiosity* was one of the four founding virtues of the republic, together with *industriousness, honesty and marriage*. By all accounts, and by comparison with the citizens of Old Europe, the Americans were indeed industrious – that is, not only hardworking, but having a burning desire to *succeed* in life, and not to live off the state or one's neighbours. They were also honest, respecting the law (and watching that their neighbours did, too) and with a very low crime rate (although drunkenness was a problem). And their family life was, with few exceptions, stable and chaste. As for their religiosity, that will be examined more closely later in this chapter. As long as Americans preserved these civic virtues, their republic was prosperous and increasingly powerful. Only from the 1960s did these virtues decline, with a corresponding decline in the power and prestige of the American republic...

"Everyone involved in the creation of the United States knew that its success depended on virtue in its citizenry – not gentility, but virtue. 'No theoretical obstacles, no form of self-government can render us secure,' James Madison famously observed in the Virginia ratifying convention. 'To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people is a chimerical idea.'

"It was chimerical because of the nearly unbridled freedom that the American Constitution allowed the citizens of the new nation. Americans were subject to criminal law, which forbade the usual crimes against person and property, and to tort law, which regulated civil disputes. But otherwise Americans faced few legal restrictions on their freedom of action and no legal obligations to their neighbors except to refrain from harming them. The guides to their behavior at any more subtle level had to come from within.

⁶³⁹ Miltimore, "Democracy Doesn't Work Without Religion", *Intellectual Takeout*, June 10, 2016, <https://www.intellectuالتakeout.org/blog/harvard-prof-democracy-doesnt-work-without-religion/?fbclid=IwAR>.

“For Benjamin Franklin, this meant that ‘only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become more corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.’ On the other hand, virtue makes government easy to sustain. ‘The expense of our civil government we have always borne, and can easily bear, because it is small. A virtuous and laborious people may be cheaply governed.’

“For Patrick Henry, it seemed a truism that ‘bad men cannot make good citizens... No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue.’ George Washington said much the same thing in the undelivered sermon of his first inaugural address, asserting that ‘no Wall of words, no mound of parchment can be for as to stand against the sweeping torrent of boundless ambition on the one side, aided by the sapping current of corrupted morals on the other.’ Or as he put it most strongly in his Farewell Address: ‘Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.’ In their various ways, the founders recognized that if a society is to remain free, *self-government* refers first of all to individual citizens governing their own behavior...”⁶⁴⁰

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What was the religion of the Americans? Of course, they believed in the various religions they had brought with them from across the ocean: Catholicism, Anglicanism, Protestantism of various kinds, Quakerism, Judaism... But was there any “higher” religion that bound the variously religious Americans together?

By the late eighteenth century we may talk of two dominant American religions: on the one hand, the Masonry of the cultured leaders of the Revolution, who usually belonged to some institutional church but whose real temple was the lodge, and who, as Karen Armstrong writes, “experienced the revolution as a secular event”⁶⁴¹, and on the other, the Protestantism of the lower classes, which had evolved into Revivalism and who experienced the revolution more religiously (or at any rate, emotionally). These two religions – of the upper and lower classes respectively – united in what we may call a Religion of Liberty.

Let us first look at American Masonry, the religion of the upper classes.

Although Freemasonry is best-known for its catastrophic influence on the French and Russian revolutions, its influence was hardly less profound on the American revolution and on the whole political and cultural development of America, where the great majority of Masonic lodges are to be found today.

The first Masonic lodges were established in Boston and Philadelphia by 1730.⁶⁴² And several of the leaders of the American revolution were Masons, including Benjamin Franklin (master of his lodge in Philadelphia), George Washington

⁶⁴⁰ Murray, *Falling Apart*, New York: Crown Forum, 2012, pp. 132-133.

⁶⁴¹ Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, New York: Ballantine books, 2000, p. 81.

⁶⁴² Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

(master of Alexandria lodge No. 22), John Hancock, James Madison, James Monroe, Paul Revere, John Paul Jones and La Fayette.⁶⁴³ As Niall Ferguson points out, "At his first presidential inauguration on 30 April 1789, Washington swore the oath of office on the Bible of the St. John's Masonic Lodge No. 1 of New York. The oath was administered by Robert Livingston, the Chancellor New York (the State's highest judicial office) and another Mason, indeed the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York. In 1794, Washington sat for the artist Joseph Williams, who painted him dressed in the full Masonic regalia the president had worn to level the cornerstone of the United States Capitol a year before. George Washington's apron deserves to be as famous in the folklore of the American Revolution as Paul Revere's ride; for it seems doubtful that either man would have had the influence he enjoyed had it not been for his membership of the Masonic brotherhood. Later historians have cast doubt on the Masonic origins of iconography of the Great Seal of the United States, globally recognizable since its incorporation in the one-dollar bill in 1955. Yet the all-seeing eye of Providence that crowns the unfinished pyramid on the obverse of the seal does closely resemble the eye that gazes out at us from Washington's apron in nineteenth-century lithographs of the first president in Masonic attire...

"The evidence suggests that [Freemasonry] was at least as important as secular political rhetoric or religious doctrines in animating the men who made the revolution..."⁶⁴⁴

Indeed, the United States may be called the world's first Masonic state. And this dark beginning hangs over it still. Thus in 1976 Fr. Seraphim Rose wrote: "In America this is the 'bicentennial' year—and we feel it as especially dark and ominous. Each nation has its guardian angel—thus also each pagan or masonic festival must have its special demon! We in America are grateful for our freedom, but we know the dark masonic origins of our American ideology and tremble for the future when the meaning of the occult symbols of our government (visible in our currency, for example—the unfinished pyramid, the all-seeing eye, the number 13 everywhere, the *novus ordo seclorum*) will begin to be fulfilled. Even without a Communist coup, our future is dark; 'democracy,' after all, only prepared the way for Communism, and spiritually they come from the same source and prepare for the same future..."

American Masonry was a mixture of English and French Masonry. Lafayette represented radical French Masonry, but there were also representatives of the more conservative and monarchist English Masonry. Thus "of the 7 Provincial Grand Masters [in America], 5 supported George III, and condemned revolutionary agitation against the established authority."⁶⁴⁵ Moreover, many of the leaders of the British forces were also Freemasons. The movement therefore had the unexpected property of spawning, as well as most of the leaders of the revolution, several of the leaders of the counter-revolution.

⁶⁴³ Ridley, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

⁶⁴⁴ Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, pp. 115, 111.

⁶⁴⁵ Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

A similar paradox existed in Europe. Thus the anti-revolutionary Comte d'Artois and King Gustavus Adolphus III of Sweden were Freemasons, while the ultra-revolutionary Danton and Robespierre were not; Napoleon was not a Freemason (although he protected it), while the reactionary generals who defeated him - Wellington, Blücher and Kutuzov - were.

One reason for this paradoxical phenomenon was the distinction, discussed above, between two concepts of freedom prevailing in eighteenth-century thought: freedom as a *negative* concept, that is, freedom *from* restrictions of various kinds, and freedom as a *positive* concept, that is, freedom *to* do certain things. English liberalism and the English Enlightenment understood freedom in the negative sense; whereas the French Enlightenment and Rousseau tended to understand it in the positive sense - which was also the more revolutionary idea. Those who joined the ranks of the Masons were lovers of freedom in a general sense. But when some of them saw how the Rousseauist, positive concept of freedom led to Jacobinism and all the horrors of the French revolution, they turned sharply against it. Some still remained members of the lodge, but others broke all links with it. Thus the Duke of Wellington never entered a lodge after his membership lapsed in 1795, and in 1851 wrote that he "had no recollection of having been admitted a Freemason."⁶⁴⁶

Masonry's organization was decentralised and diffuse, and it had very broad criteria of membership. This meant that a very wide range of people could enter its ranks, and precluded the degree of control and discipline that was essential for the attainment and, still more important, the retention of supreme political power. Masonry was therefore the ideal kind of organization for the first stage in the revolutionary process, the dissemination of revolutionary ideas as quickly as possible through as large a proportion of the population as possible.

However, "the Founding Fathers of the American republic," writes Armstrong, "were an aristocratic elite and their ideas were not typical. The vast majority of Americans were Calvinists, and they could not relate to this rationalist ethos. Initially, most of the colonists were just as reluctant to break with England as their leaders were. Not all joined the revolutionary struggle. Some 30,000 fought on the British side, and after the war between 80,000 and 100,000 left the new states and migrated to Canada, the West Indies, or Britain. Those who elected to fight for independence would be as much motivated by the old myths and millennial dreams of Christianity as by the secularist ideals of the Founders..."

"During the first decade of the revolutionary struggle, people were loath to make a radical break with the past. Severing relations with Britain seemed unthinkable, and many still hoped that the British government would change its policies. Nobody was straining forward excitedly to the future or dreaming of a new world order. Most Americans still instinctively responded to the crisis in the old, premodern way: they looked back to an idealized past to sustain them in their

⁶⁴⁶ Ridley, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

position. The revolutionary leaders and those who embraced the more secular Radical Whig ideology drew inspiration from the struggle of the Saxons against the invading Normans in 1066, or the more recent struggle of the Puritan Parliamentarians during the English Civil War. The Calvinists harked back to their own Golden Age in New England, recalling the struggle of the Puritans against the tyrannical Anglican establishment in Old England; they had sought liberty and freedom from oppression in the New World, creating a godly society in the American wilderness. The emphasis in the sermons and revolutionary rhetoric of this period (1763-73) was on the desire to conserve the precious achievements of the past. The notion of radical change inspired fears of decline and ruin. The colonists were seeking to preserve their heritage, according to the old conservative spirit. The past was presented as idyllic, the future as potentially horrific. The revolutionary leaders declared that their actions were designed to keep at bay the catastrophe that would inevitably ensue if there was a radical severance from tradition. They spoke of the possible consequences of British policy with fear, using the apocalyptic language of the Bible.

“But this changed. As the British clung obstinately to their controversial imperial policies, the colonists burned their boats. After the Boston Tea Party (1773) and the Battles of Lexington and Concord (1775) there could be no going back. The Declaration of Independence expressed a new determination to break away from the old order and go forward to an unprecedented future. In this respect, the Declaration was a modernizing document, which articulated in political terms the intellectual independence and iconoclasm that had characterized the scientific revolution in Europe. But the majority of the colonists were more inspired by the myths of Christian prophecy than by John Locke...

“... The Great Awakening had already made New Light Calvinists wary of the establishment and confident of their ability to effect major change. When revolutionary leaders spoke of ‘liberty’, they used a term that was already saturated with religious meaning: it carried associations of grace, of the freedom of the Gospel and the Sons of God. It was linked with such themes as the Kingdom of God, in which all oppression would end, and the myth [sic] of the Chosen People who would become God’s instrument in the transformation of the world. Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), president of Yale University, spoke enthusiastically of the revolution ushering in ‘Immanuel’s Land’, and of America becoming ‘the principal seat of that new, that peculiar Kingdom which shall be given to the saints of the Most High’. In 1775, the Connecticut preacher Ebenezer Baldwin insisted that the calamities of the war could only hasten God’s plans for the New World. Jesus would establish his glorious Kingdom in America: liberty, religion and learning had been driven out of Europe and had moved westward, across the Atlantic. The present crisis was preparing the way for the Last Days of the present corrupt order. For Provost William Smith of Philadelphia, the colonies were God’s ‘chosen seat of Freedom, Arts and Heavenly Knowledge’.

“But if churchmen were sacralizing politics, secularist leaders also used the language of Christian utopianism. John Adams looked back on the settlement of America as God’s plan for the enlightenment of the whole of humanity. Thomas

Paine was convinced that 'we have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation such as the present hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand'. The rational pragmatism of the leaders would not itself have been sufficient to help people make the fearsome journey to an unknown future and break with the motherland. The enthusiasm, imagery, and mythology of Christian eschatology gave meaning to the revolutionary struggle and helped secularism and Calvinists alike to make the decisive, dislocating severance from tradition."⁶⁴⁷

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Let us look more closely at how American Protestantism changed... Over time, as many ministers lamented, increasing prosperity had diluted the religious enthusiasm and influence of the early Puritans. For, as David Reynolds writes, "the Puritans were a dead-end, historically: their attempt to impose a church-dominated uniformity was short-lived. The religious groups who shaped America more profoundly were the Baptists, Methodists and other sects, whose roving preachers set off a series of religious revivals that sparked and crackled across the country from the mid-eighteenth century right up to the Civil War. For these preachers and their followers, religion was an affair of the heart, rooted in a conversion experience, and expressed in a rich, vibrant community of the faithful. These evangelicals broke the stranglehold of the older churches - Anglicans in the South, Congregationalists in New England - and made the United States a nation of sects rather than churches. They also generated much of the fervour behind causes like anti-slavery and later women's suffrage. America's religion was a product of evangelicalism more than Puritanism."⁶⁴⁸

A revival of religious enthusiasm in the lower classes is discernible already in the early eighteenth century. This movement had its roots in similar European movements: the German Pietism of Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) and the British Methodism of John Wesley (1703-1791). It was George Whitefield (1714-1770), a follower of John Wesley, who introduced British revivalism to America.

"However," writes Jean Comby, "there was also a distinctive American dimension: the colonies' roots in Puritan dreams of a new godly Commonwealth which would remedy the corruption of Old England. By the end of the seventeenth century these dreams had come to seem very threadbare, and many felt that the Calvinist Congregationalist establishments of New England had lost their way. Nevertheless, from the 1720s the same Calvinist impulse which had so inspired the early colonists was beginning to produce fresh energy: and frequently fresh quarrels! A group of Presbyterian ministers in the Middle Colonies led by Gilbert Tennent (1703-64) caused controversy by insisting on the importance of individual conversion in church life, in reaction to what they saw as the formalism of much contemporary religion; they found a powerful if unlooked for ally in George

⁶⁴⁷ Armstrong, *op. cit.*, pp. 80, 82-84.

⁶⁴⁸ Reynolds, *America, Empire of Liberty*, London: Penguin, 2010, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

Whitefield when he began a series of spectacular preaching tours in 1739, often reaching great crowds by speaking to them in the open air.

“The scenes of wild enthusiasm which Whitefield’s sermons generated (although he did not encourage such outbursts) set a tone of emotionalism which was to remain characteristic of ‘Revivalism’ in American Protestant religion: and even during the eighteenth century, the gulf between this religious style and a more restrained, reflective strain in American Protestantism became obvious...”⁶⁴⁹

Whitefield emphasized “personal accountability as well as a more passionate communion with God, carrying his message into cities, towns, and remote frontier areas where not only whites but blacks were caught up in the fervor and responded to his call. According to Jonathan Edwards, the great Northampton preacher who was second only to Whitefield in contemporary fame, many blacks were ‘truly born again’ in ‘this late remarkable season’ and indeed the conversion of black slaves to Christianity in large numbers dates from this time...”⁶⁵⁰

This Revivalist movement was called the First Great Awakening. As Peter Watson writes, it “swept through the northeast and 250 new emotionalist churches were established outside the Calvinist faith.” These were increasingly outlandish and eccentric: “Such groups as those of Conrad Beissel and the Ephrata Mystics, the Shakers and other visionary communities, the Swedenborgians, with their concept of ‘correspondence’, that God speaks to man through Nature; and the Transcendentalists, who also believed that understanding could come through the contemplation of Nature – all of these shared the view that intuition was a higher faculty than reason...”⁶⁵¹

“People of all sects and denominations were held in thrall. And despite excesses that repelled Church authorities (and elicited censure from the faculties of Harvard and Yale), the Great Awakening helped bind Americans together with a shared sense of their spirituality as a people and, perhaps, ‘prepared them,’ in the hands of one historian, ‘for the coming ordeal of sacrifice and war.’”⁶⁵²

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⁶⁴⁹ Comby, *How to Read Church History*, London: SCM Press, 1985, vol. 2, p. 98.

⁶⁵⁰ Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, p. 60.

⁶⁵¹ Watson, *The Age of Atheists*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2014, p. 177.

⁶⁵² Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, pp. 60-61.

“During the first decade of the revolutionary struggle, people were loath to make a radical break with the past. Severing relations with Britain seemed unthinkable, and many still hoped that the British government would change its policies. Nobody was straining forward excitedly to the future or dreaming of a new world order. Most Americans still instinctively responded to the crisis in the old, premodern way: they looked back to an idealized past to sustain them in their position. The revolutionary leaders and those who embraced the more secular Radical Whig ideology drew inspiration from the struggle of the Saxons against the invading Normans in 1066, or the more recent struggle of the Puritan Parliamentarians during the English Civil War. The Calvinists harked back to their own Golden Age in New England, recalling the struggle of the Puritans against the tyrannical Anglican establishment in Old England; they had sought liberty and freedom from oppression in the New World, creating a godly society in the American wilderness. The emphasis in the sermons and revolutionary rhetoric of this period (1763-73) was on the desire to conserve the precious achievements of the past. The notion of radical change inspired fears of decline and ruin. The colonists were seeking to preserve their heritage, according to the old conservative spirit. The past was presented as idyllic, the future as potentially horrific. The revolutionary leaders declared that their actions were designed to keep at bay the catastrophe that would inevitably ensue if there was a radical severance from tradition. They spoke of the possible consequences of British policy with fear, using the apocalyptic language of the Bible.

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What united aristocratic Masons and lower-class revivalists as the break with England began to seem inevitable was a *religion of liberty*. As Bobrick writes, "Americans in general embraced a notion of liberty that was already an almost occult compound of messianic, historical and rationalist ideas. Even before the ouster of the French forces from Canada, New England clerics conjured up the vision of a mighty new North American empire 'in numbers little inferior perhaps to the greatest in Europe,' as one of them predicted, 'and in felicity to none'. He foresaw 'a great and flourishing kingdom' with cities 'rising on every hill... happy fields and villages... [and] religion professed and practised throughout this spacious kingdom in far greater purity and perfection than since the time of the apostles.' The language of American politicians and statesmen echoed the theme: 'The liberties of mankind and the story of human nature is in our keeping,' John Adams wrote in 1765. 'America was designed by Providence for the theatre on which man was made to make his true figure, on which science, virtue, liberty, happiness, and glory were to exist in peace.'

"Some of these ideas were associate with covenant theology - in particular, with the Puritan idea that the colonization of America had been an event designed by the hand of God to satisfy his ultimate aims - but they were linked in a coordinate (or blended) way with political ideas of the Enlightenment and idealized conceptions of the democratic republics of Greece and Rome. The history of those republics, which had been suppressed by tyrants and supplanted by corrupt imperial regimes, was viewed by Americans (steeped by their own education in the classical world) as a warning and example to the times. By analogy, they regarded their own principal virtues - frugality, industry, and temperance, for example - as menaced by the degeneracy and corruption of imperial power in London. The most popular play in America... was *Cato*, which dramatized the martyrdom of a hero of republican liberty, and almost everyone read Charles Rollin's *Ancient History*, which traced the sad story of that liberty's demise. As a

⁶⁵³ Armstrong, *op. cit.*, pp. 80, 82-84.

law student abroad in England, John Dickinson, had compared 'the most unbounded licentiousness and utter disregard of virtue' which he found in London to that of imperial Rome. More than £1 million, he reported, had been expended to buy votes in the recent general election, in which, with equal 'impudence and villainy', an effort had also been made to see members of the opposition electorate so drunk they could not vote at all. 'Few people can refrain from laughing,' he added, when members of Parliament took their solemn oaths of office which included a promise not to engage in electoral fraud.

"Liberty can no more exist without virtue and independence than the body can live and move without a soul,' declared John Adams in kindred spirit about the corruption of English politics, where 'luxury, effeminacy and venality are arrived at such a shocking pitch.' Or as his wife, Abigail, put it more succinctly, 'A true patriot must be a religious man.'

"Religion and politics were entwined. The so-called Liberty Tree (in Boston and elsewhere, a great elm on the common where protesters met) was Roman in origin and (in American revolutionary symbolism) related to the liberty pole or pike topped with a cap held by the figure of Libertas in the Temple of Liberty established in Rome in 135 B.C. These symbols had appeared on Roman coins in Dutch and French prints of the seventeenth century, and in English prints during the French and Indian war. In America, they turned up in the illustrations of patriotic pamphlets, and when Charles William Peale later painted the portrait of William Pitt (to the colonists, a hero of enlightened government), he depicted the British statesman in the attitude and the garb of a Roman orator, Magna Carta in hand, pointing to a figure of Britannia holding a liberty pole.

"Ideas and attitudes associated with the Enlightenment gave the idea of *libertas* a rational and contemporary context. American writers cited Locke, Hobbes and Montesquieu on natural rights and almost ritualistically invoked Locke's trinity of life, liberty, and property as the previous and inherited natural rights of all free men. They believed that political authority was, or should be, derived from the consent of the governed, and that its goal was the general good. Moreover, they believed they shared in a unique political inheritance. It was their historical understanding (based on the writing of Samuel von Pufendorf and Hugo Grotius) that the rights they claimed by way of the English could be traced back to the Anglo-Saxons (as depicted by Tacitus in his *Germania*), who had curbed royal power by introducing a measure of representative government. That had ultimately led to England's unique unwritten constitution, from which (in Daniel Boorstin's summary) trial by jury, due process of law, representation before taxation, habeas corpus, freedom from attainder, the independence of the judiciary, and the rights of free speech were all derived. As described by John Adams, the English constitution was 'the most perfect combination of human powers in society which finite wisdom had yet contrived and reduced to practice for the preservation of liberty and the production of happiness.' Whether it could really be traced, historically, to the Anglo-Saxons or not, everyone knew that in March, 1628 the House of Commons had, in the Petition of Right, sought royal recognition of four principles - no taxation without the consent of parliament, no imprisonment

without cause, no quartering of soldiers on subjects, and no martial law in peacetime. And to these the king had been obliged to consent. It is therefore not surprising that even on the threshold of the Revolution, Thomas Jefferson could declare: 'I would rather be in dependence on Great Britain, properly limited, than on any other nation upon earth, or on no nation' as the faithful choice was framed."⁶⁵⁴

But if "the mystery of iniquity" was to achieve real political power, this first stage had to be succeeded by a second in which a more highly disciplined and ruthless, Communist-style party took over the leadership. Such a take-over took place in both the French and the Russian revolutions. Thus in France the Masonic constitutionalists, such as Mirabeau and Lafayette, were pushed aside by the anti-democratic, anti-constitutionalist Jacobins or "Illuminati"; while in the Russian revolution, the Masonic constitutionalists, such as Kerensky and Lvov, were pushed aside by the anti-constitutionalist Lenin and Stalin...

The American Revolution was unique in that the first stage has not been succeeded by the second - yet... And we may speculate that this fact is owing in part to the continuing influence of lower-class Revivalism on American political culture. For Revivalism is highly emotional, even anarchical; it is not conducive to the secretive, disciplined, hierarchical discipline of Illuminati-like movements. Moreover, the American colonies were not used to any kind of hierarchical control, whether in Church or State. The hand of the British Crown, whatever the colonists might assert, had always been light, and the Americans could always escape what control there was by simply moving further west...

⁶⁵⁴ Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, pp. 62-64.

44. BRITAIN CONTRA MUNDUM

The period just after the Declaration of Independence was probably the worst period of the war for the Americans. The British conquered Philadelphia, where the Declaration had been signed, in September, 1777, and the following winter the American army, camped in Valley Forge, suffered agonies of deprivation. However, in 1778 France entered the war on the American side, and the next year Spain joined the anti-British coalition, launching an attack on Gibraltar, while Holland extended the war to the Indies. A civil war between Englishmen had suddenly turned into a world war of Britain versus the rest in which the British had no allies, and in which they were vulnerable on both sides of the Atlantic. And at this point a huge Franco-Spanish fleet of 104 ships entered the Channel aiming for Portsmouth.

The threat was hardly less than in 1588. But once again Divine Providence decided in the Britons' favour. The British fleet retreated, and the French invasion force was forced to wait in Normandy.

This, "the third attempt in forty years," writes Tombs, "this time actually arrived in sight of the Devon coast, on 14 August 1779. England was saved by a combination of Franco-Spanish incompetence, cold feet and disease, 'a terrible plague that disarms our ships', without the Royal Navy firing a shot, and they returned forlornly to France in September with 8,000 sailors sick or dying. So many corpses had been thrown into the sea that the people of Cornwall and Devon were said to be refusing to eat fish..."⁶⁵⁵

"Britain mobilized its peoples and resources more than in any previous war for what seemed a struggle to survive as a great power and a prosperous society. As George III emphasized to his ministers, 'We can never exist as a great or powerful nation after we have lost or renounced the sovereignty of America,' for 'the West Indies must follow them', and 'Ireland would soon follow the same plan,' and finally 'this island would be reduced to itself, and would soon be a poor island indeed'. So the navy was increased from a peacetime strength of 16,000 men to 100,000 by 1782; 250,000 men were in the regular army or the militia, many of them Irish and Scots, plus 60,000 Protestant Irish volunteers... Taxes rose by 30 percent, and by the end of the war absorbed 23 percent of national income – more than in any previous war or in any other belligerent country. This was bound to cause socio-economic and political discontent, whether from those who opposed the war or impatient that it was not being won. A Whig 'Association Movement' began to press for parliamentary reforms, and the most radical elements began to speak of annual general elections, manhood suffrage, a secret ballot and payment of MPs.

"... Large numbers [of Irishmen] had joined volunteer defence units, and this gave Dublin leverage over London. Concessions were made to Irish demands for

⁶⁵⁵ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

greater commercial equality with Britain. An Irish Relief Act (1778) and a (British) Catholic Relief Act (1778) reduced legal disabilities against Catholics, with the support of Anglican bishops. Irish Catholic notables declared that 'two millions of loyal, faithful and affectionate' Catholics were ready to serve the king - a manpower bonus that would buttress British world power for nearly 150 years. The British government was forced to acquiesce in a gradual assertion of greater autonomy between 1780 and 1762 by the Irish parliament, known as 'Grattan's Parliament' after the brilliant orator and tactician Henry Grattan, who masterminded its strategy.

"A pro-American and anti-popery backlash ensued, supported by prominent Dissenters, including John Wesley and Richard Prince. 'Shall these [Catholic] vermine bask in the sunshine of court favour, while the honest amiable Dissenter is stigmatized as an enemy to the King and the Country?' asked a pamphleteer. George III was caricatured as a monk. There were riots in Scotland. A Protestant Association was formed, strongest in Newcastle and London. The agitation culminated in the most destructive outburst of collective violence in modern British history. On 6 June 1780 a strongly pro-American Whig MP, Lord George Gordon - whose stepfather was from New York, who had spent several years there, and who had resigned his naval commission in protest against the 'mad, cruel and accursed American war' - presented a petition to Parliament backed by a large crowd dressed, on Gordon's instructions, 'in their Sabbath days cloaths' and led by a man in a kilt and two bagpipers. The petition demanded repeal of the Catholic Relief Act. The palace of Westminster was invaded, Whig leaders cheered, and ministers, bishops and judges were jostled and de-wigged. Five days of rioting ensued in London and some provincial towns...

"... The city authorities refused to act, through either fear or political sympathy. Without their sanction - the law required a magistrate to read the Riot Act to the crowd, after which they had an hour to disperse - troops could not be used... After five days of mayhem,⁶⁵⁶ ... the king in person ordered the army to act, saying that at least one magistrate in the kingdom would do his duty [and read the Riot Act]. Soldiers patrolled the streets with orders to fire on groups that refused to disperse, and about 450 people were killed or wounded. Whigs denounced the king's action, Fox declaring that he would 'much rather be governed by a mob than a standing army.' Eventually, 160 rioters were put on trial, and 22 men and 4 women, most aged between seventeen and twenty-five, hanged near the scene of their actions. Gordon himself, charged with high treason, was acquitted.

"... What the riots above all show is the continuing potency, especially in London, of militant religious Dissent galvanized by the American Revolution and which would remain the core of English political radicalism for generations...

⁶⁵⁶ "Although they lasted only a week, they caused £100,000 worth of damage and destroyed *ten times* more property than was destroyed in Paris during the entire French Revolution" (Tim Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, p. 326). (V.M.)

“Otherwise, the political and military situation seemed to be stabilizing in 1780. North won a snap general election. There was no prospect of the French and Spanish trying another invasion. The Spanish navy was occupied in an epic siege of Gibraltar, which continued on and off for nearly four years. In America, English, Loyalist, Scottish, Native American and German troops advanced through the southern colonies. The Dissenting minister Richard Parr lamented ‘the common expectation... that America will soon be ours again.’ Washington’s army was plagued by desertions and mutinies, and infiltrated by Loyalist agents. Wrote one congressman in 1780: ‘We are pretty near the end of our tether.’ As the British war minister, Lord George Germain, saw it optimistically in December: ‘So very contemptible is the rebel force in all parts, and so vast is our superiority, that no resistance on their part is to be apprehended... and it is a pleasing... reflection... that the American levies in the King’s service are more in number than the whole of the enlisted troops in the service of the Congress.’ So the likelihood arose again of a negotiated compromise. Some politicians had long considered abandoning New England – ‘not only no advantage but a considerable detriment’ – and making ‘Hudson’s River the barrier of our empire’. North assured Parliament in January 1781 that there was the prospect of ‘a just and an honourable peace...’⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁷ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 358- 361.

45. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: (4) FROM VALLEY FORGE TO THE TREATY OF PARIS

As we have seen, the tide in the American war was turned by the intervention of the old enemy – France... The French were encouraged by an important American victory: the surrender of Burgoyne’s army coming from the north at Saratoga, which also encouraged the Spanish and the Dutch to join the Americans. This changed the balance of power at sea. On land, Washington’s main contribution was the Churchillian one of refusing to give up. His refusal to surrender at Valley Forge was critical...

“France had provided money to pay for 15,000 American troops, and a French army of 5,000 men under the Comte de Rochambeau had been sitting in Rhode Island for months. In 1781 Versailles acted decisively. In March its Atlantic fleet was dispatched first to the West Indies, the main prize, and then, after failing to capture Jamaica, in July it sailed north to Virginia, to join up with Rochambeau and Washington. Fatally, the Royal Navy, intent on protecting the sugar islands, failed to stop them, and so the French navy and army were able to trap a small British force under General Cornwallis at Yorktown. Rochambeau’s army besieged it, seconded by Washington’s men and local militia. On 19 October, with many men sick or wounded and ammunition nearly exhausted, the British surrendered. They marched out playing a popular tune, ‘The World Turned Upside Down’.

“Yorktown was a fairly minor affair by the standards of European wars. Yet the choice of music was not inappropriate, for the psychological blow was severe: ‘O God! It is all over,’ exclaimed North. An MP wrote that ‘every Body seems really sick of carrying on the American war’. A motion calling for peace was passed in the Commons. North insisted on resigning, for which George III, eager to fight on, never forgave him. The opposition Whig Rockingham returned to office in March 1782 and began to withdraw troops from North America, urging commanders to try to ‘captivate [American] hearts’. The French fleet set sail for Jamaica to deliver the coup de grâce. The British fleet hastened westward to fight the only great battle it has ever fought outside European waters, and the only time the main fleet had been so far from home until it sailed to fight Japan in later 1944 and Argentina in 1982. The Battle of the Saints, in the Caribbean, on 9-10 April 1782, tilted the global advantage in Britain’s favour, as the French and their allies ran out of money, men, ships and confidence. Admirals Rodney and Hood smashed the French fleet, using new tactics to break the enemy line. Rodney boasted to London, ‘You may now despise all your enemies’. The Spanish failed to take Gibraltar in their final great assault in September, and the French, who had been hoping to effect another revolution in India, arrived with too little and too late: there was to be no Yorktown in Asia...

“Some ministers wanted to do a deal with the Americans, and turn on France, Spain and Holland. But Rockingham and his successor, the Irish magnate Lord Shelburne, were eager to end the war, against the express will of the king...

“Peace negotiations were dominated by Shelburne. He had long sympathized with the American Patriots, and wanted to safeguard trade and political influence by a generous settlement. The French envoy was astonished at how ‘the English are buying peace... their concessions with regard to boundaries, fisheries and loyalists exceed anything I would have believed possible.’ Britain gave full independence to all the thirteen colonies involved in the rebellion, ceded to them all the territory south of the Great Lakes, and returned Florida to Spain.⁶⁵⁸ The Americans jumped at this, abandoning their allies – the preliminary peace agreement was signed without the French even being informed. Shelburne was little concerned about the Loyalists and the freed slaves, who at best were packed off to other colonies. The Native American Allies he regarded with distaste, abandoning them to the new Republic, which ‘knew best how to tame their savage natures’. This has been called ‘a sentence of death for their civilization’. Shelburne’s terms were attacked in Parliament, and he was forced out of office in April 1783. But Parliament could do nothing about a treaty that had already been signed, other than punish the government, and in September the treaties of Versailles and Paris were ratified.

“American independence was a hammer blow to British prestige, and a triumph for France. The Habsburg emperor wrote England off as now ‘a second-class power, comparable with Sweden and Denmark’. The French intervention had prevented the British from keeping much more of America than Canada and the West Indies. France, Spain and Holland had seized command of the seas for a crucial period, hampering British operations against the rebels and preventing the deployment of reinforcements. The fate of America was largely decided in the West Indies, which had first call on British troops and ships. Despite the legend of lumbering Redcoats being defeated by straight-shooting frontiersmen, there is little doubt that the Crown forces, including many Americans – among them the native and the enslaved – could have defeated the half-hearted ‘Roundheads’ had Britain not also been fighting a world war.

“This, however, is not how we remember it. As in so much of our history, the Whig version, in both its English and American variants, has prevailed, and we have generally accepted the idealized vision of the American Revolution as a noble struggle for freedom and democracy. Here indeed is a case of history being written by the victors...”⁶⁵⁹

The independence of America was probably inevitable in that, as Earl Chatham (William Pitt) put it, sending thousands of troops thousands of miles across the ocean to subdue the colonials was thoroughly impractical: “America cannot be conquered”. Nevertheless, it is a question whether the Americans really gained

⁶⁵⁸ Article 1 of the Treaty read: “His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz., New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, to be free, sovereign and independent states, that he treats with them as such, and for himself, his heirs, and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, property, and territorial rights of the same and every part thereof.” (V.M.)

⁶⁵⁹ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-363.

from their victory, at any rate in the short run. For, as Simon Jenkins writes, “it was the war’s victors who faced the tougher future. For for the first time America had to tax itself for its own protection, and its income per head fell 46 per cent in the next fifteen years. Britain’s rose...”⁶⁶⁰

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The American Revolution, as we have seen, was motivated primarily by financial considerations (a supposedly unjust tax) and a nascent sense of American patriotism or nationalism. It was in the American revolution that terms familiar to us from Soviet times, such as “enemy of the people” and “Committee of Public Safety” (KGB) first came into use. Moreover, the American revolution provided a vital spark that revived French patriotism in the nobility, uniting it to the banner of liberty.

Two men were especially important in the transmission of this spark: the French nobleman Marie Joseph Paul Yves Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, and the American scientist and journalist, Benjamin Franklin.

“Like every French nobleman of his generation,” writes Zamoyski, Lafayette’s “national pride smarted under the humiliation of his country’s defeat in the Seven Years’ War, which had ended in 1763. France had lost Canada and her possessions in India, as well as a string of other colonies, to her arch-enemy England. A desire for revenge combined with a burning need to distinguish himself animated the seventeen-year-old when he joined his regiment at Metz for manoeuvres in the summer of 1775. The commander of the forces stationed around Metz was the Maréchal de Broglie, an old soldier who had seen long service against the English. Like most Frenchmen, he was delighted by the news that on the morning of 19 April that year the dispute between the English colonies of North America and their government in London had turned violent, leading to an exchange of shots on Lexington Green.

“Apart from feeling the natural restlessness of a soldier in time of peace, Broglie also nurtured a hurt pride, having been given less than his due for years of distinguished service. And in the American situation he saw opportunities. He began hatching plans for the unofficial despatch of a number of French officers to the American colonies to foment rebellion. He himself would stand at their head, and, as all the officers would have been chosen by him, he would be in an unassailable position. Behind this purely military plan to repay England for France’s loss of Canada, lurked a personal dream. Lafayette was drawn into these plans, and they assumed immediacy for him when the Minister of War, the Comte de Saint-Germain, began slimming down the French forces in the interests of economy. On 11 June 1776, Lafayette was transferred to the reserve list. This meant he would never make a career in the army, and a lifetime of inactivity at court and personal nonentity threatened.

⁶⁶⁰ Jenkins, *A Short History of England*, London: Profile, 2011, p. 183.

“By then, the Americans had an agent in Paris, Silas Deane, who was procuring arms through Pierre Augustine Caron de Beaumarchais, businessman, spy, publicist, wheeler-dealer and later author of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Deane had no authority to do so, but under the influence of Broglie and others he also began to enrol officers for the rebel cause. By mid-December 1776 there were several ships in the roads of Le Havre with a quantity of arms and some sixty French officers aboard, mostly men proposed by Broglie. Lafayette badgered Broglie and Silas Deane to be included. The nineteen-year-old captain who owed his rank solely to his connections, and had never fired a shot in anger. When Deane balked at this, Lafayette countered by waiving the right to general’s pay and by pointing out that his position in French society would bring with it valuable publicity for the cause of the colonists. On 7 December 1776 Deane signed his contract...”⁶⁶¹

In spite of the disapproval of King Louis XVI, who “was not inclined to support rebels against their rightful king”, and of his chief minister Turgot, who “was against getting involved in something that might lead to a war”, Lafayette set off for America. “In mid-Atlantic he penned a letter to his wife Adrienne, clearly meant to be some kind of testament, in which he declared his intention to fight selflessly in the service of liberty. ‘In working for my glory I work for their welfare,’ he wrote. ‘I hope for my sake you will become a good American. It is a sentiment meant for virtuous hearts. The welfare of America is intimately linked with the welfare of all humanity.’”⁶⁶²

Arriving in America, Lafayette met George Washington during his army’s suffering winter at Valley Forge, which took place after the British had conquered Philadelphia in September, 1777. Lafayette joined Washington’s staff. “The young man’s initial admiration for the tall, elegant commander rapidly developed into adulation. One evening, Washington told Lafayette to treat him ‘as a father and a friend’, a natural enough show of avuncular concern in the circumstances. To the French boy who had never known his own father [who had been killed by an English bullet], the offer meant far more, and he took it literally. He considered himself to have been adopted, and associated himself more firmly with the cause, whatever he might have thought this to be.”⁶⁶³

On returning to France in 1779, Lafayette received an ecstatic welcome. As Simon Schama writes, “Lafayette’s celebrity is an important moment in the coining of a new patriotism, in that it nativized and modernized a genre that had previously been confined to classical ideals. It also gave that patriotism a distinct ideological color, however faintly tainted. It would be naïve to imagine that popularity alone could have pushed France down the road to a more aggressive intervention in the American War, had not Vergennes and Maurepas, the King’s ministers, decided upon that course for reasons wholly unconnected with ‘Liberty’ or other fancy modern notions. But, as we shall later see, already in the France of Louis XVI, the security of ministerial tenure, and the policies associate with the

⁶⁶¹ Zamoyski, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁶² Zamoyski, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁶⁶³ Zamoyski, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

ministers themselves, were to some extent governed by a favor that extended well beyond Versailles. At the very least, the orchestrated campaign of huzzahs that greeted Lafayette's return and the sensational nature of his exploits in America did no harm at all to those in the government determined to press foreign policy towards a full war with the British Empire..."⁶⁶⁴

Even before Lafayette's return, the news of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 threw French aristocratic society into a frenzy. "I was singularly struck to see the unanimous eruption of such keen and all-embracing sympathy for the revolt of a people against a king," writes [the Comte de] Ségur. 'The American insurrection took hold of the imagination like some fashion,' he adds, and indeed fashions overnight changed overnight: the game of whist was replaced at the card-tables at Spa by 'le boston'.

"Nobody knew how to exploit this mood better than the 'apostle of liberty', Benjamin Franklin, who arrived in Paris as the agent of the American rebels in December 1776, just as Lafayette was preparing to leave. Franklin was famous for his discovery of the lightning conductor. In an age when thousands of houses were burned and people killed by lightning every year, this invention was as self-evidently salutary as any vaccine. In a climate where the useful was equated with the good and the moral, he appeared as a sort of saints. A native of Boston, brought up in poverty and the Presbyterian faith, he had educated himself, become a printer, graduated to journalism and rise to the office of Postmaster-General for the Colonies. He had visited England, moving in high circles and joining the Hell Fire Club. Even now he hedged his bets by serving British intelligence.

"As he had no official accreditation, Franklin's only way of promoting the rebels' cause was by seducing French society. He rented a little house in Passy, just outside Paris, and settled into a modest way of life. His plain clothes hinted at fashionable Quakerism, his refusal to wear a wig or powder his hair, his sensible and thrifty lifestyle, his studiously unceremonious deportement epitomized the Voltairean ideal of '*simplicité*'. He wore a trappers' fur hat, redolent of the virgin glades of the new world, and bifocal spectacles of his own construction that proclaimed his scientific credentials. He acted out for the French the ideal new man they fantasized about, and as a result became the object of a cult. His cane was copied, snuff-boxes, rings, bracelets and even shirts bearing his likeness were manufactured and sold. In Arras, an ambitious young lawyer by the name of Maximilien de Robespierre dedicated his first important court case to him..."⁶⁶⁵

"'The cause of America is in great measure the cause of all mankind,' Thomas Paine had written in the introduction to *Common Sense*, adding that it was 'the concern of every man to whom nature hath given the power of feeling.' But he was primarily thinking of rights; others saw the events in a more metaphysical light. 'The independence of the Anglo-Americans is the event most likely to accelerate the revolution which will bring happiness on earth', opined one French

⁶⁶⁴ Schama, *Citizens*, London: Penguin, 1898, 2004, p. 33.

⁶⁶⁵ Zamoycki, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

commentator. 'It is in the breast of the nascent Republic that lie the true treasures that will enrich the world.' 'This will be the century of America,' declared King Gustavus of Sweden. In Russia, the poet Alexander Nikolayevich Radishchev composed an ode to universal Freedom, and from Buda Janos Zinner wrote to Franklin with the assurance that he viewed him 'and all the chiefs of your new republic as angels sent by Heaven to guide and comfort the human race.' Nowhere was this rhapsodical tendency more pronounced than in France, which was experiencing an orgasm of vicarious self-fulfilment. 'The Americans appeared to be doing no more than carrying out what our writers conceived,' as Alexis de Tocqueville put it, 'they were giving the substance of truth to what we were dreaming.'

"'There is a hundred times more enthusiasm for this revolution in any café in Paris than in all the United States together,' reported a baffled Louis du Portail, a colonel of engineers who had spent a year in North America, on his return to France in the autumn of 1777. This enthusiasm was forcing the hand of a reticent French government, and when the rebel's victory over the rash General Burgoyne at Saratoga on 17 October 1777 showed that they meant business, Louis XVI and Turgot gave way. In February 1778 France signed a treaty of alliance with the American States. Young men rushed to enlist, not just to have a go at the British, but also to assert the intellectual superiority of Enlightenment France.

"Suitably, the venerable Voltaire arrived in Paris to take a valedictory bow. His house was besieged by throngs of admirers. At the opera his bust was brought on stage and crowned with laurels while incense was burned before it. Wherever he went, people gathered around the old seer, falling on their knees, touching his clothes, and even tearing pieces off to keep as relics. At the Académie Française Benjamin Franklin brought his little grandson to the old man. Voltaire extended his hand over the child's head, murmuring the words 'God... Liberty...', and all those around them burst into tears while the sage of the old world and the apostle of the new embraced. 'It was,' in the words of one contemporary, 'the apotheosis of a still living demigod'.

"This epiphanous atmosphere did not seem out of place. Many believed that something like a miracle was taking place, that a whole society was throwing off not only the shackles of monarchical denomination but also the cultural and spiritual taints of the old world, that it was reinventing itself as an entirely new kind of human polity. It seemed to be on the point of bringing about the chiliastic dream of a utopian state on earth, to make up for the paradise which the children of the Enlightenment no longer believed in..."⁶⁶⁶

"The consequences of French involvement in the revolutionary war, writes Schama, "were, in fact, profoundly subversive and irreversible. The American historian Forrest Macdonald attempted to show a high degree of correspondence between returning French veterans of the war and the outbreak of rural violence in 1789. Recently, this has been shown by more careful research to be suspect,

⁶⁶⁶ Zamoyski, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

although there remain striking cases of returning soldiers who show up in the Chronicle of the Revolution, most famously Lieutenant Elie and Louis La Reynie, both 'conquerors' of the Bastille on July 14. But the case for an 'American' cause of the French Revolution does not have to rest on this kind of geographical literalism. A more qualitative approach can hardly fail to register the extraordinary importance of the flirtation with armed freedom to a section of the aristocracy that was rich, powerful and influential. On their own they could not conceivably have constituted any kind of independent 'revolutionary' opposition to the crown. But once the money crisis of the monarchy was transformed into a political argument, the vocabulary of 'liberty' was apt to take on a life of its own - and become available to those who were prepared to play politics for very high stakes. Ségur, who was just such a participant, wrote to his wife in 1782, before he embarked with the French army, that 'arbitrary power weighs heavily on me. The freedom for which I am going to fight, inspires in me the liveliest enthusiasm and I would like my own country to enjoy such a liberty that would be compatible with our monarchy, our position and our manners.' The fact that Ségur, on the highest rung of the nobility, could blithely assume that such a transformation *would* be compatible with the monarchy may well suggest a myopic naiveté, but it also explains how so many of his peers would take the exemplary nature of America seriously without ever dreaming it would lead directly to the Dictatorship of Virtue..."⁶⁶⁷

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Paradoxically, if we look at the history of the American War of Independence in a wider and longer perspective, the conclusions to be drawn are almost the precise opposite of what they seemed to be to contemporaries.

First, the war was not between democrats and tyrants for the simple reason that neither was America a real democracy, but a confederation of sovereign oligarchies; nor was Britain a real monarchy - still less the "absolute despotism" that the Declaration of Independence calls it, but an oligarchical Parliamentocracy in which the king's desire to continue the war in 1781-2 was deliberately and openly ignored, with the result that already before the end the king ruled neither Britain nor America (which may have precipitated his fall into madness). The American colonies were not model democracies in that the decision to rebel was taken by small, barely representative assemblies from a narrow franchise and against the manifest will of large minorities of the population. In effect, this was a war between two groups of oligarchs of the same race and a very similar culture, class and world-view; the differences between them were smaller than those between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians in the English Civil War.

Secondly, so little divided the antagonists that, apart from the war of 1812-14 (when the British burned down the White House, and the Americans defeated the British at New Orleans), Britain and the United States have remained friends and allies ever since, to their immense mutual benefit and the benefit of that common

⁶⁶⁷ Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 35-36.

civilization which they jointly represented and advanced throughout the world. Oscar Wilde's quip that Britain and America are two nations divided by a common language only emphasizes how much they do indeed have in common. Indeed, the British-American "special relationship", although a little tattered in recent years, may be described as the most powerful and successful international alliance in history.

Thirdly, if we consider the war in its wider, global dimension, then we have to conclude that the victory of France in America was a truly pyrrhic one. For France's support of the American revolutionaries was to prove fatal for a state more absolutist than Britain and therefore more vulnerable to the propaganda of revolution. For, as Marc Almond writes, "French assistance to the rebel Americans helped to bankrupt the royal regime in France and create the conditions for revolution in 1789."⁶⁶⁸

In 1803 Napoleon was able to recoup some of the financial loss – not for the monarchy, but for the revolution – when the United States purchased 800,000 square miles of French territory in the centre and south of the country for \$15 million. This "Louisiana Purchase" made the United States into a great power, and destroyed the threat of the French and Spanish empires in North America. In a letter to Lafayette Napoleon wrote that he hoped he was making a great maritime rival to Britain...

Fourthly, France's victory in America was perhaps the decisive event that guaranteed the victory, not of France, but of *Britain*, in that long-drawn-out, titanic struggle that began in 1700 with the War of the Spanish Succession continued with the Seven Years war (1759-63) and ended in 1815 on the bloody field of Waterloo. For if Britain had won the war of 1776-83 in America, there is little doubt that this would only have been a respite, and that when Britain found herself again at war with France in 1802, the Americans would have renewed their struggle for independence, placing an extra and probably intolerable burden on her resources. The British David eventually defeated the French Goliath – thanks to the fact that he had made his peace with the budding Goliath on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean...

Probably the most important conclusion to be drawn from the revolution is the fundamental weakness and instability of the liberal, parliamentary model of statehood accepted by both British and Americans since the Glorious Revolution of 1689. The revolution showed, as Barbara Tuchman has put it, that "parliamentary supremacy", no less than monarchy, "was vulnerable to riot, agitation and boycott..."⁶⁶⁹ Moreover, in principle it authorized the process of rebellion to go on forever: smaller parliaments can rebel against larger ones, and there are always people who do not feel they belong to *this* people or political grouping, who do not experience the "happiness" which the Declaration says is their "natural right", and therefore feel they have the right to "institute a new

⁶⁶⁸ Almond, *Revolution*, London: De Agostino, 1996, p. 69.

⁶⁶⁹ Tuchman, *The March of Folly*, London: Michael Joseph, 1984, p. 166.

government” that would “effect their safety and happiness” – which is precisely what happened when about 100,000 American Loyalists fled to Canada to escape persecution in the United States ⁶⁷⁰, and again after the war in 1786 when the veteran revolutionary Daniel Shays led a tax rebellion against the State of Massachusetts.

⁶⁷⁰ Thus Noam Chomsky points out that many American loyalists fled to Canada “because they didn’t like the doctrinaire, kind of fanatic environment that took hold in the colonies. The percentage of colonists who fled in the American Revolution was actually about 4 percent, it was probably higher than the percentage of Vietnamese who fled Vietnam after the Vietnam War. And remember, they were fleeing from one of the richest places in the world – these were boat-people who fled in terror from Boston Harbor in the middle of winter to Nova Scotia, where they died in the snow trying to get away from all of these crazies here. The numbers are supposed to have been in the neighbourhood of maybe a hundred thousand out of a total population of about two and a half million – so it was a substantial part of the population. And among them were people from groups who knew they were going to get it in the neck if the colonists won – blacks and Native Americans, for example. And they were right: in the case of the Native Americans, it was genocide; in the case of the blacks, it was slavery.” (*Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, London: Vintage, 2003, p. 102).

46. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: (5) THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

America's government after 1776, the Confederation Congress, writes Hugh Brogan, "had conducted the revolutionary war feebly but successfully and secured a generous peace treaty through its chosen emissaries. In the years since 1783 it had achieved a settlement of the Western land question that was to be of incalculable importance to the American future. To get the Articles ratified it had been necessary to induce Virginia and other states with charter claims to relinquish them and concede that the vast stretch of territory between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, between the Great Lakes and the borders of Florida, should be held by Congress on behalf of all citizens. The existence of this heritage did much to cement national loyalties and to diminish the importance of state identities..."⁶⁷¹

The task now was to convert the Provisional Government of the war years into a permanent government with a constitution. It was generally agreed that the old constitution of the nation that had fought the War of Independence was not fit for purpose; it had to be tightened up to make for a more unitary nation-state. Apart from anything else, the ability of a single State in effect to veto resolutions (like the *liberum veto* of the Polish Sejm) would doom the nation in the long run (as it did in the case of contemporary Poland, which was carved up between Russia, Prussia and Austria).

And so "after the war," writes Bobrick, "there was an inexorable, if tremendously conflicted, move towards a strong central government uniting the thirteen states. Under the Confederation, Congress had been unable to impose taxes or regulate currency, credit, or commerce; exercise full control over the military; or enforce any civil law. Its members had been nominated by state legislatures, not elected by the people; voted in state blocs; and could press amendments only by a unanimous vote. Nevertheless, this tenuously constituted and impractical government had established relations (or alliances) with foreign powers, and had managed and financed a long and complex war through to its victorious end. But an increase in social unrest, a staggering national debt, and the separatist tendencies inherent in disunion - at a time when an American referring to his 'country' still meant his own state - caused mounting alarm. Imperial union had departed: national unity had yet to take place.

"The Articles of Confederation were inadequate for this task. Adopted after much misgiving and disputation in 1781, they had created a loose and weak federal organization that was unable to hold the separate states together in anything stronger than, in Washington's phrase, 'a feeble thread'. A national Constitutional Convention was called to meet in Philadelphia in May 1787 to address the crisis, and though Washington at first refused to be a delegate, he relented and was chosen president of the Convention on the fourteenth."⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 191.

⁶⁷² Bobrick, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

Each state sent delegates to the Convention, and at first they made rapid progress. "All agreed that, as a matter of fact, the chief defect of the Articles was that the confederalist Congress represented states, and because of the unanimity rule one state, even a very small one, could frustrate the will of the others. They agreed in principle that the remedy for this infirmity was to set up 'a national government... consisting of a supreme Legislature, Judiciary, and Executive' which would operate directly on individuals, not just on states. It was agreed that the legislature ought to consist of two chambers; some progress was made towards settling the details of the judiciary and the executive. But it soon became clear that a fundamental problem gaped before the convention. The delegates from the large states held that, as a matter of republican principle, direct election should be held for both legislative houses, and that representation in both should be proportioned to population, ignoring the states; while the small states, though ready to give up the equal rights they enjoyed under the Articles, insisted on some protecting privilege under the new system. Throughout June and early July the point was debated; anxiety mounted that it might wreck the whole convention. Hamilton left in despair, and his colleagues from New York in disgust (they were committed small state men); by early July Washington was looking as grim as at Valley Forge; but eventually the large states conceded, as they had to if they wanted to make progress. It was agreed that the lower house would be elected on a population basis, though every state was to have at least one representative; while the upper house, or Senate, would be elected by the state assemblies, and each state would have an equal role there. This was the Great Compromise; without it the Constitution would not have been agreed; and it was a price worth paying. And yet essentially it was a price paid by the future to the past. Major political conflict has never, since 1787, raged between large states and small states; so the Constitutional protection has been neither a help nor a hindrance. Madison foresaw this at the time; he insisted that the real disputes would in future arise between the regions, or sections - between North and South, say; but he too acquiesced in the agreement. The essential point of the compromise was agreed on 16 July.

"This matter having been settled, the convention was freed to get down to the hard work of settling the details of their grand design. It was agreed, for example, that each state would have two representatives in the Senate, who would vote as individuals, not as a unitary state delegation; that the new Constitution would be the supreme law of the land; and that executive officials would be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanours. The debates were long and earnest, and not always very enlightening: during the discussion of that dangerous institution, the standing army, Gerry of Massachusetts actually proposed that the Constitution limit the size of the army to two or three thousand men. Fortunately, Washington killed the idea by muttering audibly from the chair that they should next make it unconstitutional for our enemy to attack with a larger force..."⁶⁷³

⁶⁷³ Brogan, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.

Every State assembly eventually ratified the new Constitution, which consisted of seven articles. The first three articles embodied the doctrine of the separation of powers into three branches: the legislative, consisting of two chambers, the Senate and Congress (Article One), the executive, consisting of the president (Article Two), and the judicial, consisting of the Supreme Court and other federal courts (Article Three). The rationale behind the separation of powers was that behind the institution of the consulate in the Roman republic: as James Madison put it, "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition."⁶⁷⁴

Here we see a cardinal principle of eighteenth-century rationalism: that the good is attained only by evils cancelling each other out. In politics, ambition counteracts ambition, and in economics greed counteracts greed. It goes without saying that this principle is directly counter to Christianity, which proclaims that evil can only be counteracted by good. But by the eighteenth century, faith in the possibility of real good, that is, holiness in man had been eroded away; the dogma of original sin, which implies an original sinlessness, was a deep-rooted part of the dominant Calvinist faith. There were only fallen men with their fallen passions (except that they were not called "fallen" outside the preacher's services), which could be restrained only by pitting them (both the men and the passions) against each other...

Articles Four, Five and Six embodied the concept of federalism, and described the rights and responsibilities of the state governments, the relationship of the states to the federal government, and the shared process of constitutional amendment. Article Seven established the procedure subsequently used by the thirteen states to ratify it.

"Since the Constitution came into force in 1789, it has been amended 27 times, including one amendment that repealed a previous one, in order to meet the needs of a nation that has profoundly changed since the eighteenth century. In general, the first ten amendments, known collectively as the Bill of Rights, offer specific protections of individual liberty and justice and place restrictions on the powers of government. The majority of the seventeen later amendments expand individual civil rights protections. Others address issues related to federal authority or modify government processes and procedures."⁶⁷⁵

The First Amendment declares: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

We shall discuss freedom of religion in a later chapter...

The Second Amendment, granting citizens the right to bear arms in defence of their rights, has become particularly controversial in recent times in view of the

⁶⁷⁴ Madison, *The Federalist*, no. 51, early 1788; in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

⁶⁷⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_United_States.

spate of gun crimes. Such an innovation was perhaps possible only in America, whose distance from her most powerful rivals and decentralised system of semi-sovereign states and ever-expanding frontiers made strong central government less essential, giving unparalleled freedom to individual farmer-settlers.

While instituting a strong executive power, the delegates were also motivated by a fear of despotism and distrust of big government; they wanted a government which would interfere as little as possible in the private lives of the citizens. Thus the 9th and 10th Amendments reserved spheres not explicitly given to the central government to the States and the People.⁶⁷⁶ For, as Hamilton wrote in the first of *The Federalist Papers*, "A dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidding appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency of government. History will teach us that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants." Again, Hamilton's friend James Madison said: "Wherever the real power in government lies, there is the danger of oppression. In our government the real power lies in the majority of the community, and the invasion of private rights is chiefly to be apprehended, not from acts of government contrary to the sense of its constituents, but from acts in which the government is the mere instrument of the major number of the constituents. This is a truth of great importance, but not yet sufficiently attended to..."⁶⁷⁷

The champions of a strong central government, the federalists, believed that such a government was necessary provided it was limited by the power of impeachment, in order to preserve the gains of the revolution, to guarantee taxation income, and to preserve law and order. As George Washington put it: "Let then the reins of government be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the Constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled on whilst it has an existence."⁶⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, many of the anti-federalists thought that Washington was putting the central government in the place of the tyrannical British king. They were haunted by "the ideological fear, so effective as a weapon against the taxes imposed by Parliament and decrees of George III, that once arbitrary power was acknowledged to reside elsewhere, all liberty was lost..."⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁶ Ninth Amendment: The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." Tenth Amendment; "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the People."

⁶⁷⁷ Madison, in James M. Rafferty, *Prophetic Insights into the New World Order*, Malo, WA: Light Bearers Ministry, 1992, p. 73.

⁶⁷⁸ Washington, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

⁶⁷⁹ Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, New York: Vintage Books, 2002, p. 59. See also Simon Collinson, "President or King?", *History Today*, vol. 50 (11), November, 2000, pp. 12-13.

Thus the American Civil War, when it came, was not unexpected. For as early as 1787 Alexander Hamilton "had made a prediction: The newly created federal government would either 'triumph altogether over the state governments and reduce them to an entire subordination,' he surmised, or 'in the course of a few years the contests about the boundaries of power between the particular governments and the general government will produce a dissolution of the Union."⁶⁸⁰ Indeed, when the Civil War came, it turned out to be as much about "the boundaries of power" between the federal government and the States as about slavery.

Benjamin Franklin, godfather of the revolution, supported the constitution of 1787 "with all its faults - if they are such - because I think a general government necessary for us, and there is no form of government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered". But this good administration, he believed, could only go on for a few years, after which it "can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other..."⁶⁸¹

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The most famous absentee from the Constitutional Convention (and successor of Franklin as ambassador in Paris) was Thomas Jefferson. In spite of his absence, Jefferson's influence remained powerful. He drew inspiration from the French revolution; and strove to "rekindle the old spirit of 1776". Thus he believed that a rebellion every twenty years or so was necessary to stop the arteries of freedom from becoming sclerotic. As he wrote in 1787: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots & tyrants. It is its natural manure."⁶⁸² And to James Madison he wrote in the same year: "A little rebellion now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical... It is a medicine for the sound health of government..."⁶⁸³

Now according to Brogan, "the right of revolution was tacitly dropped: the process of Constitutional amendment [guaranteeing various human rights] was supposed to remove the need for any such doctrine. No President since Jefferson has believed that a revolution every twenty years is a good thing; and it is not clear that even Jefferson was dissatisfied with revolution through the voting-booth. The right to individual property was so intrinsically part of eighteenth-century thought that it was not made explicit in the Constitution, or even in the Bill of Rights; but it is hard to see how it can be much endangered while the ten great amendments are enforced. For they are predicated on the assumption that the right of happiness is

⁶⁸⁰ Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, New York: Vintage Books, 2002, p. 77.

⁶⁸¹ Franklin, in Brian MacArthur, *The Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 101.

⁶⁸² Jefferson, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

⁶⁸³ Jefferson, in Almond, *op. cit.*, p. 69. This recipe for permanent revolution was taken up by none other than Abraham Lincoln in 1861: "This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it..." (Almond, *op. cit.*, p. 69)

effective only if the individual has the means to defend his interests through the press, the churches and the courts, as well as through the political process; and it is impossible to see how, in a society so organized, a citizen can lose the right to his economic independence (the power to maintain it is another matter) – which is what the eighteenth century really understood by property. In short, the Bill of Rights puts a sharp limit to the legitimate claims on the citizen of government, majority, minority and collectivity of any sort...⁶⁸⁴

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the United States was a revolutionary polity from the beginning and in essence, however rational and enlightened the debates and eventual conclusions of the convention seemed to be... By a strange coincidence, the American Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia coincided with the foundation of Illuminism in Germany in 1776, which tells us something about its revolutionary nature – or, perhaps, that America was destined to be the last western rampart against the Illuminist revolutionism of the Old World... In either case, the Lockean idea of the original innocence of America was as false as the American idea that all her ills came from British “tyranny”; and innocence was not restored in 1787...

So however cleverly the Constitution may have been framed in order to avert the *need* for revolution, revolution remains in the blood of America; and in times of crisis, as at the present time (2021), the *spirit* of revolution, which respects no laws or constitutions, will revive: laws are no bulwark against unrestrained passion unchecked by religious feeling and morality...

Indeed, there is a rich irony in the fact that the United States, which after 1917, and especially after 1945, became the main bulwark of ordered government against the revolution, should have been the most revolutionary State prior to 1789. Moreover, its success as such had a considerable influence on the French revolution and its imitators, who took the American example as proving that “where there is a will there is a way” for nations rebelling against monarchs and traditional interests. Thus “‘Since America became a free society after shaking the English yoke off her neck, all nations are yearning for the same golden liberties,’ wrote the Magyar *Kurir*... on 27 May 1789.”⁶⁸⁵

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The American system of government is usually considered to be a product of English liberal ideas, particularly those of John Locke. This is true, as we have seen; but in justice another important influence should be indicated: that of the Native Indians, and in particular the Confederacy of Iroquois Five Nations, whose Mohawk Chief Canassatego advised Benjamin Franklin: “Our wise forefathers established union between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable; this has given us great weight and authority with our neighbouring nations. We are a powerful confederacy, and by your observing the same methods our wise

⁶⁸⁴ Brogan, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214.

⁶⁸⁵ Adam Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 96.

forefathers have taken you will acquire such strength and power. Therefore, whatever befalls you, never fall out with one another.”

G.K. Ballatore comments: “Arguably, federalism has been the United States’ foremost political contribution. The pattern of states within a nation held together not by clannishness or geography but by shared values mimics the structure of the Iroquois Confederacy. Since most of the colonies had more contact and trade with the Indians than they did with one another, the Iroquois preference for local government made sense.

“The Iroquois Confederacy was the only living, breathing democracy the founders had witnessed when the time came to declare independence and, later, cobble together the Constitution when the Articles of Confederation were found wanting. Although Franklin and Jefferson were acquainted with the ideas of Locke and Rousseau, there were no current examples in Europe of democracy in action. In contrast, colonists imagined that the American Indians lived in a perfect state of nature and were somehow descended from the Ancient Romans. As early as 1580, Michel de Montaigne wrote admiringly of the natives of the New World in his essay, *On Cannibals*... Later, in the late 1600s, the first colonial historian of the Indians, Cadwallader Colden, wrote that without ‘Men of experience among the Five Nations to advise and direct them on all emergencies of importance’, the British colonies would be sunk. Colden even attributed French dominance in early colonial America to their ties with the Five Nations.

“By the mid-1700s, this sense of respect and curiosity filtered down to the Founding Fathers, many of whom studied Colden’s work. During this time, Franklin, Conrad Weiser, Thomas Paine, William Johnson, James Madison and John Adams all visited the Iroquois for extended periods to study their government and organisation. The Indians’ proximity to the eastern colonies enabled these frequent visits. Adams even included a survey of Iroquois government in his *Defence of the Constitution of the United States*, published on the eve of the Constitutional Convention, in which he favourably compared the unicameral governing body of the United States to that of the Five Nations.

“The colonists’ first attempt to organise as a cohesive state was at the Albany Conference in 1754, where representatives from each of the colonies attended, as well as many Iroquois Indians, including the Mohawk chief Canassatego. Franklin named the organising body the Great Council, after the Grand Council of the Iroquois. In the Iroquois tradition, the Grand Council does not interfere with local tribal matters. Each tribe has its own ‘constitution’ that governs the laws of their land, independent of the other tribes. In addition, they convene regularly with the other tribes to discuss matters that affect all of them, especially the decision to wage war. Otherwise, each tribe’s and each individual’s autonomy is recognised and respected as long as it does not hurt another. Franklin greatly admired this system of government and chastised the other colonists when they failed to cohere:

“It would be a very strange thing if six nations of ignorant savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such an Union and be able to execute it in such a

manner, as that it has subsisted for Ages, and appears indissoluble, and yet a like Union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English colonies.

“The notion of personal freedom and liberty also descended from the Iroquois and, most notably, from the Mohawks, who had the most contact with the British colonists. Many colonists, in keeping with Montaigne, saw the Indian way of life as a ‘recapitulation of Eden’. When the founders tried to capture this in the laws of the New World, they aimed at describing a way of life akin to a state of nature as they observed in the Indians. Hence, Jefferson replaced the right of property that was safeguarded in European constitutions with the right to happiness.

“While the Magna Carta also treated the question of inalienable rights (in a more limited way), the last thing Jefferson and other founders wanted was an imitation of the world from which they had escaped. They did not want to go back to the European way of life, but to form a new society that was neither civilised nor savage...”⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁶ Ballatore, “America’s First Nation”, *History Today*, April, 2017, pp. 51-52.

47. THE BLACKS AND THE INDIANS

As we have seen, one potential danger of the new American state was that it allowed for equal rights to be demanded on the part of a theoretically endless list of truly or supposedly oppressed minorities. The demands of two major and truly oppressed minorities in particular – the black slaves and the Indians – could not be ignored for long.

Conditions for slaves in the early United States could be very harsh. According to the Virginia slave code of 1705 all servants imported into the State “who were not Christians in their native country... shall be accounted and be slaves, and such be here bought and sold notwithstanding a conversion to Christianity afterwards...” Whites could not marry blacks or those of mixed race. And if a master killed a slave in the course of correcting him, “he shall be free of all punishment... as if such accident had never happened”.

Such harshness towards slaves was motivated – but not, of course, justified – by the fact that they were vital for the economy, in that many of them came from the so-called Rice Coast, present-day Ghana, where they had learned how to separate rice grains from their husks – a skill vital in making rice cultivation a success in the South. Free white workers were less skilled and more expensive. That was the main reason – apart from simple racism – why the slave-owners resisted emancipation so fiercely, and why there were periodic slave uprisings. An attempt to create a new colony without slavery was made in Georgia in 1732, but it failed; and in 1752 Georgia became a crown colony, and thereafter a plantation society like South Carolina...⁶⁸⁷

The Declaration of Independence famously declared that it was “not possible that one man should have property in person of another”. However, as Ellis writes, “removing slavery was not like removing British officials or revising constitutions. In isolated pockets of New York and New Jersey, and more panoramically in the entire region south of the Potomac, slavery was woven into the fabric of American society in ways that defied appeals to logic and morality. It also enjoyed the protection of one of the Revolution’s most potent legacies, the right to dispose of one’s property without arbitrary interference from others, especially when the others resided far away or claimed the authority of some distant government. There were, to be sure, radical implications latent in the ‘principles of ‘76’ capable of challenging privileged appeals to property rights, but the secret of their success lay in their latency – that is, the gradual and surreptitious ways they revealed their egalitarian implications over the course of the nineteenth century. If slavery’s cancerous growth was to be arrested and the dangerous malignancy removed, it demanded immediate surgery. The radical implications of the revolutionary legacy were no help at all so long as they remained only implications.

“The depth and apparent intractability of the problem became much clearer during the debates surrounding the drafting and ratification of the Constitution.

⁶⁸⁷ Reynolds, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-31.

Although the final draft of the document was conspicuously silent on slavery, the subject itself haunted the closed-door debates. No less a source than Madison believed that slavery was the central cause of the most elemental division in the Constitutional Convention: 'the States were divided into different interests not by their difference of size,' Madison observed, 'but principally from their having or not having slaves... It did not lie between the large and small States: it lay between the Northern and Southern.'

"The delegates from New England and most of the Middle Atlantic states drew directly on the inspirational rhetoric of the revolutionary legacy to argue that slavery was inherently incompatible with the republican values on which the American Republic had been based.⁶⁸⁸ They wanted an immediate end to the slave trade, an explicit statement prohibiting the expansion of slavery into the western territories as a condition for admission into the union, and the adoption of a national plan for gradual emancipation analogous to those state plans already adopted in the North...

"The southern position might more accurately be described as 'deep southern', since it did not include Virginia. Its major advocates were South Carolina and Georgia, and the chief burden for making the case in the Constitutional Convention fell almost entirely on the South Carolina delegation. The underlying assumption of this position was most openly acknowledged by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina – namely, that 'South Carolina and Georgia cannot do without slaves'. What those from the Deep South wanted was open-ended access to African imports to stock their plantations. They also wanted equivalently open access to western lands, meaning no federal legislation restricting the property rights of slave owners...

"Neither side got what it wanted at Philadelphia in 1787. The Constitution contained no provision that committed the newly created federal government to a policy of gradual emancipation, or in any clear sense placed slavery on the road to ultimate extinction. On the other hand, the Constitution contained no provisions that specifically sanctioned slavery as a permanent and protected institution south of the Potomac or anywhere else. The distinguishing feature of the document when it came to slavery was its evasiveness. It was neither a 'contract with abolition' nor a 'covenant with death', but rather a prudent exercise in ambiguity. The circumlocutions required to place a chronological limit on the slave trade or to count slaves as three-fifths of a person for purposes of representation in the House, all without ever using the forbidden word, capture the intentionally elusive ethos of the Constitution. The underlying reason for this calculated orchestration of non-

⁶⁸⁸ As early as 1773 Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, a patriotic physician who later became one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence and a friend of Jefferson's, had attacked what he called 'Slave Keeping', and urged his fellow 'advocates for American liberty' to be consistent. 'The plant of liberty', he wrote, 'is of so tender a nature that it cannot thrive long in the neighbourhood of slavery. Remember, the eyes of Europe are fixed upon you, to preserve an asylum for freedom in tis country after the last pillars of it are fallen in every other quarter of the globe.'" (Brogan, *op. cit.*, p. 179)

commitment was obvious: Any clear resolution of the slavery question one way or the other rendered ratification of the Constitution virtually impossible...⁶⁸⁹

Already in 1774 James Madison had foreseen that the rebellion of the Americans from the British might lead to the rebellion of the slaves from their American owners. In November, 1775 Lord Dunmore, the governor of Virginia, declared that all slaves belonging to the rebels were “free’, and that those who were willing and able could join the British Army. In December, George Washington, who was a Virginia slave-owner, said: “If that Man [Dunmore] is not crushed he will become the most formidable Enemy America has – his strength will increase as a Snowball by Rolling; and faster, if some expellent cannot be hit upon to convince the Slaves and Servants of the impotency of His designs.”⁶⁹⁰

Great expectations were indeed aroused in the non-white populations - together with a general loosening of morality among the whites. Thus in 1776 Benjamin Franklin admitted “that our struggle has loosened the bonds of government everywhere; that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges were grown turbulent; that Indians slighted their guardians, and negroes grew more insolent to their masters...”⁶⁹¹

Several of the Founding Fathers themselves owned slaves. Jefferson owned two hundred, only seven of whom he ever freed.⁶⁹² But this did not prevent him from moving to include a clause condemning George III for the slave trade. But the delegates from South Carolina and Georgia succeeded in having it deleted. George Washington also owned slaves. But this was not the primary reason why he was silent about slavery when he came to make his retirement address in 1796. “His silence on the slavery question was strategic, believing as he did that slavery was a cancer on the body politic of America that could not at present be removed without killing the patient...”⁶⁹³

And with reason; for by 1790 the slave population was 700,000, up from about 500,000 in 1776. This, and the threat that South Carolina and Georgia would secede from the Union if slavery were outlawed, made abolition impractical on the plane of practical politics. (In his will Washington stipulated that all his slaves should be freed after his wife’s death.) ...

“The irony is,” writes Ferguson, “that having won their independence in the name of liberty, the American colonists went on to perpetuate slavery in the southern states. As Samuel Johnson acidly asked in his anti-American pamphlet *Taxation No Tyranny*: ‘How is it that the loudest YELPS for liberty come from the drivers of Negroes?’ By contrast, within a few decades of having lost the American colonies, the British abolished first the slave trade and then slavery itself throughout their Empire. Indeed, as early as 1775 the British Governor of Virginia,

⁶⁸⁹ Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92, 93.

⁶⁹⁰ Washington, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

⁶⁹¹ Almond, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁶⁹² Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁶⁹³ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

Lord Dunmore, had offered emancipation to slaves who rallied to the British cause. This was not entirely opportunistic: Lord Mansfield's famous judgement in *Somerset's case* had pronounced slavery illegal in England three years before.⁶⁹⁴ From the point of view of most African-Americans, American independence postponed emancipation by at least a generation. Although slavery was gradually abolished in northern states like Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island, it remained firmly entrenched in the South, where most slaves lived."

The fact that the first state in the world to make slavery illegal and start the ball rolling on emancipation was the great bugbear of the American revolution, Britain under her "tyrannical" King George, tells us much about the "liberation theology" of the revolution. Evidently freedom is just as possible, if not more so, under a hierarchical state with a king and an aristocracy than under a democratic one. This truth would be demonstrated again in 1861, when the Russian serfs (not slaves, but not still with no political rights) were emancipated at a stroke of the pen by Tsar Alexander II...

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Let us turn now to the Americans' relations with the Native Indians... In 1629, writes Noam Chomsky, John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, "created its Great Seal, which depicted an Indian with a scroll coming out of his mouth. On that scroll are the words 'Come over and help us'. The British colonists were thus benevolent humanists, responding to the pleas of the miserable natives to be rescued from their bitter pagan fate.

"The Great Seal is, in fact, a graphic representation of 'the idea of America' from its birth... an early proclamation of 'humanitarian intervention', to use the currently fashionable phrase. As has commonly been the case since, 'humanitarian intervention' led to catastrophe for the alleged beneficiaries."⁶⁹⁵

The roots of the catastrophe lay in the greed of the colonists, on the one hand, and on the other, the fact that the Indians weakened themselves both by their tribal wars and by their economic dependence on the colonists. For, as Brogan writes, "only Indians could provide the commodities of the peltries [furs] trade; and there

⁶⁹⁴ "As Lord Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield (1705-1793) presided over a number of cases about slavery....His most famous case was that of James Somerset. Having been enslaved, Somerset ran away but had been recaptured and held aboard a ship bound for Jamaica. The slavery abolitionist, Granville Sharp, helped Somerset to bring his case to court. Sharp wanted to find out once and for all if slavery was legal in England. After much delay Lord Mansfield eventually gave a carefully worded judgement. He avoided the question of whether slavery was legal in England. Instead he stated: 'No master was ever allowed here to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatever.' James Somerset was freed. Immediately afterwards the Somerset case was hailed by many as a victory. However, some slave owners ignored the ruling and continued to take Africans abroad forcibly." (<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/sites-of-memory/ending-slavery/notable-legal-cases/> In his judgement, Lord Mansfield described slavery as "odious" and impossible to justify by any kind of law except positive law. (V.M.)

⁶⁹⁵ Chomsky, *Who Rules the World?*, London: Penguin, 2017, p. 34.

was much money to be made out of them. For as time went on the Indians grew ever more dependent on European goods. By the same token they grew more and more manipulable. Those who controlled the supply of essential articles such as guns controlled their customers. And so the curtain rose on the tragedy of the native peoples of North America.

“There had been a long prologue. It is easy to forget, when studying the comparatively gentle rule of Spain north of Mexico (at any rate after the Pueblo revolt [in 1680]), what the conquest of the Aztecs and the Incas had involved. The crimes of the Anglo-Americans pale beside those of Cortes and his successors. Hundreds of thousands of Indians were killed outright; even more were worked slowly and horribly to death as slaves. The fact that European diseases were even more destructive hardly excuses the conquistadores. One Carib Indian, about to be burned to death after a rebellion, refused baptism, though it could take him to heaven, because he feared he would find more Christians there. Genocide is an unpleasant word, but it seems appropriate here. If the North American Indians had known what had happened south of the Rio Grande, they might well have trembled at the future.

“But they were blessedly ignorant. They did not even know how completely they were trapped in the destiny of the Europeans. Towards the end of their days of freedom and power one man of genius among them, the Shawnee Tecumseh (1768-1813), saw the truth and realised that only by uniting in one nation might the Indians save themselves. Tecumseh (‘Crouching Tiger’) was a great general, a compelling orator, a generous and humane man. But his vision came too late, the red men had thrown away their safety and their numbers in ceaseless wars among themselves; after delusive early success Tecumseh failed, and died in battle....”⁶⁹⁶

The Declaration of Independence did not change things. For in the very year of 1776 that famous lover of freedom, Thomas Jefferson, wrote “that he favoured pushing the war into the heart of the Indian lands: ‘But I would not stop there. I would never cease pursuing them while one of them remained on this side of the Mississippi. We would never cease pursuing them with war while one remained on the face of the earth.’”⁶⁹⁷

The trigger for action seems to have been the removal of the restraining power of the British monarchy. For “during the Seven Years War the British government had shown itself anxious to conciliate the Indian tribes, if only to try to lure them away from their alliance with the French. Treaties had been signed which established the Appalachian mountains as the limit of British settlement, leaving the land west of it, including the Ohio Valley, to the Indians. Admittedly, these treaties were not strictly adhered to when peace came, sparking the war known as Pontiac’s Uprising in 1763. But the fact remains that the distant imperial authority

⁶⁹⁶ Brogan, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

⁶⁹⁷ Andrew Marr, *A History of the World*, London: Pan, 2012, p. 353.

in London was more inclined to recognize the rights of the native Americans than the land-hungry colonists on the spot.”⁶⁹⁸

The catastrophe began when General Henry Knox was appointed the new nation's second secretary for war in 1785. He was “responsible for managing the nation's relations with the Native Americans resident in lands it claimed, following a 1789 act of U.S. Congress. Knox, in several documents drafted for Washington and Congress, articulated the nation's early Native American policy. He stated that Indian nations were sovereign and possessed the land they occupied, and that the federal government (and not the states) should therefore be responsible for dealings with them. These policies were implemented in part by the passage of the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1790, which forbade the sale of Native American lands except in connection with a treaty with the federal government. Knox wrote, ‘The Indians, being the prior occupants, possess the right to the soil. It cannot be taken from them except by their consent, or by rights of conquest in case of a just war. To dispossess them on any other principle would be a great violation of the fundamental laws of nature.’ Historian Robert Miller claims that statements like these seem to support indigenous rights to land, but were ignored in the practice of the Doctrine of Discovery, which came to govern the taking of Native lands.

“American Indian wars, including the Cherokee–American wars and the Northwest Indian War, would occupy much of [Knox's] tenure. During the years of the Confederation, there had been insufficient Congressional support for any significant action against the Nations on the western frontier. The British supported the northwestern tribes from frontier bases that they continued to occupy after the Revolutionary War ended (in violation of the Treaty of Paris), and the Cherokee and Creek continued to contest illegal encroachment of colonial settlers on their lands. In October 1790 Knox organized a campaign led by General Josiah Harmar into the Northwest Territory in retaliation for Native American raids against colonial settlers in that territory and that of present-day Kentucky. That campaign failed. A second campaign was organized by Knox, financed by William Duer, and to be led by territorial Governor Arthur St. Clair. Knox and Duer failed to provide enough supplies for the Army, which led to the American Army's greatest defeat in history. These campaigns failed to pacify the Native Americans, and Knox was widely blamed for the failure to protect the frontier.

“Seeking to close the issue before he left office, he organized an expedition led by Anthony Wayne that brought the conflict to a meaningful end with the 1794 Battle of Fallen Timbers. Wayne's “troops had burned ‘immense fields of corn’ for a stretch of about fifty miles along the river”, in a move that affected civilian non-combatants. The result of American military action in the Northwest led to the Treaty of Greenville, which forced the defeated Native Americans to cede lands in the Ohio area. The bloody campaigns that Secretary Knox oversaw in some cases involved armies many times larger than later battles in the 1870s.

⁶⁹⁸ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101.

“The Native American nations refused to be removed from their lands without a fight, and they opposed the Americans' attempts to forcefully remove them in warfare, by trickery or by treaties, since they had owned and lived on the lands for thousands of years. One group of Americans wanted direct ‘Indian Removal’ and the mass extermination of any tribe on land it wanted; Washington and Secretary Knox also wanted the lands. They generally (though not always) felt the use of force would be too costly to Americans, and sought other means to take Native American lands. Instead, Knox at first recommended a continuation of British policies, furnishing the Native nations with livestock, farming implements, and missionaries, in order to pacify them. After failing to appease the Cherokee and Creek with a large cache of gifts in 1789, Knox eventually signed the Treaty of New York (1790) on behalf of the nation, ending conflict with some, but not all, Cherokee tribal units. Of the genocide of the native populations in the nation's most heavily populated areas, Knox wrote, ‘A future historian may mark the causes of this destruction of the human race in sable colors.’ Noam Chomsky claims that the nation's leaders ‘knew what they were doing’, and often used language saying they were the natives’ ‘benefactors’, ‘philanthropists and humanitarians’, when in reality they were engaged in the ‘genocidal practices’ of extermination and ‘Indian Removal’. In fact, Knox said what the Europeans and Americans were doing to the native nations was so harmful that ‘our modes...have been more destructive to the Indian natives than the conduct of the conquerors of Mexico and Peru’. He went on to cite the fact that where there was white civilization, there was ‘the utter extirpation’ of natives, or almost none left. Regardless of whether the Americans wanted to obtain Native American lands by purchase, conquest or other means, ‘there would be no lasting peace while land remained the object of American Indian policy’, which continued after Knox left office. Washington's policies, as carried out by Secretary Knox, set the stage for the rise of Tecumseh. Many thousands of Native Americans refused to accept treaties, claiming that they had not approved them and that their only purpose was to remove them from their lands. They specifically cited the Treaty of Greenville, and reoccupied ancestral lands, beginning renewed resistance in the Northwest that was finally crushed in the War of 1812.”⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Knox

48. RELIGIOUS TOLERATION IN AMERICA

As we have seen, the early Americans were extremely religious. Moreover, in the beginning their religiosity went with an extreme religious intolerance, at least in New England. Thus in 1645 Thomas Shepard of Newtown said to Hugh Peter of Salem (where the famous witches' trial took place): "Toleration of all upon pretence of conscience - I thank God my soul abhors it. The godly in former times never fought for the liberty of consciences by pleading for liberty for all."⁷⁰⁰ "Most of the Bay colonists agreed with the sixteenth-century French theologian Theodore Beza that full liberty of religion was 'a most diabolical doctrine because it means that every one should be left to go to hell in his own way'."⁷⁰¹

Rhode Island, founded by refugees fleeing from intolerant Massachusetts, was the first State to proclaim religious freedom, under the leadership of Roger Williams in 1636. Its early code of laws defined it as a place "where all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every man in the name of his God". As a consequence, the State was described by its opponents as "the sink into which all the rest of the colonies empty their heretics", "the receptacle of all sorts of riff-raff people, and nothing else than the sewer or latrina of New England".⁷⁰² Hardly coincidentally, Rhode Island was the first State to renounce allegiance to the king in 1776. As Patrick Henry wrote in 1776: "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone, people of other faiths have been afforded freedom of worship here."

Rhode Island was followed by Connecticut in 1636 and Pennsylvania in 1682. These colonies became sanctuaries for persecuted religious minorities fleeing more authoritarian States such as Massachusetts. Again, Maryland was designed as a refuge for Roman Catholics persecuted elsewhere. New York was even more tolerant: it accommodated a small population of Jews. "In fact, New York had a synagogue before it had a purpose-built Anglican church."⁷⁰³ Pennsylvania was conceived by William Penn as a refuge first of all for Quakers, but then for all persecuted people. The basic laws he wrote for residence in Philadelphia, the city of Brotherly Love, "allowed freedom of worship to all 'who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and that hold themselves in conscience to olive peaceably and justly in civil society.' The right to vote and to hold office were open to 'such as profess faith in Jesus Christ, and that are not convinced of ill fame or unsober and dishonest conversation, and that are of one and twenty years at least.' Penn never thought to say here that, of course, he was referring only to men: female politicians and votes for women were totally outside even his worldview."⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰⁰ Shepard, in Barzun, op. cit., p. 278.

⁷⁰¹ Reynolds, op. cit., p. 34.

⁷⁰² Bamber Gascoigne, *A Brief History of Christianity*, London: Robinson, 2003, p. 154.

⁷⁰³ Reynolds, op. cit., p. 39.

⁷⁰⁴ Reynolds, op. cit., p. 41.

There was also toleration of Jews. "America had about 2,500 Jews, mostly refugees from religious persecution in Germany, Portugal, and Spain. The first to arrive - twenty-three on a French ship in 1654 - had disembarked at New Amsterdam (later, New York) after being expelled by the Portuguese from Brazil. In New York they established a congregation for worship and in 1730 built Shearith Israel, America's first synagogue, on Wall Street. In 1744, the synagogue had about fifty regular members. According to a Swedish visitor, Jews enjoyed 'all the privileges common to the other inhabitants of this town and province' except the right to vote. The Jewish congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, also thrived, and its synagogue was regarded as the finest house of worship in the town."⁷⁰⁵

This move from intolerance to toleration, from "enthusiasm" to religious tolerance, in America was based on practical necessity. For uniformity was not a practical possibility in a nation that combined the Puritanism of New England with the Anglicanism of Virginia, the Roman Catholicism of Maryland with the Quakerism of Pennsylvania. So a broad measure of tolerance, and a strict separation of Church and State, became a necessity if the country was not to fall apart along confessional lines.

However, K.N. Leontiev argues that the American attitude was one of enforced tolerance, not indifference: "The people who left Old England and laid the foundations of the States of America were all extremely religious people who did not want to make any concessions with regard to their burning personal faith and had not submitted to the State Church of Episcopal Anglicanism, not out of progressive indifference, but out of godliness.

"The Catholics, Puritans, Quakers, all were agreed about one thing - that there should be mutual tolerance, not out of coldness, but out of necessity. And so the State created by them for the reconciliation of all these burning religious extremes found its centre of gravity outside religion. Tolerance was imposed by circumstances, there was no inner indifferentism."⁷⁰⁶

However, in Freemasonry, as we have seen, toleration underwent a subtle but important change, the change from toleration as "a utilitarian expedient to avoid destructive strife" to toleration as "an intrinsic value"⁷⁰⁷, that is, *indifferentism*. It became a dogma of the Enlightenment that a ruler could not impose his religion on his subjects. This had become enshrined in international law even before the Enlightenment, in the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555. Certain rulers, such as Frederick the Great, took religious toleration to the point of almost complete indifference to all religion, still a rare condition before the French revolution.

⁷⁰⁵ Benson Bodrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, p. 41.

⁷⁰⁶ Leontiev, "Vizantizm i Slavianstvo" ("Byzantinism and Slavism"), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavism), Moscow, 1996, p. 124

⁷⁰⁷ Isaiah Berlin, "Nationalism", in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 581.

According to Enlightenment philosophers, writes McClelland, “physical matter in identical circumstances would always behave in the same way: all stones dropped from a great height fall to the ground. What applied to the physical world applied to the human world too. All human beings in human circumstances other than their own would act in very different ways. How human beings conducted themselves was not accidental, but the accident of birth into particular societies at particular moments in those societies’ development determined what kinds of people they would eventually turn out to be. The implications of this view were clear: if you were born in Persia, instead of France, you would have been a Muslim, not a Catholic; if you had been born poor and brought up in bad company you would probably end up a thief; if you had been born a Protestant in northern Europe, rather than a Catholic in southern Europe, then you would be tolerant and love liberty, whereas southerners tended to be intolerant and to put up with autocratic government. If what human beings were like was the necessary effect of the circumstances they were born to, then nobody had a right to be too censorious about anybody else. A certain toleration of other ways of doing things, and a certain moderation in the criticism of social and political habits, customs and institutions, seemed the natural corollary of the materialistic view of mankind.”⁷⁰⁸

The transition from toleration as a utilitarian expedient to toleration as an intrinsic value is illustrated by England’s changing attitude to Roman Catholics. As Joseph Sobran writes: “For centuries England tolerated Roman Catholics, who were regarded as heretics owing their chief loyalty to a foreign power (the papacy). But Roman Catholics were also barred from public offices, universities, and other positions of influence. Toleration wasn’t considered a virtue: it was only a policy, based on the assumption that ideally there should be no Roman Catholics in England. The policy was to allow Roman Catholicism to exist (in private), while discouraging people from embracing it.”⁷⁰⁹ In the twentieth century, however, toleration of Catholics came to be seen as a positive virtue, and the only remnant of the old, utilitarian attitude is the ban on a Roman Catholic becoming king or queen of England.

This important cultural and religious change came to America after her revolution. Thus “After the Revolution,” writes Armstrong, “when the newly independent states drew up their constitutions, God was mentioned in them only in the most perfunctory manner. In 1786, Thomas Jefferson disestablished the Anglican church in Virginia; his bill declared that coercion in matters of faith was ‘sinfull and tyrannical’, that truth would prevail if people were allowed their own opinions, and that there should be a ‘wall of separation’ between religion and politics.”⁷¹⁰ The bill was supported by the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians of Virginia, who resented the privileged position of the Church of England in the state. Later the other states followed Virginia’s lead, and disestablished their own

⁷⁰⁸ McClelland, *op. cit.*, p. 297).

⁷⁰⁹ Sobran, *The Wanderer*, July 1, 1999.

⁷¹⁰ He also expressed something close to J.S. Mill’s “harm principle”: “The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me not injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg; (*Notes on Virginia* (1787), in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 482). (V.M.)

churches, Massachusetts being the last one to do so, in 1833. In 1787, when the federal Constitution was drafted at the Philadelphia Convention, God was not mentioned at all, and in the Bill of Rights (1789), the First Amendment of the Constitution formally separated religion from the state: 'Congress shall make no laws respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof'.⁷¹¹ Henceforth faith would be a private and voluntary affair in the United States. This was a revolutionary step and has been hailed as one of the great achievements of the Age of Reason. The thinking behind it was indeed inspired by the tolerant philosophy of the Enlightenment, but the Founding Fathers were also moved by more pragmatic considerations. They knew that the federal Constitution was essential to preserve the unity of the states, but they also realized that if the federal government established any single one of the Protestant denominations and made it the official faith of the United States, the Constitution would not be approved. Congregationalist Massachusetts, for example, would never ratify a Constitution that established the Anglican Church. This was also the reason why Article VI, Section 3, of the Constitution abolished religious tests for office in the federal government... The new nation could not base its identity on any one sectarian option and retain the loyalty of all its subjects. The needs of the modern state demanded that it be tolerant and, therefore, secular."⁷¹²

The First Amendment to the Constitution "was affirmed in 1791, a time when Britain still barred Catholics, Nonconformists and Jews from political office. In 1797 the United States government signed a treaty with the Muslim state of Tripoli containing this striking statement: 'As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion... it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquillity of Musselmen.'"⁷¹³

This was a sad fall from the Christian Ideals of the Founding Fathers... Nevertheless, the religious toleration of America was a precious boon for the immigrants from many countries and of many faiths who were fleeing persecution. The assumption underlying it was well expressed thus: "If... the attitude of the law both civil and criminal towards all religions depends fundamentally on the safety of the State and not on the doctrines or metaphysics of those who profess them, it is not necessary to consider whether or why any given body was relieved by the law at one time or frowned on at another, or to analyse creeds and tenets, Christian and other."⁷¹⁴

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However, the idea that the safety of the State is completely independent of the religion (or lack of it) confessed by its citizens is false. The history of the people of God demonstrates that their prosperity depended crucially on their fulfilling of the

⁷¹¹ It went on: "or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

⁷¹² Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁷¹³ Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii.

⁷¹⁴ Bowman v. Secular Society, Ltd. (1917) A.C. 406. Quoted in Huntingdon Cairns (ed.), *The Limits of Art*, Washington D.C.: Pantheon Books, 1948, p. 1353.

commandments of God. For, as Solomon says: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14.34). The idea that the religion of a State has no bearing on its prosperity could occur only to a person who has not studied history or believes in a Deist God Who created the world but does not interfere in its history thereafter.

Also false is the idea that anyone worshipping "according to the dictates of his own conscience" is for that reason alone worthy of protection. "Conscience" very often refers, not to the real voice of God speaking in the soul of man, but any voice, however demonic, that a man *thinks* or *pretends* is the voice of God. It is therefore inherently dangerous to consider a religion worthy of protection, not because it is objectively true, but because the believers are sincere in their beliefs, whether these are in fact true or false, profitable to society or profoundly harmful to it. False religion is always harmful, both for its adherents, and for those right-believers who are tempted away from the right path by them. We would never accept the argument that a poison can be sold freely so long as its traders sincerely believe it to be harmless or because the traders "are accountable to God alone" for the harm they cause. And the spiritual poison of heresy is far more harmful than material poison, in that it leads, not simply to the temporal dissolution of the body, but to the eternal damnation of the soul. Of course, it is another question how a false religion is to be combatted. Crude forms of persecution are often counter-productive in that they strengthen the fanaticism of the persecuted. Persuasion and education that respects the freewill of the heretic is without question the best means of combatting false belief. The free will of the heretic is not violated, and he is able to come freely, by the free exercise of his reasoning power, to a knowledge of the truth.

But what about those too young or too impaired to reason for themselves? Should they not be protected from the influence of heretics? If allowed to live in a truly Christian atmosphere, these weak members might become stronger and less in need of the protection of the State. But while they are still weak, the influence of heretics, if unchecked, could well lead them astray. It is a generally accepted principle that the young and the weak, who are not yet fully independent spiritually, are entitled to the protection of the State against those who would exploit their weakness to their destruction. So in cases where the heretic is himself stubbornly impenitent, and is leading others astray, physical forms of oppression may be justified. The spiritually strong may refuse to offer physical resistance to religious evil, choosing instead the path of voluntary martyrdom. But the spiritually weak are in general unable choose this path, and must be protected from the evil, if necessary by physical means. Indeed, one could argue that the government that does not protect the weak in this way is itself persecuting them, laying them open to the most evil and destructive influences. For, as Sir Thomas More's King Utopus understood, "the worst men be most obstinate and stubborn and in their evil opinion most constant", so that without some restraint on them "the best and holiest religion would be trodden underfoot by most vain

superstitions, even as good corn is by thorns and weeds overgrown and choked."⁷¹⁵

Lev Alexandrovich Tikhomirov writes: "Man is a bodily being. Moral 'persuasion' is inseparable from moral 'coercion', and in certain cases also from physical 'violence'. If one says: 'Act through moral persuasion, but do not dare to resort to physical violence', this is either absurdity or hypocrisy. Every conviction sooner or later unfailingly finds its expression in forms of physical action for the simple reason that man is not [only] spirit and lives in a physical form. All our acts represent a union of spiritual and physical acts. If a man does something, it is unfailingly accompanied by physical actions. This relates both to good and to evil. One can oppose evil sometimes by moral persuasions, but at other times it is impossible to resist it otherwise than physically, and then 'resistance' and 'violence' are morally obligatory."⁷¹⁶

Moreover, the State needs religion even more than religion needs the State. For "the legislative mind cannot fail to value the religious spirit of a people in view of the unbreakable bond between religion and morality...

"State order and the energetic pursuit of the aims of the public good are attained by a good organisation of the governmental mechanism, by the establishment of rational laws, and by a series of measures of observation, coercion, punishment, encouragement, etc. But however well worked-out the laws may be, and however perfected may be the governmental mechanism, courts and administration, this still will not lead to the attainment of the good ends of the state if citizens do not strive on their own initiative to live in accordance with justice and their own moral duty. A living, self-dependent feeling of moral duty in the souls of citizens is the foundation of the public good: when this is present, the very oversights of the law and the authorities do not become particularly fatal, for the citizens will not hurry to exploit the possibility of abuse, and by their own self-dependent moral acts will significantly correct the evil permitted by the imperfection of the law or the governmental mechanism. On the contrary, however, in the absence of a self-dependent striving of the citizens to act in accordance with righteousness, there will be no question of the State keeping track of everyone, and there will be nobody to keeping an eye on them, for the State's agents themselves, as products of society, will always have the same character and the same level of morality as exists in the people.

"Thus a living moral feeling constitutes the foundation for the success of the State's actions. But the State does not of itself have the means to generate this feeling that is necessary to it. The State can take measures that the moral feeling should not be undermined by the spread of immoral teachings or the demoralising spectacle of vice triumphant, etc. By a firm insistence on the fulfilment of the prescribed norms of life and by the systematic punishment of crime the State can

⁷¹⁵ More, *Utopia*, book II, pp. 119-120.

⁷¹⁶ Tikhomirov, "O Smysle Vojny" ("On the Meaning of War"), in *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), Moscow: GUP "Oblizdat", 1999, pp. 206-207.

'drill' the citizens, make the observance of righteousness into a habit. But all this has a useful significance only if the moral feeling is somehow 'generated' in souls, that is, when the 'material' by which the mechanical measures can operate already exists.

"Whence is this necessary material to be taken? By what is the moral feeling 'generated'?"

"... In itself, by its very nature, the moral feeling is not social, but religious..."

"The moral feeling of man is the demand that his feelings and actions should be in harmony with a 'higher' power of the world's life... Man wishes to be in union with this higher power, leaving aside all calculations of benefit or non-benefit. Out of all that life can give him, he finds the greatest joy in the consciousness of his union with the very foundation of the world's powers..."

"Man impresses his idea of what is the main, highest world power, and his striving to be in harmony with it, in all spheres of his creativity, including Statehood.

"Therefore the State has all the more to protect and support everything in which the very generation of the moral feeling takes place.

"In the vast majority of cases - this is a general fact of history - people themselves directly link the source of their moral feeling with the Divinity. It is precisely in God that they see that higher power, harmony with which constitutes their morality. Morality flows from religion, religion interprets and confirms morality.

"Besides, it is a general historical fact that people unite into special societies in order to live together in accordance with their religious-moral tasks. These religious organisations interweave with social and political organisations, but they are never completely merged with them, even in the most theocratic States. In the Christian world this collective religious life is carried out, as we know, in the Church..."

"In this way the demand to preserve and develop social morality naturally leads the State to a union with the Church. In trying to help the Church make society as moral as possible, the State aims to use in its own work that moral capital which it [the Church] builds up in people...."

"Autonomous morality, on the contrary, is founded on the premise that the innate moral feeling guides man by itself. We do not know from where this feeling, this 'altruism', comes from, but it rules our moral acts just as the force of gravity rules the movement of the heavenly lights. The religious principle, qua impulse, is quite unnecessary. To clarify what must and what must not be done, we need only enlightenment, knowledge of the needs of man and society, an understanding of the solidarity of human interests, etc.

“From this point of view, the work of the State in the development of morality comes down to the development of the school and the multiplication of other means of the development of enlightenment, perhaps with the teaching of ‘courses of morality’....

“The tendency to substitute the school for the Church is now [in 1903] very strong, and in general the State and the law of contemporary countries have to all practical purposes already done much for the triumph of the idea of autonomous morality in place of religious morality....

“‘Autonomous’ morality leads to an endless diversity of moral rules, and to the disappearance of any generally accepted line of behaviour.

“Moreover, the right of the person to have his ‘autonomous’ morality annihilates the possibility of public moral discipline. Whatever foulness a man may have committed, he can always declare that according to ‘his’ morality this act is permissible or even very lofty. Society has no criterion by which to reproach the lie contained in such a declaration. It can kill such a person, but it cannot morally judge him or despise him. But this ‘moral’ condemnation is society’s most powerful weapon for the education of the person, beginning from childhood and throughout almost the whole course of a man’s life...

“All in all, therefore, the autonomy of morality leads to moral chaos, in which neither law nor custom nor public opinion are possible – that is, no social or political discipline in general...

“Even leaving aside plain debauchery, which unbridles predatory instincts and similar phenomena, developing autonomy under its all-permissive protection, and taking into consideration only chosen natures that are truly endowed with a subtle moral feeling, we nevertheless find in them an extremely harmful, fruitlessly revolutionary type of character, an element that is forever striving to destroy social-political forms, but which is satisfied with no new constructions. In the cultured world we have already been observing such a picture for more than one hundred years now...⁷¹⁷

And yet the autonomy of morality from religion was never preached by America’s Founding Fathers. Thus John Adams, the second president and also chairman of the American Bible Society, said in an address to military leaders: “We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and true religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

⁷¹⁷ Tikhomirov, “Gosudarstvennost’ i religia” (“Statehood and Religion”), in *Khristianstvo i Politika*, pp. 37, 38-39, 40-41, 42.

Again, his son, John Quincy Adams, the sixth president and also chairman of the American Bible Society, said on July 4, 1821: "The highest glory of the American revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity." As Supreme Court justice Joseph Story (1779-1845) put it in his famous *Commentaries on the Constitution* (3 vols., 1833), "It yet remains a problem to be solved in human affairs, whether any free government can be permanent, where the public worship of God, and the support of religion, constitute no part of the policy or duty of the state in any assignable shape."

The great tragedy of modern America is that this "indissoluble bond" between civil government and the principle of Christianity has now been broken. "Freedom" has been taken to such extremes of licence that it has ceased to signify a positive virtue. We are reminded that the Statue of Liberty at the entrance to New York harbour looks almost exactly like antique statues of Hecate, the goddess of the underworld...

49. EAST MEETS WEST: (1) INDIA

The British East India Company (EIC), which was founded in 1600, purchased its first small stretch of land in Madras in 1639, as a centre for the export of Indian textiles. "Its original intention," writes William Dalrymple, "was to take on Dutch spice traders in Indonesia. But the Dutch were much better equipped, and so from around the 1620s, EIC traders turned to plan B - Indian textiles. This was a massive business - India was producing spectacular amounts of the world's finest textiles and flooding markets in far-flung places. Once the EIC jumped on board the textile trade, it mutated from a small fish playing catch-up with the Dutch big boys to *the* major player - the most sophisticated capitalist organization in the world."⁷¹⁸

As such, the EIC represented something truly new - an organization that was not a state, and not structured like a state, and yet more powerful than many states, the forerunner of today's multinational corporations which are similarly more powerful than many states. It was a joint-stock corporation whose only aim was the financial profit of its stock-holders - who could be anyone willing to put money into the company. Since its sole aim was profit, it owed no allegiance to any state or government, not even the British. But in pursuit of profit it came to rely on, or rather *use* one government (the British) and oppose others. Thus in India it came into conflict with the Mughals, Muslim invaders from Afghanistan who since the 1520s had conquered most of the subcontinent. The seventeenth century witnessed the peak of their power and wealth; the famous Taj Mahal was built in about 1650. This was "an incredibly well-run, sophisticated empire which controlled a quarter of the world's manufacturers. Britain, by comparison, had a measly 3 per cent."⁷¹⁹

The British founded Calcutta as a fortified trading post in 1690, and by 1760 it had 120,000 inhabitants, only a few hundred of them British. But they were not the only vultures to feast on the flesh of this magnificent empire. The French had similar posts at Pondicherry and Chandernagore; the Portuguese at Goa; the Danes at Tranquebar. The French-British rivalry became increasingly toxic, as each nation's corporations exploited the fragmentation of the Mughal empire against the other.

For, as Robert Tombs writes, "dynastic conflicts, religious and regional rebellions, and defeats inflicted by the Marathas (Hindu peasant warriors) and the Persians, who sacked Delhi in 1739, fragmented the empire into regional power centres, often ruled by former Mughal officials (such as 'nawabs' - governors)."⁷²⁰

The British gradually took control of one fragment after the other. For by the mid-eighteenth century, "while the British had formerly been powerless to take on the Mughals, by that point a military revolution had taken place in Europe. The bayonet and musket had replaced the pike, and file-firing infantry and mobile

⁷¹⁸ Dalrymple, "It's not only a story of colonial oppression, but also asset-stripping, plunder and corporate violence", *BBC History Magazine*, November, 2019, p. 68.

⁷¹⁹ Dalrymple, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁷²⁰ Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-341.

artillery had first emerged. These innovations created modes of warfare which, when exported to India, suddenly changed the balance of power.

“It became clear that profits could come not only in the form of cash, but also chunks of territory. Beginning in the 1740s, trading companies began to transform into mercenary military units. They were still buying and selling textiles, but at the same time they were deploying this new type of infantry warfare, and training up Indian troops (*sepoys*) in mobile horse artillery. With this new technology, they could make mincemeat of vast armies of heavy Indian cavalry.”⁷²¹

“By 1761 the East India Company had 2,000 European and 23,000 Indian soldiers. Europeans thus became involved in Indian politics, despite the caution of shareholders in London, concerned for their dividends, and ministers of the Crown, keen to limit their commitments. There grew up a symbiotic relationship of alliance, commerce, bribery, and debt involving Indian rulers and merchants, Company traders, and British and Indian soldiers. Some Indian rulers had agents and lobbyists in London, and wealthy Company officials gained peerages or bought seats in the Commons. The established Mughal way of paying for military support was by making grants of land with the taxation revenue they commanded, and hence Europeans became involved in tax collection and territorial rule. In 1765 the Company received from the Mughal emperor the right to collect the taxes (the ‘*diwani*’) of his richest province, Bengal: about £2m per year, equal to one quarter of the domestic revenue of the British Crown. This became the Company’s main single source of income, and also a means of subsidizing British war costs outside India. Bengal – with a population of about 20 million people, far more than Britain and the American colonies combined – was the first place in which Company officials exercised quasi-sovereign authority. For mixed reasons of patriotism, security, personal profit and idealism, they seized the opportunity to found a territorial empire that had neither been envisaged nor desired in London...”⁷²²

In 1756, there began the Seven Years War that pitted Britain and Prussia against France and Austria in several theatres of war. It began badly for the British: the ally of the French, the Nawab of Bengal, captured Calcutta. At the same time, in south India, “the Irish Jacobite General Lally, commanding French forces, promised to ‘exterminate all the English in India’.”⁷²³

However, he had not reckoned with a remarkable servant of the East India Company, Robert Clive.

Jesse Norman writes: “A natural troublemaker who had been expelled by a succession of English schools, Clive entered the company on the bottom rung in the usual position of ‘writer’ or junior clerk. Caught up in the running wars of the period with the French, he distinguished himself by his bravery and leadership, a reputation greatly enhanced across Europe by his success in defending the city of Arcot against siege in 1751. In 1757, after a visit to England, he recaptured the

⁷²¹ Dalrymple, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

⁷²² Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-341.

⁷²³ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

Company's vital eastern base, Calcutta, which had briefly fallen to the Nawab of Benhal, before defeating the Nawab directly at the Battle of Plessey, laying the foundations for what would later become the Raj. A puppet was installed as the new Nawab. In 1761 the important French outpost of Pondicherry was taken, further consolidating British power along the eastern coastline. The Treaty of Paris two years later [guaranteed the British gains of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta and] restricted the Compagnie des Indes to commerce, not politics, banned its fortifications, limited its garrisons and hastened its decline. The crowning moment came in 1765 when, after a further period in England, Clive received the firman, or royal decree, from the Emperor granting the British legal title to Bengal itself, and to the neighbouring provinces of Bihar and Orissa as well.

“The effect of these actions was to unleash a bonanza of personal enrichment for the Company, its shareholders and above all its local agents. Bengal alone had forty million people at this time, or four times the entire population of Great Britain; it was now effectively controlled by a few hundred Company men. Indian nobles had been quickly elbowed out of the markets after Plessey as the British took over the lucrative trade in betel nuts, salt and opium. But now the Company possessed something far greater: control of the entire tax revenue of Bengal, amounting to some £33 million per year. Clive was thought to have returned to England in 1753 after his triumph at Arcot with £40,000, at the age of just twenty-eight. Seven years later, his fortune was over £300,000. More than ever, India now became the wild east, a dangerous place full of exotic temptation, where young men risked serious disease and death, but from which they could and often did return with vast fortunes. ‘Nabobs’ – nouveaux riches who had returned to Britain to parlay their wealth into social standing and political influence – became familiar cultural stereotypes at home, and were much envied and lampooned.

“But these development also raised profound moral questions. India was being conquered, and not by Britain but by a private British company. Revenue from mutually beneficial trade was being replaced by revenue from tribute and tax. Clive had been a brilliant commander, but he had not hesitated to bribe, coerce and where necessary deceive Indian nobles and merchants in order to achieve his goals. The battle of Plessey itself had been less a military engagement than a subtle process of dividing the Nawab from his financial backers and military commanders, in particular the army paymaster Mir Jafar, who was bribed to defect at a crucial moment. Once established in power, the British had been brutal in enforcing their control of concessions in Bengal, extorting new rights and tribute or beating or flogging those how opposed them. Self-dealing and private profiteering were rampant. Clive himself had been shocked on his return to see ‘a scene of anarchy, confusion, bribery, corruption and extortion’, and had sought to institute reforms.

“As reports of these practices increasingly reached Westminster, pressure grew for Parliament to take action. But the East India Company had showed itself to be a formidable political power in its own right over the previous century and more. Until the mid-1760s at least, it had in general been an immensely profitable success; its loans had sustained the Treasury in time of crisis; and its dividends had

enriched much of the political elite, a fact which created huge and endemic conflicts of interest. Moreover, its power had only increased with the influx of new MPs from among the nabobs. After the 1774 general election there were twenty-six nabob MPs; after 1784 there were eighty-five. Mocking the nabobs, or fretting about their values and influence on public life, was one thing. The question now, however, was not simply how far Parliament should condone British despotism in India, but whether it could in fact control it at all...⁷²⁴

While, according to Yuval Noah Harari, “Imperialists claimed that their empires were not vast enterprises of exploitation but rather altruistic projects conducted for the sake of the non-European races – in Rudyard Kipling’s words, ‘the White Man’s burden’..., the facts often belied this myth. The British conquered Bengal, the richest province of India, in 1764. The new rulers were interested in little except enriching themselves. They adopted a disastrous economic policy that a few years later led to the outbreak of the Great Bengal Famine. It began in 1769, reached catastrophic levels in 1770, and lasted until 1775...⁷²⁵

“Bengal had previously been the bread basket of India, but it had literally been asset-stripped by the company. Even during the famine, *sepoys* were sent out to keep revenue taxes up to their normal level. Even if they were starving, people would have to sell their livestock or homes, or children, in order to pay the taxes the company demanded. Not one penny was remitted. Elsewhere in India there was famine too, but rulers intervened to provide soup kitchens and relief measures. But in Bengal the company did nothing; it just watched people starve...⁷²⁶

Dalrymple calculates that one-fifth of all Bengalis died out of a population of ten million. Harari puts the figure at one third. This was the figure calculated by the governor-general...

“The situation,” writes Peter Frankopan, “was entirely avoidable. The suffering of the many had been sacrificed for personal gain. To howls of derision, Clive simply answered – like the chief executive of a distressed bank – that his priorities had been to protect the interests of shareholders, not those of the local population; he deserved no criticism, surely, for doing his job. Things were to get worse. The loss of manpower in Bengal devastated local productivity. As revenues collapsed, costs suddenly rose sharply causing panic that the golden goose had laid its last egg. This prompted a run on the shares of the EIC and pushed the Company to the brink of bankruptcy. Far from its directors being superhuman administrators and wealth-creators, it turned out that the practices and culture of the Company had brought the intercontinental financial system to its knees...⁷²⁷

⁷²⁴ Norman, *Edmund Burke*, London: William Collins, 2013, pp. 106-108.

⁷²⁵ Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 336-337.

⁷²⁶ Dalrymple, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁷²⁷ Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 277.

“A Commons select committee concluded that ‘the laws of society, the laws of nature, have been enormously violated. Oppression in every shape had ground the faces of the poor defenceless natives.’ Samuel Johnson declared that the discovery of the sea-route from Europe to India had been ‘disastrous to mankind’. John Wesley anticipated divine vengeance for ‘such merciless cruelty’. But despite a strong sense of guilt and disquiet about India – which to some extent continued throughout Britain’s two-century involvement – most commentators felt there was no turning back. Even though Company rule was, as various critics put it, ‘a detestable tyranny’, if Indian trade were lost ‘national bankruptcy’ would ensue, and France would be handed ‘the empire of the sea’ and ‘universal monarchy’. Power in India, if too valuable to relinquish, had to be made more accountable. Then, perhaps, it might become a benevolent autocracy legitimized by good government – essentially, the hope that prevailed until independence in 1947.”⁷²⁸

In any case, divine vengeance was coming. During the American War of Independence, the French organized “a formidable alliance of Indian states, including the powerful Maratha Confederation and Haider Ali, the indomitable ruler of Mysore in southern India. The Company’s Bombay army was forced to surrender to the Maratha in 1779, and its Madras army was bloodily defeated by Haider Ali in 1780 – the worst setback ever suffered by the British in India. In Bengal, the ruler of Benares, a former ally, massacred a party of Company troops and forced the governor-general, Warren Hastings [appointed in 1773], to flee for his life...”⁷²⁹

Hastings was a very talented man, but not uninvolved in the web of corruption that involved almost all British leaders in India, and in 1786 Edmund Burke, the great crusader against corruption in British public life, impeached him in a famous and long-lasting trial before Parliament. Hastings, writes Norman, “was used to exercising a degree of personal power unknown to any British politician, in circumstances of extreme treachery, complexity and danger. As the impeachment record would show, he had a great deal to answer for in his dealings with various Indian states, which he had successfully manipulated against different threats coming from the west in the 1770s, before extracting prodigious sums of money from the winners...”⁷³⁰ Burke called Hastings “the scourge of India... a dreadful Colossus... who lorded it over every thing that was great and powerful and good in India, and in England.”⁷³¹

Nevertheless, Hastings was the most pro-Indian and popular governor-general in the history of British India, having a profound effect on British rule in India even after his retirement in 1784. Thus “during the final quarter of the 18th century, many of the Company's senior administrators realised that, in order to govern Indian society, it was essential that they learn its various religious, social, and legal customs and precedents. The importance of such knowledge to the colonial

⁷²⁸ Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

⁷²⁹ Tombs, *op. cit.* pp. 357-358.

⁷³⁰ Norman, *Edmund Burke*, p. 126.

⁷³¹ Burke, in Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

government was clearly in Hastings's mind when, in 1784, he remarked: 'Every application of knowledge and especially such as is obtained in social communication with people, over whom we exercise dominion, founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state ... It attracts and conciliates distant affections, it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection and it imprints on the hearts of our countrymen the sense of obligation and benevolence... Every instance which brings their real character will impress us with more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own... But such instances can only be gained in their writings; and these will survive when British domination in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.'"732

As Zareer Masani writes, "Hastings intended to revive, as far as possible, the decayed Mughal administration and to avoid measures 'which the original constitution of the Mogul Empire hath not before established and adopted and thereby rendered familiar to the people.'

"Hastings was keen to confine European institutions and personnel to the bounds of Calcutta, the Company's Bengal capital, and to leave the collection of revenues and administration of justice to Indian intermediaries. He believed that European administrators were more prone to abuses of power. 'There is a fierceness,' he warned, 'in the European manners, especially among the lower sort, which is incompatible with the gentle temper of the Bengalese,' whereas 'native oppression was less truculent, more easily punished, more familiar to the people and in every way preferable to the corrupt tyranny of overbearing Englishmen.'"733

In spite of some serious errors of judgement, Hastings showed himself unusually free from racial prejudice for the British rulers of the time. In 1813 he wrote: "Among the natives of India, there are men of as strong intellect, as sound integrity and honourable feelings, as any of this Kingdom. I regret that they are not sufficiently noticed, sufficiently employed nor respected... Be it your Lordship's care... to lessen this distance... and by your example make it the fashion among our countrymen to treat them with courtesy and as participators in the same equal rights of society."734

⁷³² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Hastings

⁷³³ Masani, "The Battle of Hastings", *History Today*, November, 2017, p. 68.

⁷³⁴ Hastings, in Masani, *op. cit.*, p. 75. Another enlightened British colonial governor was Frederick North, fifth earl of Guilford, who as governor of the Ionian islands in Western Greece founded the first modern Greek university, the Ionian Academy, and was secretly baptized in 1792 in the Orthodox Church with the name Demetrios.

50. EAST MEETS WEST: (2) ARABIA

While Christians were becoming more tolerant of “Musselmen”, the reverse was not the case.

In 1689, the same year in which the Toleration Act was passed in England, the Turks were defeated outside the walls of Vienna. This important battle on the one hand removed a great threat to Christian civilization, but on the other hand engendered a new one. For many Muslims “blamed Ottoman reverses on a lack of true piety, and the emergence of religious heresies right in the heart of the Dar al Islam itself. The answer, these critics argued, was more Islam. For this reason the eighteenth century central Arabian preacher Muhammed ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-92) called for an Islamic reformation, a return to the uncorrupted principles of medieval Islam. By the end of the century he had joined forces with the local tribal chief Muhammed ibn Saud, and raised most of the Arabian peninsula in revolt against the Ottomans. The religious radicalization of the Arab world, in other words, began in central Europe, before the walls of Vienna...”⁷³⁵

The West first heard of Wahhabism in 1761, through a Göttingen mathematics student, Carsten Niebuhr. “Visiting Basra in southern Iraq, he met a local Arabian ruler, Muhammad Ibn Saud, and learned of a new Islamic sect promoted by Sheikh Ibn al-Wahhabi. Niebuhr’s report is by far the earliest reference to Wahhabism...”⁷³⁶

We see the first impact of Wahhabism on the western world in 1785, when Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were informed by Tripoli’s envoy to London that “all nations which did not acknowledge the authority of the Koran ‘were sinners, [and] that it was their right and duty to make war upon whoever they could find and to make slaves of *all* they could take as prisoners...”⁷³⁷

Wahhabism became the official faith of Saudi Arabia in the 1920s under King Abd-al Aziz, who then began to export it as a kind of “cultural revolution” throughout the Muslim world.

However, as Alastair Crooke writes, “this ‘cultural revolution’ was no docile reformism. It was a revolution based on Abd al-Wahhab's Jacobin-like hatred for the putrescence and deviationism that he perceived all about him -- hence his call to purge Islam of all its heresies and idolatries.

“The American author and journalist, Steven Coll, has written how this austere and censorious disciple of the 14th century scholar Ibn Taymiyyah, Abd al-Wahhab, despised ‘the decorous, arty, tobacco smoking, hashish imbibing, drum pounding Egyptian and Ottoman nobility who travelled across Arabia to pray at Mecca.’

⁷³⁵ Simms, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁷³⁶ Mark Ronan, “The Great Expedition”, *History Today*, June, 2017, p. 75.

⁷³⁷ Simms, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

“In Abd al-Wahhab's view, these were not Muslims; they were imposters masquerading as Muslims. Nor, indeed, did he find the behavior of local Bedouin Arabs much better. They aggravated Abd al-Wahhab by their honoring of saints, by their erecting of tombstones, and their "superstition" (e.g. revering graves or places that were deemed particularly imbued with the divine).

“All this behavior, Abd al-Wahhab denounced as *bida* -- forbidden by God. Like Taymiyyah before him, Abd al-Wahhab believed that the period of the Prophet Muhammad's stay in Medina was the ideal of Muslim society (the "best of times"), to which all Muslims should aspire to emulate (this, essentially, is Salafism).

“Taymiyyah had declared war on Shi'ism, Sufism and Greek philosophy. He spoke out, too against visiting the grave of the prophet and the celebration of his birthday, declaring that all such behavior represented mere imitation of the Christian worship of Jesus as God (i.e. idolatry). Abd al-Wahhab assimilated all this earlier teaching, stating that "any doubt or hesitation" on the part of a believer in respect to his or her acknowledging this particular interpretation of Islam should 'deprive a man of immunity of his property and his life'.

“One of the main tenets of Abd al-Wahhab's doctrine has become the key idea of *takfir*. Under the takfiri doctrine, Abd al-Wahhab and his followers could deem fellow Muslims infidels should they engage in activities that in any way could be said to encroach on the sovereignty of the absolute Authority (that is, the King). Abd al-Wahhab denounced all Muslims who honored the dead, saints, or angels. He held that such sentiments detracted from the complete subservience one must feel towards God, and only God. Wahhabi Islam thus bans any prayer to saints and dead loved ones, pilgrimages to tombs and special mosques, religious festivals celebrating saints, the honoring of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad's birthday, and even prohibits the use of gravestones when burying the dead.

"Those who would not conform to this view should be killed, their wives and daughters violated, and their possessions confiscated, he wrote.'

“Abd al-Wahhab demanded conformity -- a conformity that was to be demonstrated in physical and tangible ways. He argued that all Muslims must individually pledge their allegiance to a single Muslim leader (a Caliph, if there were one). Those who would not conform to this view should be killed, their wives and daughters violated, and their possessions confiscated, he wrote. The list of apostates meriting death included the Shiite, Sufis and other Muslim denominations, whom Abd al-Wahhab did not consider to be Muslim at all...

“Abd al-Wahhab's advocacy of these ultra radical views inevitably led to his expulsion from his own town -- and in 1741, after some wanderings, he found refuge under the protection of Ibn Saud and his tribe. What Ibn Saud perceived in Abd al-Wahhab's novel teaching was the means to overturn Arab tradition and convention. It was a path to seizing power.

“Ibn Saud's clan, seizing on Abd al-Wahhab's doctrine, now could do what they always did, which was raiding neighboring villages and robbing them of their possessions. Only now they were doing it not within the ambit of Arab tradition, but rather under the banner of jihad. Ibn Saud and Abd al-Wahhab also reintroduced the idea of martyrdom in the name of jihad, as it granted those martyred immediate entry into paradise.

““Their strategy -- like that of ISIS today -- was to bring the peoples whom they conquered into submission. They aimed to instill fear.’

“In the beginning, they conquered a few local communities and imposed their rule over them. (The conquered inhabitants were given a limited choice: conversion to Wahhabism or death.) By 1790, the Alliance controlled most of the Arabian Peninsula and repeatedly raided Medina, Syria and Iraq.

“In 1801, the Allies attacked the Holy City of Karbala in Iraq. They massacred thousands of Shiites, including women and children. Many Shiite shrines were destroyed, including the shrine of Imam Hussein, the murdered grandson of Prophet Muhammad.

“A British official, Lieutenant Francis Warden, observing the situation at the time, wrote: ‘They pillaged the whole of it [Karbala], and plundered the Tomb of Hussein... slaying in the course of the day, with circumstances of peculiar cruelty, above five thousand of the inhabitants...’

“Osman Ibn Bishr Najdi, the historian of the first Saudi state, wrote that Ibn Saud committed a massacre in Karbala in 1801. He proudly documented that massacre saying, ‘we took Karbala and slaughtered and took its people (as slaves), then praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and we do not apologize for that and say: ‘And to the unbelievers: the same treatment.’

“In 1803, Abdul Aziz then entered the Holy City of Mecca, which surrendered under the impact of terror and panic (the same fate was to befall Medina, too). Abd al-Wahhab's followers demolished historical monuments and all the tombs and shrines in their midst. By the end, they had destroyed centuries of Islamic architecture near the Grand Mosque.

“But in November of 1803, a Shiite assassin killed King Abdul Aziz (taking revenge for the massacre at Karbala). His son, Saud bin Abd al Aziz, succeeded him and continued the conquest of Arabia. Ottoman rulers, however, could no longer just sit back and watch as their empire was devoured piece by piece. In 1812, the Ottoman army, composed of Egyptians, pushed the Alliance out from Medina, Jeddah and Mecca. In 1814, Saud bin Abd al Aziz died of fever. His unfortunate son Abdullah bin Saud, however, was taken by the Ottomans to Istanbul, where he was gruesomely executed (a visitor to Istanbul reported seeing him having been humiliated in the streets of Istanbul for three days, then hanged and beheaded, his severed head fired from a canon, and his heart cut out and impaled on his body).

“In 1815, Wahhabi forces were crushed by the Egyptians (acting on the Ottomans’ behalf) in a decisive battle. In 1818, the Ottomans captured and destroyed the Wahhabi capital of Dariyah. The first Saudi state was no more. The few remaining Wahhabis withdrew into the desert to regroup, and there they remained, quiescent for most of the 19th century...”⁷³⁸

⁷³⁸ Crooke, “You Can't Understand ISIS If You Don't Know the History of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia”, *The World Post*, October 6, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia_b_5717157.html

51. EAST MEETS WEST: (3) JAPAN

In the midst of the enormous changes taking place in the West, the ancient civilizations of the Far East were continuing to flourish largely unaffected.

Henry Kissinger writes: "Japan for centuries existed at the fringe of the Chinese world, borrowing heavily from Sinic religion and culture. But unlike most societies in the Chinese cultural sphere, it transformed the borrowed forms into Japanese patterns and never conflated them with a hierarchical obligation to China. Japan's resilient position was at times a source of consternation for the Chinese court. Other Asian peoples accepted the premises and protocol of the tribute system – a symbolic subordination to the Chinese Emperor by which Chinese protocol ordered the universe – labelling their trade as 'tribute' to gain access to Chinese markets. They respected (at least in their exchanges with the Chinese court) the Confucian concept of international order as a familial hierarchy with China as the patriarch. Japan was geographically close enough to understand this vocabulary intimately and generally made tacit allowance for the Chinese world order as a regional reality. In quest of trade or cultural exchange, Japanese missions followed etiquette close enough to established forms that Chinese officials could interpret it as evidence of Japan's aspiration to membership in a common hierarchy. Yet in a region carefully attuned to the gradations of status implied in minute protocol decisions – such as the single word used to refer to a ruler, the mode in which a formal letter was delivered, or the style of calendar date on a formal document – Japan consistently refused to take up a formal role in the Sinocentric tribute system. It hovered at the edge of the Chinese hierarchical world order, periodically insisting on its equality and, at some points, its own superiority.

"At the apex of Japanese society and its own view of world order stood the Japanese Emperor, a figure conceived, like the Chinese Emperor, as the Son of Heaven, an intermediary between the human and the divine. This title – insistently displayed on Japanese diplomatic dispatches to the Chinese court – was a direct challenge to the cosmology of the Chinese world order, which posited China's Emperor as the single pinnacle of human hierarchy. In addition to this status (which carried a transcendent import above and beyond what would have been claimed by any Holy Roman Emperor in Europe), Japan's traditional political philosophy posited another distinction, that Japanese emperors were deities descended from the Sun Goddess, who gave birth to the first Emperor and endowed his successors with an eternal right to rule. According to the fourteenth-century 'Records of the Legitimate Succession of the Divine Sovereigns:

"Japan is the divine country. The heavenly ancestor it was who first laid its foundations, and the Sun Goddess left her descendants to reign over it forever and ever. This is true only of our country, and nothing similar may be found in foreign lands. That is why it is called the divine country."⁷³⁹

⁷³⁹ Kissinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182.

Nevertheless, from the twelfth century, while the emperor reigned, the real ruler was the *shogun* – that is, the most powerful warrior lord. Thus W.H. Spellman writes: "During the Kamakura period (1192-1333) when the Minamoto clan dominated the scene from their military base on the Kanto plain, the Japanese emperor was no more than a symbolic figurehead performing ceremonial and religious functions while banditry and general lawlessness became the norm throughout the islands; even Buddhist monasteries employed armed bands for protection in a strife-torn society. By the eleventh century, private rights had clearly superseded public obligations and localism usurped the prerogatives of central authority. For the next 800 years, Japanese monarchs reigned but did not rule. The fact that outright usurpation of the throne did not occur, however, is testimony to the strength of the royal claim to hereditary priestly leadership within the island kingdom. Indeed, unlike the Chinese model, where usurpation was interpreted as the legitimate transfer of the Mandate of Heaven to a more worthy leader, in Japan belief in the divine descent of the emperor and the importance of unbroken succession guaranteed the survival of the monarchy throughout the difficult medieval centuries."⁷⁴⁰

Kissinger continues: "Japan's insular position allowed it wide latitude about whether to participate in international affairs at all. For many centuries, it remained on the outer boundaries of Asian affairs, cultivating its military traditions through internal contests and admitting foreign trade and culture at its discretion. At the close of the seventeenth century, Japan attempted to recast its role with an abruptness and sweep of ambition that its neighbors at first dismissed as implausible. The result was one of Asia's major military conflicts – whose regional legacies remain the subject of vivid remembrance and dispute and whose lessons, if heeded, might have changed America's conduct in the twentieth-century Korean War.

"In 1590, the warrior Toyotomi Hideyoshi – having bested his rivals, unified Japan, and brought more than a century of civil conflict to a close – announced a grander vision: he would raise the world's largest army, march it up the Korean Peninsula, conquer China, and subdue the world. He dispatched a letter to the Korean King announcing his intent to 'proceed to the country of the Great Ming and compel the people there to adopt our customs and manners' and inviting his assistance. After the King demurred and warned him against the endeavor (citing an 'inseparable relationship between the Middle Kingdom and our kingdom' and the Confucian principle that 'to invade another state is an act of which men of culture and intellectual attainments should feel ashamed'), Hideyoshi launched an invasion of 160,000 men and roughly seven hundred ships. This massive force overwhelmed initial defences and at first marched swiftly up the peninsula. Its progress slowed as Korea's Admiral Yi Sun-sin organized a determined naval resistance, harrying Hideyoshi's supply lines and deflecting the invading armies to battles along the coast. When Japanese forces reached Pyongyang, near the narrow northern neck of the peninsula (and now North Korea's capital), China intervened in force, unwilling to allow its tribute state to be overrun. A Chinese

⁷⁴⁰ Spellman, *Monarchies*, London: Reaktion Press, 2001, p. 59.

expeditionary army estimated between 40,000 and 100,000 strong crossed the Yalu River and pushed Japanese forces back as far as Seoul. After five years of inconclusive negotiations and devastating combat, Hideyoshi died, the invasion force withdrew, and the status quo ante was restored. Those who argue that history never repeats itself should ponder the comparability of China's resistance to Hideyoshi's enterprise with that encountered by America in the Korean War nearly four hundred years later.

“On the failure of this venture, Japan changed course, turning to ever-increasing isolation. Under the ‘locked country’ policy lasting over two centuries, Japan all but absented itself from participating in any world order. Comprehensive state-to-state relations on conditions of strict diplomatic equality existed only with Korea. Chinese traders were permitted to operate in select locations, though no official Sino-Japanese relations existed because no protocol could be worked out that satisfied both sides’ amour proper. Foreign trade with European countries was restricted to a few specified coastal cities; by 1673, all but the Dutch had been expelled, and they were confined to a single artificial island off the port of Nagasaki...”⁷⁴¹

There was another reason for the ‘locked country’ policy. Japan had allowed Portuguese Jesuits to convert about 500,000 Japanese, including many samurai. But the Christians proved themselves less than completely obedient to the authorities. In 1614-15 they rebelled unsuccessfully in the epic siege of Osaka castle. And in 1637 there was a major uprising of thirty thousand peasants, most of them Christians, on the island of Kyushu. “The revolt,” writes Andrew Marr, “was as much about taxation and hunger as about religion, and ended after another epic siege, during which the peasants and rebel samurai held off an army vastly greater than their own. The Tokugawa were only able to suppress them with the help of ships belonging to [Protestant] Christians, the Dutch...”

“Christianity was outlawed, though many Japanese Christians would die rather than renounce their new faith.

“Foreigners were finally expelled. When the Portuguese came back in 1640 to protest, their mission was wiped out...”⁷⁴²

⁷⁴¹ Kissinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-184.

⁷⁴² Marr, *A History of the World*, London: Pan, 2012, p. 295.

52. EAST MEETS WEST: (4) CHINA

The Chinese “Middle Kingdom” always considered itself to be at the apex of humanity, to which all other kingdoms owed tribute. The Chinese followed a similar course to Japan’s: initial expansion towards the West followed by withdrawal and self-isolation. In the Middle Ages, China had suffered from a foreign Mongol dynasty (the Yuan) and a massive population loss of more than 60 million as a result of the Black Death. However, towards the end of the fourteenth century the Ming emperors restored the unity of the Chinese world, and led the country on a remarkable course of economic development and expansion. As John Darwin writes: “Around 1400, it might have seemed to any well-informed observer that China’s pre-eminence in the Old World was not only secure but likely to grow stronger. Under Ming rule, China’s subordination to the Mongols and their imperial ambitions all across Eurasia had been definitively broken. Ming government reinforced the authority of the emperor over his provincial officials. The use of eunuchs at the imperial court was designed to strengthen the emperor against the intrigues of his scholar-gentry advisers (as well as protect the virtue of his concubines). Great efforts were made to improve the agrarian economy and its waterway network. Then, between 1405 and 1431, the emperors dispatched the eunuch admiral Cheng-ho on seven remarkable voyages into the Indian Ocean to assert China’s maritime power. Commanding fleets carrying over twenty thousand men, Cheng-ho cruised as far as Jeddah in the Red Sea and the East African coast, and made China’s presence felt in Sri Lanka, whose recalcitrant ruler was carried off to Peking. Before the Europeans had gained the navigational know-how needed to find their way into the South Atlantic (and back) China was poised to assert its maritime supremacy in the eastern seas.”⁷⁴³

But then mysteriously the Ming Empire retreated within itself. The Great Wall was completed, the great voyages westwards stopped, and contacts with other cultures were cut short. “The greatest puzzle in Chinese history is why the extraordinary dynamism that had created the largest and richest commercial economy in the world seemed to dribble away after 1400. China’s lead in technical ingenuity and in the social innovations required for a market economy was lost. It was not China that accelerated towards, and through, an industrial revolution, but the West...”⁷⁴⁴

Chinese history is notable, on the one hand, for the remarkable stability and longevity of “the Chinese idea”, and on the other hand, the tendency for “Times of Trouble” to be succeeded by a change in “the Mandate of heaven” – the arrival of a new dynasty. Perhaps the most notable such change before the twentieth century was the replacement of the Mongol Yuan dynasty by the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). For in 1368, writes Niall Ferguson, “the warlord Zhu Yuanzhang renamed himself Hongwu, meaning ‘vast military power’. For most of the next three centuries, Ming China was the world’s most sophisticated civilization by almost any measure. But

⁷⁴³ Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise & Fall of Global Empires 1400-2000*, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁴⁴ Darwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

then, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the wheels came off. This is not to exaggerate its early stability. Yongle had succeeded his father, Hongwu, only after a period of civil war and the deposition of the rightful successor, his eldest brother's son. But the mid-seventeenth-century crisis was unquestionably a bigger disruption. Political factionalism was exacerbated by a fiscal crisis as the falling purchasing power of silver eroded the real value of tax revenues. Harsh weather, famine, and epidemic disease opened the door to rebellion within and incursions from without. In 1644, Beijing itself fell to the rebel leader Li Zicheng. The last Ming emperor, the Chongzhen Emperor, hanged himself. This dramatic transition from Confucian equipoise to anarchy took little more than a decade.

"The consequences of the Ming collapse were devastating. Between 1580 and 1650, conflict and epidemics reduced the Chinese population by 35 to 40 percent. What had one wrong? The answer is that the Ming system had created the appearance of a high equilibrium - impressive outwardly, but fragile inwardly. The countryside could sustain a remarkably large number of people, but only on the basis of an essentially static order that ceased to innovate. It was a kind of trap, and when the least little thing went wrong, the trap snapped shut. There were no external resources to draw on. True, a considerable body of scholarship has sought to represent Ming China as a prosperous society, with considerable internal trade and a vibrant market for luxury goods. More recent Chinese research, however, shows that Chinese per capita income stagnated in the Ming era and the capital stock shrank. Many of these pathologies simply continued under new management after the Manchus successfully established the Qing dynasty, but with ever larger disasters..."⁷⁴⁵

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And yet, even as late as 1750, when the Manchus were in power, it was not at all clear why the West should have taken the lead over China in industry, rather than the other way round. "Kiangnan (the Yangtze delta) was a great manufacturing region, producing cotton cloth for 'export' to the rest of China. With a dense population (a thousand people to the square mile) of over 30 million, numerous cities, and a thick web of water communications connecting it with the middle and upper Yangtze (a colossal hinterland), as well as the rest of China (via the Grand Canal), Kiangnan was comparable to Europe's commercial heartland. A powerful case can be made that as a market economy it was as wealthy and productive as North West Europe. Textile production was similar, while the consumption of items like sugar and tea may well have been higher. Technical ingenuity was widespread. Moreover, China benefited from laws that made buying and selling land easier than in Europe, and from a labour market in which serfdom had practically vanished (unlike in Europe). In an orderly, well-regulated society, with low levels of taxation and a state that actively promoted better practice (usually in agriculture), there seemed no obvious reason why material progress along Adam Smith's lines (what economists call 'Smithian growth') should not continue indefinitely, on a scale comparable with Europe...

⁷⁴⁵ Ferguson, *Doom. The Politics of Catastrophe*, London: Allen Lane, 2021, pp. 206-207.

“The question becomes: why did Kiangnan (and China) fail to match the economic expansion of Europe, and check the emergence of a Europe-centred world economy? The best answer we have is that it could not surmount the classic constraints of pre-industrial growth. By the late eighteenth century it faced steeply rising costs for food, fuel and raw materials. Increasing population and expanding output competed for the produce of a more or less fixed land area. The demand for food throttled the increase in raw cotton production. Raw cotton prices probably doubled in the Yangtze delta between 1750 and 1800. The demand for fuel (in the form of wood) brought deforestation and a degraded environment. The escape route from this trap existed in theory, Kiangnan should have drawn its supplies from further away. It should have cut the costs of production by mechanization, enlarging its market and thus its source of supply. It should have turned to coal to meet the need for fuel. In practice there was little chance for change along such lines. It faced competition from many inland centres where food and raw materials were cheaper, and which could also exploit China’s well-developed system of waterway transport. The very perfection of China’s commercial economy allowed new producers to enter the market with comparative ease at the same technological level. Under these conditions, mechanization – even if technologically practical – might have been stymied at birth. And, though China had coal, it was far from Kiangnan and could not be transported there cheaply. Thus, for China as a whole, both the incentive and the means to take the industrial ‘high road’ were meagre or absent.

“The most developed parts of Europe did not face these constraints...”⁷⁴⁶

According to Ferguson, another important reason was *financial*. “For one thing, the unitary character of the Empire precluded that fiscal competition which proved such a driver of financial innovation in Renaissance Europe and subsequently. For another, the ease with which the Empire could finance its deficits by printing money discouraged the emergence of European-style capital markets. Coinage, too, was more readily available than in Europe because of China’s trade surplus with the West. In short, the Middle Kingdom had far fewer incentives to develop commercial bills, bonds and equities...”⁷⁴⁷

But these economic factors, though important, were not the decisive ones. Still more important were cultural and institutional factors, and in particular the changes induced in European thinking by the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Chinese Confucianism emphasised order, hierarchy and conservatism, and was therefore directly contrary to the Western emphasis on freedom, individualism and innovation. In accordance with this general difference, Ferguson argues that Early Modern Europe had six “killer apps”, as he calls them, that gave her a vital edge over the Oriental empires: *competition, science, property rights, medicine, the consumer society and the work ethic*.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁶ Darwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 193-194.

⁷⁴⁷ Ferguson, *Civilization*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 286.

⁷⁴⁸ Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

But probably more important than any of these was Europe's overweening self-confidence or *pride*. Of course, the Orientals were not renowned for their humility, either. But the Westerners were exceptional in the aggressiveness with which they displayed their arrogance. And they had a kind of missionary zeal to export their civilization that the Chinese never had.

Darwin continues: "It was in this period that Europeans first advanced the claim that their civilization and culture were superior to all others - not theologically (that was old hat) but intellectually and materially. Whether this claim was true need not detain us. Much more important was the Europeans' willingness to act as if it were. This was shown in their eagerness to collect and categorize the knowledge they gleaned from other parts of the world. It was revealed in the confidence with which they fitted this knowledge into a structure of thought with themselves at the centre. The intellectual annexation of non-European Eurasia preceded the imposition of a physical dominance. It was expressed in the ambition by the end of our period (earlier if we include the French invasion of Egypt) to 'remake' parts of Afro-Asia as the 'New World' had been 'made'. And it ultimately rested on the extraordinary conviction that Europe alone could progress through history, leaving the rest of the world in a 'stationary state' awaiting Europe's Promethean touch....

"In China between the 1750s and 1820s there was to be no great change in cultural direction, no drastic reappraisal of China's place in the larger world, certainly no repudiation of the cultural past. Nor was there any obvious reason why there should have been. This was a wealthy, successful and sophisticated gentry society. The Chi'ien-lung (Qianlong) reign (1735-1796) was one of political stability, prosperity and (in China proper) peace. In the slogan of the day, it was the 'Flourishing Age'. Their conquests in Inner Asia, the final victory over the turbulent steppe, crowned the Ch'ing's achievement in pacifying, reunifying, consolidating and securing the Chinese realm. The perpetual threat of dynastic collapse in the face of barbarian attack - the great constant in China's long history as a unified state - had been lifted at last: confirmation, were it needed, of China's cultural and technological superiority where it mattered most. It was, after all, a triumph which, in geographical scale and geopolitical importance (if not economic value) matched Europe's in America.

"There were of course social and cultural stresses. Military failures against Burma and Vietnam; symptoms of growing bureaucratic corruption; popular millenarian uprisings like the White Lotus movement: all hinted as the onset of dynastic decline, the gradual decay of the 'mandate of heaven' on which dynastic legitimacy was thought to depend. But the Confucian tradition remained immensely strong. Its central assumption was that social welfare was maximized under the rule of scholar-bureaucrats steeped in the paternalist and hierarchical teachings of K'ung-fu-tzu. The Confucian synthesis, with its Taoist elements (which taught the need for material simplicity and harmony with the natural world), faced no significant intellectual challenge. Religion in China played a role quite different from that of its counterpart in Europe. While 'pure' Taoism had

some intellectual influence, and its mystical beliefs attracted a popular following, it had no public status, and was regarded with suspicion by the Confucian bureaucracy. Salvationist beliefs were officially frowned upon. Buddhism was followed mainly in Tibet and Mongolia. The emperors were careful to show it respect, as a concession to the Buddhist elites co-opted into their system of overrule. In China proper it was marginalized. Buddhist monks, like Taoist priests, were seen as disruptive and troublesome.

“The scholar-bureaucracy, and the educated gentry class from which it was drawn, thus faced no competition from an organized priesthood. No challenge was made from within the social elite by the devotees of religious enthusiasm. Nor was the bureaucrats’ classical learning threatened by new forms of ‘scientific’ knowledge. For reasons that historians have debated at length, the tradition of scientific experimentation had faded away, perhaps as early as 1400. Part of the reason may lie in the striking absence in Confucian thought of the ‘celestial lawgiver’ – a god who had prescribed the laws of nature. In Europe, belief in such a providential figure, and the quest for ‘his’ purposes and grand design, had been a (perhaps the) central motive for scientific inquiry. But the fundamental assumption that the universe was governed by a coherent system of physical laws that could be verified empirically was lacking in China. Even the scholarly kaozheng movement in the eighteenth century, which stressed the importance of collecting empirical data across a range of scientific and technical fields, rejected ‘the notion of a lawful, uniform and mathematically predictable universe’. It should be seen instead as part of the long tradition of critique and commentary upon ‘classical’ knowledge, not an attack upon its assumptions...”⁷⁴⁹

This is an important insight. We have seen how the scientific revolution, which had such an important impact on the Enlightenment, was pioneered by highly religious scientists, like Newton, who believed that in describing the laws of nature they were uncovering a little of the Mind of God. This assumption proceeded from the fundamental Christian belief that man is made in the image of God, and that his logical and reasoning powers are also in the image of the “Logos”, or Word and Wisdom of God. However, this assumption was lacking in Chinese thought, which stunted experimentation and scientific research. And this fact, combined with economic factors that we have mentioned, meant that China stagnated while Europe moved forward...

However, this is not enough to explain the sheer aggressiveness of the European expansion into the rest of the world, which was so destructive that the traditional societies of the East had the choice: either to become part of that expansion and that civilization, or be destroyed by it. Thus Japan chose to join – and prospered. China, however, resisted, which led to the collapse of her imperial system at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Why was this new expansion of Christianity so much more violent and harmful than previous such periods? The answer lies in the fact that the Enlightenment,

⁷⁴⁹ Darwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-200.

and, before it, Renaissance humanism and Protestant rationalism, had introduced a kind of virus into European Christianity that in fact turned it into anti-Christianity. Yes, the Christian belief in the One Creator of heaven and earth was the vital stimulus to modern science. But the “reasonable rationalism” of Christian scientists like Newton, who believed in revelation as well as reason, and in humbling the human mind before the Original Mind, was undermined by the “irrational rationalism” of the philosophers, who subjected everything to corrosive doubt, raising their own feeble reason above the whole of reality, and thereby undermining not only Christianity but even the possibility of any kind of truly rational thought. We have seen where this irrational rationalism led in the case of the philosophy of David Hume, and with what difficulty Immanuel Kant constructed a very limited breakwater against its ravages. It is not surprising that it should also have ravaged other traditional societies such as the Chinese, destroying, as Darwin writes, “the scholastic monopoly of ‘classical’ knowledge that remained so immensely powerful in Islamic and Confucian culture.”⁷⁵⁰

Another reason why Europe’s impact on the traditional societies of the East was so destructive lay in the fact that the Europeans had acquired the habit of destroying in North and South America. “It was in the Americas that the Europeans discovered their capacity to impose radical change upon other societies – through enslavement, expropriation, conversion, migration and economic exploitation. It was there that they saw the devastating effects that one culture or people could have on another – an impact without parallel elsewhere in Eurasia. It was there, above all, that they found peoples who were living in what seemed an earlier age, following modes of life that, conjecture suggested, might once have prevailed in Europe. ‘In the beginning,’ said Locke, ‘all the world was America’. The result was a great backward extension of the historical past (far beyond the limits of biblical creation) and a new mode of speculative inquiry into the stages through which European society must have passed to reach its contemporary form.

“America revolutionized the European sense of time. It encouraged Europeans to devise a historical framework into which they could fit the states and peoples of the rest of the world. It helped to promote a conjectural history of progress in which Europe had reached the highest stage. In the later eighteenth century this sense of Europe’s premier place in a global order was reinforced by three hugely influential ideas. The first was the virtue of commerce as a civilizing agent, on which Hume and the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment insisted. In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith pressed the case for commercial freedom as the surest route to material progress, and the idea of unfettered trade as a means to global harmony was taken up by Immanuel Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* (1798). It was a short step to argue (like the Victorian free-traders) that Europe should lead the rest of the world into universal free trade, and to see the world itself as a vast single market. The second was the extraordinary confidence displayed by Enlightenment thinkers that human institutions and even human behaviour could be reconstructed along ‘rational’ lines. No one carried this further than the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, whose utilitarian calculus (the greatest happiness for the greatest

⁷⁵⁰ Darwin, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

number) supplied a measure against which laws and institutions anywhere in the world could be tested. Armed with the calculus, the enlightened legislator (from Europe) could frame better laws than benighted locals mired in superstition and antiquated prejudices. To his follower James Mill, the history of India revealed that 'the manners, institutions and attainments of the Hindus have been stationary for many years' (since about 300 BC he suggested), a savage indictment he extended to China. Europe's Promethean touch offered the only hope for a resumption of progress. The third proposition was just as startling. It was the growing conviction by the end of the century that there rested on the Christian societies of Europe an urgent obligation to carry their gospel throughout the world. What was especially significant was the force of this evangelizing urge in Protestant Britain, the richest and strongest of the European maritime states, and by 1815 the dominant sea power throughout Southern Asia."⁷⁵¹

In practice, evangelization became less important than commercialization and utilitarianism. This was paradoxical, because it was precisely in her Christian tradition that Europe could offer something of real - indeed, supreme - value to the non-European nations. But the tragic fact was that the only major European nation that still retained the true Christian tradition was Russia; the others had lost the salt of True Christianity, and soon found in any case that inculcating their own, heretical traditions was too difficult, and so was pursued with ever-decreasing conviction and vigour...

⁷⁵¹ Darwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-210.

53. KANT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Hume's demonstration of the irrationality of rationalism had one very important result: it aroused the greatest philosopher of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant, from what he called his "dogmatic slumbers". Kant sought to re-establish some of the beliefs that Hume's thorough-going scepticism had undermined. To that end, he determined to subject "pure reason itself to critical investigation", answering the question: "what and how much can understanding and reason know, apart from all experience?"⁷⁵² In his trilogy, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781-7), *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and *The Critique of Judgement* (1790), he sought to demonstrate certain non-mathematical "synthetic *a priori* judgements" which, although they cannot be *proved* either by logic or from empirical experience, nevertheless constitute *the conditions for the possibility of theoretical, moral and aesthetic judgement in general*. The significance of this is that it shows that there are certain truths which are demonstrable neither from experience nor from the postulates of purely rationalist thinking, but which are *true and transcendent in essence* and point to a supra-natural realm that cannot be entered or known directly but of whose existence there can be no doubt.

Being a rationalist and a product of the Enlightenment, Kant did not succeed in restoring a proper understanding of the nature and limits of human reason. Nor, being a Protestant, could he conceive how Grace given through Christ in the Church can take the mind beyond the limits of fallen human nature, so that *it truly knows the transcendent by participating in it* rather than merely mutely pointing to it. Nevertheless, he established an important truth: that *while empirical reason can know certain things, the use of reason itself presupposes the existence of other things which transcend reason, including the thinking self*. Thus the thought "I think", according to Kant, must accompany all our experiences if they are to be qualified as ours. This is the "transcendental unity of apperception" *which unifies experience while being at the same time beyond it*. And so, apart from the "phenomenal" realm of nature, which scientists and historians study, of things as they appear to the senses, there is a "noumenal" realm of the spirit, of "things-in-themselves"; this is the realm of spirit, reason and freedom containing the *a priori* categories of substance, causality and mutual interaction, which shape all thought and experience. "There is thus a being above the world, namely the spirit of man".⁷⁵³

This was not, of course, a new discovery; the ancients and the Christians knew it long before. But it was an important achievement to establish, as the result of the workings of "pure reason", that *the spirit of man exists and transcends the world* and cannot therefore be an object of empirical investigation - or denial - like any other. Nevertheless, it is an indication of the abyss of blindness into which Western thought had descended that it took such a ferocious and complicated effort of philosophical reasoning to re-establish what all pre-Enlightenment generations of Christian Europe knew already...

⁷⁵² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, first edition, XVII.

⁷⁵³ Kant, *Opus Posthumum*, XXI.

Kant's re-discovery of the spirit of man had consequences for ethics as well as epistemology. For the spirit of man determines not only what is *true* but also what is *right*. And just as man the thinker must be free from the causal nexus in order to determine what is true, so man the actor must be free of his desires, interests and motives in order to determine what is right. According to Kant, man himself is noumenally free while being at the same time empirically (phenomenally) determined. His spirit is not a substance in the empirical sense, nor an objective part the empirical causal nexus (psychologists, take note). It is free, being the seat of that which is greatest and truly rational in man, indeed the whole world: his sense of duty, his will to do good. Hence the famous words: "It is impossible to conceive of anything in the world, or indeed out of it, which can be called good without qualification, save only a good will."⁷⁵⁴ A good will acts neither out of some psychological sympathy or passion pushing it from behind, nor in order to attain some end or goal in front of it; it acts out of a pure duty, in answer to a "categorical imperative".

The categorical imperative is a law of reason composed of several rules. The first is the golden rule that we should do as we would be done by (which, of course, derives from the Gospel). More formally put, this is the principle that *I am never to act otherwise than so that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law*, so that every other rational being in the same circumstances should make the same decision. The second is that I must "so act as to treat humanity, whether in my own self or in that of another, as an end, and never as a means". Indeed, it is from the existence of a "kingdom of ends", of men who ideally treat each other as rational beings and ends in themselves, that Kant derives, if not the existence of God and immortality, at any rate the possibility and reasonableness of their existence: for a kingdom of ends encourages belief in a rational being who legislates for all other rational beings while not having any limitations on his will, and who, in the life to come, brings virtue its due reward in happiness...

"If Kant is right," writes Peter Singer, "the only kind of action that is not the result of our innate or socially conditioned desire is action in accordance with the categorical imperative. Only action in accordance with the categorical imperative, therefore, can be free. Since only free action can have genuine moral worth, the categorical imperative must be not only the supreme imperative of reason, but also the supreme law of morality.

"One final point is needed to complete the picture. If my action is free, my motivation for acting in accordance with the categorical imperative cannot be any particular desire I might happen to have. It cannot, therefore, be my desire to go to heaven, or to win the esteem of my friends, nor can it be my benevolent desire to do good to others. My motivation must be to act in accord with the universal law of reason and morality, for its own sake. I must do my duty because it is my duty – the Kantian ethic is sometimes summed up in the slogan: 'Duty for duty's sake.' It does indeed follow from what Kant said that we are free when we do our duty for its own sake, and not otherwise.

⁷⁵⁴ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*.

“So we have arrived at the conclusion that freedom consists in doing one’s duty. To the modern reader this conclusion is paradoxical. The term ‘duty’ has come to be associated with obedience to the conventional rules of institutions like the army and the family. When we speak of doing our duty we often mean that we are doing what we would much rather not be doing, but feel ourselves constrained to do by customary rules we are reluctant to defy. ‘Duty’ in this sense is the very opposite of freedom.

“If this is the basis of the paradoxical air of the conclusion that freedom consists in doing our duty, we should put it aside. Kant’s conclusion was that freedom consists in doing what we really see as our duty in the broadest sense of the term. To put the point in a way that modern readers might be readier to accept: freedom consists in following one’s conscience...”⁷⁵⁵

One of the fiercest attacks on this idea was launched by Nietzsche: “An action demanded by the instinct of life is proved to be right by the pleasure that accompanies it; yet this nihilist [Kant] with his Christian dogmatic entrails considered pleasure an *objection*. What could destroy us more quickly than working, thinking and feeling without any inner necessity, without any deeply personal choice, without *pleasure* – as an automaton of ‘duty’?”⁷⁵⁶

Of course, Nietzsche was an antichristian figure. But It should be clear that Kant’s ethics based on his categorical imperative are also directly opposed to Christian ethics. For, as the great Russian hermit who was contemporary to Kant, St. Seraphim of Sarov, said: only that deed which is done out of love of Christ, for the sake of carrying out His commandments, is truly good. But such a motivation is very particular, and does not conform to Kant’s criterion of duty, which rejects all particular desires and motivations... Kant’s desiccated idea of duty, rejecting all particular human desires but founded on a rigid backbone of will alone, loses all the warmth of real moral action and everything but the most abstract connection to the Christian faith. The title of his work, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, says it all. Religion without living faith in Christ, morality without evangelical love, all for the sake of adherence to some abstract “Reason” which is certainly not the Word of God – that is the fruit of this easternmost outpost of Voltairean rationalism in Europe.

⁷⁵⁵ Singer, in *German Philosophers*, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 146-147.

⁷⁵⁶ Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 11.

54. ENLIGHTENED DESPOTISM AND FREDERICK THE GREAT

The Enlightenment, as one might expect, rejected the doctrine of the Divine right of kings. Its political creed was summed up by Barzun as follows: "Divine right is a dogma without basis; government grew out of nature itself, from reasonable motives and for the good of the people; certain fundamental rights cannot be abolished, including property and the right of revolution."⁷⁵⁷ However, the philosophers did not at first mount a fierce attack on the State, hoping that their own programme would be implemented by what were called the "enlightened despots" of the time. Moreover, until Rousseau's theory of the General Will appeared, the philosophers were wary of the destructive impact a direct attack on the State could have. They preferred Montesquieu's idea of a "free" state in which the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government exercised restraint on each other – an idea that became, as we have seen, very influential in the Anglo-Saxon world.⁷⁵⁸

In "enlightened despotism" the ideals of the Enlightenment were seen to work together with traditional, monarchical forms of government. Of course, the combination of the words "enlightened" and "despotism" is paradoxical and oxymoronic, for the whole thrust of the Enlightenment, as we have seen, was anti-authoritarian. And yet at precisely this time there came to power in continental Europe a series of rulers who were infected with the cult of reason and democratism, on the one hand, but who ruled as despots, on the other.

Here we see a phenomenon frequently occurring in history, movements of ideas in one direction taking place simultaneously (or only a short time later) by movements in the opposite direction. Enlightened despotism was made possible because the official Churches – still the main "check" on government – had grown weak. In earlier times, even the most despotic of rulers had made concessions to the power of the Church. For example, Louis XIV's rejection of Gallicanism and revocation of the Edict of Nantes giving protection to the Huguenots (1685) was elicited by his need to retain the support of the still-powerful Papacy. In France, the Catholic Church, if not the Papacy as such, continued to be strong, which is one reason why the struggle between the old and the new ideas and regimes was so intense there, spilling over into the revolution of 1789. In other continental countries, however, despotic rulers did not have to take such account of ecclesiastical opposition to their ideas. Their success was furthered by the demise of their main rivals, the Jesuits. Like the Jews, the Jesuits were a kind of state within the state. In Paraguay they created a hierocratic society under their control among the Indians.⁷⁵⁹ Their demise laid the way open for king to demonstrate that they could rule without any priestly limitations on their power.

⁷⁵⁷ Barzun, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-365.

⁷⁵⁸ In chapter 6 of *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu "defined the freedom of states by the relationship between three powers, legislative, executive and judicial. If all are in the same hands, the State is a despotism; if one of them is independent, it is a 'moderate' state; if all are separate, it is a free state" (in Robert and Isabelle Toms, *That Sweet Enemy*, London: Pimlico, 2007, p. 62).

⁷⁵⁹ See I.R. Shafarevich, *Sotsializm kak iavlenie mirovoj istorii* (Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 194-204.

Let us look more closely at the question how despotism could co-exist with the caustic anti-authoritarianism of Voltaire and the other *philosophes*. It was a question of means and ends. If the aims of the *philosophes* were “democratic” in the sense that they wished the abolition of “superstition” and an increase in the happiness of everybody through education, the best – indeed the only – means to that end at that time was the enlightened despot.

But there is no question that they preferred republicanism to despotism, enlightened or otherwise. Thus Voltaire said: “The most tolerable government of all is no doubt a republic, because it brings men closest to natural equality.” And yet, he added wisely, “there has never been a perfect government because men have passions”. Indeed; and it was that insight, and the realization that republican or democratic government often stimulated those passions to the detriment of the people, which led even the more liberal governments to seek checks on democratism. Thus even in Britain “the parliamentary system was under increasing scrutiny. Ministers, or their spokesmen, argued that frequent elections gave ‘a handle to the cabals and intrigues of foreign princes’, and encouraged playing fast and loose with allies. For this reason, in mid-1716 the government pushed through the Septennial Act, which increased the interval between general elections from three to seven years.”⁷⁶⁰

It was not only the *philosophes* who looked to the enlightened despots: as Eric Hobsbawm writes, “the middle and educated classes and those committed to progress often looked to the powerful central apparatus of an ‘enlightened’ monarchy to realize their hopes. A prince needed a middle class and its ideas to modernize his state; a weak middle class needed a prince to batter down the resistance of entrenched aristocratic and clerical interests to progress.”⁷⁶¹ So the *philosophes* went to the kings – Voltaire to Frederick of Prussia, Diderot to Catherine of Russia – and tried to make them into philosopher-kings, as Plato had once tried with Dionysius of Syracuse.

But neither the kings nor their philosopher advisers ever aimed to create democratic republics, as opposed to more efficient monarchies. The philosophers, writes Porter, “never made their prime demand the maximisation of personal freedom and the reciprocal attenuation of the state, in the manner of later English laissez-faire liberalism. For one thing, a strong executive would be needed to maintain the freedom of subjects against the encroachments of the Church and the privileges of the nobles. Physiocrats such as Quesnay championed an economic policy of free trade, but recognised that only a determined, dirigiste administration would prove capable of upholding market freedoms against encroached vested interests. No continental thinkers were attracted to the ideal of the ‘nightwatchman’ state so beloved of the English radicals...

⁷⁶⁰ Simms, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷⁶¹ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848*, London: Abacus, 1977, p. 36.

“It was the thinkers of Germanic and Central Europe above all who looked to powerful, ‘enlightened’ rulers to preside over a ‘well-policed’ state. By this was meant a regime in which an efficient, professional career bureaucracy comprehensively regulated civic life, trade, occupations, morals and health, often down to quite minute details.”⁷⁶²

One enlightened despot was the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus III. In 1768 he “compelled the dominant Cap faction, which mainly represented the interests of the peasantry and clergy, to summon an extraordinary diet from which he hoped for the reform of the constitution in way that would increase the power of the crown. But the victorious Hat party, which mainly represented the interests of the aristocracy and military establishment, refused to redeem the pledges that they had given before the previous elections. ‘That we should have lost the constitutional battle does not distress us so much’, wrote Gustav, in the bitterness of his heart; ‘but what does dismay me is to see my poor nation so sunk in corruption as to place its own felicity in absolute anarchy.’”

In 1771 Gustavus “opened his first *Riksdag* [Swedish Diet] with a speech that aroused powerful emotions. It was the first time in more than a century that a Swedish king had addressed a Swedish *Riksdag* in its native tongue. He stressed the need for all parties to sacrifice their animosities for the common good, and volunteered, as ‘the first citizen of a free people,’ to be the mediator between the contending factions. A composition committee was actually formed, but it proved illusory from the first: the patriotism of neither faction was sufficient for the smallest act of self-denial. The subsequent attempts of the dominant Caps to reduce him to a *roi fainéant* (a powerless king), encouraged him to consider a coup d'état.”

“After accomplishing the coup, Gustavus “dictated a new oath of allegiance, and everyone signed it without hesitation. It absolved them from their allegiance to the estates, and bound them solely to obey ‘their lawful king, Gustav III’ ...

“A new constitution, the Instrument of Government, was read to the estates and unanimously accepted by them. The diet was then dissolved.

“Gustav worked towards reform in the same direction as other contemporary sovereigns of the Age of Enlightenment. Criminal justice became more lenient, the death penalty was restricted to a relatively short list of crimes (including murder), and torture was abolished in order to gain confessions, although the “strict death penalty”, with torture-like corporal punishment preceding the execution, was maintained.”

In 1789 Gustavus “swept away most of the powers exercised by the Swedish *Riksdag*” before his accession, but at the same time opened up the government for all citizens, thereby breaking the privileges of the nobility”.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶² Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁷⁶³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_III_of_Sweden

In 1792, “outraged at a programme of democratic despotism... [which] made the popular gestures constantly being pressed upon Louis XVI by his secret advisers seem tame,”⁷⁶⁴ the nobles killed him... (He had in any case already been sentenced to death at a Convention of the *Illuminati* in Willemsbad in 1785.)

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The accession to the Prussian throne of Frederick the Great (1740-1786) opened a new phase in Prussian history.

Cragg writes: “Certain characteristics were common to all the enlightened despotisms, but each of the continental countries had its own particular pattern of development. By the middle of the century, Frederick the Great had achieved a pre-eminent position, and his brilliance as a military leader had fixed the eyes of Europe on his kingdom. Prussia appeared to be the supreme example of the benefits of absolute rule. But appearances were deceptive. Frederick had indeed brought the civil service to a high degree of efficiency and had organized the life of the country in a way congenial to a military martinet. Though he was anxious to improve the peasants’ lot, he could not translate his theories into facts. His reign resulted in an actual increase of serfdom. His rule rested on assumptions that were already obsolete long before the advent of the French Revolution. It is true that by illiberal means he achieved certain liberal ends. He abolished torture; he promoted education; in the fields of politics and economics he applied the principles of the Enlightenment. He had no sympathy with Christianity and little patience with its devotees. He regarded the service of the state as an adequate substitute for Christian faith and life. He advocated toleration on the ground that all religious beliefs were equally absurd...”⁷⁶⁵

In essence, however, he was a militaristic despot. Immediately after ascending the throne, in 1740, Frederick invaded and conquered Silesia, a rich province belonging to the Austrian Habsburgs, and held onto it in spite of many years of warfare against Austria, Saxony, France and Russia, suffering serious defeats as well as brilliant victories. As a result, “Prussia’s economy was devastated, reverting almost to Thirty Years War conditions. As much as a third of its population was estimated to have perished through starvation. Frederick had overreached himself, but he had marked his country as a player on the European stage.”⁷⁶⁶ The most significant aspect of this newly-acquired status as a great power was that Prussia was now seen as a rival to Austria as the leader of the Holy Roman Empire. As Clark puts it, “the Catholic Emperor in Vienna now faced a Protestant anti-emperor in Berlin”.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁴ William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 314.

⁷⁶⁵ Cragg, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁷⁶⁶ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 165

⁷⁶⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

Frederick's defeat of Austria's French allies at Rossbach in 1757 was no less fateful in its consequences than the defeats he inflicted on his main enemy, Austria. For it raised doubts "about the competence of the Bourbon regime that would persevere until the revolutionary crisis of the 1780s. 'More than ever before,' the French Foreign Minister Cardinal de Bernis observed in the spring of 1758, 'our nation is outraged against the war. Our enemy, the king of Prussia, is loved to the point of distraction... but the court of Vienna is hated because it is seen as the bloodsucker of the state.' In the eyes of critical French contemporaries, the treaties with Austria of 1756 and 1757 were 'the disgrace of Louis XV', 'monstrous in principle and disastrous for France in practice'. The defeats of the war, the Comte de Ségur recalled, 'both wounded and aroused French national pride. From one end of the kingdom to the other, to oppose the Court became a point of honour.' The first partition of Poland in 1772, in which Prussia, Austria and Austria joined in despoiling one of France's traditional clients, deepened such apprehensions by demonstrating that the new alliance system operated to the benefit of Austria and the detriment of France. To make matters worse, the French monarchy chose to cement the Austrian alliance by marrying the future Louis XVI to the Habsburg princess Marie Antoinette in 1771. She later came to personify the political malaise of Bourbon absolutism in its terminal phase. In short, we can follow at least one strand of the crisis that culminated in the fall of the French monarchy back to the consequences of Frederick's invasion of Silesia..."⁷⁶⁸

Frederick's rationale for his conquests was purely Machiavellian, in spite of the title of his work *Anti-Machiavel*, published shortly after his accession to the throne. In this work he "delineated three types of ethically permissible war: the defensive war, the war to pursue just rights, and the 'war of precaution', in which a prince discovers that his enemies are preparing military action and decides to launch a pre-emptive strike so as not to forgo the advantages of opening hostilities on his own terms. The invasion of Saxony clearly fell into the third category..."⁷⁶⁹ Hitler's invasion of the Sudetenland clearly comes to mind, both in its geographical proximity to Frederick's invasions, and in the similarity of the excuses given.

Henry Kissinger writes: "Where Louis had fought wars to translate power into hegemony, Prussia's Frederick II went to war to transmute latent weakness into great power status. Sitting on the harsh North German plain and extending from the Vistula across Germany, Prussia cultivated discipline and public service to substitute for the larger population and greater resources of better-endowed countries. Split into two non-contiguous pieces, it jutted precariously into the Austrian, Swedish, Russian, and Polish spheres of influence. It was relatively sparsely populated; its strength was the discipline with which it marshalled its limited resources. Its greatest assets were civic-mindedness, an efficient bureaucracy, and a well-trained army..."

"... Frederick saw his personal authority as absolute but his policies as limited rigidly by the principles of *raison d'état* Richelieu had put forward a century earlier.

⁷⁶⁸ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁷⁶⁹ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

'Rulers are the slaves of their resources,' his credo held, 'the interest of the State is their law, and this law may not be infringed.' Courageous and cosmopolitan (Frederick spoke and wrote French and composed sentimental French poetry even on military campaigns, subtitled one of his literary efforts 'Pas trop mal pour la veille d'une grande bataille'), he embodied the new era of Enlightenment governance by benevolent despotism, which was legitimized by its effectiveness, not ideology.

"Frederick concluded that great-power status required territorial contiguity for Prussia, hence expansion. There was no need for any other political or moral justification. 'The superiority of our troops, the promptitude with which we can set them in motion, in a word the clear advantage we have over our neighbours' was all the justification Frederick required to seize the wealthy and traditionally Austrian province of Silesia in 1740. Treating the issue as geopolitical, not a legal or moral one, Frederick aligned himself with France (which saw in Prussia a counter to Austria) and retained Silesia in the peace settlement of 1742, nearly doubling Prussia's territory and population.

"In the process, Frederick brought war back to the European system, which had been at peace since 1713 when the Treaty of Utrecht had put an end to the ambition of Louis XIV. The challenge to the established balance of power caused the Westphalian system to begin to function. The price for being admitted as a new member to the European order turned out to be seven years of near-disastrous battle. Now the alliances were reversed, as Frederick's previous allies sought to quash his operations and their rivals tried to harness Prussia's disciplined fighting force for their own aims. Russia, remote and mysterious, for the first time entered a contest over the European balance of power. At the edge of defeat, with Russian armies at the gates of Berlin, Frederick was saved by the sudden death of Czarina Elizabeth. The new Czar [Peter III], a long-time admirer of Frederick, withdrew from the war. (Hitler, besieged in encircled Berlin in April 1945, waited for an event comparable to the so-called Miracle of the House of Brandenburg and was told by Joseph Goebbels that it had happened when President Franklin D. Roosevelt died.)

"The Holy Roman Emperor had become a façade; no rival claimant to universal authority had arisen. Almost all rulers asserted that they ruled by divine right – a claim not challenged by any major power – but they accepted that God had similarly endowed many other monarchs. Wars were therefore fought for limited territorial objectives, not to overthrow existing governments and institutions, nor to impose a new system of relations between states. Tradition prevented rulers from conscripting their subjects and severely constrained their ability to raise taxes. The impact of wars on civilian populations was in no way comparable to the horrors of the Thirty Years' War or what technology and ideology would produce two centuries later. In the eighteenth century, the balance of power operated as a theatre in which 'lives and values were put on display, amid splendour, polish, gallantry, and shows of utter self-assurance'. The exercise of that power was constrained by the recognition that the system would not tolerate hegemonic aspirations."

“International orders that have been the most stable have had the advantage of uniform perceptions. The statesmen who operated the eighteenth-century European order were aristocrats who interpreted intangibles like honor and duty in the same way and agreed on fundamentals. They represented a single elite society that spoke the same language (French), frequented the same salons, and pursued romantic liaisons in each other’s capitals. National interests of course varied, but in a world where a foreign minister could serve a monarch of another nationality (every Russian foreign minister until 1820 was recruited abroad), or when a territory could change its national affiliation as the result of a marriage pact or a fortuitous inheritance, a sense of overarching common purpose was inherent. Power calculations in the eighteenth century took place against this ameliorating background of a shared sense of legitimacy and unspoken rules of international conduct.

“This consensus was not only a matter of decorum; it reflected the moral convictions of a common European outlook... New triumphs in science and philosophy began to displace the fracturing European certainties of tradition and faith. The swift advance of the mind on multiple fronts – physics, chemistry, astronomy, history, archaeology, cartography, rationality – bolstered a new spirit of secular illumination auguring that the revelation of all nature’s hidden mechanisms was only a question of time. ‘The true system of the world has been recognized, developed, and perfected,’ wrote the brilliant French polymath Jean Le Rond d’Alembert in 1759, embodying the spirit of the age...”⁷⁷⁰

Frederick embodied the spirit of his age especially in culture and the arts. He “built himself a palace at Potsdam outside Berlin in the manner of Versailles, calling it Sansouci, Without Care. He founded a new Academy of Arts in Berlin and commanded that French be its language rather than ‘barbarous German’. Frederick played music [Bach on the flute] and wrote poetry, corresponding with the French philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778), whom he said had ‘the loveliness and mischievousness of a monkey’. Voltaire admired and flattered him – until they fell out when Frederick inherited his father’s addiction to war.”⁷⁷¹

“Throughout his life,” writes Clark, “Frederick displayed a remarkable disregard for the conventional pieties of his era. He was vehemently irreligious: in the Political Testament of 1768, he described Christianity as ‘an old metaphysical fiction, stuffed with miracles, contradictions and absurdities, which was spawned in the fevered imagination of the Orientals and then spread to our Europe, where some fanatics espoused it, some intriguers pretended to be convinced by it and some imbeciles actually believed it.’ He was also unusually relaxed on questions of sexual morality...”⁷⁷²

Whether or not he was a homosexual, he certainly preferred the company of men, wrote pornographic verse and treated his wife with cruel indifference.

⁷⁷⁰ Kissinger, *World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 37-38.

⁷⁷¹ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁷⁷² Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187.

Although widely admired, he may be considered to be not only Europe's first "enlightened despot" but also its first truly atheist ruler.

Which is not to say that all he did was wholly evil. He established institutions and funds for war invalids and the impoverished families of soldiers. And in accordance with his egalitarian Enlightenment ideals, he, together with the similarly enlightened (but more pious) Emperor Joseph II of Austria, tried hard to abolish serfdom in his realm. However, both enlightened despots were forced to abandon their plans by their nobles.

Typical was the opposition of the Pomeranian Junkers, who pointed out to Frederick the sacrifices they had made in serving in his army. "They also argued," writes Tim Blanning, "that the relationship between lord and peasant was not true serfdom (*Leibeigenschaft*) but rested on a 'voluntary and honest' contract, which obliged the landowner to 'feed and maintain the peasant family, including children and servants, even when they became invalids through accident or old age; to supply the peasant with house, stable, arable land, cattle and garden for his use; to pay equitable wages to domestic servants; and to build and maintain central buildings for residential and economic purposes.' Not the least advantage of this welfare state, they argued further, was that it kept the peasants 'in their proper place': severing the ties which bound lord and peasant in mutual obligation would lead to anarchy. Frederick did not press the point..."⁷⁷³ (Serfdom was not abolished in Central Europe until the revolution of 1848...)

"In work towards the post-war reconstruction of Prussia, Frederick was a conscientious servant of the general interest – villages devastated during the wars were rebuilt in accordance with the principle later set out in the General Code that the state is obliged to 'compensate' those who have been 'forced to sacrifice their special rights and advantages to the welfare of the generality.'"⁷⁷⁴

Frederick was essentially a cultured and tolerant atheist who worried that his enlightened friends like Voltaire would not become fanatically anti-religious (which he was). As he said: "We know the crimes which religious fanaticism has engendered. Let us take care to keep philosophy free of fanaticism; it should be characterized by moderation. In society tolerance should allow everyone the liberty to believe in what he wants; but tolerance should not be extended to authorizing outrageous behaviour or licensing young scatter-brains to rudely insult the things that others revere. These are my views, which suit the maintenance of liberty and public security, which is the first object behind all legislation."⁷⁷⁵

Frederick's tolerated religion because it was useful to the State. In general, he encouraged veneration of the state rather than himself or his dynasty. Still less did he encourage veneration of the people. In spite of his supposed love of liberty,

⁷⁷³ Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815*, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 160-161.

⁷⁷⁴ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

⁷⁷⁵ Frederick the Great, in Cohen and Major, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

“Frederick proved to be an authoritarian and a militarist. He viewed his people as ‘a troop of stags in the great lord’s park, with no other function than to stock and restock the enclosure’. He told Voltaire that ‘three-quarters of mankind are made for slavery to the most absurd fanaticism’. He doubled the size of his army until it consumed over eighty per cent of the Prussian budget, built on the Junker tradition of an inherited class, with soldiers recruited on a cantonal basis. Frederick remarked that ‘friends and relations who fight together do not lightly let each other down’. Soon the French had a saying: “Prussia is not a nation that has an army but an army that has a nation’ ...”⁷⁷⁶

Frederick “joined a Masonic lodge in 1738, while he was still crown prince. He was, as we have seen, a sceptic in religious questions and an exponent of religious tolerance. When asked in June 1740 whether a Catholic subject should be permitted to enjoy civic rights in the city of Frankfurt an der Oder, he replied that ‘all religions are just as good as each other, so long as the people who practice them are honest, and even if Turks and heathens came and wanted to populate this country, then we would build mosques and temples for them.’ ...

“Frederick even granted refuge in Berlin to the radical Spinozist Johann Christian Edelmann. Edelmann was the author of various tracts arguing, among other things, that only a deism purged of all idolatry could redeem and unite humanity, that there was no need for the institution or sacrament of marriage, that sexual freedom was legitimate, and that Christ was a man like any other. Edelmann had been driven out of some of the most tolerant states of the German lands by hostile Lutheran and Calvinist establishments. During a brief visit by Edelmann to Berlin in 1747, the local Calvinist and Lutheran clergy attacked him as a dangerous and offensive sectary. He even attracted the hostile notice of Frederick for his principle opposition to royal absolutism and his dismissive (printed) remarks about Voltaire’s eulogy celebrating the king’s accession. Yet he was permitted to make his home in Berlin – even as his works were being furiously condemned across the length and breadth of the German lands – on the condition that he ceased to publish. In May, 1750, as Edelmann while away his time in Berlin (under a false name to protect him against reprisals by Christian fanatics), there was a massive burning of his books in the city of Frankfurt/Main under the auspices of the Imperial Book Commission. With the entire magistracy and municipal government in attendance and seventy guards to hold back the crowds, nearly 1,000 copies of Edelmann’s books were tossed on to a tower of flaming birch wood. The contrast in tone and policy with Berlin could hardly have been more conspicuous. Frederick had no objections to Edelmann’s religious skepticism, his deism or his moral libertinism. The Prussian capital, he observed in a characteristically back-handed quip, already contained a great many fools and could surely accommodate one more.

“Frederick was thus – unlike his French counterpart Louis XVI – a plausible partner in the project of enlightenment in the Prussian lands. Indeed for many in the literary and political elite, the monarch’s legitimate *personal* claim to

⁷⁷⁶ Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

enlightenment bestowed a unique meaning upon the relationship between civil society and the state in Prussia..."⁷⁷⁷

However "enlightened" he may have been, Frederick was feared by both his subjects and his neighbours, who suffered much from his despotism. But he greatly raised the power and prestige of Prussia, inoculating Prussianness into the German soul. Not for nothing did Hitler take his portrait and Macaulay's biography of him into his bunker...

In any case Frederick's "enlightenment" did not last beyond his death in 1786. His successor, Frederick-Wilhelm II, restored the dominance of German language and traditions (including Lutheranism, although he was also a Rosicrucian). He also neglected the army, so that the great instrument created by his predecessors was overcome by the next European hegemon, Napoleon...

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Prussia, which produced the most famous enlightened despot in Frederick the Great, also produced the most sophisticated justification, both of enlightened despotism and of the Enlightenment project as a whole, in the form of Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay "What is the Enlightenment?"...

In this essay, writes Clark, "Kant argued that the convergence of authority and enlightenment in the same sovereign person utterly transformed the relationship between political and civil liberties, for, where the monarch was enlightened, his power constituted an asset, rather than a threat to the interests vested in society. The result, Kant argued, was a paradox: under a truly enlightened sovereign, moderate constraints on the degree of political liberty might actually 'create a space in which the people may expand to the fullness of its powers.' The famous formula Kant placed in the mouth of Frederick: 'Argue as much as you will about whatever you choose, but obey!' was not presented as the slogan of a despot. Rather it encapsulated the self-transforming potential within an enlightened monarchy. In such a polity, public argument and public criticism - a conversation, in short, between civil society and the state - ensured that the values and objectives of the state itself would ultimately merge harmoniously with those of the people, so that the duty to obey ceased to be a burden upon the subject."⁷⁷⁸

But the main theme of the essay was different: The Age of the Enlightenment represented Man's Coming to Maturity. Here is the text (commentary in italics):-

"Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. **Sapere aude!** 'Have courage to use your own reason!' - that is the motto of enlightenment."

⁷⁷⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253, 254-255.

⁷⁷⁸ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

The Enlightenment philosophers were very proud of their supposed courage. As if to reject the Christian revelation and the wisdom of the ages in favour of one's own puny ratiocinations is not a mark of extreme pride and folly. St. John Chrysostom expressed this folly thus: "Poor human reason, when it trusts in itself, substitutes the strangest absurdities for the highest divine concepts."

"Laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a portion of mankind, after nature has long since discharged them from external direction (naturaliter maiorennnes), nevertheless remains under lifelong tutelage, and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. It is so easy not to be of age. If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has a conscience for me, a physician who decides my diet, and so forth, I need not trouble myself. I need not think, if I can only pay - others will easily undertake the irksome work for me."

Again he appeals to man's pride: that he can find the truth on his own, without the help of anyone else, that he is not a child, that he can think for himself. So Kant despises "a pastor who has a conscience for me". Like Luther, he has only to follow his conscience without checking it out with anyone wiser or older than himself. For all their intellectual brilliance, the Enlightenment philosophers are adolescent rebels.

"That the step to competence is held to be very dangerous by the far greater portion of mankind (and by the entire fair sex) - quite apart from its being arduous is seen to by those guardians who have so kindly assumed superintendence over them. After the guardians have first made their domestic cattle dumb and have made sure that these placid creatures will not dare take a single step without the harness of the cart to which they are tethered, the guardians then show them the danger which threatens if they try to go alone. Actually, however, this danger is not so great, for by falling a few times they would finally learn to walk alone. But an example of this failure makes them timid and ordinarily frightens them away from all further trials."

More incitement to rebellion – especially, this time, to women. St. Paul told women to seek the truth from their husbands (I Corinthians 14.35), but Kant thinks that these "placid creatures" should strike out on their own. The beginning of feminism is here...

"For any single individual to work himself out of the life under tutelage which has become almost his nature is very difficult. He has come to be fond of his state, and he is for the present really incapable of making use of his reason, for no one has ever let him try it out. Statutes and formulas, those mechanical tools of the rational employment or rather misemployment of his natural gifts, are the fetters of an everlasting tutelage. Whoever throws them off makes only an uncertain leap over the narrowest ditch because he is not accustomed to that kind of free motion. Therefore, there are few who have succeeded by their own exercise of mind both in freeing themselves from incompetence and in achieving a steady pace."

Freedom! The slogan of modern, post-Renaissance man. But freedom, according to the Lord is found only as a result of knowing the truth (John 8.32). He who, casting off the advice of all tutors and advisors, thinks himself thereby qualified to know the truth, only entangles himself more deeply in falsehood.

“But that the public should enlighten itself is more possible; indeed, if only freedom is granted enlightenment is almost sure to follow. For there will always be some independent thinkers, even among the established guardians of the great masses, who, after throwing off the yoke of tutelage from their own shoulders, will disseminate the spirit of the rational appreciation of both their own worth and every man's vocation for thinking for himself. But be it noted that the public, which has first been brought under this yoke by their guardians, forces the guardians themselves to remain bound when it is incited to do so by some of the guardians who are themselves capable of some enlightenment - so harmful is it to implant prejudices, for they later take vengeance on their cultivators or on their descendants. Thus the public can only slowly attain enlightenment. Perhaps a fall of personal despotism or of avaricious or tyrannical oppression may be accomplished by revolution, but never a true reform in ways of thinking. Farther, new prejudices will serve as well as old ones to harness the great unthinking masses.

‘For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required but freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which this term can properly be applied. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point. But I hear on all sides, ‘Do not argue!’ The Officer says: ‘Do not argue but drill!’ The tax collector: ‘Do not argue but pay!’ The cleric: ‘Do not argue but believe!’ Only one prince in the world says, ‘Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, but obey!’ Everywhere there is restriction on freedom.”

Only Frederick the Great, the most impious and atheistical of all the rulers of Europe, was a worthy ruler, according to Kant, because he allowed his subjects to argue freely. And yet when, only a few years later, the French revolution brought supposed freedom to “the great unthinking masses”, the first casualty was precisely the loss of freedom of the word and religion.

“Which restriction is an obstacle to enlightenment, and which is not an obstacle but a promoter of it? I answer: The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among men. The private use of reason, on the other hand, may often be very narrowly restricted without particularly hindering the progress of enlightenment. By the public use of one's reason I understand the use which a person makes of it as a scholar before the reading public. Private use I call that which one may make of it in a particular civil post or office which is entrusted to him. Many affairs which are conducted in the interest of the community require a certain mechanism through which some members of the community must passively conduct themselves with an artificial unanimity, so that the government may direct them to public ends, or at least prevent them from destroying those ends. Here argument is certainly not allowed - one must obey. But so far as a part of the mechanism regards himself at the same time as a member of the whole community or of a society of world citizens, and thus in the role of a scholar who addresses the public (in the proper sense of the word) through his writings, he certainly can argue without hurting the affairs for which he is in part responsible as a passive member. Thus it would be ruinous for an officer in service to debate about the suitability or utility of a command given to him by his superior; he must obey. But the right to make remarks on errors in the military service and

to lay them before the public for judgment cannot equitably be refused him as a scholar. The citizen cannot refuse to pay the taxes imposed on him; indeed, an impudent complaint at those levied on him can be punished as a scandal (as it could occasion general refractoriness). But the same person nevertheless does not act contrary to his duty as a citizen, when, as a scholar, he publicly expresses his thoughts on the inappropriateness or even the injustices of these levies, Similarly a clergyman is obligated to make his sermon to his pupils in catechism and his congregation conform to the symbol of the church which he serves, for he has been accepted on this condition. But as a scholar he has complete freedom, even the calling, to communicate to the public all his carefully tested and well meaning thoughts on that which is erroneous in the symbol and to make suggestions for the better organization of the religious body and church. In doing this there is nothing that could be laid as a burden on his conscience. For what he teaches as a consequence of his office as a representative of the church, this he considers something about which he has not freedom to teach according to his own lights; it is something which he is appointed to propound at the dictation of and in the name of another. He will say, 'Our church teaches this or that; those are the proofs which it adduces.' He thus extracts all practical uses for his congregation from statutes to which he himself would not subscribe with full conviction but to the enunciation of which he can very well pledge himself because it is not impossible that truth lies hidden in them, and, in any case, there is at least nothing in them contradictory to inner religion. For if he believed he had found such in them, he could not conscientiously discharge the duties of his office; he would have to give it up. The use, therefore, which an appointed teacher makes of his reason before his congregation is merely private, because this congregation is only a domestic one (even if it be a large gathering); with respect to it, as a priest, he is not free, nor can he be free, because he carries out the orders of another. But as a scholar, whose writings speak to his public, the world, the clergyman in the public use of his reason enjoys an unlimited freedom to use his own reason to speak in his own person. That the guardian of the people (in spiritual things) should themselves be incompetent is an absurdity which amounts to the eternalization of absurdities."

So there are limitations on freedom! The citizen must pay his taxes and the clergyman must teach the catechism. But as a scholar a man is free to say and think what he likes. For, as in Bacon's Utopia, the scholars and the scientists must be given full rein. It is the dictatorship, not of the proletariat, but of the intellectuals, as in Plato's ideal state. Religion is a private matter, and is permissible in private (that is in one's church), but the public domain is the domain of the Enlightenment philosopher, where he is allowed to question and even contradict his private religious beliefs and teaching. And of course it is the public philosopher who represents truth, because he represents progress as against religious reaction.

"But would not a society of clergymen, perhaps a church conference or a venerable classis (as they call themselves among the Dutch), be justified in obligating itself by oath to a certain unchangeable symbol in order to enjoy an unceasing guardianship over each of its numbers and thereby over the people as a whole, and even to make it eternal? I answer that this is altogether impossible. Such contract, made to shut off all further enlightenment from the human race, is

absolutely null and void even if confirmed by the supreme power, by parliaments, and by the most ceremonious of peace treaties. An age cannot bind itself and ordain to put the succeeding one into such a condition that it cannot extend its (at best very occasional) knowledge purify itself of errors, and progress in general enlightenment. That would be a crime against human nature, the proper destination of which lies precisely in this progress and the descendants would be fully justified in rejecting those decrees as having been made in an unwarranted and malicious manner."

This is the other great dogma of the Enlightenment: Progress. Mankind is progressing, because the errors of one generation are corrected in the next by the guardians, the scholars and the scientists. No power can be allowed to stop this march of progress.

"The touchstone of everything that can be concluded as a law for a people lies in the question whether the people could have imposed such a law on itself. Now such religious compact might be possible for a short and definitely limited time, as it were, in expectation of a better. One might let every citizen, and especially the clergyman, in the role of scholar, make his comments freely and publicly, i.e. through writing, on the erroneous aspects of the present institution. The newly introduced order might last until insight into the nature of these things had become so general and widely approved that through uniting their voices (even if not unanimously) they could bring a proposal to the throne to take those congregations under protection which had united into a changed religious organization according to their better ideas, without, however hindering others who wish to remain in the order. But to unite in a permanent religious institution which is not to be subject to doubt before the public even in the lifetime of one man, and thereby to make a period of time fruitless in the progress of mankind toward improvement, thus working to the disadvantage of posterity - that is absolutely forbidden. For himself (and only for a short time) a man may postpone enlightenment in what he ought to know, but to renounce it for posterity is to injure and trample on the rights of mankind. And what a people may not decree for itself can even less be decreed for them by a monarch, for his lawgiving authority rests on his uniting the general public will in his own. If he only sees to it that all true or alleged improvement stands together with civil order, he can leave it to his subjects to do what they find necessary for their spiritual welfare. This is not his concern, though it is incumbent on him to prevent one of them from violently hindering another in determining and promoting this welfare to the best of his ability. To meddle in these matters lowers his own majesty, since by the writings in which his own subjects seek to present their views he may evaluate his own governance. He can do this when, with deepest understanding, he lays upon himself the reproach, *Caesar non est supra grammaticos*. Far more does he injure his own majesty when he degrades his supreme power by supporting the ecclesiastical despotism of some tyrants in his state over his other subjects."

Kant here characterizes as "absolutely forbidden" a church's remaining constant in its teaching and refusing to keep in step with the times. But Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, "is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13.8).

“If we are asked, ‘Do we now live in an enlightened age?’ the answer is, ‘No,’ but we do live in an age of enlightenment. As things now stand, much is lacking which prevents men from being, or easily becoming, capable of correctly using their own reason in religious matters with assurance and free from outside direction. But on the other hand, we have clear indications that the field has now been opened wherein men may freely deal with these things and that the obstacles to general enlightenment or the release from self-imposed tutelage are gradually being reduced. In this respect, this is the age of enlightenment, or the century of Frederick.

“A prince who does not find it unworthy of himself to say that he holds it to be his duty to prescribe nothing to men in religious matters but to give them complete freedom while renouncing the haughty name of tolerance, is himself enlightened and deserves to be esteemed by the grateful world and posterity as the first, at least from the side of government, who divested the human race of its tutelage and left each man free to make use of his reason in matters of conscience. Under him venerable ecclesiastics are allowed, in the role of scholar, and without infringing on their official duties, freely to submit for public testing their judgments and views which here and there diverge from the established symbol. And an even greater freedom is enjoyed by those who are restricted by no official duties. This spirit of freedom spreads beyond this land, even to those in which it must struggle with external obstacles erected by a government which misunderstands its own interest. For an example gives evidence to such a government that in freedom there is not the least cause for concern about public peace and the stability of the community. Men work themselves gradually out of barbarity if only intentional artifices are not made to hold them in it.”

Frederick is “Great” because he, more than any other ruler, allows the “scholars” publicly to question the foundations of the Christian faith without censorship. There is no danger in such “tolerance”, says Kant; for it is “those who are restricted by no official duties”, the intellectuals, who will lead men out of “barbarity” – that is, religious dogma.

“I have placed the main point of enlightenment - the escape of men from their self-incurred tutelage - chiefly in matters of religion because our rulers have no interest in playing guardian with respect to the arts and sciences and also because religious incompetence is not only the most harmful but also the most degrading of all. But the manner of thinking of the head of a state who favors religious enlightenment goes further, and he sees that there is no danger to his lawgiving in allowing his subjects to make public use of their reason and to publish their thoughts on a better formulation of his legislation and even their open-minded criticisms of the laws already made. Of this we have a shining example wherein no monarch is superior to him we honor.

“But only one who is himself enlightened, is not afraid of shadows, and has a numerous and well-disciplined army to assure public peace, can say: ‘Argue as much as you will, and about what you will, only obey!’ A republic could not dare say such a thing. Here is shown a strange and unexpected trend in human affairs in which almost everything, looked at in the large, is paradoxical. A greater degree of civil freedom appears advantageous to the freedom of mind of the people, and

yet it places inescapable limitations upon it. A lower degree of civil freedom, on the contrary, provides the mind with room for each man to extend himself to his full capacity. As nature has uncovered from under this hard shell the seed for which she most tenderly cares - the propensity and vocation to free thinking - this gradually works back upon the character of the people, who thereby gradually become capable of managing freedom; finally, it affects the principles of government, which finds it to its advantage to treat men, who are now more than machines, in accordance with their dignity."⁷⁷⁹

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To conclude: enlightened despotism, the despotism of Frederick the Great, was better than republicanism, according to Kant. But his reason for this preference was shallow and time-serving: it guaranteed, for as long as Frederick lived, greater freedom for the essentially atheist (or at any rate, Deist) ideas of the Enlightenment (after his death Prussia reverted to orthodox Lutheranism)... For Frederick himself was an atheist... But only nine years later would come the republican French revolution, an "Enlightenment" that was so dark and barbaric that it crushed freedom and rationality (if not rationalism) as no other state before it. So Kant's defence of enlightened despotism was revealed to be no more than a holding operation; the force of his ideas pointed in precisely the opposite direction, that of republicanism.

For, as Peter Singer has pointed out, the revolution revealed what happened "when people first ventured to strike down irrational institutions and build a new State based on purely rational principles. The leaders of the French Revolution understood reason in a purely abstract and universal sense which would not tolerate the natural dispositions of the community. The Revolution was the political embodiment Kant made in his purely abstract and universal conception of duty, which would not tolerate the natural side of human beings. In keeping with this pure rationalism the monarchy was abolished, and all other degrees of nobility as well. Christianity was replaced by the cult of Reason, and the old system of weights and measures abolished to make way for the more rational metric system. Even the calendar was reformed. The result was the Terror, in which the bare universal comes into conflict with the individual and negates him - or, to put it in less Hegelian terms, the State sees individuals as its enemies and puts them to death..."⁷⁸⁰

While enlightened despotism was a short-lived phase in European history, it posed a perennial temptation: the idea of a monarchical state dedicated exclusively to the material and/or emotional well-being of the people, without God or any spiritual principle to its existence. Christ the True King of all rejected this temptation in the wilderness when he refused to turn stones into bread. For, as He

⁷⁷⁹ Translated by Paul Halsall, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/kant-what-is.asp>.

⁷⁸⁰ Singer, "Hegel", pp. 151-152.

said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4.4).

It follows that states cannot survive through the provision of material benefits alone. Men are immortal, and have longings for God and eternal life. Christianity provided such a faith as long as the people believed in it. And it is a striking fact that Christianity, and especially Roman Catholicism, flourished even in the century of the Enlightenment. There were very large numbers of monks and nuns, of pilgrimages and religious processions, throughout Catholic Europe. And only towards the end of period did this faith begin to be persecuted.⁷⁸¹

But if neither the people nor the rulers believe in Christianity, what can take its place? One alternative is the deification of the nation or state itself, and this was the path Frederick's successors took. But between Frederick's enlightened despotism and the Prussian nationalism of the nineteenth century there was a logical and chronological gap. That gap was filled by the teaching of Herder and Rousseau, the French revolution and Napoleon...

We have said that the *philosophes* like Voltaire and Diderot were happy to work with the enlightened despots. However, this was a purely transitional phase, a tactical ploy that could not last long. For the principles of the *philosophes*, carried to their logical conclusion, led to the destruction of all monarchies.

This was clearest in the case of Rousseau, as we have seen; but even in Diderot, the friend of Catherine the Great, we find the following: "The arbitrary government of a just and enlightened prince is always bad. His virtues are the most dangerous and the most surely seductive: they insensibly accustom a people to love, respect and serve his successor, however wicked or stupid he might be. He takes away from the people the right of deliberating, of willing or not willing, of opposing even its own will when it ordains the good. However, this right of opposition, mad though it is, is sacred..."

"What is it that characterises the despot? Is it kindness or ill-will? Not at all: these two notions enter not at all into the definition. It is the extent of the authority he arrogates to himself, not its application. One of the greatest evils that could befall a nation would be two or three reigns by a just, gentle, enlightened, but arbitrary power: the peoples would be led by happiness to complete forgetfulness of their privileges, to the most perfect slavery..."⁷⁸²

"The right of opposition, mad though it is, is sacred"... Here we find the true voice of the revolution, however disguised in the clothes of reason. It welcomes madness, horror, misery, bloodshed on an unprecedented scale, so long as it is the expression of the right of the most venomous kind of opposition, that is, of satanic rebelliousness to established authority. And that madness, it must not be forgotten, was begotten in the Age of Reason, the age of sophisticated, elegant courtiers and

⁷⁸¹ Blanning, *op. cit.*, chapter 7.

⁷⁸² Diderot, *Refutation of Helvétius*, ed. Garnier, p. 610.

kings playing Bach and Mozart and speaking the voice of sweet reason and universal happiness...

55. THE COUNTER-ENLIGHTENMENT: KANT, HAMANN AND HERDER

The leading idea in the Prussian Counter-Enlightenment, as in every major innovation of thought in West European history since the Renaissance, was that of *freedom...*

We have seen how the whole development of western thought from the Renaissance onwards centred on the idea of freedom, of human autonomy and especially the autonomy of human reason. However, this development had led, by the second half of the eighteenth century, to a most paradoxical dead-end: to the conclusion that man, being a part of nature, is not free, but determined, and that the exercise of human reason is based on the most irrational leap of blind faith in objects and causes, without which we could not be assured of the existence of anything external to our own mind - which is in any case just a bundle of sensations. Kant, by a supreme exercise of that same free reasoning faculty, stanches the flow of irrationalism.

But at a price: the price of making man a kind of schizoid creature living on a razor blade between the noumenal and phenomenal realms. Yes, he says, man is a part of nature and determined, otherwise the science of man and the whole educational project of the Enlightenment would be impossible (and Kant remains an Enlightenment figure to the end). And yes, he says, man is free and uncaused, otherwise Christianity and morality would be impossible (and Kant remains a devout Lutheran to the end).

But the balance and synthesis he achieves between the two is hard to express and difficult to maintain. Thus in *Idea of a Universal History* (1984) he asserts that the human will is free, but "human actions... are determined by universal laws". This is an impossible distinction to maintain consistently, and succeeding generations preferred to go in one direction or the other: some down the Enlightenment path of seeking a Utopia on earth through science and rational social organisation, and others down the Romantic path of irrational, unfettered self-expression in both the private and the public spheres.

Thus "in his moral philosophy," writes Berlin, Kant lifted the lid "of a Pandora's box, which released tendencies which he was among the first, with perfect honesty and consistency, to disown and condemn. He maintained, as every German schoolboy used to know, that the moral worth of an act depended on its being freely chosen by the agent; that if a man acted under the influence of causes which he could not and did not control, whether external, such as physical compulsion, or internal, such as instincts or desires or passions, then the act, whatever its consequences, whether they were good or bad, advantageous or harmful to men, had no moral value, for the act had not been freely chosen, but was simply the effect of mechanical causes, an event in nature, no more capable of being judged in ethical terms than the behaviour of an animal or plant. If the determinism that reigns in nature - on which, indeed, the whole of natural science is based -

determines the acts of a human agent, he is not truly an agent, for to act is to be capable of free choice between alternatives; and free will must in that case be an illusion. Kant is certain that freedom of the will is not illusory but real. Hence the immense emphasis that he places on human autonomy – on the capacity for free commitment to rationally chosen ends. The self, Kant tells us, must be ‘raised above natural necessity’, for if men are ruled by the same laws as those which govern the material world ‘freedom cannot be saved’, and without freedom there is no morality.⁷⁸³

“Kant insists over and over again that what distinguishes man is his moral autonomy as against his physical heteronomy – for his body is governed by natural laws, not issuing from his own inner self. No doubt this doctrine owes a great deal to Rousseau, for whom all dignity, all pride rest upon independence. To be manipulated is to be enslaved. A world in which one man depends upon the favour of another is a world of masters and slaves, of bullying and condescension and patronage at one end, and obsequiousness, servility, duplicity and patronage at the other. But whereas Rousseau supposes that only dependence on other men is degrading, for no one resents the laws of nature, only ill will, the Germans went further. For Kant, total dependence on non-human nature – heteronomy – was incompatible with choice, freedom, morality. This exhibits a new attitude to nature, or at least the revival of an ancient [supposedly] Christian antagonism to it. The thinkers of the Enlightenment and their predecessors in the Renaissance (save for isolated antinomian mystics) tended to look upon nature as divine harmony, or as a great organic or artistic unity, or as an exquisite mechanism created by the divine watchmaker, or else as uncreated and eternal, but always as a model from which men depart at their cost. The principal need of man is to understand the external world and himself and the place that he occupies in the scheme of things: if he grasps this, he will not seek after goals incompatible with the needs of his nature, goals which he can follow only through some mistaken conception of what he is in himself, or of his relations to other men or the external world....

“Man is subject to the same kind of causal laws as animals and plants and the inanimate world, physical and biological laws, and in the case of men psychological and economic too, established by observation and experiment, measurement and verification. Such notions as the immortal soul, a personal God,

⁷⁸³ “Kant’s moral doctrines stressed the fact that determinism was not compatible with morality, since only those who are the true authors of their own acts, which they are free to perform or not perform, can be praised or blamed for what they do. Since responsibility entails power of choice, those who cannot freely choose are morally no more accountable than sticks and stones. Thereby Kant initiated a cut of moral autonomy, according to which only those who act and are not acted upon, whose actions spring from a decision of the moral will to be guided by freely adopted principles, if need be against inclination, and not from inescapable causal pressure of factors beyond their control – physical, physiological, psychological (such as emotion, desire, habit) – can properly be considered to be free, or, indeed, agents at all.

“This emphasis upon the will at the expense of contemplative thought and perception, which function within the predetermined grooves of the categories of the mind that man cannot escape, enters deeply into the German conception of moral freedom as entailing resistance to nature and not harmonious collusion with it” (Isaiah Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment”, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 258-259). (V.M.)

freedom of the will, are for them metaphysical fictions and illusions. But they are not so for Kant.

“The German revolt against France and French materialism has social as well as intellectual roots. Germany in the first half of the eighteenth century, and for more than a century before, even before the devastation of the Thirty Years War, had little share in the great renaissance of the West – her cultural achievement after the Reformation is not comparable to that of the Italians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of Spain and England in the age of Shakespeare and Cervantes, of the Low Countries in the seventeenth century, least of all of France, the France of poets, soldiers, statesmen, thinkers, which in the seventeenth century dominated Europe both culturally and politically, with only England and Holland as her rivals. What had the provincial German courts and cities, what had even Imperial Vienna, to offer?

“This sense of relative backwardness, of being an object of patronage or scorn to the French with their overweening sense of national and cultural superiority, created a sense of collective humiliation, later to turn into indignation and hostility, that sprang from wounded pride. The German reaction at first is to imitate French models, then to turn against them. Let the vain but godless French cultivate their ephemeral world, their material gains, their pursuit of glory, luxury, ostentation, the witty trivial chatter of the salons of Paris and the subservient court of Versailles. What is the worth of the philosophy of atheists or smooth, worldly abbés who do not begin to understand the true nature, the real purpose of men, their inner life, man’s deepest concerns – his relation to the soul within him, to his brothers, above all to God – the deep, the agonising questions of man’s being and vocation? Inward-looking German pietists abandoned French and Latin, turned to their native tongue, and spoke with scorn and horror of the glittering generalities of French civilisation, the blasphemous epigrams of Voltaire and his imitators. Still more contemptible were the feeble imitators of French culture, the caricature of French customs and taste in the little German principalities. German men of letters rebelled violently against the social oppression and stifling atmosphere of German society, of the despotic and often stupid and cruel German princes and princelings and their officials, who crushed or degraded the humbly born, particularly the most honest and gifted men among them, in the three hundred courts and governments into which Germany was then divided.

“This surge of indignation formed the heart of the movement that, after the name of a play by one of its members, was called *Sturm und Drang*. Their plays were filled with cries of despair or savage indignation, titanic explosions of rage or hatred, vast destructive passions, unimaginable crimes which dwarf the scenes of violence even in Elizabethan drama; they celebrate passion, individuality, strength, genius, self-expression at whatever cost, against whatever odds, and usually end in blood and crime, their only form of protest against a grotesque and odious social order. Hence all these violent heroes – the *Kraftmenschen*, *Kraftschreiber*, *Kraftkerl*, *Kraftknaben* – who march hysterically through the pages of Klinger, Schubart, Leisewitz, Lenz, Heinse and even the gentle Carl Philipp Moritz; until life began to imitate art, and the Swiss adventurer Christoph Kaufmann, a self-proclaimed

follower of Christ and Rousseau, who so impressed Herder, Goethe, Hamann, Wieland, Lavater, swept through the German lands with a band of unkempt followers, denouncing polite culture, and celebrating anarchic freedom, transported by wild and mystical public exaltation of the flesh and the spirit.

“Kant abhorred this kind of disordered imagination, and, still more, emotional exhibitionism and barbarous conduct. Although he too denounced the mechanistic psychology of the French Encyclopaedists as destructive of morality, his notion of the will is that of reason in action. He saves himself from subjectivism, and indeed irrationalism, by insisting that the will is truly free only so far as it wills the dictates of reason, which generate general rules binding on all rational men. It is when the concept of reason becomes obscure (and Kant never succeeded in formulating convincingly what this signified in practice), and only the independent will remains man’s unique possession whereby he is distinguished from nature, that the new doctrine becomes infected by the ‘stürmerisch’ mood. In Kant’s disciple, the dramatist and poet Schiller, the notion of freedom begins to move beyond the bounds of reason. Freedom is the central concept of Schiller’s early works. He speaks of ‘the legislator himself, the God within us’, of ‘high, demonic freedom’, ‘the pure demon within the man’. Man is most sublime when he resists the pressure of nature, when he exhibits ‘moral independence of natural laws in a condition of emotional stress’. It is will, not reason – certainly not feeling, which he shares with animals – that raises him above nature, and the very disharmony which may arise between nature and the tragic hero is not entirely to be deplored, for it awakens man’s sense of his independence.”⁷⁸⁴

Thus to the thesis of the godless worship of reason was opposed the antithesis of the demonic worship of will. Dissatisfied with the dry soullessness of the Enlightenment, western man would not go back to the sources of his civilization in Orthodoxy, but forward to – the Revolution, and the hellish torments of the Romantic hero.

For, as Francisco Goya said, “the sleep of Reason engenders monsters” ...

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“Nowhere was German amour propre more deeply wounded,” continues Berlin, “than in East Prussia, still semi-feudal and deeply traditionalist; nowhere was there deeper resentment of the policy of modernisation which Frederick the Great conducted by importing French officials who treated his simple and backward subjects with impatience and open disdain. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most gifted and sensitive sons of this province, Hamman, Herder, and Kant too [who was from the capital, Königsberg], are particularly

⁷⁸⁴ Berlin, “The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will”, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 561-564.

vehement in opposing the levelling activities of these morally blind imposers of alien methods on a pious, inward-looking culture."⁷⁸⁵

Hamann and Herder were the first thinkers explicitly to attack the whole Enlightenment enterprise. This attack was perhaps the first sign of that great cleavage within western culture that was to take the place of the Catholic/Protestant cleavage: the cleavage between the classical, rationalist and universalist spirit of the Latin lands, and the romantic, irrational and particularist spirit of the Germanic lands. (England with its dual Roman and Germanic inheritance stood somewhere in the middle).

"Hamann," writes Berlin, "was brought up as a pietist, a member of the most introspective and self-absorbed of all the Lutheran sects, intent upon the direct communion of the individual soul with God, bitterly anti-rationalist, liable to emotional excess, preoccupied with the stern demands of moral obligation and the need for severe self-discipline. The attempt of Frederick the Great in the middle years of the eighteenth century to introduce French culture and a degree of rationalisation, economic and social as well as military, into East Prussia, the most backward of his provinces, provoked a peculiarly violent reaction in this pious, semi-feudal, traditional Protestant society (which also gave birth to Herder and Kant). Hamann began as a disciple of the Enlightenment, but, after a profound spiritual crisis, turned against it, and published a series of polemical attacks written in a highly idiosyncratic, perversely allusive, contorted, deliberately obscure style, as remote as he could make it from the, to him, detestable elegance, clarity and smooth superficiality of the bland and arrogant French dictators of taste and thought. Hamann's theses rested on the conviction that all truth is particular, never general: that reason is impotent to demonstrate the existence of anything and is an instrument only for conveniently classifying and arranging data in patterns to which nothing in reality corresponds; that to understand is to be communicated with, by men or by God. The universe for him, as for the older German mystical tradition, is itself a kind of language. Things and plants and animals are themselves symbols with which God communicates with his creatures. Everything rests on faith; faith is as basic an organ of acquaintance with reality as the senses. To read the Bible is to hear the voice of God, who speaks in a language which he has given man the grace to understand. Some men are endowed with the gift of understanding his ways, of looking at the universe, which is his book no less than the revelations of the Bible and the fathers and saints of the Church. Only love – for a person or an object – can reveal the true nature of anything. It is not possible to love formulae, general propositions, laws, the abstractions of science, the vast system of concepts and categories – symbols too general to be close to reality – with which the French *lumières* have blinded themselves to the real experiences which only direct acquaintance, especially by the senses, provides.

"Hamann glories in the fact that Hume had successfully destroyed the rationalist claim that there is an a priori route to reality, insisting that all knowledge and belief ultimately rest on acquaintance with the data of direct perception. Hume

⁷⁸⁵ Berlin, "The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will", *op. cit.* p. 566.

rightly supposes that he could not eat an egg or drink a glass of water if he did not believe in their existence; the date of belief – what Hamann prefers to call faith – rest on grounds and require evidence as little as taste or any other sensation. True knowledge is direct perception of individual entities, and concepts are never, no matter how specific they may be, wholly adequate to the fullness of the individual experience. ‘Individuum est ineffabile’, wrote Goethe to Lavater in the spirit of Hamann, whom Goethe profoundly admired. The sciences may be of use in practical matters; but no concatenation of concepts will give an understanding of a man, of a work of art, of what is conveyed by gestures, symbols, verbal and non-verbal, of the style, the spiritual essence, of a human being, a movement, a culture; nor for that matter of the Deity, which speaks to one everywhere if only one has ears to hear and eyes to see.”⁷⁸⁶

“Hamann is first in the line of thinkers who accuse rationalism and scientism of using analysis to distort reality: he is followed by Herder, Jacobi, Mōser, who were influenced by Shaftesbury, Young and Burke’s anti-intellectualist diatribes, and they, in their turn, were echoed by romantic writers in many lands. The most eloquent spokesman of this attitude is Schelling, whose thought was reproduced vividly by Bergson at the beginning of this century. He is the father of those anti-rationalist thinkers for whom the seamless whole of reality in its unanalysable flow is misrepresented by the static, spatial metaphors of mathematics and the natural sciences. That to dissect is to murder is a romantic pronouncement which is the motto of an entire nineteenth-century movement of which Hamann was a most passionate and implacable forerunner. Scientific discussion leads to cold political dehumanisation, to the strait-jacket of lifeless French rules in which the living body of passionate and poetical Germans is to be held fast by the Solomon of Prussia, Frederick the Great, who knows too much and understands so little. The arch-enemy is Voltaire, whom Herder called a senile child with a corrosive wit in place of human feeling.”⁷⁸⁷

Following up on these insights, Hamann’s disciple Herder “believed that to understand anything was to understand it in its individuality and development, and that this required the capacity of *Einfühlung* (‘feeling into’) the outlook, the individual character of an artistic tradition, a literature, a social organisation, a people, a culture, a period of history. To understand the actions of individuals, we must understand the ‘organic’ structure of the society in terms of which alone the minds and activities and habits of its members can be understood. Like Vico, he believed that to understand a religion, or a work of art, or a national character, one must ‘enter into’ the unique conditions of its life... To grade the merits of cultural wholes, of the legacy of entire traditions, by applying a collection of dogmatic rules claiming universal validity, enunciated by the Parisian arbiters of taste, is vanity and blindness. Every culture has its own unique *Schwerpunkt* (‘centre of gravity’), and unless we grasp it we cannot understand its character or value...”⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁶ Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment”, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 248-

⁷⁸⁷ Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment”, pp. 251-252.

⁷⁸⁸ Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment”, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254.

As he wrote in *Auch eine Philosophie*: “How unspeakably difficult it is to convey the particular quality of an individual human being and how impossible it is to say precisely what distinguishes an individual, his way of feeling and living; how different and how individual [*anders und eigen*] everything becomes once his eyes see it, once his soul grasps it, his heart feels it. How much depth there is in the character of a single people, which, no matter how often observed, and gazed at with curiosity and wonder, nevertheless escapes the word which attempts to capture it, and, even with the word to catch it, is seldom so recognizable as to be universally understood and felt. If this is so, what happens when one tries to master an entire ocean of peoples, times, cultures, countries with one glance, one sentiment, by means of one single word!”⁷⁸⁹

This admirable sensitivity to the unique and unrepeatable was undoubtedly a needed corrective to the over-generalising and over-rationalising approach of the French *philosophes*. And in general Herder’s emphasis on warm, subjective feeling and the intuition of quality - “Heart! Warmth! Blood! Humanity! Life!” “I feel! I am!”⁷⁹⁰ - was a needed corrective to the whole rationalist emphasis on cold clarity, objectivity and the measurement of quantity that had come to dominate western thought since Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am”. From now on, owing in part to Herder, western thought would become more sensitive to the aesthetically intuited, as opposed to the scientifically analysed aspects of reality, to organic, living, historical wholes as well as to inorganic, dead, ahistorical parts.

It began, consequently, to understand the *Kultur* distinguishing individual nations from the *Zivilisation* that was common to them all. And so “Works of art from the European Enlightenment took as their subject matter other cultures, other countries and other climes, so as expressly to profile the shared humanity of the different peoples of the world. Examples like Montesquieu’s *Lettres Persanes*, Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise*, Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, MacPerson’s Ossian poems, Goethe’s *Westostlicher Divan*, and a thousand lesser creations remind us of the immense curiosity that grew in European and American society, towards the varieties of human experience and community.”⁷⁹¹

“Burke’s famous onslaught on the principles of the French revolutionaries was founded upon the self-same appeal to the myriad strands that bind human beings into a historically hallowed whole, contrasted with the Unitarian model of a society as a trading-company held together solely by contractual obligations, the world of ‘sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators’ who are blind and deaf to the unanalysable relationships that make a family, a tribe, a nation, a movement, any association of human beings held together by something more than a quest for mutual advantage, or by force, or by anything that is not mutual love, common history, emotion and outlook.”⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁹ Herder, in Berlin, “Herder and the Enlightenment”, in *The Proper Study of Man*, London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 405.

⁷⁹⁰ Herder, in Berlin, “Herder and the Enlightenment”, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

⁷⁹¹ Sir Roger Scruton, *How to be a Conservative*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 81.

⁷⁹² Berlin, “The Counter-Enlightenment”, pp. 256-257.

Nevertheless, Herder was as unbalanced in his way as the philosophers were in theirs. This is particularly evident in his relativism, his idea that every nation and culture was not only unique, but also incommensurable – that is, it could not be measured by universal standards of truth and falsehood, right and wrong. As he wrote: “Not one man, country, people, national history, or State, is like another. Hence the True, the Beautiful, the Good in them are not similar either.”⁷⁹³ If Herder has been unjustly accused of being an ancestor of German fascist nationalism, he cannot so easily be absolved of being one of the fathers of the modern denial of universal truths and values, of the multiculturalism that has so eaten into and corroded modern western civilization. Indeed, Hamann’s and Herder’s thesis that “all truth is particular, never general” is at the root of the identity politics that began to torture the western world towards the end of the twentieth century.

⁷⁹³ Herder, in Berlin, “Herder and the Enlightenment”, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

CONCLUSION. THE DARK HEART OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

There were obvious deficiencies in the optimistic view of the world presented by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. In the first place, it failed to explain the existence of evil – prejudice as the result of lack of development or reason and education could account only for the less serious forms of evil, not the satanic depths of the heart of man – which is precisely why God was about to unleash those satanic depths in the French Revolution, as a demonstration of the ultimate feebleness and superficiality of Enlightenment culture.

Again, if this was the best of all possible worlds, as Leibniz claimed, why did the terrible earthquake of Lisbon in 1755 take place? Some fault in the harmony of God's laws? Or a deliberate irruption of God's wrath into a sinful world? In either case one had to admit, with Voltaire himself, that "the world does, after all, contain evil", and that either nature was *not* harmonious and perfect, or that God *did* intervene in its workings – postulates that were both contrary to the Enlightenment creed.

Another problem was that the Enlightenment failed to satisfy the cravings of the religious man; for man is not only a *rational* animal, but also a *religious* animal. And when his religious nature is denied, there is always a reaction. For, as Sir Roger Scruton writes, "Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists, Hume, Smith, and the Scottish Enlightenment, the Kant of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* – such thinkers and movements had collectively remade the God of Christianity as a creature of the head rather than the heart. God retreated from the world to the far reaches of infinite space, where only vertiginous thoughts could capture him. Daily life is of little concern to such a God, who demands no form of obedience except to the universal precepts of morality... As God retreated from the world, people reached out for a rival source of membership, and national identity seemed to answer to the need..."⁷⁹⁴

Already in the first half of the eighteenth century the religious cravings suppressed by Enlightenment rationalism were seeking outlets in more emotional forms of religion, the very opposite of enlightened calm. Such were Methodism in England and Pietism in Germany, Revivalism and the Great Awakening in America and "Convulsionarism" in France. In some ways, however, these very emotional, passionate forms of religion worked in the same direction as the cult of reason. They, too, tended to minimise the importance of theology and dogma, and to maximise the importance of man and human activity and human passion. Thus in American Revivalism, writes Cragg, "conversion was described in terms of how a man felt, the new life was defined in terms of how he acted. This was more than an emphasis on the moral consequences of obedience to God; it was a preoccupation with man, and it became absorbed in what he did and in the degree

⁷⁹⁴ Scruton, *The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat*, London: Continuum, 2002, p. 43.

to which he promoted righteousness. In a curious way man's activity was obscuring the cardinal fact of God's rule."⁷⁹⁵

The French revolution was to bring together the two streams of the Enlightenment: rationalist secularism and irrational religion in a single, torrential rebellion against God...

The rationalists became adept at explaining religion in naturalistic terms. Religion was simply a "need", no different in principle from other needs, as Freud later tried to demonstrate. Of course, no religious person will find such explanations even remotely convincing. But it must be admitted that, unconvincing though their explanations might be, the Enlightenment philosophers managed to convince enough people to create whole generations of men possessing not even a spark of that religious "enthusiasm" which they so despised.

Were they happier for it? Hardly. Condorcet wrote: "The time will come when the sun will shine only upon a world of free men who recognise no master except their reason, when tyrants and slaves, priests, and their stupid or hypocritical tools will no longer exist except in history or on the stage". That time has not yet come. Most men do indeed "recognise no master except their reason". But there are still tyrants and slaves (and priests) - and no discernible decrease in human misery.

Moreover, there was not just unhappiness - the accompaniment of most ages of human history: there was something deeper and darker, a madness underlying the urbane and sophisticated surface of Enlightenment Europe. The greatest thinkers and artists of the age could not fail to be sensitive to this madness, just waiting to break out in the horrors of the French revolution. We sense it, for example, in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, where the Don is dragged screaming into the fire of hell by demons.

Still more horrifying, because happening in real life to the most famous and typical representative of the age, was the death of Voltaire: "When Voltaire felt the stroke that he realized must terminate in death, he was overpowered with remorse. He at once sent for the priest, and wanted to be 'reconciled with the church.' His infidel flatterers hastened to his chamber to prevent his recantation; but it was only to witness his ignominy and their own. He cursed them to their faces; and, as his distress was increased by their presence, he repeatedly and loudly exclaimed, 'Begone! It is you that have brought me to my present condition. Leave me, I say; begone! What a wretched glory is this which you have produced to me!'

"Hoping to allay his anguish by a written recantation, he had it prepared, signed it, and saw it witnessed. But it was all unavailing. For two months he was tortured with such an agony as led him at times to gnash his teeth in impotent rage against God and man. At other times in plaintive accents, he would plead, 'O, Christ! O, Lord Jesus!' Then, turning his face, he would cry out, 'I must die - abandoned of God and of men!'

⁷⁹⁵ Cragg, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

“As his end drew near, his condition became so frightful that his infidel associates were afraid to approach his bedside. Still they guarded the door, that others might not know how awfully an infidel was compelled to die. Even his nurse repeatedly said, ‘For all the wealth of Europe I would never see another infidel die.’ It was a scene of horror that lies beyond all exaggeration. Such is the well-attested end of the one who had a natural sovereignty of intellect, excellent education, great wealth, and much earthly honour.”⁷⁹⁶

The immediate result of the Enlightenment was the French revolution and all the revolutions that took their inspiration from it, with all their attendant bloodshed and misery, destroying both the bodies and souls of men on a hitherto unprecedented scale. Science and education have indeed spread throughout the world, but poverty has not been abolished, nor war nor disease nor crime. If it were possible to measure “happiness” scientifically, then it is highly doubtful whether the majority of men are any happier now than they were before the bright beams of the Enlightenment began to dawn on the world.

It is especially the savagery of the twentieth century that has convinced us of this. As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer write: “In the most general sense of progressive thought the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant.”⁷⁹⁷ And as Nadezhda Mandelstam writes: “We have seen the triumph of evil after the values of humanism have been vilified and trampled on. The reason these values succumbed was probably that they were based on nothing except boundless confidence in the human intellect.”⁷⁹⁸

And the reason why “boundless confidence in the human intellect” has brought us to this pass is that, as L.A. Tikhomirov writes, the cult of reason “very much wants to establish worldly prosperity, it very much wants to make people happy, but it will achieve nothing, because it approaches the problem from the wrong end.

“It may appear strange that people who think only of earthly prosperity, and who put their whole soul into realising it, attain only disillusionment and exhaustion. People who, on the contrary, are immersed in cares about the invisible life beyond the grave, attain here, on earth, results constituting the highest examples yet known on earth of personal and social development! However, this strangeness is self-explanatory. The point is that *man* is by his nature precisely the kind of being that Christianity understands him to be *by faith*; the aims of life that are indicated to him *by faith* are precisely the kind of aims that he has in reality, and not the kind that reason divorced from faith delineates. Therefore in educating a man in accordance with the Orthodox world-view, we conduct his education *correctly*, and thence we get results that are good not only in that which is most

⁷⁹⁶ Rev. S.B. Shaw, *Dying Testimonies of Saved and Unsaved*, pp. 49-50.

⁷⁹⁷ Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1972, p. 3; in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, London: Cassell, 2004, p. 487.

⁷⁹⁸ Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope against Hope*.

important [salvation] (which unbelievers do not worry about), but also in that which is secondary (which is the only thing they set their heart on). In losing *faith*, and therefore ceasing to worry about the most important thing, people lost the possibility of developing man in accordance with his true nature, and so they get distorted results in earthly life, too."⁷⁹⁹

The problem is that "reason is a subordinate capacity. If it is not directed by the lofty single organ of religious perception – the feeling of faith, it will be directed by the lower strivings, which are infinitely numerous. Hence all the heresies, all the 'fractions', all contemporary reasonings, too. This is a path of seeking which we can beforehand predict will lead to endless disintegration, splintering and barrenness in all its manifestations, and so in the end it will only exhaust people and lead them to a false conviction that in essence religious truth *does not exist*."⁸⁰⁰

And yet such a conclusion will be reached only if the concept of reason is limited in a completely arbitrary manner. For, as Copleston points out, the Enlightenment philosophers' idea of reason "was limited and narrow. To exercise reason meant for them pretty well to think as the *philosophes* thought; whereas to anyone who believes that God has revealed Himself it is rational to accept this revelation and irrational to reject it."⁸⁰¹

The complement to the philosophers' belief in a very narrow concept of reason, - that is, rationalism, - was their belief that the only thing that really exists is that which is subject to rational analysis - that is, nature. And since neither God, nor the soul, nor the principles of morality are derivable from rational analysis of nature (Hume demonstrated that), the only basis for morality had to be the impulses of human nature - without being able to prefer benevolent to malevolent impulses. Only by entering the *Tao*, in C.S. Lewis's language, - that is, the realm of commonly accepted revelation rather than narrow reason - can the "Conditioners" (the naturalist educators), derive a morality that commends the good and condemns the evil. For "what is not conjecture is that our hope even of a 'conditioned' happiness rests on what is ordinarily called 'chance' - the chance that benevolent impulses may on the whole predominate in our Conditioners. For without the judgment 'Benevolence is good' - that is, without re-entering the *Tao* - they can have no ground for promoting or stabilizing these impulses rather than any others. By the logic of their position they must just take their impulses as they come, from chance. And Chance here means Nature. It is from heredity, digestion, the weather, and the association of ideas, that the motives of the Conditioners will spring. Their extreme rationalism, by 'seeing through' all 'rational' motives, leaves them creatures of wholly irrational behaviour. If you will not obey the *Tau*, or else commit suicide, obedience to impulse (and therefore, in the long run, to mere 'nature') is the only course left open."⁸⁰²

⁷⁹⁹ Tikhomirov, "Dukhovenstvo i obshchestvo v sovremennom religioznom dvizhenii" ("The Clergy and Society in the Contemporary Religious Movement"), in *Khristianstvo i Politika* (Christianity and Politics), Moscow, 1999, pp. 30-31.

⁸⁰⁰ Tikhomirov, "Dukhovenstvo i obshchestvo...", *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁸⁰¹ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 6, part II, New York: Image Books, 1964, p. 209.

⁸⁰² Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (1941), *The Complete C.S. Lewis*, HarperSanFrancisco, 2002, p. 724.

The Enlightenment philosophers not only narrowed the concept of reason: they deified it, thereby reducing it to absurdity. This has been well demonstrated by C.S. Lewis in relation to Marxism and Freudianism. But his argument applies generally to all attempts to enthrone narrow reason above everything else:-

“It is a disastrous discovery, as Emerson says somewhere, that we exist. I mean, it is disastrous when instead of merely attending to a rose we are forced to think of ourselves looking at the rose, with a certain type of mind and a certain type of eyes. It is disastrous because, if you are not very careful, the colour of the rose gets attributed to our optic nerves and its scent to our noses, and in the end there is no rose left. The professional philosophers have been bothered about this universal black-out for over two hundred years, and the world has not much listened to them. But the same disaster is now occurring on a level we can all understand.

“We have recently ‘discovered that we exist’ in two new senses. The Freudians have discovered that we exist as bundles of complexes. The Marxians have discovered that we exist as members of some economic class. In the old days, it was supposed that if a thing seemed obviously true to a hundred men, then it was probably true in fact. Nowadays the Freudian will tell you to go and analyze the hundred: you will find that they all think Elizabeth [I] a great queen because they have a mother-complex. Their thoughts are psychologically tainted at the source. And the Marxist will tell you to go and examine the economic interests of the hundred; you will find that they all think freedom a good thing because they are all members of the bourgeoisie whose prosperity is increased by a policy of *laissez-faire*. Their thoughts are ‘ideologically tainted’ at the source.

“Now this is obviously great fun; but it has not always been noticed that there is a bill to pay for it. There are two questions that people who say this kind of things ought to be asked. The first is, Are *all* thoughts thus tainted at the source, or only some? The second is, Does the taint invalidate the tainted thought – in the sense of making it untrue – or not?

“If they say that *all thoughts* are thus tainted, then, of course, we must remind them that Freudianism and Marxism are as much systems of thought as Christian theology or philosophical idealism. The Freudian and the Marxist are in the same boat with all the rest of us, and cannot criticize us from outside. They have sawn off the branch they were sitting on. If, on the other hand, they say that the taint need not invalidate their thinking, then neither need it invalidate ours. In which case they have saved their own branch, but also saved ours along with it.

“The only line they can really take is to say that some thoughts are tainted and others are not – which has the advantage (if Freudians and Marxians regard it as an advantage) of being what every sane man has always believed. But if that is so, then we must ask how you find out which are tainted and which are not. It is no earthly use saying that those are tainted which agree with the secret wishes of the thinker. *Some* of the things I should like to believe must in fact be true; it is impossible to arrange a universe which contradicts everyone’s wishes, in every

respect, at every moment. Suppose I think, after doing my accounts, that I have a large balance at the bank. And suppose you want to find out whether this belief of mine is 'wishful thinking'. You can never come to any conclusion by examining my psychological condition. Your only chance of finding out is to sit down and work through the sum yourself. When you have checked my figures, then, and then only, will you know whether I have that balance or not. If you find my arithmetic correct, then no amount of vapouring about my psychological condition can be anything but a waste of time. If you find my arithmetic wrong, then it may be relevant to explain psychologically how I came to be so bad at my arithmetic, and the doctrine of the concealed wish will become relevant – but only *after* you have yourself done the sum and discovered me to be wrong on purely arithmetical grounds. It is the same with thinking and all systems of thought. If you try to find out which are tainted by speculating about the wishes of the thinkers, you are merely making a fool of yourself. You must find out on purely logical grounds which of them do, in fact, break down as arguments. Afterwards, if you like, go on and discover the psychological causes of the error.

“In other words, you must show *that* a man is wrong before you start explaining *why* he is wrong. The modern method is to assume without discussion *that* he is wrong and then distract his attention from this (the only real issue) by busily explaining how he became so silly. In the course of the last fifteen years I have found this vice so common that I have had to invent a name for it. I call it Bulverism. Some day I am going to write the biography of its imaginary inventor, Ezekiel Bulver, whose destiny was determined at the age of five when he heard his mother say to his father – who had been maintaining that two sides of a triangle were together greater than the third – ‘Oh you say that *because you are a man.*’ ‘At that moment,’ E. Bulver assures us, ‘there flashed across my opening mind the great truth that refutation is no necessary part of argument. Assume that your opponent is wrong, and then explain his error, and the world will be at your feet. Attempt to prove that he is wrong or (worse still) try to find out whether he is wrong or right, and the national dynamism of our age will thrust you to the wall.’ This is how Bulver became one of the makers of the Twentieth Century.

“I find the fruits of his discovery almost everywhere. Thus I see my religion dismissed on the grounds that ‘the comfortable parson had every reason for assuring the nineteenth century worker that poverty would be rewarded in another world’. Well, no doubt he had. On the assumption that Christianity is an error, I can see early enough that some people would still have a motive for inculcating it. I see it so easily that I can, of course, play the game the other way round, by saying that ‘the modern man has every reason for trying to convince himself that there are no eternal sanctions behind the morality he is rejecting’. For Bulverism is a truly democratic game in the sense that all can play it all day long, and that it gives no unfair privilege to the small and offensive minority who reason. But of course it gets us not one inch nearer to deciding whether, as a matter of fact, the Christian religion is true or false. That question remains to be discussed on quite different grounds – a matter of philosophical and historical argument. However it were decided, the improper motives of some people, both for believing it and for disbelieving it, would remain just as they are.

“I see Bulverism at work in every political argument. The capitalists must be bad economists because we know why they want capitalism, and equally the Communists must be bad economists because we know why they want Communism. Thus, the Bulverists on both sides. In reality, of course, either the doctrines of the capitalists are false, or the doctrines of the Communists, or both; but you can only find out the rights and wrongs by reasoning – never by being rude about your opponent’s psychology.

“Until Bulverism is crushed, reason can play no effective part in human affairs. Each side snatches it early as a weapon against the other; but between the two reason itself is discredited. And why should reason not be discredited? It would be easy, in answer, to point to the present state of the world, but the real answer is even more immediate. The forces discrediting reason, themselves depend on reasoning. You must reason even to Bulverize. You are trying to *prove* that all *proofs* are invalid. If you fail, you fail. If you succeed, then you fail even more – for the proof that all proofs are invalid must be invalid itself.

“The alternative is either self-contradicting idiocy or else some tenacious belief in our power of reasoning, held in the teeth of all the evidence... I am ready to admit, if you like, that this tenacious belief has something transcendental or mystical about it. What then? Would you rather be a lunatic than a mystic?

“So we see there is a justification for holding on to our belief in Reason. But can this be done without theism? Does ‘I know’ involve that God exists? Everything I know is an inference from sensation (except the present moment). All our knowledge of the universe beyond our immediate experiences depends on inferences from these experiences. If our inferences do not give a genuine insight into reality, then we can know nothing. A theory cannot be accepted if it does not allow our thinking to be a genuine insight, nor if the fact of our knowledge is not explicable in terms of that theory.

“But our thoughts can only be accepted as a genuine insight under certain conditions. All beliefs have causes but a distinction must be drawn between (1) ordinary causes and (2) a special kind of cause called ‘a reason’. Causes are mindless events which can produce other results than belief. Reasons arise from axioms and inferences and affect only beliefs. Bulverism tries to show that the other man has causes and not reasons and that we have reasons and not causes. A belief which can be accounted for entirely in terms of causes is worthless. This principle must not be abandoned when we consider the beliefs which are the basis of others. Our knowledge depends on the certainty about axioms and inferences. If these are the result of causes, then there is no possibility of knowledge. Either we can know nothing or thought has reasons only, and no causes...

“It is admitted that the mind is affected by physical events; a wireless set is influenced by atmospherics, but it does not originate its deliverances – we’d take notice of it if we thought it did. Natural events we can relate to another until we

can trace them finally to the space-time continuum. But thought has no father but thought. It is conditioned, yes, not caused...

“The same argument applies to our values, which are affected by social factors, but if they are caused by them we cannot know that they are right. One can reject morality as an illusion, but the man who does so often tacitly excepts his own ethical motive: for instance the duty of freeing morality from superstition and of spreading enlightenment.

“Neither Will nor Reason is the product of Nature. Therefore either I am self-existent (a belief which no one can accept) *or* I am a colony of some Thought or Will that are self-existent. Such reason and goodness as we can attain must be derived from a self-existent Reason and Goodness outside ourselves, in fact, a Supernatural...”⁸⁰³

Thus Lewis does not decry Reason, but vindicates it, by showing that *Reason is independent of Nature*. However, in doing this he shatters the foundations of Enlightenment thinking, and therefore also of the modern world-view, which is based on the Enlightenment. This world-view is based on the following axioms, which Lewis has shown to be false: (a) Truth and Goodness are attainable by Reason alone, without the need for Divine Revelation; and (b) Reason, as a function of Man, and not of God, is entirely a product of Nature. Lewis demonstrates that even if (a) were true, which it is not, it could only be true if (b) were false. But the Enlightenment insisted that both were true, and therefore condemned the whole movement of western thought founded upon it to sterility and degeneration and, ultimately, nihilism.

The whole tragedy of western man since the Enlightenment – which, through European colonization and globalization has become the tragedy of the whole world - is that in exalting himself and the single, fallen faculty of his mind to a position of infallibility, he has denied himself his true dignity and rationality, making him a function of irrational nature – in effect, sub-human. But man is great, not because he can reason in the sense of ratiocinate, that is, make deductions and inferences from axioms and empirical evidence, but because he can reason in accordance with the Reason that created and sustains all things, that is, the Word and Wisdom of God in Whose image he was made. It is when man tries to make his reason autonomous, independent of its origin and inspiration in the Divine Reason, that he falls to the level of rationalism and irrationality. For *Man, being in honour, did not understand; he is compared to the mindless cattle, and is become like unto them (Psalm 48.12)*.

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⁸⁰³ Lewis, “‘Bulverism’ or the Foundation of 20th Century Thought”, in *God in the Dock*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 271-275, 276. Lewis developed this important argument in other works of his such as *Mere Christianity* and *The Problem of Pain*.

A major argument against this conclusion is that European civilization at the end of the eighteenth century was enriched not only by the rapid advances in science and technology encouraged by the rationalist climate of the Enlightenment, but also by the continuing output of astonishing artistic geniuses. Was this not, many thought, a kind of justification of western civilization? After all, the Renaissance had excelled especially in the visual arts, in the compositions of such men as Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael, while in the literary arts there shone the unequalled star of Shakespeare. The torrent of genius continued flowing in the seventeenth century, with Rembrandt and the French dramatists. Then in the eighteenth century came the baroque geniuses Bach and Handel and Vivaldi, followed by Haydn and Mozart.

And yet what great civilization – “great” in the sense of powerful, stable and self-confident – has not produced great art? Ming China, like every earlier phase of China’s long, long culture, produced wonderful vases. Japan produced Kyoto and exquisite line paintings. Mughal India produced the Taj Mahal. Ottoman Turkey produced the Blue Mosque. Classical Greece produced the Parthenon. Imperial Rome produced the Pantheon. Christian Rome produced Hagia Sophia and iconography.

It appears that God gives the gift of artistic genius to all great civilizations. This fact in itself tells us an important lesson. *Genius is not a function of the true faith, and operates independently of it.* It may even operate more abundantly outside of it. Thus Mozart’s church music, by common consent, is not his best genre. His best works in that genre – the Mass in C Minor and the Requiem Mass in D Minor – both remained unfinished at his death, as if his heart were not in it. On the other hand, the last work he completed was a Masonic Cantata, and the Masonic music in his last opera, *The Magic Flute*, is back to his best level, as if his heart really *were* in it. A second lesson, therefore, is: *the presence of a genius in a culture tells little or nothing of the quality of that culture – or of the genius himself – from God’s point of view.*

What, then, is the purpose of genius, at any rate in the age of the Enlightenment, in the scheme of Divine Providence? Here we venture a very tentative hypothesis, possibly quite wrong, which we nevertheless claim to be consistent with an Orthodox view of Enlightenment culture. That culture, as we have seen, tended towards Deism in theology – ultimately, atheism. But truth and goodness, as C.S. Lewis teaches us, presuppose a realm *above* nature and above the causal nexus revealed by science. The greatest works of artistic genius tend towards the same conclusion; they cannot be understood in empirical terms.

From the time of Classical Greece, artistic genius has been associated with the gods known as the Muses. We do not need to assume that all works of genius are inspired by God; it is obvious in many cases that they are not. What we do seem to be assuming, however, when we use the term “genius”, is that ordinary processes of spatio-temporal causation cannot explain the work of genius. Its existence points to a realm above nature and above the causal nexus. And this may be precisely the reason why God through His Providence (as opposed to His direct inspiration) sprinkles works of genius so widely among the civilizations and peoples. When

men are tempted to believe only in the empirical, the material, the here-and-now, - and this temptation was especially great in the age of Enlightenment - then the irrefutable fact of genius draws them sharply before the transcendental, the supra-natural, the inexplicable in purely material terms.

For, faced with the genius of Mozart's music, who that has any sensitivity to music can doubt that God exists? Genius even protects against some of the crudest errors of thought, such as racism. For a single work of undeniable genius from a nation that before was considered inferior or sub-human is enough to dispel that error for ever. Could that be why, at a time when anti-semitism was on the rise in such a dangerous way, God allowed so many of the greatest practitioners of the early twentieth century in so many of the arts and sciences to be Jews? When contemplating the whole range of genius, there can be no inferiors, no duds, only universal astonishment at the greatness of God's creation: "I will confess Thee, for awesomely art Thou wondrous; marvellous are Thy works, and my soul knoweth it right well" (Psalms 138.13).

For the great majority of people the genius of artists like Mozart meant much less than the undermining of their traditional, religious way of life. For so many people, the Age of Humanism was simply inhumane, and the Age of Reason - inexplicably irrational. The great tragedy of the Enlightenment is that while it emancipated the scope of man's inborn faculties, legitimately, to explore the universe, it lost the sense of wonder at what it had discovered, and instead of ascribing the glory to God narrowed and darkened its mind to the contemplation only of itself, as if man existed independently of his Creator...