

**THE AGE OF FASCISM**  
**(1925-1945)**

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

*Vladimir Moss*

*Cruel are the times, when we are traitors,  
And do not know ourselves.*  
Shakespeare, Macbeth.

*The Lord has revealed to me, wretched Seraphim, that there will be great woes in the Russian land: the Orthodox Faith will be trampled on, the hierarchs of the Church of God and other spiritual persons will fall away from the purity of Orthodoxy, and for that the Lord will punish them terribly. I, wretched Seraphim, besought the Lord for three days and nights that He would rather deprive me of the Kingdom of Heaven but have mercy on them. But the Lord replied: 'I will not have mercy on them, for they teach human teachings and honour me with their lips but their hearts are far from Me.'*

St. Seraphim of Sarov (+1833).

*Now I shall go to sleep deeply and for a long time. The night will be long, and very dark...*

Last words of Hieromartyr Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow (+1925).

*Everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.*  
Mussolini (1925).

*The whole world is wet with mutual blood. And murder, which in the case of an individual is admitted to be a crime, is called a virtue when it is committed wholesale. Impunity is claimed for the wicked deeds, not on the plea that they are guiltless, but because the cruelty is perpetrated on a grand scale.*

St. Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle 1.6.

*In vain do you believe in world revolution. Throughout the cultured world you are sowing, not revolution, but Fascism – and with great success. There was no Fascism before your revolution... All the other countries by no means want to see among themselves what was and is with us. And of course, they are learning to apply in time, as a warning, what you used and are using – terror and violence... Yes, under your indirect influence Fascism is gradually seizing the whole of the cultured world with the exception of the powerful Anglo-Saxon sector...*

Holy New Martyr and Academician Ivan Popov.

*Communism is the greatest world evil that human history has ever seen. It destroys society and age-old Christian culture and in its place creates the kingdom of the beast wherever it succeeds in establishing its mastery. This is as obvious as its nature is without doubt one and the same at all times and in all places: on whatever soil its seeds may grow: on Russian, Spanish, Serbian soil, it everywhere produces one and the same poisonous fruits that kill the soul and the body both of the individual person and of the whole people.*

Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky).

*It is well the people of the nation do not understand our banking and monetary system, for if they did, I believe there would be a revolution before tomorrow morning.*

Henry Ford.

*Progress should mean that we are always striving to change the world so that it fits the vision; instead, we seem more intent on changing the vision.*  
G.K. Chesterton.

*Stalin has delivered the goods to an extent that seemed impossible ten years ago. Jesus Christ has come down to earth. He is no longer an idol. People are gaining some kind of idea of what would happen if He lived now...*  
George Bernard Shaw, The Rationalization of Russia (1931).

*For liberation, something more is necessary than an economic policy, something more than industry. If a people is to become free, it needs pride and will-power, defiance, hate, hate and once again hate.*  
Adolf Hitler.

*The whole of National Socialism is based on Marx.*  
Adolf Hitler.

*Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer for himself as it was with the forefathers!*  
Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov (+1937).

*As Hannah Arendt wrote in her 1951 book The Origins of Totalitarianism, the ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e. the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e. the standards of thought) no longer exists.*  
Michiko Kakutani, Truth Decay.

*Hitler's democratic triumph exposed the true nature of democracy. Democracy has few values of its own: it is as good, or as bad, as the principles of the people who operate it. In the hands of liberal and tolerant people, it will produce a liberal and tolerant government; in the hands of cannibals, a government of cannibals. In Germany in 1933-34 it produced a Nazi government because the prevailing culture of Germany's voters did not give priority to the exclusion of gangsters...*  
Norman Davies (1997).

*Patriotism does not call for the subjugation of the universe; liberating your people does not at all imply overtaking and wiping out your neighbours.*  
Ivan Ilyin.

*The practice of Communist states and... Fascist states... leads to a novel conception of the truth and of disinterested ideals in general, which would hardly have been intelligible to previous centuries. To adopt it is to hold that outside the purely technical sphere (where one asks only what are the most efficient means towards this or that practical end) words like 'true', or 'right', or 'free', and the concepts which*

*they denote, are to be defined in terms of the only activity recognized as valuable, namely, the organization of society as a smoothly-working machine providing for the needs of such of its members as are permitted to survive...*

Sir Isaiah Berlin.

*This collective organism, the nation, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows at the same rate, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls.*

Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of New York (+1964).

*Stalin had eliminated private property and made himself responsible for the Soviet equivalents of Washington, Wall Street, and Hollywood all rolled in one, and all rolled into one person, an extreme despotism.*

Stephen Kotkin, Stalin. Waiting for Hitler (2018).

*Feminism is the idea that women are free when they serve their employer, but slaves when they serve their husband.*

G.K. Chesterton.

*We feel the public are being deceived. Evolution propaganda does not present the facts impartially; it dwells upon those which favour the theory, while suppressing those which oppose it. Such are not the methods of true, but of false, science. Few people realise that the tactics which Evolution employs should be regarded as 'special pleading' in a Court of Law; and that many scientists have declared that Evolution is both unproved and unprovable.*

The Evolution Protest Movement (1932).

*[Democracy is] an organization to contend with God and Christianity, the Church, the national public, especially the Christian state. In this international organization the first place of power belongs to the Jews, inherent to theomachy and the death of God in the West.*

Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky (1932).

*In the European West, Christianity gradually became transformed into humanism. For several centuries the God-man became more and more limited and confined to His humanity, eventually becoming the infallible man of Rome and of Berlin. Thus, on the one hand there appeared a western Christian humanistic maximalism (the papacy) which took everything away from Christ, and on the other hand a western Christian humanistic minimalism (Protestantism) which sought very little if anything from Christ. In both man takes the place of the God-man as that which is of most value and is the measure of all things.*

Archimandrite Justin Popovich (+1979).



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## INTRODUCTION

This book is the tenth volume in my series, *An Essay in Universal History from an Orthodox Christian Point of View*. It covers the period from 1925 to 1945, when the terrible totalitarian twins, Fascism and Communism, ravaged Europe and then turned against each other, until Stalin finally overthrew Hitler in 1945. It traces the continuing decay of Liberal Democracy together with its recovery under Roosevelt and Churchill – but at the cost of its own transformation, under the pressure of war and economic depression, into semi-socialism, which was consolidated, in Britain, by the victory of the socialist Labour Party in 1945.

The seventh volume in this series was entitled “The Age of Socialism” because it encompassed the peak of the career of the chief ideologues of socialism, Marx and Engels, and the rise of welfare socialism in Germany and Western Europe. This volume is entitled “The Age of Fascism” because it encompasses the Fascist and Communist regimes of the twentieth, both of which have a distinctly nationalist colouring in this period – more obviously in the case of Hitler’s National Socialism, less obviously but no less definitely in the case of Stalin’s “Socialism in One Country”; for Stalin transformed the internationalism of Lenin’s revolution into a kind of Soviet nationalism, which reached its apotheosis in 1945. Indeed, as the early careers of Mussolini show, Fascism was an early offspring or mutation of internationalist Socialism. For, as Soviet academic and holy new martyr Ivan Popov wrote: “In vain do you believe in world revolution. Throughout the cultured world you are sowing, not revolution, but Fascism – and with great success. There was no Fascism before your revolution.”

Besides the liberal democracies of the West, and the national socialisms of Hitler and Stalin, there still existed the remnants of a third type of governance, Orthodox Autocracy: the monarchies of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, all of which were destroyed within a short period of the Red Army’s overrunning the Balkans. However, the Orthodox *Church* survived – albeit in a condition of the fiercest and most prolonged persecution ever suffered by the Church in any period of her history. This unprecedentedly severe persecution at the hands of the Soviets makes this period one, not only of shame, shame for the blasphemy and apostasy of the masses, but also of *glory*, the glory of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia. However, in the estimation of the West, the greatest crime of this period was not the murder of many tens of millions in *the Orthodox Christian Holocaust* – which, begun by the Bolsheviks in 1917, reached its peak in the inter-war period and continued during the second world war and for many decades into the post-war period – but in the Jewish holocaust, which killed six million. This was, of course, horrific in itself, but not comparable in scale to the slaughter of God’s faithful Orthodox Christians. For the annihilating of the main concentration of True Christianity in the world was quite compatible, in the eyes of the Nazis, with their goal of the reshaping of human nature on the atheist model whose foundations had been laid in the nineteenth century by Darwin, Marx and Freud. So this book is distinguished from most other histories of this period in devoting almost as much space to

the mainly underground life of the True Church of Christ as to the above-ground actions of a Stalin, a Hitler or a Roosevelt...

This was also the age in which the non-westernized nations of the Middle East and Far East began to bestir themselves. The oil-producing nations of the Middle East became the object of the imperialistic designs of the western nations (who had awarded themselves mandates over them at Versailles), while China under the westernized regime of the Kuomintang came close to becoming a great power in her own right - and was recognized as such by the United Nations in 1945. Meanwhile Japan, whose plea for a declaration of racial equality had been brusquely rejected by the western nations at Versailles in 1919, took her revenge by overrunning the Far East and joining the despoticisms of Italy and Germany, before succumbing to the apocalyptic new weapon of the atomic bomb.

The main lesson of this most horrific period of history is: *when the restraint of True Christianity and True Christian governance is removed, then truly all things are possible, up to and including the destruction of all civilized norms in even the most civilized of countries.*

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

*I. STALIN VERSUS RUSSIA (1925-1933)*

## 1. DEMOCRACY, DICTATORSHIP AND TOTALITARIANISM

“Of twenty-eight European countries,” writes Niall Ferguson “nearly all had acquired some form of representative government before, during or after the First World War. Yet eight were dictatorships by 1925, and a further five by 1933. Five years later only ten democracies remained. Russia... was the first to go after the Bolsheviks shut down the Constituent Assembly in 1918. In Hungary the franchise was restricted as early as 1920. Kemal [Ataturk], fresh from his trouncing of the Greeks, established what was effectively a one-party state in Turkey in 1923, rather than see his policies of secularism challenged by an Islamic opposition...

“... Even before his distinctly theatrical March on Rome on October 29, 1922 - which was more photo-opportunity than coup, since the fascists lacked the capability to seize power by force - Mussolini was invited to form a government by the king, Victor Emmanuel III, who had declined to impose martial law...

“Italy was far from unusual in having dictatorship by royal appointment. Other dictators were themselves monarchs. The Albanian President, Ahmed Bey Zogu, declared himself King Zog I in 1928. In Yugoslavia King Alexander staged a coup in 1929, restored parliamentarism in 1931 and was assassinated in 1934; thereafter the Regent Paul re-established royal dictatorship. In Bulgaria King Boris III [of Bulgaria] seized power in 1934. In Greece the king dissolved parliament and in 1936 installed General Ioannis Metaxas as dictator. Two years later Romania’s King Carol established a royal dictatorship of his own...”<sup>1</sup>

Of course, there were differences - and important ones. The dictatorships in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania assumed power in countries that were Orthodox in faith, even though Orthodoxy was severely weakened in all of them. But by the judgement of God they all fell victim to dictatorships of the European type, first fascist, and then communist. And such was the fate also of the Baltic States, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Portugal and Austria. In Germany, the democratically elected Reichstag chose Hitler as chancellor...

“Nearly all the dictatorships of the inter-war period,” continues Ferguson, “were at root conservative, if not downright reactionary. The social foundation of their power was what remained of the pre-industrial *ancien régime*: the monarchy, the aristocracy, the officer corps and the Church, supported to varying degrees by industrialists fearful of socialism and by frivolous intellectuals who were bored of democracy’s messy compromises...”<sup>2</sup>

But it is unjust to describe these right-leaning intellectuals who were frustrated with democracy as “frivolous”. Some of them were; but they voiced

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<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 228, 229-230.

<sup>2</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

well-founded criticisms of democracy that resonate even more today than they did then. As, for example, in the following words of Ioannis Metaxis: "Democracy is the offspring of Capitalism. It is the instrument through which Capitalism rules the masses. It is the instrument through which Capitalism displays its own will as if it were the people's... This variety of democracy relies on universal suffrage by individual and secret ballot; i.e. it needs well-built political parties - hence the need of capital. It needs newspapers, hence the need of capital. It . . . needs electoral organizations and electoral combats; that means money. [And] it needs a lot of other things that presuppose money as well. In short, only big capitalists or their puppets are able to fight in [the framework of] such a democracy. Men or [even] groups of people in need of money, even if they defend the noblest ideals, are doomed to failure. For if one has the control of the newspapers, one is in a position to shape the public opinion according to his own views; and even if he defends principles abhorred by the people, he can conceal them in such a way, that the people swallow them in the end. But even if the people do not swallow them, he can declare, through the newspapers he controls, that the people have in fact swallowed them. And then everybody believes that the others have swallowed the 'principles' /lies [of the capitalist] and surrenders as well."<sup>3</sup>

For the post-war idols of democracy and national self-determination, proclaiming only the "rights" but never the real obligations of individuals and ethnic groups, had led not simply to "messy compromises", but to gridlock, paralysis, near-anarchy and civil war in many countries. This led to the emergence of several non-totalitarian dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the Orthodox states of Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece. In fact, the Orthodox Balkans became kind of bloc of dictatorships. For all their faults, these dictators helped to preserve what was left of Christian faith and morality in their countries; and their basic aims of preserving order and unity in the state, and suppressing the extreme left whose overt aim was to destroy it, were laudable and necessary.

However, in the struggle against the totalitarian states that was looming, representative democracy in the form of elections, parliaments and separation of powers was less essential than freedom of speech. Already in World War I, representative democracy had been in effect suspended in the western democracies, and the same would happen in World War II. But freedom of speech was preserved, albeit impaired. And for a people that has lost the true faith, whose first necessity is to find that faith again, freedom of speech and free access to sources of information that enable one to come to an informed opinion, is essential. But that is precisely what the totalitarian dictatorships deprived their citizens of. Moreover, they imposed a false faith under threat of torture and death. Therefore to avoid the hell of the totalitarians it was necessary to support the democracies, far from ideal though they were....

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<sup>3</sup> *The Diaries of I. Metaxis*, Athens: Ikaros, 1960, vol. 4, p. 446.

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Some political philosophies are of the head; others – of the heart. Liberal democracy is of the first kind. It appeals to the rational (but false) idea that if governments are formed through elections on the basis of universal suffrage, then they will act for the benefit of all: “government by the people for the people”. “People” here means “a multitude of voters, each voting rationally for his own interests”: it does not mean a single unity having a single will (Rousseau’s concept of “the general will” is a communistic, not a liberal idea). And once enough individuals see that they as individuals are not benefiting from democracy, then they will seek salvation in a philosophy with a more powerful, more unitary and more emotive definition of the word “people”, where “people” means something closer to “nation”, not a chance aggregate of unrelated individuals, each wanting something different and forming unities only on the basis of fleeting and constantly shifting parliamentary majorities, but a mystical organism with a single will and soul and heart.

Italy was the first country that lost confidence in democracy. Mussolini’s march on Rome in March, 1922, after which King Victor Emmanuel III asked him to form a government, proved the old government’s impotence. And in August he declared: “Democracy has done its work. The century of democracy is over. Democratic ideologies have been liquidated.”<sup>4</sup>

The next failed democracy was Germany’s Weimar Republic, which was plagued by violence and, as the Reichmark plummeted in value, by widespread poverty and despair. Even pious Germans, such as the Lutheran Paul Althaus, began to doubt its legitimacy: “Did Lutherans owe the Weimar Republic the loyalty prescribed in Romans 13? Only in a heavily qualified way, since the ‘temporary structure’ of Weimar was ‘the expression and means of German deprecation and apathy’.”<sup>5</sup> Why? Because the Weimar republic was seen as having been imposed on Germany by the Allied victor-nations, and therefore as betraying the real interests of the German people in such questions as reparation payments and the French occupation of the Ruhr. This gave extremist movements on both the right and the left powerful ammunition, and several attempted coups, including one by Hitler, were put down with difficulty. And so Germany became a battlefield between three fairly equally matched ideologies: democracy, fascism and communism.

From 1924 democracy appeared to recover, and foreign companies invested in Germany, leading to an economic recovery. But then in 1929 came the Great Depression, which hit Germany harder than any other country precisely because it had become more dependent on foreign investment, which now left the country. Democracy faltered again; the fascists and communists recovered their confidence, while the liberals lost theirs.

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<sup>4</sup> Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

However, it should be noted that while both Bolsheviks and the Nazis despised democracy and plotted to destroy it, there was this difference between them: while Hitler openly despised democracy, Stalin had to preserve its simulacrum for longer. He always deferred to the supreme authority of the Politburo – although he manipulated both its membership and all its decisions. Thus while Hitler never replaced the Weimar constitution with another, Nazi one, Stalin composed the 1936 Soviet Constitution, which claimed to be supremely democratic even when democracy no longer existed in Russia. That is one reason why western intellectuals have always been more generous to Stalin than to Hitler. For it is thought, quite wrongly, that since Stalin was at least striving to create a democracy (after all, that was the purpose of the Russian revolution, wasn't it?), he was better than Hitler, who, on the contrary, always proclaimed his contempt for it.

“At bottom,” writes Eric Hobsbawm, “liberal politics was vulnerable because its characteristic form of government, representative democracy, was rarely a convincing way of running states, and the conditions of the Age of Catastrophe rarely guaranteed the conditions that made it viable, let alone effective.

“The first of these conditions was that it should enjoy general consent and legitimacy. Democracy itself rests on this consent, but does not create it, except that in well-established and stable democracies the very process of regular voting has tended to give citizens – even those in the minority – a sense that the electoral process legitimizes the governments it produces. But few of the inter-war democracies were well-established. Indeed, until the early twentieth century democracy had been rare outside the USA and France. Indeed, at least ten of Europe's states were either entirely new or so changed from their predecessors as to have no special legitimacy for their inhabitants. Even fewer democracies were stable. The politics of states in the Age of Catastrophe were, more often than not, the politics of crisis.

“The second condition was a degree of compatibility between the various components of ‘the people’, whose sovereign vote was to determine the common government. The official theory of liberal bourgeois society did not recognize ‘the people’ as a set of groups, communities and other collectivities with interests as such, although anthropologists, sociologists and all practising politicians did. Officially the people, a theoretical concept rather than a real body of human beings, consisted of an assembly of self-contained individuals whose votes added up to arithmetical majorities and minorities, which translated into elected assemblies to majority governments and minority oppositions. Where democratic voting crossed the lines between the divisions of the national population, or where it was possible to conciliate or defuse conflicts between them, democracy was visible. However, in an age of revolution and radical social tensions, class struggle translated into politics rather than class peace was the rule. Ideological and class intransigence could wreck democratic government. Moreover, the botched peace settlements after 1918 multiplied what we, at the end of the twentieth century, know to be the

fatal virus of democracy, namely the division of the body of citizens exclusively along ethnic-national or religious lines, as in ex-Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland. Three ethnic-national communities voting as blocks, as in Bosnia; two irreconcilable communities, as in Ulster; sixty-two political parties each representing a tribe or clan, as in Somalia; cannot, as we know, provide the foundation for a democratic political system, but - unless one of the contending groups or some outside authority is strong enough to establish (non-democratic) dominance - only for instability and civil war. The fall of the three multinational empires of Austria-Hungary, Russia and Turkey replaced three supra-national states whose governments were neutral as between the numerous nationalities over which they ruled, with a great many more multinational states, each identified with *one*, or at most with two or three, of the ethnic communities within their borders.

“The third condition was that democratic governments did not have to do much governing. Parliaments had come into existence not so much to govern as to control the power of those who did, a function which is still obvious in the relations between the US Congress and the US presidency... Bodies of independent, permanently appointed public officials had become an essential device for the government of modern states. A parliamentary majority was essential only where major and controversial executive decisions had to be taken, or approved, and organizing or maintaining an adequate body of supporters was the major task of government leaders, since (except in the Americas) the executive in parliamentary regimes was usually not directly elected...

“The twentieth century multiplied the occasions when it became essential for governments to govern. The kind of state which confined itself to providing the ground rules for business and civil society, and the police, prisons and armed forces to keep internal and external danger at bay, the ‘nightwatchman state’ of political wits, became as obsolete as the ‘nightwatchmen’ who inspired the metaphor.

“The fourth condition was wealth and prosperity. The democracies of the 1920s broke under the tension of revolution and counter-revolution (Hungary, Italy, Portugal) or of national conflict (Poland, Yugoslavia); those of the thirties, under the tensions of the Slump. One has only to compare the political atmosphere of Weimar Germany and 1920s Austria with that of Federal Germany and post-1945 Austria to be convinced. Even national conflicts were less unmanageable, so long as each minority’s politicians could feed at the state’s common trough. That was the strength of the Agrarian Party in east-central Europe’s only genuine democracy, Czechoslovakia: it offered benefits across national lines. In the 1930s, even Czechoslovakia could no longer hold together the Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians and Ukrainians.

“Under these circumstances democracy was, more likely than not, a mechanism for formalizing divisions between irreconcilable groups. Very often even in the best circumstances, it produced no stable basis for democratic



government at all, especially when the theory of democratic representation was applied in the most rigorous versions of proportional representation. Where, in times of crisis, no parliamentary majority was available, as in Germany (as distinct from Britain), the temptation to look elsewhere was overwhelming. Even in stable democracies the political divisions the system implies are seen by many citizens as costs rather than benefits of the system. The very rhetoric of politics advertises candidates and party as the representative of the national rather than the narrow party interest. In times of crisis the costs of the system seemed unsustainable, its benefits uncertain.

“Under these circumstances it is easy to understand that parliamentary democracy in the successor states to the old empires, as well as in most of the Mediterranean and in Latin America, was a feeble plant growing in stony soil. The strongest argument in its favour, that, bad as it is, it is better than any alternative system, is itself half-hearted. Between the wars it only rarely sounded realistic and convincing...”<sup>6</sup>

Half-hearted – yes. Unconvincing – yes. But, having destroyed the Orthodox autocracy, the only form of government having God’s blessing to restrain the Antichrist, the West had only the feeble plant of democracy to rely on. By the mercy of God, Who did not yet will the complete destruction of the West, democracy prevailed against the Nazi totalitarianism in World War II. But it did so only by allying itself with the Soviet totalitarianism, and only by stiffening its own feeble democracies with an infusion of dictatorial strength, as we shall see...

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In addition to their common contempt for democracy, another important similarity between Fascism and Communism consisted in their *exaltation of violence*. Many joined the Communist Party as a place where they could express their violent passions. But others joined the no less violent fledgling movements of Fascism and Nazism. In both Germany and Italy, it was especially the wandering bands of war veterans who filled their ranks. They felt that the war had come to an end too early, that the nation had to be purged and purified by yet more violence and hatred.

Thus, as Burleigh writes: “In both Italy and Germany elite fighting units (the Italian *arditi*) who had brought fanatical courage and tenacity to the wartime battlefields, provided the prototypical ‘new man’ who, despite his self-professed dehumanisation, was supposed to be the nation’s future redeemer. The brutality that total war had engendered, and which in Armenia, Belgium, the Balkans, northern France and East Prussia had spilled over into violence towards civilians, became a permanent condition, in the sense that political *opponents* were regarded as deadly *enemies*. In Italy people who revelled in

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<sup>6</sup> Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London: Pimlico, 1994, pp. 138-140.

violence for political purposes acquired a political label earlier than elsewhere: that of Fascists, the very symbol – of axes tightly bound in lictorial rods – conveying the closed community of the exultantly thuggish better than the mystic iron octopus of the Nazi swastika.”<sup>7</sup>

“The major difference between the fascist and the non-fascist Right,” writes Eric Hobsbawm, “was that fascism existed by mobilizing masses from below. It belonged essentially to the ear of democratic and popular politics which traditional reactionaries deplored and which the champions of the ‘organic state’ tried to by-pass. Fascism gloried in the mobilization of the masses, and maintained it symbolically in the form of public theatre – the Nuremberg rallies, the masses on the Piazza Venezia looking up to Mussolini’s gestures on his balcony – even when it came to power; as also did Communist movements. Fascists were the revolutionaries of counter-revolution: in their rhetoric, in their appeal to those who considered themselves victims of society, in their call for a total transformation of society, even in their deliberate adaptation of the symbols and names of the social revolutionaries, which is so obvious in Hitler’s ‘National Socialist Workers’ Party’ with its (modified) red flag and its immediate institution of the Red’s First of May as an official holiday in 1933.”<sup>8</sup>

First in Italy, and later in Germany, the Fascist idea gradually triumphed over the Communist one. This was largely because its mystical concept of the nation corresponded more closely to the psychology and history of the Italian and German peoples. Of course, this concept was at least as old as the French revolution and had been influential everywhere; but it had been particularly important in Germany and Italy, whose hitherto disunited countries had been united at about the same time in the late nineteenth century. The two countries were also united by the feeling that they had been cheated in the aftermath of the war. The Germans felt they had been “stabbed in the back” by the Jews, and betrayed by Wilson’s failure to implement his Fourteen Points, while Italy, though a victor-nation, felt frustrated by Wilson’s resistance to their demands for Slavic lands on the other side of the Adriatic (not to speak of Albanian lands in Albania and Turkish lands in Turkey). The German veterans felt they had not been defeated in the war, while the Italian veterans felt that their losses of half a million men merited them a greater reward. And so pre-war Italian nationalism, reared on the exploits of Mazzini and Garibaldi, and on the music of Verdi, now re-emerged in a more violent, hard-edged form in Fascism.

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The differences between the three ideologies can be seen in different ways. Some have seen the more important cleavage as running between, on the one hand, the rationalist Enlightenment ideologies of Liberalism and Communism, which go back to the first, liberal, and second, Jacobin phases of French revolution respectively, and on the other hand, the anti-Enlightenment anti-

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<sup>7</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, p. 117.

universalist ideology of nationalism, which could be said to go back to the third, Napoleonic phase of the French revolution, but whose real origins are in the German reaction *against* it. For others, however, the more fundamental cleavage was between the totalitarian ideologies of Communism and Nazism, on the one hand, and the anti-totalitarian ideology of Liberalism, on the other.

Both Liberalism and Communism trace their roots to the optimistic Enlightenment faith that a materialistic utopia can be achieved on earth by education, rationalism, science and the elimination of religious superstition. Both emphasize the role of the State as the spearhead of progress; and if Liberalism also tries to protect the “human rights” of the individual, it is nevertheless the State, rather than the Church or any other organization, that determines what those rights are and how they are to be implemented. So if Liberalism gives greater protection to the individual than does Communism, this is a difference in emphasis rather than of principle, as the increasing convergence between the two systems after World War II demonstrates.<sup>9</sup>

If there is a difference in principle between the two it consists in Liberalism’s insistence that the dominance of the State should be limited by democratic elections, preceded by genuinely free debate, that permit the removal of governments that are perceived to have failed, whereas Communism posits the eternal rule of the Communist Party and of the State ruled by it, and punishes any criticism of it.<sup>10</sup>

And yet even here the difference is not as radical as might at first appear. For, on the one hand, Communism pays lip-service to the *principle* of democratic elections (during which the existing leaders are usually, by a miracle, elected again with 99.9% of the vote). And on the other hand, the choice offered to voters in a liberal democracy becomes increasingly limited as real power is vested in two increasingly similar political party machines that are in hock to their paymasters.

There is also a difference between the fallen passions these systems most pander to. Liberalism panders especially to *greed* and *lust*. It moderates, without destroying, these passions by recognizing that one individual’s greed and lust should be satisfied only to the extent that it does not interfere with the satisfaction of another’s greed and lust. These passions are given a more or less

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<sup>9</sup> George Orwell prophesied this convergence at the end of his post-war novel *Animal Farm*, when the pigs (the communists) and the men (the capitalists) looked indistinguishable to the impoverished animals (ordinary human beings).

<sup>10</sup> Strictly speaking, Communism preaches the withering away of the State. But the State had to expand to its maximum first. Thus Stalin declared at the Sixteenth Party Congress in 1930: “We are for the withering away of the state. But at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, which constitutes the most powerful, the mightiest of all governing powers that have ever existed. The highest development of governmental power for the purpose of preparing the conditions for the withering away of governmental power, this is the Marxist formula. Is this ‘contradictory’? Yes, it is ‘contradictory’. But this contradiction is life, and it reflects completely the Marxist dialectic” (Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London, 1991, p. 467).

decent covering by such slogans as “human rights” and “freedom, equality and fraternity”: we supposedly have the “right” to indulge them; we must be free to indulge them, and to an equal extent as everybody else.

Not that there is no genuine idealism and altruism among many liberals: but the egoistic roots of “humanrightism” become increasingly obvious as their demands become more and more unnatural and contradictory...

Since Communism shares a common ancestry with Liberalism in the French Revolution, it, too, uses the slogans of “human rights” and “freedom, equality and fraternity”. But as the heir of the later Jacobin rather than the early liberal phase of the revolution, Communism is based on the sharper passions of *hatred* – hatred of the old society of kings and priests, businessmen, bankers and peasants – and *love of power*. This hatred and love of power was demonstrated most clearly in the Communist leaders, such as Lenin and Stalin, who, whatever their propaganda might say, cared not at all for justice, freedom and equality for the masses: they hated their fellow men and sought to dominate and exterminate them. By contrast, many rank-and-file Communists, and especially those in Western countries, were motivated by liberal ideals when they joined the Party; their Communism was seen as simply an extension of their Liberalism. But the conflict between the professed aims of the Party and the satanic means employed to achieve them, soon corrupted and destroyed all those who did not quickly repent.

The term “totalitarian” was first invented in 1923 “by an opponent of Mussolini, Giovanni Amendola (later murdered by the Fascists), who, having observed Mussolini’s systematic subversion of state institutions, concluded that his regime suffered fundamentally from conventional dictatorships. In 1925, Mussolini adopted the term and assigned it a positive meaning. He defined Fascism as ‘totalitarian’ in the sense that it politicized everything ‘human’ as well as ‘spiritual’: ‘Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.’<sup>11</sup> “The Fascist conception of the state is all-embracing: outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value..<sup>12</sup> In 1928, the Education Minister Giovanni Gentile defined Fascism primarily in terms of “the comprehensive, or as Fascists say, the ‘totalitarian’ scope of its doctrine, which concerns itself not only with political organization and political tendency, but with the whole will and thought and feeling of the nation.”

This remains the first defining characteristic, not only of Fascism, but of all other totalitarian regimes, such as the Nazi and the Soviet.<sup>13</sup> Unlike liberal

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<sup>11</sup> Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, p. 241.

<sup>12</sup> Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, 1932.

<sup>13</sup> “This term,” writes Pipes, “has fallen out of favour with Western sociologists and political scientists determined to avoid what they consider the language of the Cold War. It deserves note, however, how quickly it found favour in the Soviet Union the instant the censor’s prohibitions against its use had been lifted. This kind of regime, unknown to previous history, imposed the authority of a private but omnipotent ‘party’ on the state, claiming the right to

regimes, which make a distinction between public and private space, and accord the individual, theoretically at any rate, a more or less wide area in which he can rule his life independently of the State, totalitarian regimes try to encompass everything. *L'état, c'est tout...*

However, the term “totalitarian”, writes Richard Overy, “does not mean that they were ‘total’ parties, either all inclusive or wielding complete power; it means that they were parties concerned with the ‘totality’ of the societies in which they worked. In this narrower sense both movements did have totalitarian aspiration.”<sup>14</sup> For both sought to control, not only the strictly political sphere, but also the economic, cultural and religious spheres.

“In its attack on liberal individualism, Fascism proposed a social project revolutionary in its implications: the bourgeois division of life into public and private spheres was to be replaced by a ‘totalitarian’ conception of politics as a complete lived experience: ‘One cannot be a Fascist in politics... and non-Fascist in school, non-Fascist in the family circles, non-Fascist in the workshop.’ Through all the many twists and turns of the Duce’s long period in office, these elements at least of Fascism remained constant.”<sup>15</sup>

But if the Fascists first used the term, the reality was imbibed from Communism. As Pipes writes: “All the attributes of totalitarianism had antecedents in Lenin’s Russia: an official, all-embracing ideology; a single party of the elect headed by a ‘leader’ and dominating the state; police terror; the ruling party’s control of the means of communication and the armed forces; central command of the economy. Since these institutions and procedures were in place in the Soviet Union in the 1920s when Mussolini founded his regime and Hitler his party, and were to be found nowhere else, the burden of proving there was no connection between ‘Fascism’ and Communism rests of those who hold this opinion.

“No prominent European socialist before World War I resembled Lenin more closely than Benito Mussolini. Like Lenin, he headed the antirevisionist wing of the country’s Socialist Party; like him, he believed that the worker was not by nature a revolutionary and had to be prodded to radical action by an intellectual elite. However, working in an environment more favourable to his ideas, he did not need to form a splinter party: whereas Lenin, leading a minority wing, had to break away, Mussolini gained a majority in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and ejected the reformists. Had it not been for his reversal, in 1914, of his stand on the war, coming out in favour of Italy’s entry on the Allied side, which resulted in his expulsion from the PSI, he might well have turned into an Italian Lenin. Socialist historians, embarrassed by these facts of Mussolini’s early biography, have either suppressed them or described them

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subject to itself all organized life without exception, and enforcing its will by means of unbounded terror...” (*Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, p. 499)

<sup>14</sup> Overy, *The Dictators*, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 173.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe’s Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 13.

as a passing flirtation with socialism by a man whose true intellectual mentor was not Marx, but Nietzsche and Sorel. Such claims, however, are difficult to reconcile with the fact that Italian socialists thought well enough of the future leader of Fascism to name him in 1912 editor in chief of the Party's organ, *Avanti!* Far from having a fleeting romance with socialism, Mussolini was fanatically committed to it: until November 1913, and in some respects until early 1920, his ideas on the nature of the working class, the structure and function of the party, and the strategy of the socialist revolution, were remarkably like Lenin's...

"Like Lenin, he saw in conflict the distinguishing quality of politics. The 'class struggle' meant to him warfare in the literal sense of the word: it was bound to assume violent forms because no ruling class ever peacefully surrendered its wealth and power. He admired Marx, whom he called a 'father and teacher', not for his economics and sociology, but for being the 'grand philosopher of worker violence'. He despised 'lawyer socialists' who pretended to advance the cause by parliamentary manoeuvres. Nor did he have faith in trade unionism, which he believed diverted labor from the class struggle. In 1912, in a passage that could have come from the pen of Lenin, he wrote: 'A worker who is merely organized turns into a petty bourgeois who obeys only the voice of interest. Every appeal to ideals leaves him deaf.' He remained faithful to this view even after abandoning socialism: in 1921, as Fascist leader, he would describe workers as 'by nature... piously and fundamentally pacifistic'. Thus, independently of Lenin, in both his socialist and his Fascist incarnation he repudiated what Russian radicals called 'spontaneity': left to his own devices, the worker would not make a revolution but strike a deal with the capitalist, which was the quintessence of Lenin's social theory.

"These premises confronted Mussolini with the same problem that faced Lenin: how to make a revolution with a class said to be inherently unrevolutionary. He solved it, as did Lenin, by calling for the creation of an elite party to inject into labor the spirit of revolutionary violence. Whereas Lenin's concept of the vanguard party came from the experience of the People's Will, Mussolini's was shaped by the writings of Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto, who in the 1890s and early 1900s popularized the view of politics as contests for power among elite groups..."<sup>16</sup>

The most significant difference between Soviet Communism and Italian Fascism was that Mussolini came to the conclusion that, for his revolutionary purposes, "nationalism was more potent fare than socialism. In December 1914, he wrote: 'The nation has not disappeared. We used to believe that it was annihilated. Instead, we see it rise, living, palpitating before us! And understandably so. The new reality does not suppress the truth: class cannot destroy the nation. Class is a collectivity of interests, but the nation is a history of sentiments, traditions, language, culture, ancestry. You can insert the class

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<sup>16</sup> Pipes, op. cit., pp. 245-247.

into the nation. But they do not destroy each other.' From this it followed that the Socialist Party must lead not only the proletariat, but the entire nation: it must create '*un socialismo nazionale*'..."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Pipes, op. cit., pp. 249-250.

## 2. THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE

When the British miners went on strike in 1926, the employers, backed by the government, were in no mood to increase wages and crushed the strike. The situation was exacerbated by the social divisions and snobberies that survived from the pre-war period.

“This is not to suggest,” writes Piers Brendon, “that there was any significant revolutionary tradition among the British working class. Indeed, hearing that strikes and policemen played a friendly game of football Lenin declared that all British classes, from the proletariat to the aristocracy, were incurably bourgeois. In the same vein Harry Pollitt, a leader of the Communist Party of Great Britain (founded in 1920) complained that the workers ‘cared only for beer, tobacco and horse-racing, and it will take twenty years to educate them’. Later, when Pollitt was imprisoned for his opinions in Wandsworth, a professional burglar said: ‘Serve you bloody well right, you’ve no respect for private property.’ British society, described by George Orwell as the most class-ridden in the world, was fundamentally deferential. And trade unionists such as the bibulous railwaymen’s leader Jimmy Thomas, who told the House of Commons that less than ‘2 per cent of the people would vote for a revolution’, aimed not to beat the system but to join it. They ‘piss[ed] in the same pot’ as the bosses, ordinary workers complained. They wore evening dress, hobnobbed with the rich, hankered after knighthood, and kowtowed to royalty... Ramsey Macdonald, the Labour party leader, was notoriously susceptible to the charm of duchesses and eagerly submitted to the aristocratic embrace. In socialist company he sang the Red Flag, but privately he deplored the sentiments as much as the tune, regarding it as ‘the funeral dirge of our movement’.

“All the same, there was much working-class sympathy for the Bolsheviks and corresponding resistance to the British government’s intervention on the side of the White Russians. In some of the post-war labour disputes trade unionists employed Communist rhetoric to plead their cause. In 1920, using the soviets as their model, militants formed Councils of Action and places like ‘Red Clydeside’ seemed bent on actually waging class war. Their aspirations were summed up by the transport workers’ leader who told a meeting at the Albert Hall, ‘I hope to see the Red Flag flying over Buckingham Palace’. King George V was not the only one ‘in a funk’ about the ‘danger of revolution’. Lloyd George’s coalition government responded by rushing through an Emergency Powers Act (1920) awarding itself the draconian controls conferred by the wartime Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). It also took secret measures to counter the Red Menace. These included spying on suspected subversives and mobilising the middle classes, themselves resentful at having been financially squeezed during and after the war. Plans were made to arm loyal citizens and to form ‘battalions of stockbrokers’. At one cabinet meeting the First Lord of the Admiralty regretted that he personally possessed no pistols more than 200 years old.



“When the post-war boom collapsed in 1921, organised labour was at a disadvantage. Falling wages provoked strikes but rising unemployment made them less likely to succeed. Of all Britain’s industries, coal-mining, at one million strong the country’s largest, was worst affected. Britain’s civilisation, as Orwell would insist, was ‘founded on coal’; but the world was moving to oil. In any case, British pits were mostly antique, inadequately mechanised and increasingly uncompetitive. Conditions of work were correspondingly bad, a fact best illustrated by the appalling accident rate. Between 1922 and 1924 (inclusive) 3,603 miners were killed and 597, 198 were injured. In 1923, on average, 5 miners were killed every working day, 32 were injured every hour. Even those miners who escaped death or disablement were liable to be worn out at the age of 40, their broad backs scarred by overhead beams, their pallid faces veined with subcutaneous coal-dust, their eyes rolling with nystagmus, their lungs choked with silicosis.

“Yet in many tightly-knit communities in depressed areas like South Wales and Scotland the pit provided the only work. Indeed the vista from rows of jerry-built houses was bounded by coal – slag-heaps, ash-pits, colliery workings. Above ground miners in cloth caps, mufflers, threadbare suits and patched boots eked out ‘days of semi-starvation’ of wages of under £2.10s. a week (the average in 1925). Below ground, nearly naked and often on their knees, amid heat and dust, fumes and water, as well as their own sweat and sewage, men hewed coal for seven hours at a stretch – journeys from shaft to face, sometimes several miles long, did not count as part of the shift. One visitor to a pit commented: ‘It is like going down into the depths of Hell.’

“From the abyss miners rose in 1925 to resist a further attack on their living standards. Lower wages and longer hours were essential, the owners insisted, if Britain was to compete with foreign pits. Those of a revived Ruhr were thought to be particularly damaging in their British rivals at a time when the pound had been pegged at a high rate by Britain’s return to the gold standard...”<sup>18</sup>

“The cabinet,” writes Jenkins, “struggled to mediate between the intransigent parties. One minister remarked that the miners’ leaders ‘might be thought the stupidest men in England, if we had not had frequent occasion to meet the mine owners.’ Baldwin was in his element as peacemaker. Despite his reputed remark that a cabinet should never push its nose ‘against the Pope or the National Union of Mineworkers’, he succeeded in isolating the coal industry following a commission of inquiry, and the TUC agreed to end the strike after just nine days, though the miners fought on alone and unsuccessfully.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-45.

<sup>19</sup> Jenkins, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

The strike failed as the ruling classes (with a particularly belligerent Winston Churchill in the lead) presented a united front against the workers, and the workers meekly capitulated before them.

As A.N. Wilson writes, "The union leaders did not want Britain to become communist. But for eight years since the end of the war, the working classes had waited for some of the promises of politicians to be fulfilled. Where was the Land Fit for Heroes to Live In which Lloyd George had promised? How did they live, in their back-to-back houses, and their tenements? How did they wash? How did they go to the lavatory? What happened to them when they were ill? It [the strike] was a yelp of pain and anger, not an organized political programme. The Conservatives could capitalize on all the fears which the strike had aroused, by bringing in the Trade Unions Act of 1927. It greatly expanded the class of 'illegal strikes'. It banned all strikes 'designed or calculated to coerce the Government either directly or by inflicting hardship on the community'. Workers who refused to accept changes in their working conditions were now deemed in the eyes of the law to be on strike. Peaceful picketing was banned. Civil servants were forbidden from joining a trade union. The comparative benignity of the Employers and Workmen Act of 1875 was swept away. Trade unions were limited to the extent to which they could fund political parties, so that the government was able, while limiting the power of the union, to ruin, financially, the Labour party, since trade unions were the principal sources of Labour party funding. Labour party membership fell from 3,388,000 in 1926 to a little over 1 million in 1927"<sup>20</sup>

"The General Strike and its aftermath," writes Brendon, "made an interesting if paradoxical prelude to the years of Depression. Awareness of the great gulf fixed between Britain's two nations increased. Outraged by injustice, many workers, especially miners, were imbued with a spirit of radicalism which expressed itself in everything from hunger marches to fights against fascism. The prevailing aestheticism of the 1920s began its transformation into the political culture of the 1930s. The Communist Party of Great Britain doubled in size and the bogey of Bolshevism loomed ever larger in the imagination of the middle and upper classes. On the other hand, the Party had only 10,000 members. Its influence was minimal, especially as the extreme hardship which nourished it was largely confined to depressed areas of the north and west while elsewhere living standards rose. The spectre of workers' control was exorcised by the failure of the General Strike. Trade unions afterwards restricted themselves to purely industrial disputes and 'the political left was disabled for a generation'..."<sup>21</sup>

And yet the strike left its mark on the national memory as an example of working-class solidarity. Eventually this brought forth fruit in the astonishing election result of 1945, when Churchill, the man who had led the nation to victory both over the miners and the Nazis, was thrown out of office...

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<sup>20</sup> Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, pp. 258-259).

<sup>21</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

“The British economy showed a spurt in growth in 1928-9. However, although there had been expansion in new industries such as car manufacturing, chemicals and electrical goods, the traditional industrial heartlands of coal, steel, textiles and shipbuilding had remained depressed throughout the 1920s. In Europe as a whole, nonetheless, by 1929 recovery from the immediate post-war blight had been a success story. Driven especially by the American boom, international trade had risen by over 20 per cent...”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 153.



### 3. THE REVOLUTION IN PHYSICS

After the Great War the wrath of God was threatening a world that was careering, not only into luxury and debauchery, but also into atheism. And yet, for the sake of those few who are being saved, and as a rebuke to the majority who are not, God always provides new evidence of His existence, very often in just those spheres that seem to be the breeding-grounds of atheism, such as science. Thus in the inter-war years (1918-45) some developments in physics seemed to undermine atheism and suggest that the universe had a beginning, which could only have been in God...

The years after the Great War were a period of extraordinary experimentation in morality, in politics, in art – and especially in physics. The advances in physics overthrew the whole understanding of the physical world that had prevailed since Newton. Einstein's theories of Special and General Relativity transformed our ideas of the inter-relationship of space, time and gravity, and of the larger-scale objects and events, while in a similar way, quantum mechanics transformed our ideas of the smallest-scale objects and events.

Stephen Meyer writes: "Whereas Newton viewed gravity as a force between objects having mass, Einstein reconceived gravity as a geometric property of spacetime, something he saw as a multidimensional 'fabric' that objects having mass could warp.

"Just as a bowling ball set down on a large trampoline makes a depression on its surface, a large mass such as the sun will curve or depress the fabric of spacetime. The more mass an object has, the larger the warp or depression. Objects having less mass 'fall into' the depression in space-time caused by objects with larger mass, just as tennis balls at the edge of a trampoline will roll into the depression created by a bowling ball placed in its center. Thus, general relativity, and Einstein's field equations expressing the theory mathematically, describe how curved space affects the movements of massive objects and how massive objects curve space. Or as the physicist John Archbald Wheeler cleverly summarized the theory, 'Space tells matter how to move, and matter tells space how to curve.'"<sup>23</sup>

Unlike those other enormously influential supposed discoveries - Darwin's evolutionism and Freud's psychoanalysis, - Einstein's theory of Relativity was verified in a strictly scientific manner.

In 1915 his paper on General Relativity was completed and, as Paul Johnson writes, was smuggled out of Germany to Cambridge, "where it was received by Arthur Eddington, Professor of Astronomy and Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society.

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<sup>23</sup> Meyer, *Return of the God Hypothesis*, New York: HarperOne, 2021, p. 89.

“Eddington publicized Einstein’s achievement in a 1918 paper for the Physical Society called ‘Gravitation and the Principle of Relativity’. But it was of the essence of Einstein’s methodology that he insisted his equations must be verified by empirical observations and he himself devised three specific tests for this purpose. The key one was that a ray of light just grazing the surface of the sun must be bent by 1.745 seconds of arc – twice the amount of gravitational deflection provided for by classical Newtonian theory. The experiment involved photographing a solar eclipse. The next was due on 29 May 1919. Before the end of the war the Astronomer Royal, Sir Frank Dyson, had secured from a harassed government the promise of £1,000 to finance an expedition to take observations from Principe and Sobral.

“Early in March 1919, the evening before the expedition sailed, the astronomers talked late into the night in Dyson’s study at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, designed by Wren in 1675-6, while Newton was still working on his general theory of gravitation. E.T. Cottingham, Eddington’s assistant, who was to accompany him, asked the awful question: what would happen if measurement of the eclipse photographs showed not Newton’s, nor Einstein’s, but *twice* Einstein’s deflection? Dyson said, ‘Then Eddington will go mad and you will have to come home alone.’ Eddington’s notebook records that on the morning of 29 May there was a tremendous thunder-storm in Principe. The clouds cleared just in time for the eclipse at 1.30 p.m. Eddington had only eight minutes in which to operate. ‘I did not see the eclipse, being too busy changing plates... We took sixteen photographs.’ Thereafter, for six nights he developed the plates at the rate of two a night. On the evening of June 3, having spent the whole day measuring the developed prints, he turned to his colleague, ‘Cottingham, you won’t have to go home alone.’ Einstein had been right.

“The expedition satisfied two of Einstein’s tests, which were reconfirmed by W.W. Campbell during the September 1922 eclipse. It was a measure of Einstein’s scientific rigour that he refused to accept that his own theory was valid until the third test (the ‘red shift’) was met. ‘If it were proved that this effect does not exist in nature,’ he wrote to Eddington on 15 December 1919, ‘then the whole theory would have to be abandoned.’ In fact the ‘red shift’ was confirmed by the Mount Wilson observatory in 1923...”

The impact was huge. “It was grasped that absolute time and absolute length had been dethroned; that motion was curvilinear. All at once nothing seemed certain in the movements of the spheres. ‘The world is out of joint’, as Hamlet sadly observed. It was as though the spinning globe had been taken off its axis and cast adrift in a universe which no longer conformed to accustomed standards of measurement. At the beginning of the 1920s the belief began to circulate that there were no longer any absolutes of time and space, of good and evil, of knowledge, above all of value. Mistakenly but perhaps inevitably, relativity became confused with relativism...”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 2-3, 4.

Relativity theory combined with a hardly less important discovery of 1920s astronomy – that the universe is expanding, and that galaxies, including our own, are accelerating away from each other. This produced a theory of the origins of the universe, the so-called “Big Bang Theory”, which seemed – to the dismay of many physicists, including Einstein himself – to be consistent with the Christian belief that the universe had a beginning in time (although physicists and Christians still do not agree on how long ago) and that God created the heavens and the earth. For [the American astronomer Edwin] “Hubble’s discovery of an expanding universe was fraught with theoretical and philosophical significance. If the various galaxies are moving away from our galaxy and from each other in the forward direction of time, then at any time in the finite past the galaxies would have been closer together than they are today. As one extrapolates backward to determine the position of the galaxies at any given time in the past, not only would the galaxies have been closer and closer together, but eventually all the galaxies would have converged, bunching up on each other at some moment in the past. The moment where the galaxies converge marks the beginning of the expansion of the universe and, arguably, the beginning of the universe itself.”<sup>25</sup>

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Still more fundamental and paradoxical than the impact of Relativity theory and the Big Bang theory was that of Quantum mechanics.

Now the pagan Greeks and Romans believed in the goddess Chance (*Tyche* in Greek, *Fortuna* in Latin), as well as what would appear to be its precise opposite, Fate (*Fatum*). More precisely, they believed in the Fates (plural), the three goddesses, Atropos, Clotho, and Lachesis, who were supposed to determine the course of human life in classical mythology. Christianity rejected this belief. Thus St. Basil the Great, probably the most learned man of his time, wrote: “Do not say, ‘This happened by chance, while this came to be of itself.’ In all that exists there is nothing disorderly, nothing indefinite, nothing without purpose, nothing by chance... How many hairs are on your head? God will not forget one of them. Do you see how nothing, even the smallest thing, escapes the gaze of God?” Again, in the nineteenth century, the scientifically trained St. Ignaty Brianchaninov wrote: “There is no blind chance! God rules the world, and everything that takes place in heaven and beneath the heavens takes place according to the judgement of the All-wise and All-powerful God.”<sup>26</sup>

However, modern physics has the same combination of faith both in determinism and in indeterminism – both fate and chance – as did the ancient Greeks and Romans. For on the one hand, it believes in fate, that is, there reigns

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<sup>25</sup> Meyer, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> Brianchaninov, “Sud’by Bozhii” (The Judgements of God), *Polnoe Sobranie Tvorenij* (Complete Collection of Works), volume II, Moscow, 2001, p. 72.

the most absolute, iron-like dominion of natural law without any exceptions in the form of miracles. On the other hand, it believes in chance, that is, with regard to the smallest units of matter and energy, no determinist laws in fact exist, but only indeterminism. This creates a radical schism, an unbridgeable gulf, between the two halves of what has been called “the Theory of Everything” (TOE).

“The two pillars of twentieth-century physics,” writes the physicist Carlo Rovelli, “– general relativity and quantum mechanics – could not be more different from each other. General relativity is a compact jewel: conceived by a single mind, based on combining previous theories, it is a simple and coherent vision of gravity, space and time. Quantum mechanics, or quantum theory, on the other hand, emerges from experiments in the course of a long gestation over a quarter of a century, to which many have contributed; achieves unequalled experimental success and leads to applications which have transformed our everyday lives...; but, more than a century after its birth, it remains shrouded in obscurity and incomprehensibility...”

The reality this theory has unveiled, continues Ravelli, three aspects: granularity, indeterminism and relationality. Granularity is not directly relevant to our theme: we shall come to the relationality of quantum theory later. With regard to indeterminism, the problem for the physicists lies in the following. The British physicist Paul Dirac discovered the equations enabling us to compute the velocity, energy, momentum and angular momentum of an electron with great accuracy. However, these equations are statistical and probabilistic in nature: in spite of their accuracy, they provide us with no certain knowledge of what will be. And not only because all scientific hypotheses are uncertain and provisional, but in principle. Thus quantum physics, the most successful theory in the history of science, declares that reality at the most basic, fundamental level does not follow law; it is lawless. Thus “we do not know with certainty where the electron will appear, but we can compute the probability that it will appear here or there. This is a radical change from Newton’s theory, where it is possible, in principle, to predict the future with certainty. Quantum mechanics bring probability to the heart of the evolution of things. This indeterminacy is the third cornerstone of quantum mechanics: the discovery that chance operates at the atomic level. While Newton’s physics allows for the prediction of the future with exactitude, if we have sufficient information about the initial date and if we can make the calculations, quantum mechanics allows us to calculate only the probability of an event. This absence of determinism at a small scale is intrinsic to nature. An electron is not obliged by nature to move towards the right or the left; it does so by chance. The apparent determinism of the macroscopic world is due only the fact that microscopic randomness cancels out on average, leaving only fluctuations too minute for us to perceive in everyday life.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ravelli, *Reality is Not What it Seems*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 91, 103-104.



The greatest minds in science wrestled with this problem, trying to get rid of it if they possibly could. Even Einstein, who considered Dirac a great genius, albeit one bordering on madness, could not be reconciled with the theory at first. As he wrote to Born: "You believe in a God who plays dice, and I in complete law and order in a world which objectively exists and which I, in a wildly speculative way, am trying to capture. I firmly *believe*, but I hope that someone will discover a more realistic way or rather a more tangible basis than it has been my lot to find."<sup>28</sup> And yet Einstein, too, was finally, but reluctantly, reconciled with what appeared to be undeniable reality that the world is fundamentally *lawless*, which was confirmed by the extraordinary predictive accuracy of quantum physics.

It took a non-scientist, an Oxford professor of medieval literature, the famous Christian apologist C.S. Lewis, to express the full, shattering implications of quantum indeterminism for the nature of science and scientific laws – and the possibility of miracles. "The notion that natural laws may be merely statistical results from the modern belief that the individual unit obeys no laws. Statistics were introduced to explain why, despite the lawlessness of the individual unit, the behaviour of gross bodies was regular. The explanation was that, by a principle well known to actuaries, the law of averages leveled out the individual eccentricities of the innumerable units contained in even the smallest gross body. But with this conception of the lawless units the whole impregnability of nineteenth-century Naturalism has, it seems to me, been abandoned. What is the use of saying that all events are subject to laws if you also say that every event which befalls the individual unit of matter is not subject to laws. Indeed, if we define nature as the system of events in space-time governed by interlocking laws, then the new physics has really admitted that something other than nature exists. For if nature means the interlocking system then the individual unit is outside nature. We have admitted what may be called the sub-natural. After this admission what confidence is left us that there may not be a supernatural as well? It may be true that the lawlessness of the little events fed into nature from the sub-natural is always ironed out by the law of averages. It does not follow that great events could not be fed into her by the supernatural: nor that they also would allow themselves to be ironed out..."<sup>29</sup>

The great mystery is this: why should the essential lawlessness of every single microscopic subatomic event translates, at higher levels of macroscopic perception – those of atoms, molecules, organs, objects, planets, galaxies – into law-governed things and events? In other words, why does indeterminism become determinism, chance become fate – not in time, but simultaneously, and not only in some places but everywhere? The answer, I would suggest, can

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<sup>28</sup> "The scientist," said Einstein, "is possessed by the sense of universal causation. His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly significant reflection" (in Montefiore, *Titans of History*, p. 471).

<sup>29</sup> Lewis, "Religion without Dogma?" (1946), in *Compelling Reason*, London: Fount, 1986, pp. 92-93.

only be that God, Who is subject neither to chance nor to fate but is supremely free, being beyond all space and time, decrees every single event in the universe in order to give the impression of chance and indeterminism at one level of perception and fate at the other, when in fact “He spake and they came into being; He commanded and they were created” (Psalm 32.9). Thus Ravelli’s declaration: “An electron is not obliged by nature to move towards the right or the left; it does so by chance” should be changed to read: “An electron is not obliged by nature to move towards the right or the left; it does so by the command of God alone.”

So is God deliberately deceiving the scientists? By no means! They are deceiving themselves – and God allows this in order to expose their folly! For “the world by [scientific] wisdom knew not God” (I Corinthians 1.21) and “He catches the wise in their own craftiness” (Job 5.12; I Corinthians 3.1).

This is most obvious at the macroscopic level. Since ancient times human beings, even primitive, uneducated ones, have always known that nature is governed by laws, that it is *ordered*. Indeed, the great British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead wrote: “There can be no living science unless there is a widespread instinctive conviction in the existence of an *Order of Things*. And, in particular, of an *Order of Nature*.”<sup>30</sup> And the great majority of them have drawn the obvious conclusion: that there is a Law-giver who commands things to happen in an orderly, lawful way – “He spake and they came into being; He commanded, and they were created” (Psalm 32.9). At the same time, it was obvious to all men in ancient times, both primitive and sophisticated, that there were exceptions to natural law – miracles. For if He speaks and they come into being, why should He not also at times *not* speak so that they do *not* come into being? Or change a law of nature for a longer or shorter period for reasons known to Him alone? Indeed, any unprejudiced observer of history will accept that while some “miracles” are fake, there is a vast number of well-attested events whose only explanation must be God’s temporary suspension of the laws He Himself created.

It was this belief in order, laws and the Law-giver, combined with intellectual curiosity, that was the main motivation of modern science from the seventeenth century onwards. Newton was such a believer (he also believed in the Holy Scriptures); even Einstein appears to have been one. But then the new belief arose that we can study the laws of nature without positing a Law-giver; that is, “the God hypothesis”, as Laplace said, is unnecessary. And yet God remains the elephant in the room of modern physics. Why else would they call the most recent discovery in particle physics – that of the Higgs Boson – “the God particle”? Or are they in fact still obsessed by “the God hypothesis”, and are subconsciously trying to reduce the massive invisible elephant behind their back to the smallest visible particle in front of their nose?

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<sup>30</sup> Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York: Free Press, 1925, pp. 3-4.

Be that as it may, the fact is that science before the advent of quantum theory believed only in fate, absolute, iron necessity and determinism at every level of reality, a necessity that was lawful (and awful, for it denied freedom) but did not presuppose (in the scientists' opinion) a Law-giver. That is why the recent enthronement of chance, the exact opposite of fate, at the centre of physics is such a shock to the whole system. But it is no shock to the Christian scientist. For if an electron is not obliged to move to the right or to the left by any law – in fact, the laws we have suggest that such predictions and prescriptions are in principle *impossible* – why should that be a problem for the Law-giver, Who is above all law and necessity, being Himself Supreme Freedom? Thus the discovery of chance at the heart of the fate-based system of pre-quantum theory physics actually restores God to the heart of that system, destroying it from within and banishing both fate and chance in favour of the Providence of God.

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Let us now turn to the second major aspect of quantum theory: relationality... As we have seen, the quantum wave function that is the fundamental unit of the modern physicist's universe is not a thing or an event, but a spectrum of *possible* things or events. Moreover, it exists as such only while it is not being observed. When the wave function is observed (by a physical screen or a living being), it collapses into one and one only of all the possibilities that define it.

Now this idea creates hardly less serious problems for the classical view of the world as the idea of indeterminism. For it suggests that the objective existence of the world is tied up to an extraordinary, almost solipsistic extent with the subjective perception of that world. The fundamental unit of objective reality, the quantum wave function, becomes real – that is, in a single actual event, as opposed to a multiple spectrum of possible events – only when it is observed, that is, when it becomes part of subjective reality, when it is in a relationship with an observer... But who could that observer be for most events if not God? Thus the multiple possibilities of being at a given point are reduced to one actually when God as it were *looks at it*.

That this continues to disturb the minds of scientists even to this day is witnessed by a very recent cover story in the prestigious scientific weekly *New Scientist*: "Before observation, such quantum objects are said to be in a superposition of all possible observable outcomes. This doesn't mean that we exist in many states at once, rather that we can only say that all the allowed outcomes of measurement remain possible. This potential is represented in the quantum wave function, a mathematical expression that encodes all outcomes and their relative possibilities.

"But it isn't at all obvious what, if anything, the wave function can tell you about the nature of a quantum system before we make a measurement. That act reduces all those possible outcomes to one, dubbed the collapse of the wave function – but no one really knows what that means either. Some researchers

think it might be a real physical process, like radioactive decay. Those who subscribe to the many-worlds interpretation think it is an illusion conjured by the splitting of the universe into each of the possible outcomes. Others still say that there is no point in trying to explain it – and besides, who cares? The maths works, so just shut up and calculate.

“Whatever the case, wave function collapse seems to hinge on intervention or observation, throwing up some huge problems, not least about the role of consciousness in the whole process. This is the measurement problem, arguably the biggest headache in quantum theory. ‘It is very hard,’ says Kelvin McQueen, a philosopher at Chapman University in California. ‘More interpretations are being thrown up every day, but all of them have problems.’”<sup>31</sup>

This debate reminds the present writer of the work of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who hypothesized that children are not born with a belief in the continued existence of objects when they are not being observed. It is only from about the age of five that they acquire the belief that an object such as a ball continues to exist even when it is hidden behind a sofa so that they cannot see it any longer.<sup>32</sup> Can it be that contemporary scientists were regressing, as it were, to a state of childlike solipsism, of unbelief in the existence of reality when nobody is observing it? If they were, then there was and is a simple remedy for this form of madness: belief in God. For the existence of God is not merely a pious hope but a necessary assumption, not only of all science, but of the belief in the firm existence of anything whatsoever. For we exist only by God’s observing all, and thereby bringing it out of potentiality into actuality. He continually upholds every particle in our body and every movement of our soul by the word of His power. If He withdrew this upholding of us, even for one moment, we would immediately revert to the nothingness from which we came.

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For those with eyes to see, the revolution in physics, and the sheer incomprehensibility in human terms of quantum physics, points to something beyond physics, to God Himself; for, as St. Paul says, “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17.28).

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<sup>31</sup> Philip Ball, “Reality? It’s What You Make of It”, *New Scientist*, November, 2017, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> Actually, the present writer with C.C. Russell demonstrated in an undergraduate experiment at Oxford in 1970 that this ability is present in children much earlier, from at least the age of three.

## 4. THE FAR EAST AWAKES

**1. Japan.** After the Russo-Japanese War and especially after the First World War the Asian countries began to aspire to a higher place in the world. The Japanese in particular were growing in power and casting greedy eyes on China and the European colonies there. Already in 1914 it laid claim to former German colonies in China and the Pacific... But the West continued to look down with disdain on all Asiatics from clearly racist and colonialist motives.

This was evident at the Versailles peace conference in 1919, where the Japanese delegation, led by the former Prime Minister Saioniji, proposed that racial equality should be legally enshrined as one of the basic tenets of the newly formed League of Nations. (The Japanese, it must be admitted, were hardly model anti-racists themselves. Thus when, "in February 1916, Sir John Jordan reported to London that China was 'willing to join with the Entente provided that Japan and the other Allies accepted her as a partner on a partner of at least national equality', [this] was precisely what the Japanese refused to do."<sup>33</sup>)

The question was: how would the West respond?

On February 9, writes Tooze, "the American legal expert David H. Miller recorded a frank exchange between Colonel House and Lord Balfour on the question of the upcoming Japanese motion. To pre-empt the Japanese, House sought to persuade Balfour to accept an amendment of the Covenant's preamble that would include quotations taken from the Declaration of Independence to the effect that all men were created equal. 'Colonel H's view was that such a preamble, however little it squared with American practice, would appeal to American sentiment, and would make the rest of the formula more acceptable to American public opinion. Balfour's response was striking. The claim that all men were created equal, Balfour objected, 'was an eighteenth-century proposition which he did not believe was true.' The Darwinian revolution of the nineteenth century had taught other lessons. It might be asserted that 'in a certain sense... all men of a particular nation were created equal'. But to assert that 'a man in Central Africa was equal to a European' was, to Balfour, patent nonsense. To this remarkable broadside, House offered no immediate rebuttal. He was not about to disagree about Central Africa. But he pointed out that 'he did not see how the policy toward the Japanese could be continued'. It could not be denied that they were a growing nation who had industriously exploited outlets in 'any white country', in Siberia and in Africa. Where were they to turn? 'They had to go somewhere.' Balfour did not question this fundamental premise of the age. Dynamic populations needed space to expand. Indeed, as a staunch advocate of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Balfour 'had a great deal of sympathy' for the Japanese predicament. But with Central Africa on his mind, he could not admit the general principle of equality. Other ways must be found of satisfying Japan's legitimate interests. In any case,

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<sup>33</sup> Keith Jeffery, *1916*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 199-200.

Balfour was clearly interpreting the proposal far more expansively than the Japanese ever intended it. The idea that Japan might be speaking on behalf of Africans would no doubt have caused indignation in Tokyo. What was at stake were European-Asian relations and specifically the right of Asians to join Europeans in the settlement of the remaining open territories of the world.

“Blocked at the first attempt, the Japanese delegation could not settle for a simple rejection. At the end of March they presented a new, watered-down version of their proposal, eliminating any reference to race and demanding only non-discrimination on a national basis. But they now found themselves caught in the labyrinthine internal politics of the British Empire. It was the authority of the British delegates – Robert Cecil and Lord Balfour – that had blocked the first Japanese amendment. But, when pressed, the British insisted that it was not they but the Australians who were the real obstacle. This further raised the pressure on the Japanese delegation. How were they to explain to the Japanese public that a principle of such obvious importance had failed as a result of objections of a country as insignificant as Australia? But London stood by the White Dominions and on this occasion Wilson was only too happy to back Australia up. In light of attitudes in California on the Asian issue it was hugely convenient to let the British Empire provide the first line of resistance. There was no prospect whatsoever of Congress approving a Covenant that limited America’s right to restrict immigration.

“The affair reached its discreditable climax on 11 April at the final meeting of the League of Nations Commission. The Japanese had now retreated to demanding nothing more than an amendment to the preamble, calling for the ‘just treatment of all nationals’. On this basis they could count on a clear majority in the Commission. As the French put it, they had no wish to cause embarrassment to London, but ‘it was impossible to vote for the rejection of an amendment, which embodied an indisputable principle of justice’. When the Japanese put the question, their opponents were so shamefaced that they asked that their No votes not be officially recorded. As Cecil’s notes reveal, only the notoriously anti-Semitic Polish delegate Roman Dmowski voted with the British, forcing Wilson to use his power as chairman to block the amendment by ruling that it required unanimity. Despite the clear majority in favour, the Japanese proposal was dropped. Whereas House was pleased to celebrate a demonstration of ‘Anglo-Saxon tenacity, with Britain and America alone against the majority, the affair clearly left a nasty taste in Cecil’s mouth.”<sup>34</sup>

“At the beginning of modern times,” writes Paul Johnson, “Japan was a very remote country, in some respects closer to the society of ancient Egypt than to that of post-Renaissance Europe. The Emperor, or Tenno, was believed to be *ara-hito-gami*, ‘human, a person of the living present who rules over the land and its people and, at the same time, is a god’. The first Tenno had begun his reign in 660 BC, at the time of the Egyptian twenty-fifth dynasty, and his line had continued, sometimes by the use of adoption, for two and a half millenia.

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<sup>34</sup> Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 324-326.

It was by far the oldest ruling house in the world, carrying with it, imprisoned in its dynastic amber, strange archaic continuities. In the sixteenth century Francis Xavier, the 'apostle of the Indies', had considered the Japanese he met to be the ideal Christian converts by virtue of their tenacity and fortitude. But the internal disputes of the missionaries had led Japan to reject Christianity. In the second quarter of the seventeenth century it sealed itself off from the European world. It failed completely to absorb the notions of individual moral responsibility which were the gifts of the Judaic and Christian tradition and retained strong vestiges of the antique world. In the 1850s, the West forced its way into this self-possessed society. A decade later, a huge portion of the Japanese ruling class, fearing colonization or the fate of China, took a collective decision to carry out a revolution from above, adopt such western practices as were needful to independent survival, and turn itself into a powerful 'modern' nation. The so-called Meiji Restoration of 3 January 1868, which abolished the Shogunate or rule by palace major-domo and made the Emperor the actual sovereign, was pushed through with the deliberate object of making Japan *fakoku-kyohei*, 'rich country, strong army'.

"It is important to grasp that this decision by Japan to enter the modern world contained, from the start, an element of menace and was dictated as much by xenophobia as by admiration. The Japanese had always been adept at imitative absorption, but at a purely utilitarian level which, from a cultural viewpoint, was superficial. From her great innovatory neighbour, China, Japan had taken ceremonial, music, Confucian classics, Taoist sayings, types of Buddhist speculation, Tantric mysteries, Sung painting, Chinese verse-making and calendar-making. From the West, Japan now proceeded to take technology, medicine, administrative and business procedures, plus the dress thought appropriate for these new procedures. But the social structure and ethical framework of Chinese civilization were largely rejected; and while displayed pragmatic voracity in swallowing Western means, it showed little interest in Western ends: the ideal of classical antiquity or Renaissance humanism exercised little influence."<sup>35</sup>

The superficiality of Japanese absorption of Western norms was revealed in the gangsterism of their political life. While there was an appearance of parliamentary democracy, politicians lived in constant fear of assassination – which was often approved of by the public. Moreover, the army and the navy were largely independent of political control...

In September, 1923, there was a huge earthquake in Japan, which was followed by fires and massive disruption. "Because communications were cut," writes Brendon, "the outside world was slow to grasp the scale of the Japanese tragedy: perhaps 140,000 dead, tens of thousands injured and devastation which was likened to that of Armageddon. As one witness wrote, 'Imagine the Somme battle-fields and the ruins of Ypres on a gigantic but concentrated scale and you have a picture, though not even realistic enough, of Tokyo and the

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<sup>35</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 177-178.

country around.' At two billion dollars, the cost of renovation amounted to 40 per cent of the country's gross national product. It not only wiped out the 400-million-dollar profit which Japan had made out of the First World War, it crippled the entire economy. In the words of an American authority, this was 'the greatest financial catastrophe of the age'.

"Foreign countries, particularly the United States, responded generously to the disaster, donating millions of dollars and enabling relief agencies like the Red Cross to deliver food, clothing, tents, medical supplies and other aid to the stricken cities. But this largesse did little more than point up the contrast between America's wealth and Japan's poverty. It was poverty so acute that the masses could seldom afford to eat more than rice and salt – Prince Saionji hailed it as a notable improvement when they were able to augment this diet with bean paste (*miso*) and soy sauce. During the various economic crises of the 1920s, farmers – and agriculture employed half of Japan's 60 million people – had no recourse but to sell their daughters into prostitution. Sometimes it seemed as though this were Japan's most prosperous business: after the earthquake the brothel-keepers of Tokyo's Yoshiwara district rebuilt their premises more quickly than anyone else – they could afford to pay the highest wages.

"Admittedly Japan's advance since the nominal restoration of power to the emperors in 1868 – the beginning of the Meiji ('Enlightened Rule') era – had been one of the most astonishing achievements of modern times. Within the lifespan of Prince Saionji Japan had turned itself from a backward, isolated state into the greatest power in the Orient. It had defeated Russia, annexed Korea, Taiwan and other islands, and was casting avaricious glances towards China. Before 1853 any Japanese who built an ocean-going vessel was liable to the death penalty; by the 1920s Japan possessed the third largest shipping industry and navy, and the largest fishing fleet, in the world. Other manufacturing enterprises had also sprung from nothing, such as textiles. When the ailing Lord Northcliffe visited Tokyo in 1921 he noticed that all the weaving machinery had been made in Britain and that 'it takes at least three days [for] Japs to do the work of one European'. Within a decade, the 'rising giant of the East' was poised to overtake John Bull's massive production of cotton textiles and one Japanese did the work of 100 Britons thanks to the Toyota automatic loom – when Platt Bros of Oldham bought the right to manufacture it in England they had to be taught how to do it by Toyota engineers. The Japanese themselves were always willing to imitate and improve on Western technology. Their success also resulted from the big business combines (*zaibatsu*) exploited to keep their wages and prices low. Routed by the trade mark 'Made in Japan', foreigners increasingly took refuge behind tariff barriers. When the global Depression led to even fiercer competition, the Japanese felt a strong temptation 'to cast the samurai sword into the mercantile scales' that seemed so unfairly weighted against them.

"This aggressive policy was encouraged by further Japanese resentments towards the West. Like other victors, France and Italy, Japan emerged from the



First World War with the neuroses of a defeated nation. Denied its demands at Versailles, it was humiliated at the Washington Naval Conference in 1922. By the terms of the agreement Japan was allowed fewer warships than America and Britain, who, as a subsequent Prime Minister Baron Hiranuma said, discarded their old alliance 'just as she would a worn out sandal'. Two years later the United States prohibited Japanese immigration, at a stroke turning gratitude for American aid after the earthquake into bitterness. Nippon declared a national day of mourning and one man protested by committing suicide in front of the American embassy. Militarism, so unpopular after the war that (as in France) soldiers preferred to wear mufti, revived. Liberal internationalists like Saioniji found it increasingly difficult to maintain their predominance. Nationalist secret societies and blood brotherhoods proliferated, some of them engaging in political assassination. The outstanding proponent of the nationalist cause, Kita Ikki, declared that his country was entitled to seek equality with millionaire empires like Britain and huge landowners like Russia: 'Japan with her scattered fringe of islands is one of the proletariat, and she has the right to declare war on the big monopoly powers.'

"Kita's radical rhetoric, which influenced men such as Prince Konoe, reinforced the traditional idea that it was Japan's manifest destiny to bring 'the eight corners of the world under one roof' (*hakko-ichui*). At its most mistily magnanimous this was the aspiration to achieve universal brotherhood. Japanese were taught to regard themselves as the chosen people, the uniquely virtuous *Yamato*, the children of the sun. As a 'messianic nation' they were, to quote a Western observer, 'charged with a divine mission to subjugate, pacify and civilize the world'. Or as a Japanese professor explained, 'Nippon's national flag is an ensign of "red heart" or fiery sincerity. It alludes to the heavenly mission of Japan to tranquillize the whole world.' So high-minded notions of fraternity were imperceptibly transformed into self-serving ones of hegemony. Patriotic devotion tended to become imperialistic fanaticism. Major-General Nonaka expressed his country's burgeoning ambitions graphically: 'The ultimate conclusion of politics is the conquest of the world by one imperial power... The Japanese nation, in view of her glorious history and position, should brace herself to till her destined role.' The inspiration and the focus of the national cult was, of course, the emperor himself, who was worshipped as a living god.

"Actually Hirohito, ruling in his father's stead, expressed some doubts about his divine ancestry. But Saionji assured him it was a useful myth. In particular, the belief that the 2,600-year-old dynasty had descended in direct line of succession from the sun goddess as a social cement for a people still torn by ancient clan rivalries. The imperial indoctrination began at school, where children bowed towards the Son of Heaven's picture and repeated that their dearest ambition was 'To die for the Emperor'... Hirohito, a small, delicate, sensitive young man, intelligent but lacking in self-confidence, had been brought up to pay an even stricter regard to duty. Though short-sighted, he had been for a time denied spectacles in case they cast doubt on his divinity. He was so governed by protocol that almost any impromptu action was

rebuked; later he was not even permitted to travel in the same railway carriage as his own children because there was no precedent for it..."<sup>36</sup>

**2. Vietnam.** By comparison with the disdainful, racist attitudes of western imperialists and capitalists, the Communists advertised themselves as exemplary internationalists. As we have seen, the Comintern was founded in 1919 with the aim of spreading communism throughout the world. However, after their defeat at the hands of the Poles in 1920, the Bolsheviks' hopes of conquest were redirected beyond Europe towards Asia.

"Let us turn our faces towards Asia," said Lenin when revolution failed to materialize in Europe. Unsuccessful in the short term, but highly significant in the longer term, was Moscow's influence on the Vietnamese revolution through its future leader, Ho Chi Minh, the first man to lead a country to victory in war over the United States since 1812. He was born, writes Max Hastings, Nguyen Sinh Cung in a central Vietnamese village in 1890. His father had risen from being a mere concubine's son to mandarin status, but then abandoned the court to become an itinerant teacher. Ho, like Vo Nguyen Giap, Pham von Dong and Ngo Dinh Diem later, attended Hue's influential Quoc Hoc high school, founded in 1896, from which he was expelled in 1908 for revolutionary activity. He cast off family ties, and after a brief period teaching in a village school, in 1911 became a stoker and galley boy aboard a French freighter. For three years he roamed the world, then spent a year in the United States, which fascinated him, before taking a job as an assistant pastry chef in London's Carlton Hotel. He became increasingly politically active and met nationalists of many hues - Irish, Chinese, Indian. He spoke English and French fluently, together with several Chinese dialects and later Russian.

"In 1919 he drafted an appeal which was delivered to US President Woodrow Wilson at the Versailles peace conference, soliciting his support for Vietnamese independence: 'All subject peoples are filled with hope by the prospect that an era of right and justice is opening to them... in the struggle of civilization against barbarism.' He attended the 1920 French socialist congress, at which he delivered a speech that later became famous: 'It is impossible for me in just a few minutes to rehearse to you all the atrocities committed in Indochina by the bandits of capitalism. There are more prisons than schools... Freedom of the press and opinion does not exist for us... We don't have the right to emigrate or travel abroad... They do their best to intoxicate us with opium and brutalize us with alcohol. They... massacred many thousands... to defend interest that are not [Vietnamese].' Ho became a prolific pamphleteer and contributor to left-wing journals, often quoting Lenin.

"In 1924 he travelled to Moscow, meeting Russia's new leaders and spending some months at the so-called University of Oriental Workers before moving on to Canton, where he became an interpreter for the Soviet advisor to Chiang Kai-shek. A French acquaintance described a meeting on a bridge over

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<sup>36</sup> Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, pp. 35-37.

the Seine, during which the Vietnamese said reflectively, 'I always thought I would become a scholar or writer, but I've become a professional revolutionary. I travel through many countries, but I see nothing. I'm on strict orders, and you cannot deviate from the route, can you?'

"Orders from whom? There are many mysteries concerning Ho's life. He never married, and his emotional needs appear to have been fulfilled by commitment to political struggle. Who funded his global travels? Was he a paid servant of Moscow, or did he merely receive ad-hoc financial assistance from political fellow-travellers? It is unsurprising that he became a communist, because the world's capitalists were implacably hostile to his purposes. He was less remarkable for his own writing and thinking, which were unoriginal, than for an extraordinary ability to inspire in others faith, loyalty, and indeed love. A Vietnamese student wrote of a first meeting with Ho some years later in Paris: 'He exuded an air of frailty, a sickly pallor. But this only emphasized the imperturbable dignity that enveloped him as though it were a garment. He conveyed a sense of inner strength and generosity of spirit that impacted upon me with the force of a blow.'

"In 1928, Ho appeared in Bangkok, a rendezvous for exiled Indochinese nationalists. The following year he moved to Hong Kong, where he presided over a meeting of leaders of rival Vietnamese factions, held in a football stadium during a match to evade police attention. He persuaded his compatriots to unite under the banner of the Indochinese Communist Party, which in 1931 was formally recognized by the Moscow Comintern. During the years that followed, a series of revolts took place in Vietnam. The French responded with bombings of suspected insurgent villagers, and guillotining of identified leaders. Though he was not directly linked to the risings, he was not a wanted man, pursued through the European powers' colonies. After a series of adventures, he escaped into China by persuading a Hong Kong hospital employee to have him declared dead. Thereafter he commuted between China and Russia, suffering chronic privation and recurrent illnesses. A French communist agent who met him during his odyssey described Ho as 'taut and quivering, with only one thought in his head: his country.'

"Early in 1941, after an absence of three decades, he secretly returned to Vietnam, travelling on foot and by sampan, and assuming the pseudonym by which he would become known in history - Ho Chi Minh, or Bringer of Light'. He took up quarters in a cave in the hills of the north, where he met young men who embraced this fifty-year-old as 'Uncle Ho', among them such later heroes of the revolution as Pham Van Dong and Vo Nguyen Giap. Giap at first introduced Ho to the little guerilla group by saying, 'Comrades, this is an old man, a native of this area, a farmer who loves the revolution.' But they quickly realized that this was no local, and certainly no farmer. Ho drew maps of Hanoi for those who had never seen it, and advised them to dig latrines. A veteran recalled: 'We thought to ourselves, "Who is this old man? Of all the things he could tell us, he gives us advice about how to take a shit!"' Nonetheless, Ho was readily accepted as leader of the group, and indeed of the new movement,

which they called the Vietnamese Independence League, shortened to Vietminh. Its leaders did not disguise their own commitment, but only much later did they explicitly avow communism as their only permitted creed.

“Nazi mastery of western Europe drastically eroded France’s authority in its colonies, and intensified peasant suffering. In Indochina the French requisitioned to meet their own needs such basic commodities as matches, cloth, lamp oil. In the Mekong delta there was a brief 1940 communist-led rising in which several French officials were killed, army posts seized. Rice granaries were occupied and their contents distributed, bridges broken down by insurgents waving hammer-and-sickle flags. The so-called Nam Ky insurrection lasted just ten days, and only a small minority of local people participated, yet it emphasized the rage latent in the countryside.

“From the summer of 1940 onwards, Tokyo exploited its regional dominance to deploy troops in Indochina, first to sever the Western supply route to China, later progressively to establish an occupation, which provoked President Franklin Roosevelt to impose his momentous July 1941 oil embargo. Although the French retained nominal authority, the Japanese thereafter exercised real power. They craved commodities to supply their domestic industries, created increasing hunger among the inhabitants of the richest rice-producing area in South-East Asia.

“In 1944, a drought followed by floods unleashed a vast human tragedy. At least a million Vietnamese, one in ten of Tonkin’s population, perished in a famine as disastrous as the contemporaneous Bengal disaster in British India. There were credible reports of cannibalism, yet no Frenchman is known to have starved...”<sup>37</sup>

**3. China.** But the biggest potential prize for the Soviets was - China... Now China had moved firmly into the West’s, and especially America’s orbit in 1917, breaking diplomatic relations with Germany at the same time as the US did. “Its citizens,” writes Tooze, “en route to the western front to serve as ‘coolie’ labour, were in danger from U-boats too - 543 drowned in the sinking of the SS *Athos* in February, 1917. The ensuing struggle between factions in Beijing over the terms of China’s entry into the war would mark a new phase in the country’s politicisation. While regional military factions contended for power in Beijing and pushed for China to join the war under the sponsorship of Japan, Sun Yat-Sen and the nationalist Kuomintang demanded an independent foreign policy, and withdrew to a base camp in the south. When China entered the war on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1917, the anniversary of the Boxer uprising, it was not a moment of celebration. But it did gain China a place at the Versailles Peace Conference and set the stage for the popular mobilisation that would follow on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1919. Mass indignation over the humiliating concessions that were

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<sup>37</sup> Hastings, *Vietnam*, London: William Collins, 2019, pp. 5-7.

granted to Japan at China's expense at the Paris peace talks would mark the starting point of modern Chinese nationalism."<sup>38</sup>

For in clear violation of the principles of national self-determination, the Versailles Conference awarded Japan Germany's former rights in Shantung (promised to Japan in 1917 by Britain and France), as well as many formerly German Pacific islands and a permanent seat on the Council of the League of Nations.

The "May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement" of 1919 was a nation-wide movement of student protest against these decisions that led, as J.M. Roberts writes, "to embrace others than students and to manifest itself in strikes and a boycott of Japanese goods. A movement which had begun with intellectuals and their pupils spread to include other city-dwellers, notably industrial workers and the new Chinese capitalists who had benefited from the war. It was the most important evidence yet seen of the mounting rejection of Europe by Asia.

"For the first time, an industrial China entered the scene. China, like Japan, had enjoyed an economic boom during the war. Though a decline in European imports to China had been partly offset by increased Japanese and American sales, Chinese entrepreneurs in the ports had found it profitable to invest in production for the home market. The first important industrial areas outside Manchuria began to appear. They belonged to progressive capitalists who sympathized with revolutionary ideas all the more when the return of peace brought renewed western competition and evidence that China had not earned her liberation from tutelage to the foreigner. The workers, too, felt this resentment: their jobs were threatened. Many of them were first-generation town-dwellers, drawn into the new industrial areas from the countryside by the promise of employment. An uprooting from the tenacious soil of peasant tradition was even more important in China than in Europe a century before. Family and village ties were specially strong in China. The migrant to the town broke with patriarchal authority and the reciprocal obligations of the independent producing unit, the household: this was a further great weakening of the age-old structure which had survived the revolution and still tied China to the past. New material was thus made available for new ideological deployments.

"The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement first showed what could be made of such forces as these by creating the first broadly-based Chinese revolutionary coalition. Progressive western liberalism had not been enough; implicit in the movement's success was the disappointment of the hopes of many of the cultural reformers. Capitalist western democracy had been shown up by the Chinese government's helplessness in the face of Japan. Now, that government had another humiliation from its own subjects: the boycott and demonstration forced it to release the arrested students and dismiss its pro-Japanese ministers. But this was not the only important consequence of May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. For all

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<sup>38</sup> Tooze, "265 Days that Shook the World", *Prospect*, January, 2017, p. 26.

their limited political influence, reformers had for the first time, thanks to the students, broken through into the world of social action. This aroused enormous optimism and greater popular awareness than ever before. This is the case for saying that contemporary Chinese history begins positively in 1919 rather than 1911...

“... Russia was very popular among Chinese students... One of the first acts of the Soviet government had been a formal renunciation of all extra-territorial rights and jurisdictions enjoyed by the Tsarist state. In the eyes of the nationalists, Russia, therefore, had clean hands. Moreover, her revolution – a revolution in a great peasant society – claimed to be built upon a doctrine whose applicability in China seemed especially plausible in the wake of the industrialization provoked by the war.”<sup>39</sup>

In 1917 the Soviets had renounced all annexations carried out by the Tsarist regime in China, and in 1920 they conceded to China full freedom to set its own tariffs and jurisdiction over all Russians in China. The Chinese went on to take over the former Tsarist embassy in Beijing and the cities of Tianjin and Harbin as well as the last leg of the Trans-Siberian railway. They were tolerant of the large number of Russian emigrants to such places as Harbin; among ROCOR’s distinguished archpastors in the region was St. Jonah of Hankow (+1925).

By 1924, feeling stronger after their victory in the Civil War, the Soviets reasserted Russian rights over the Manchurian railway system. Before that, however, in November, 1922 the Comintern at its Fourth Congress made an important policy change: the foreign Communist Parties were to pursue the strategy of revolutionary defence, not striving to overthrow governments – at any rate not immediately, but to cooperate with the most promising elements. In China’s case this meant the nationalists, whom Stalin called “the revolutionary bourgeoisie”.

“The central point of the new Comintern line,” writes Tooze, “was the need to draw the great mass of the rural population into national liberation struggles. The role of the Communist Party was to pressure the bourgeois-nationalist parties into adopting a revolutionary agrarian programme to appeal to the landless rural population. Crucially, on 12 January 1923 the Comintern directed the Chinese Communist Party that ‘The only serious national revolutionary group in China at present is the Kuomintang.’ With these words the Comintern for better or worse made the choice that none of the other foreign powers had been willing to make. It opted not just to acknowledge the significance of the Kuomintang, but to assist it in making a full-scale national revolution. This was affirmed by official Soviet diplomacy only a few weeks later when the Soviet ambassador to China, Adolphe Joffe, abandoned Beijing to meet with Sun Yat-Sen in Shanghai, from where they issued a manifesto on future collaboration. In May this was followed by specific instructions designating the peasant problem as the central issue of the Chinese revolution.

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<sup>39</sup> Roberts, *History of the World*, Oxford: Helicon, 1992, pp. 734-735.

Along with their role in the cities, the Chinese comrades were enjoined to foment an agrarian revolt. This strategy was not to the taste of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party, who were urban intellectuals fixated on the modern, industrial working class. But it brought to the fore a new cohort of organizers, include the young Mao Zedong, himself a son of the peasantry..."<sup>40</sup>

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Mao's basic philosophy was just as nihilist as Lenin's. His biographers, Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, write: "In the winter of 1917-18, still a student as he turned twenty-four, he wrote extensive commentaries on a book called *A System of Ethics*, by a minor late nineteenth-century German philosopher, Friedrich Paulsen. In these notes, Mao expressed the central elements in his own character, which stayed consistent for the remaining six decades of his life and defined his rule.

"Mao's attitude to morality consisted of one core, the self, 'I', above everything else: 'I do not agree with the view that to be moral, the motive of one's action has to be benefiting others. Morality does not have to be defined in relation to others... People like me want to... satisfy our hearts to the full, and in so doing we automatically have the most valuable moral codes. Of course there are people and objects in the world, but they are all there only for me.'

"Mao shunned all constraints of responsibility and duty. 'People like me only have a duty to ourselves; we have no duty to other people.' 'I am responsible only for the reality that I know,' he wrote, 'and absolutely not responsible for anything else. I don't know about the past, I don't know about the future. They have nothing to do with the reality of my own self.' He explicitly rejected any responsibility towards future generations. 'Some say one has a responsibility for history. I don't believe it. I am only concerned about developing myself... I have my desire and act on it. I am responsible to no one.'

"Mao did not believe in anything unless he could benefit from it personally. A good name after death, he said, 'cannot bring me any joy, because it belongs to the future and not to my own reality.' 'People like me are not building achievements to leave for future generations.' Mao did not care what he left behind.

"He argued that conscience could go to hell if it was in conflict with his impulses:

"These two should be one and the same. All our actions... are driven by impulse, and the conscience that is wise goes along with this in every instance. Sometimes... conscience restrains impulses such as over-eating or over-

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<sup>40</sup> Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 420-421.

indulgence in sex. But conscience is only there to restrain, not oppose. And the restraint is for better completion of the impulse.'

"As conscience always implies some concern for other people, and is not a corollary of hedonism, Mao was rejecting the concept. His view was: 'I do not think these [commands like "do not kill", "do not steal", and "do not slander] have anything to do with conscience. I think they are only out of self-interest for self-preservation.' All considerations must 'be purely calculation for oneself, and absolutely not for obeying external ethical codes, or for so-called feelings of responsibility...'

"Absolute selfishness and irresponsibility lay at the heart of Mao's outlook.

"These attributes he held to be reserved for 'Great Heroes' - a group to which he appointed himself. For this elite, he said:

"'Everything outside their nature, such as restrictions and constraints, must be swept away by the great strength in their nature... When Great Heroes give full play to their impulses, they are magnificently powerful, stormy and invincible. Their power is like a hurricane arising from a deep gorge, and like a sex-maniac on heat and prowling for a lover... there is no way to stop them.'

"The other central element in his character which Mao spelt out now was the joy he took in upheaval and destruction. 'Giant wars,' he wrote, 'will last as long as heaven and earth and will never become extinct... The ideal of a world of Great Equality and Harmony [*da tong*, Confucian ideal society] is mistaken.' This was not just the prediction that a pessimist might make; it was Mao's desideratum, which he asserted was what the population at large wished. 'Long-lasting peace,' he claimed, 'is unendurable to human beings, and tidal waves of disturbance have to be created in this state of peace... When we look at history, we adore the times of [war] when dramas happened one after another... which make reading about them great fun. When we get to the periods of peace and prosperity, we are bored... Human nature loves sudden swift changes.'

"Mao simply collapsed the distinction between reading about stirring events and actually living through cataclysm. He ignored the fact that, for the overwhelming majority, war meant misery.

"He even articulated a cavalier attitude towards death:

"'Human beings are endowed with the sense of curiosity. Why should we treat death differently? Don't we want to experience strange things? Death is the strangest thing, which you will never experience if you go on living... Some are afraid of it because the change comes too drastically. But I think this is the most wonderful thing: where else in this world can we find such a fantastic and drastic change?'



“Using a very royal ‘we’, Mao went on: ‘We love sailing on a sea of upheavals. To go from life to death is to experience the greatest upheaval. Isn’t it magnificent!’ This might at first seem surreal, but when later tens of millions of Chinese were starved to death under his rule, Mao told his inner ruling circle it did not matter if people died – and even that death was to be celebrated. As so often, he applied his attitude only to other people, not to himself. Throughout his own life he was obsessed with finding ways to thwart death, doing everything he could to perfect his security and enhance his medical care.

“When he came to the question ‘How do we change?’, Mao laid the utmost emphasis on destruction: ‘the country must be... destroyed and then re-formed.’ He extended this line not just to China but to the whole world – and even the universe: ‘This applies to the country, to the nation, and to mankind... The destruction of the universe is the same... People like me long for its destruction, because when the old universe is destroyed, a new universe will be formed. Isn’t that better!’”<sup>41</sup>

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For the time being, however, Mao’s dreams of destruction would have to wait... In 1923 the Kuomintang under Sun Yat-Sen established itself in Canton. Their aim was to crush the warlords, throw out the foreign imperialist exploiters and unite the country. Sun was no communist, but he was prepared to work with the communists, and they were prepared to work with him, because his philosophy was collectivist and anti-western – “on no account,” he wrote, “must we give more liberty to the individual; let us secure liberty instead for the nation”. Moreover, he needed Moscow’s help in reorganizing his party on the Soviet model and in building up an army. And so in the summer of 1923, Sun sent his young brother-in-law, Chiang Kai-Shek, a soldier trained in Japan, to Moscow for further training. On his return Chiang organized an army of 85,000 men with 6000 officers trained at an academy in Canton.<sup>42</sup> In 1925 Sun died, and in July, 1926 Chiang became leader of the Kuomintang party.

The question now was: could the Kuomintang under Chiang unite with the communists under Mao in order to destroy the war-lords, who still controlled northern and central China?

Not if Chiang could help it... He had acquired a healthy distrust of Communists during his stay in Moscow, and in May, 1926 he had the Kuomintang’s Central Executive “expel all Communists from senior posts, though he did release the interned Soviet advisers. In Moscow, a politburo commission on May 30 heard a report on Chiang Kai Shek’s ‘coup’. But Stalin upheld the bloc within”<sup>43</sup> – that is, the union of Communists and nationalists,

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<sup>41</sup> Chang and Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, London: JonathanCape, 2005, pp. 13-15.

<sup>42</sup> Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 633.

<sup>43</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. 628.

which Stalin did not expect to last forever, but which he chose to support for the time being.

And for a time Chiang did seem the leader most likely to unite China. In early 1926 the ablest Kuomintang general, Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang, "marched his 300,000-strong force known as the Kuominchun or People's Army, some 7,000 miles, circling southern Mongolia, then east through Shensu and Hunan, to attack Peking from the south. This stupendous physical and military feat (which became the model for Mao's own 'long march' in the next decade), made possible Chiang's conquest of the North in 1926-7. As a result, four of the principal war-lords recognized Chiang's supremacy, and the possibility appeared of uniting China under a republic by peaceful means."<sup>44</sup>

The foreign imperialists were also on the run... By early 1927 the entire Yangtze valley - Britain's supposed sphere of influence - had been conquered, and, as Roberts writes, "Anti-imperialist feeling supported a successful boycott of British goods, which led the British government, alarmed by the evidence of growing Russian influence in China, to surrender its concessions at Hankow and Kiukiang. It had already promised to return Wei-hai-wei to China (1922), and the United States had renounced its share of the Boxer indemnity. Such successes added to signs that China was on the move at last..."<sup>45</sup>

In Hunan province, however, the communists under Mao had been doing just as well as the nationalists in their own way. Thus by 1927 "some ten million or so peasants and their families [had been] organized by the communists. 'In a few months,' wrote Mao, 'the peasants have accomplished what Dr. Sun Yat-Sen wanted, but failed, to accomplish in the forty years he devoted to the national revolution.' Organization made possible the removal of many of the ills which beset the peasants. Landlords were not dispossessed, but their rents were often reduced. Usurious rates of interest were brought down to reasonable levels. Rural revolution had eluded all previous progressive movements in China and was identified by Mao as the failure of the 1911 revolution; the communist success in reaching this goal was based on the discovery that it could be brought about by using the revolutionary potential of the peasants themselves. This had enormous significance for the future, for it implied new possibilities of historical development through Asia. Mao grasped this and revalued urban revolution accordingly. 'If we allot ten points to the democratic revolution,' he wrote, 'then the achievements of the urban dwellers and the military units rate only three points, while the remaining seven points should go to the peasants in their rural revolution.'..."<sup>46</sup> Mao said that "several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm... They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves..."

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<sup>44</sup> Johnson, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>45</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 738.

<sup>46</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 739.

The problem that now needed to be addressed was: what were to be the relations between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? In public, Chiang said: "If Russia aids the Chinese revolution, does that mean that she wants China to apply Communism? No, she wants us to carry out the national revolution." In private, however, he was more sceptical. As Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin write, he was convinced "that 'What the Russians call "Internationalism" and "World Revolution" are nothing but old-fashioned imperialism.' The Soviet leadership, however, believed that it could get the better of Chiang. He should, said Stalin, 'be squeezed like a lemon and then thrown away'. In the event, it was the CCP which became the lemon. Having gained control of Shanghai in April 1927 thanks to a Communist-led rising, Chiang began a systematic massacre of the Communists who had captured it for him. The CCP, on Stalin's instructions, replied with a series of armed risings. All were disastrous failures. Moscow's humiliation was compounded by a police raid on the Soviet consulate in Beijing which uncovered a mass of documents on Soviet espionage."<sup>47</sup>

"The Communists reverted to the defence of 'Soviet areas' in which their appetites for bloodthirsty purges of real and imagined opponents were indulged to the hilt and with indescribable cruelty."<sup>48</sup>

"The central leadership of the CCP for some time continued to hope for urban insurrection; in the provinces, none the less, individual communist leaders continued to work along the lines indicated by Mao in Hunan. They dispossessed absentee landlords and organized local soviets, a shrewd appreciation of the value of the traditional peasant hostility to central government. By 1930 they had done better than this, by organizing an army in Kiangsi, where a Chinese Soviet Republic ruled fifty million people, or claimed to. In 1932 the CCP leadership abandoned Shanghai to join Mao in this sanctuary. KMT efforts were directed towards destroying this army, but always without success. This meant fighting on a second front at a time when Japanese pressure [the Japanese had invaded Manchuria in 1931] was strongest. The last great KMT effort had a partial success, it is true, for it drove the communists out of their sanctuary, thus forcing on them the 'Long March' to Shensi which began in 1934, the epic of the Chinese Revolution and an inspiration ever since. Once there, the seven thousand survivors found local communist support, but were still hardly safe; only the demands of resistance to the Japanese prevented the KMT from doing more to harass them..."<sup>49</sup>

At this time, Chiang "had the advantages over his rivals," writes Jacques Gernet, "of a solid political organization (a one-party system based on the Soviet model), of a somewhat better financial foundation, which he strove to

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The KGB and the World: The Mitrokhin Archive II*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Small Wars, Far Away Places*, London: Pan, 2013, p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> Roberts, op. cit., p. 742.

consolidate by controlling banking circles, and of the prestige lent to him by the official recognition of all foreign countries. But for that very reason the Nanking regime differed from that of the war-lords; it was much more closely tied than its predecessors had been to the commercial middle class – which it was to exploit to its own advantage – and also much more open, of necessity, to Western influences. Most of its officials and agents had been in contact with foreigners or had been educated abroad. In spite of its own intentions, it was an emanation of the Western middle classes of the open ports, and this very fact explains why, in spite of its declared aim of encouraging agriculture, it was to take practically no interest in the tragic fate of the peasantry.

“But the Nanking regime also owed its particular colouration to the circumstances of its time; it came into existence at the period when the world war was witnessing the upsurge of Italian Fascism, German National Socialism, and Japanese militarism, while the parliamentary democracies were hit by the great American economic depression, and the U.S.S.R. was living under the bureaucratic police system directed by Stalin. Violently hostile to revolutionary movements and a great admirer of strong regimes, Chiang Kai-shek strove to imitate their methods of propaganda and to disseminate a ‘Confucianism’ modified to suit modern taste. This was the ‘New Life Movement’ (*Hsin-sheng-huo yün-tung*), a sort of moral order bound up with the cult of Confucius and the exaltation of the founder of the Chinese Republic. A political police, the ‘Blue Shirts’, was entrusted with the task of hunting down liberals and revolutionaries.

“Created by businessmen linked first to the imperial government and later to Yüan Shih-k’ai’s regime and to the governments dominated by the war-lords, the Chinese banks had played a crucial part in financing military expenditure. For that very reason they represented a sort of relatively independent power which had acted in Chiang Kai-shek’s favour at the time of his *coup d’état*. At that time they were in a period of rapid growth because of the drainage of capital from the interior to the great economic centre of Shanghai, where bank deposits increased by 245 per cent between 1921 and 1932. The number of banks in the great metropolis had risen from 20 in 1919 to 34 in 1923 and to 67 in 1927. It was to reach the figure of 164 in 1937. But from the moment of its installation in Nanking the Kuo-min-tang insisted on closer and closer collaboration from the banking sector, granting it, in return for the support required to guarantee the government’s finances and make good its deficit, big advantages and wider facilities for speculation. The result was a kind of state capitalism which enabled the Nationalist government to be sure of the support of business circles at all times and to control capitalists who showed signs of acting too independently. The regime’s finances were soon dominated by a few families who owned big banks closely tied to the Nanking government...

“Even if they suffered by the regime, as was the case mainly with the new bourgeoisie that owned the banks and industrial enterprises, the propertied classes as a whole were satisfied with an order of things that did not question

their privileges. In the countryside the Nanking government did not undertake any fundamental reform of the rent or tax system. The impoverished peasantry thus continued to be the victim of what, through a concatenation of causes and effects, might seem like a sort of inevitable curse. The excessive number of mouths to feed, the extremely small plots into which the land was divided..., its poor yield in spite of desperately hard work, and the burden of taxation ensured that the smallest inequality of wealth became the means of exploitation thanks to usury and rents. Everything helped to keep the majority of the population in abysmal poverty..."<sup>50</sup>

"In the last years of the 1920s China was given over to the rival armies, motivated by a variety of ideologies or simple greed - to their victims, what did it matter? After Chiang's Northern campaign and the meeting of war-lords in Peking in 1928, one of the KMT commanders, Marshal Li Tsung-jen, declared: 'Something new has come to changeless China... the birth of patriotism and public spirit.' Within months these words had been shown to be total illusion, as the war lords fell out with each other and the Nanking government. All parties found it convenient to fly the government and the KMT flag; none paid much regard to the wishes of either. Government revenue fell; that of the war-lords rose. As the destruction of town and villages increased, more of the dispossessed became bandits or served war-lords, great and small, for their food. In addition to half-dozen major war lords, many lesser generals controlled a single province or a dozen counties, with armies ranging from 20,000 to 100,000. Mao's was among the smallest of these. At the National Economic Conference on 30 June 1928, Chiang's brother-in-law, T.V. Soong, now Minister of Finance, said that whereas in 1911 under the monarchy China had an army of 400,000, more or less under single control, in 1928 it had eight-four armies, eighteen independent divisions and twenty-one independent brigades, totalling over 2 million. The nation's total revenue, \$450 million was worth only \$300 million after debt-payments. The army cost each year \$360 million, and if the troops were regularly paid, \$642 million - hence banditry was inevitable. Yet a disarmament conference held the following January, designed to reduce the troops to 715,000, was a complete failure. Soong told it that, in the last year, twice as much had been spent on the army as on all other government expenditure put together.

"In practice, the anguished people of China could rarely tell the difference between bandits and government troops. The number of those killed or died of exposure or starvation was incalculable. Hupeh province showed a net population loss of 4 million in the years 1925-30, though there had been no natural famine and little emigration. The worst-hit province in 1929-30 was Honan, with 400,000 bandits (mostly unpaid soldiers) out of a total population of 25 million. In five months during the winter of 1929-30, the once-wealthy city of Ivang in West Honan changed hands among various bandit armies seventy-two times. An official government report on the province said that in Miench'ih district alone 1,000 towns and villages had been looted. And 10,000

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<sup>50</sup> Genet, op. cit, pp. 634-636.

held to ransom: 'When they capture a person for ransom, they first pierce his legs with iron wire and beind them together as fish are hung on a string. When they return to their bandit dens the prisoners are interrogated and cut with sickles to make them disclose hidden property. Any who hesitate are immediately cut in two at the waist, as a warning to the others.' The report said that families were selling children and men their wives. Or men 'rented out' thei wives for two or three years, any children born being the property of the men who paid the rent. 'In many cases only eight or ten houses are left standing in towns which a year ago had 400 or 450.'"<sup>51</sup>

In spite of these horrors, China now entered a period of growth that can only be compared with the even more extraordinary growth of the present day. As Maria Hsia Chang writes: "Between 1928 and 1936, the availability of roads and track doubled, with domestic capital underwriting the construction of 7,995 kilometers of railway. Between 1926 and 1936, China sustained a compounded industrial growth rate of 8.3 percent per annum - during a period when the major economies of the world languished in Depression, with the general indices of production in the United States, France, and Germany falling by about 50 percent. In the judgment of many experts, the economy of Nationalist China was on the threshold of self-sustaining 'takeoff'."<sup>52</sup>

However, "on 12 December 1936 Chiang was kidnapped by members of his own alliance and forced to cease all hostilities against the communists. The truce was a blessing [for the communists], giving Mao the time to build up his strength under a new united front..."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>52</sup> Chang, *Return of the Dragon*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2001, pp. 79-80.

<sup>53</sup> Frank Dikötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 98.

## 5. THE RE-LAUNCH OF ECUMENISM

The post-1914 world was a time of the shaking of foundations, and not only in politics. In physics Einstein's relativity theory and Planck's quantum theory shook people's beliefs in the nature of matter and space-time; in music, the atonalism of Schoenberg changed their ideas of what could be termed beautiful; while cubism, abstractionism and other movements had the same effect in the visual arts. However, the most profound and disastrous effects were in religion...

Atheism, as we have seen, had made considerable inroads into European culture in the period up to 1914 - a factor that must be considered one of the main causes of the First World War. However, during the war itself atheism's march appears to have slowed. Thus in 1916, writes Alistair McGrath, "active scientists were asked whether they believed in God - specifically, a God who actively communicates with humanity, and to whom one may pray 'in expectation of receiving an answer'. Deists don't believe in God, by this definition. The results are well-known: roughly 40 per cent did believe in this kind of God, 40 per cent did not, and 20 per cent were not sure. The survey was repeated in 1997, using precisely the same question, and found pretty much the same pattern, with a slight increase in those who did not (up to 45 per cent). The number of those who did believe in such a God remained stable at about 40 per cent.

"James Leuba, who conducted the original survey in 1916, predicted that the number of scientists disbelieving in God would rise significantly over time, as a result of general improvements in education. There is a small increase in the number of those who disbelieve, and a corresponding diminution in those who are agnostic - but no significant reduction in those who believe."<sup>54</sup>

However, if atheism was checked during the war, essentially atheist doctrines such as Darwinism continued to gain majority support, although strong opposition also continued. In 1925 the State of Tennessee convicted a school teacher, John Stokes, of teaching evolution in school. He was not sure that had ever done that, but he was convicted in any case (the verdict was overturned on a technicality). The main result of the case was that there were attempts in several states to introduce anti-evolution laws on the statute book. Whether the trial helped or hindered either side in the evolution vs. creationism debate is disputed. What is clear is that the evolutionists modified their theory to try and take account of Mendelian genetics; the result was "neo-Darwinism".

Atheism would of course grow enormously in Russia after the revolution. And with it, Darwinism became the new orthodoxy in the biological science, as Marxism was in science and culture as a whole.

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<sup>54</sup> McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?* London: SPCK, 2007, pp. 20, 21.

In the West, the curse was rather *Ecumenism*, whose origins in Roman paganism and Apelleanism, and rebirth in eighteenth-century Masonry, we have already traced. Ecumenism is the heresy that there is no such thing as heresy as the Apostles and Fathers of the Church understand that term – that is, a false teaching on the Faith. Ecumenism is the heresy that there is no single Faith, whether Orthodox, Papist or Protestant, whether Christian or non-Christian, which expresses the fullness of the truth, and that all existing faiths (except Ecumenism itself) are more or less in error. It implies that the One, Undivided Church of Christ has foundered on the reef of sectarian strife, and that She has to be re-founded on the sands of doctrinal compromise and indifference to the truth. It is the tower of Babel rebuilt, a babble of conflicting tongues united only in their insistence that they all speak the same language...<sup>55</sup>

If British power in the political sphere was waning in the inter-war period, it was rising in the religious sphere, as Anglican (and American Episcopalian) bishops were ubiquitous in spreading the false gospel of ecumenism. As we have seen, the first ecumenist Church was the Anglican, which from the time of Queen Elizabeth I was essentially a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. Later developments in Anglicanism, such as the Oxford movement of the 1840s, introduced the idea of “the Branch theory of the Church”. According to the Oxford theologians E.B. Pusey and William Palmer, the Church consisted of three branches – Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Anglicanism – preferably in the “High Church” variety they espoused. However, “Low Church” Anglicanism also made its contribution to Ecumenism. Thus Archbishop Vitaly (Ustinov) of Canada saw the forerunners of Ecumenism in the “Low Church” Anglicanism of the Victorian era and in the semi-Christian ideologies of the YMCA, YWCA and the Boy Scouts with their belief in the basic goodness of human nature, light-minded attitude to sin, emphasis on charity as the handing out of earthly goods not in the name of Christ, the cult of the flesh under the cover of concern for health and hygiene, carnal emotionalism, interconfessionalism and condescending attitude towards dogmatic Christianity.

Especially important in the construction of this Tower of Babel, he says, “is the complete spiritual disintegration of the Protestant heresy. But if we say, together with Tertullian: ‘the human soul is naturally Christian’ – by which this western teacher of the Church undoubtedly meant: ‘naturally Orthodox’ – then we can affirm that every heresy by its very nature is contrary to the human soul and must sooner or later be rejected and cast out by it. And so we are present at the overthrow of the Protestant heresy, but insofar as the spiritual world, like nature, abhors a vacuum, the place of this heresy is being occupied by Ecumenism. For Ecumenism seeks to re-establish the dogma of the One Church that Protestantism with its innumerable sects and ever-multiplying divisions

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<sup>55</sup> V. Moss, “The Truth is One”, in *The Imperishable Word*, Old Woking: Gresham Books, 1980.



has destroyed."<sup>56</sup> Archbishop Vitaly later defined ecumenism as "the heresy of heresies" and was a member of the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad that anathematized it in 1983.

"The ideologue of ecumenism," writes Archbishop Averky, "which is the natural consequence of the nostalgia of the Protestant world for the Church that they have lost, was the German pastor Christopher Blumhardt, whom the Protestants call for that reason 'the great prophet of the contemporary world'. He called all the Protestants to unity for 'the construction of the Kingdom of God on earth', but he died before the organization of the ecumenical movement, in 1919. His fundamental idea consisted of the proposition that 'the old world has been destroyed, and a new one is rising on its ruins'. He placed three problems before Christianity: 1) the realization of the best social structure, 2) the overcoming of confessional disagreements and 3) the working together for the education of the whole world community of nations with the complete liquidation of war.

"It was in these three points that the aims of ecumenism were formulated by the present general secretary of the Council of the ecumenical movement, Visser-t-Hooft, who saw the means for their realization in the Church's pursuit of social aims. For this it is first of all necessary to overcome confessional differences and create one church. The renewed one church will have the possibility of preparing the way for the triumph of Socialism, which will lead to the creation of one world State as the Kingdom of God on earth..."<sup>57</sup>

This project elicited the first public debate on the question of the nature of the unity of the Church and the ecumenical movement between leading representatives of the Western and Orthodox Churches. Participants in the debate were, on the one hand, Mr. Robert Gardiner, secretary of the Joint Commission, and, on the other hand, Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov and Archimandrite, later Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky). In the course of this debate, which took place in 1916, Archimandrite Hilarion wrote:

"I could ask you this question: Do you and I belong to the one Church of Christ? In answering it you undoubtedly would mention the insignificance of our dogmatic differences and the virtually negligible difference in rites. For me, however, the answer is determined not by considerations of dogmatic disagreements but by the evident fact: there is no ecclesiastical unity in grace between us...

"The principal truth of Christianity, its great mystery – the Incarnation of the Son of God – is acknowledged by all Christian creeds, yet this alone cannot

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<sup>56</sup> Archbishop Vitaly, report read to the Hierarchical Council of the Russian Church Abroad at Machopac in 1967, reprinted in *Moskva* (Moscow), 1991, N 9, p. 146.

<sup>57</sup> Averky, "O polozhenii pravoslavnago khristianina v sovremennom mire" (On the Position of the Orthodox Christian in the Contemporary World), in *Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sovremennij Mir* (True Orthodoxy and the Contemporary World), Jordanville, 1972.

fuse them into one Church. For, according to the Apostle James (2.19), the devils also believe; as attested by the Gospel, they confessed their faith like the Apostle Peter did (Matthew 16.16; 8.26; Mark 1.24; Luke 8.28). But do they belong to one Church of Christ? On the other hand, the Church community undoubtedly embraces people who do not know the dogmas of the Council of Chalcedon and who are unable to say much about their dogmatic convictions...

“If the question of the belonging or non-belonging to the Church be formulated in terms of theological dogma, it will be seen that it even cannot be resolved in a definite way. Just how far should conformity to the Church’s ideas go in dogmatic matters? Just in what is it necessary to agree and what kind of disagreement ensues following a separation from the Church? How are we to answer this question? And who has so much authority as to make the decision stand? Perhaps you will point to the faith in the incarnate Son of God as the chief characteristic of belonging to the Church. Yet the German Protestants are going to argue against the necessity of even this feature, since in their religion there are to be found even such ministers who openly deny the Divinity of the Saviour.

“Christ never wrote a course in dogmatic religion. Precise formulations of the principal dogmas of Christianity took place centuries after the earthly life of the Saviour. What, then, determined the belonging to the Church in those, the very first, times of the historical existence of Christianity? This is attested to in the book of the Acts of the Apostles: ‘Such as should be saved were added to the Church’ (2.45; 6.13-14). Membership of the Church is determined by the unity with the Church. It cannot be otherwise, if only because the Church is not a school of philosophy. She is a new mankind, a new grace-filled organism of love. She is the Body of Christ. Christ Himself compared the unity of His disciples with the organic unity of a tree and its branches. Two ‘bodies’ or two trees standing side by side cannot be organically related to each other. What the soul is to the body, the Holy Spirit is to the Church; the Church is not only one body but also One Spirit. The soul does not bring back to life a member which has been cut off, and likewise the vital sap of a tree does not flow into the detached branch. A separated member dies and rots away. A branch that has been cut off dries up. These similes must guide us in a discussion of the unity of the Church. If we apply these similes, these figures of a tree and a body, to the Church, any separation from the Church, any termination of the unity with the Church will turn out to be incompatible with membership of the Church. It is not the degree of the dogmatic dissent on the part of the separated member that is important; what is significant in the extreme is the fact of separation as such, the cessation itself of the unity with the Church. Be it a separation on the basis of but a rebellion against the Church, a disciplinary insubordination without any dogmatic difference in opinion, separation from the Church will for the one who has fallen away have every sad consequence.

“Not only heretics but schismatics, too, separate themselves from the

Church. The essence of the separation remains the same."<sup>58</sup>

However, Archbishop Hilarion's view were by no means shared by all Russian ecclesiastical and political leaders. Anton Kartashev (+1960), former Minister of Religions in the Provisional Government in 1917, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, Professor at St. Petersburg Theological Academy, and later, after the Bolshevik revolution, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, Paris wrote: "Even Protestant communities, mercilessly breaking contact with apostolic hierarchical succession and the living sacred tradition of the Church, but having preserved the Sacrament of Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, continue through this mystagogical door to introduce their members into the bosom of the one invisible Church of Christ and to commune to them that very same Grace of the Holy Spirit. All this gives ground for posing the question of a unification of churches on the basis of their equal rights in their mystic realism, and not on the basis of 'uniatism,' i.e., reuniting heretics to Orthodoxy. The reunification of churches should be a manifestation and a concrete incarnation in visible reality of an already invisibly existing unity of the Church."

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After Protestantism, a further major impulse to Ecumenism was provided by the Romantic movement and its philosophical mirror, Hegelian historicism, which emphasized the inevitability of historical change in all things. Even God had to change! For God for the romantics was a dynamic, evolving being indistinguishable from nature and the temporal process, always overcoming contradictions and rising to ever higher unities. It followed that the notion of a perfectly revealed religion, a final, unalterable truth, was anathema to them. "Christians must not be 'vain and foolish', Friedrich Schleiermacher warned, for their religion is not the only 'revealed religion'. All religions are revealed from God. Christianity is the center around which all others gather. The disunity of religions is an evil and 'only in the totality of all such possible forms can there be given the true religion,' Schleiermacher added."<sup>59</sup>

A Romantic scheme of history and the evolution of religion was given by Friedrich Schelling in his Berlin lectures of 1841-1842 (many of which were attended by leading Russian intellectuals).

"In the Twenty-Sixth Lecture," writes Fr. Michael Azkoul, "Schelling discoursed on the three ages of history – the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit which correspond to the events of creation, redemption and consummation. Schelling believed that Christianity was now

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<sup>58</sup> Troitsky, *The Unity of the Church and the World Conference of Christian Communities*, Montreal: The Monastery Press, 1975, pp. 13-15.

<sup>59</sup> Azkoul, *Anti-Christianity: The New Atheism*, Montreal: Monastery Press, 1984, p. 34.

passing through 'the second age' which Christ 'incarnated' almost two millennia ago.

"In the vocabulary of the Romantics, Christ brought 'the Idea of Christianity' with Him. An 'Idea' is the invisible, unchangeable, and eternal aspect of each thing. (Plato was probably the first to teach 'Idealism'.) Phenomena are visible, changeable, and temporary. Put another way, the Idea of Christianity ('one Church') is what the historical institution will become when it finishes growing, or, as Schelling would say, when God becomes fully God. One may compare its Idea to wheat and historical Christianity (the Idea) to what Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity will become. When the multiplicity of churches grows into the ecumenical Church, then, the Idea of Christianity, of 'one church', will have been actualised in space and time. It will be actualised in the coming of 'the third age', 'the age of the Spirit', 'the age of consummation'."<sup>60</sup>

A third major impulse to ecumenism, especially in its more recent, "super-ecumenist" (that is, inter-religious) manifestations, came from the Pentecostal movement. At precisely 7 p.m. on New Year's Eve of the year 1900 "the age of the Spirit" and "the new Pentecost" is supposed to have dawned. For it is to that moment that the modern Pentecostal movement dates its origin.

"For some time before that moment," writes Hieromonk Seraphim Rose, "a Methodist minister in Topeka, Kansas, Charles Parham, as an answer to the confessed feebleness of his Christian ministry, had been concentratedly studying the New Testament with a group of his students with the aim of discovering the secret of the *power* of Apostolic Christianity. The students finally deduced that this secret lay in the 'speaking in tongues' which, they thought, always accompanied the reception of the Holy Spirit by preaching that there is no one truth, and therefore no one Church which it can be the pillar of. It maintains that all Churches - and in its more extreme, contemporary forms, all religions - contain partial or relative truths which, on being reduced to their lowest common denominator, will form the dogmatic basis of a new Church or universal religion of a new, enlightened mankind."<sup>61</sup>

A fourth impulse to ecumenism was *spiritual pacifism or appeasement*. It is no accident that ecumenism began after the end of the German Wars of Religion in the seventeenth century, that it received another strong impulse after the First World War, and that its first institutional expression - in the World Council of Churches - appeared after the Second World War. When people are tired of war, whether physical or spiritual, or are frightened of a coming war, as in the 1930s, they settle for the path of least resistance: the renunciation of all struggle for the truth and compromise with falsehood.

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<sup>60</sup> Azkoul, op cit., pp. 77-78.

<sup>61</sup> Rose, *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, 1983, pp. 148-149.

The false pathos of both communism and ecumenism, the two great politico-religious movements of the inter-war years, was *unity* – unity among workers of all nations in the one, and among believers of all denominations in the other. Christians who succumbed to this pathos were ready to surrender the Church's truth, freedom and dignity to the dominant forces in the contemporary world, with the ultimate end, whether conscious or unconscious, of the complete *secularization* of the human race. The heresies of communist and ecumenist "Christianity" attempted to justify or "dogmatize" this apostasy – in the former case, by claiming that only such apostasy can *save* the Church (from destruction by communism), and in the case of ecumenism by claiming that only such apostasy can *recreate* the Church (out of sectarian disintegration).

Essentially, therefore, ecumenism and communism were (and are) two aspects of a single politico-ecclesiological heresy, for which the present writer has coined the term "ecocommunionism"<sup>62</sup>, a single assault on the existence and the dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...

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<sup>62</sup> V. Moss, "Ecucommunism", *Living Orthodoxy*, September-October, 1989, N 5, pp. 13-18.

## 6. ATATURK'S TURKEY

Britain had defeated the Turks in the First World War by a more skillful use of religious and nationalist sentiment than the Germans. While the Germans tried and failed to stir up a pan-Muslim *jihad* against British and French rule from Morocco to India (this was partly because they also supported Turkish nationalism, which contradicted the universalist message of Islam<sup>63</sup>), the British, supported by the French and with the aid of their famous agent, T.E. Lawrence “of Arabia”, had succeeded in the more limited aim of stirring up Arab nationalism against the Turks, centering on the Arab Hashemite dynasty that controlled the heart of the Arab world, Mecca and Medina.<sup>64</sup> But the fall of the Ottoman Empire had many unexpected long-term consequences: apart from the establishment of the Zionist dream in Palestine and the Greek Asia Minor tragedy, it also engendered the secularist republic of Turkey and the resurrection of the eighteenth-century extreme Islamic cult of Wahhabism, which had been crushed by the Ottomans in 1818 but now came to life again.

“The Middle East,” writes Robert Tombs, “was a great prize. British paramountcy seemed assured following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire – an illusion soon dispelled. Friction ensued with France, which demanded Syria and Lebanon under league mandate. This forced Britain to reduce the territory it had offered to the leaders of the Arab Revolt, the Sheriff of Mecca and his sons Abdullah and Faisal. Britain stood by when the French bombarded Damascus in 1920 and ejected Faisal. He was willing to accept British protection, and Britain made him king of Iraq (important for its oil) and Abdullah king of Transjordan, both under British supervision by league mandate. In 1922 Britain found itself on the brink of an unwanted war with Turkey...”<sup>65</sup>

Having rescued his country from the Western powers at Gallipoli in 1915 and then on the Anatolian plateau in 1922, Mustafa Kemal, otherwise known as Ataturk or “Father of the Turks”, was now determined to secularize and westernize it. As Bettany Hughes writes, “In 1922, the Sultanate and Caliphate had been separate as institutions. The Sultanate was abolished in November of that year and while the Caliphate kept its religious role, its teeth were drawn; the Caliph was now subservient to the state. Sultan Abdulmecid II, who had succeeded his cousin Mehmed VI, had taken up the title of caliph only four months before. From the age of eight he had been confined to the Kafes, the prison for princes.

“Laws had been quickly passed by the Grand National Assembly on 3 March 1924 that made the Caliphate redundant. The post was abolished and over 140 members of the Ottoman dynasty were ordered into exile...”

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<sup>63</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 124.

<sup>64</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 222.

<sup>65</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 661.

“And so it was that on 4 March 1924 Abdulmecid, Istanbul’s last Caliph, was packed on to the Orient Express...”<sup>66</sup>

As Peter Mansfield writes, “A new legal code, based on a variety of European systems, was substituted for the Islamic sharia. In 1928 the constitution became officially secular with the deletion of the clause reading that ‘the religion of the Turkish state is Islam’ and ‘laicism’ was established as one of the six cardinal principles of the state. A Latin-based alphabet replaced the Arabic script of Ottoman Turkish and finally, in 1935, surnames on the European model were introduced...”

“After the abolition of the sultanate and caliphate, Ataturk organized the new republic as a secular parliamentary democracy. The 1924 constitution guaranteed equality before the law and freedom of thought, speech, publication and association. In theory sovereignty lay with the people and was exercised in their name by the single-chamber parliament – the Grand National Assembly – which elected the president of the republic, who chose the prime minister. Ministers were supposed to be responsible to parliament.

“Democracy remained severely restricted, however. Ataturk used his immense prestige to override the constitution whenever he chose. In 1924 he organized his supporters as the Republican People’s Party (RPP). This dominated political life, as all members of the Assembly belonged to it, and the RPP ruled Turkey for twenty-seven years. Yet, despite his authoritarianism and arbitrary methods, Ataturk planted the seeds of liberal constitutional government. The Assembly had real powers, and Ataturk tried to have his way by persuasion rather than by force...”<sup>67</sup>

Women were emancipated, citizens dressed in western clothes, and in general, while most Turks remained Muslim, a decisive westernizing reformation took place in accordance with Ataturk’s belief that western civilization was better than the old Ottoman civilization. As he said in 1935, “We shall attempt to raise our national culture above the level of contemporary civilization. Therefore, we think and shall continue to think not according to the lethargic mentality of past centuries, but according to the concepts of speed and action of our century.”

“Ataturk,” writes Simon Sebag Montefiore, “encouraged the study of earlier civilizations connected with the heritage of the Turkish nation. Art, sculpture, music, modern architecture, opera and ballet all flourished. In every area of Turkish life, Ataturk pressed forward his modernizing, nationalistic mission, and a new culture began to emerge...”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Hughes, *Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2017, p. 588.

<sup>67</sup> Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, London: Penguin, 2003, pp. 172, 173.

<sup>68</sup> Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 479.

## 7. THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE WEST

After the Great War five new states were created under the tutelage of Britain or France: Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq and Palestine. The Hashemite kingdom under King Hussein, which had taken the lead in the Arab Revolt and which believed it had the right to take control of most of the Arabic Middle East, steadily declined in power. And when King Hussein declared himself "Prince of the Faithful and Successor of the Prophet", the Wahhabist warriors of Arabia under the leadership of Abdulaziz, usually known in the West as Ibn Saud, were enraged, the British withdrew their financial support, and Ibn Saud took control of the whole of the Arabian peninsula (except Yemen). In 1925 he conquered the Hejaz, which included Jeddah and the Muslim holy places of Mecca and Medina, in 1929-30 he had to crush a rebellion of his Ikhwan warriors, and in 1932 he proclaimed himself king of Saudi Arabia.

It was at about this time that the importance of *oil* for the world economy became more widely recognized. In the First World War food for soldiers and coal for troop trains had been the most important raw materials. But also, and increasingly important was oil for tanks, for planes, for battleships – and for explosives (TNT was made partly out of oil).

Now one of the biggest oil fields in the world was located in Baku, which until the Russian revolution had been exploited above all by the Nobel brothers, who transported it by tankers to Moscow and Petrograd and elsewhere. Knowing this, and knowing also that Germany had little oil, Ludendorff had planned to attack the Baku oilfields from Ukraine – but the British got there first. In the summer of 1918, "the British General Liosure enougnel Dunsterville was ordered to advance from north-western Persia to the Caspian, while other senior officers were sent to monitor the Caucasus, with the aim of ensuring that the Turks did not seize control of the oilfields of Azerbaijan, take the region south of the Caspian or gain control of the Trans-Caspian Railway that led to the Afghan border. This was classic overreach, an all but impossible mission – and one that sure enough ended in disaster. Advancing Turkish forces surrounded Baku, trapping Dunsterville inside for six weeks before allowing him to withdraw. Horrific scenes of bloodshed then followed as locals settled scores after the city had surrendered."<sup>69</sup>

However, in November Turkey and Germany surrendered, and in 1919 the British occupied Georgia in order, again, to protect the oil of Baku. Meanwhile, oil production in Soviet Russia collapsed, but was revived when Lenin brought in western companies – especially Shell, Vickers and Standard Oil – to supply the technology required. From now on, oil production became a vital part of the Soviet economy.

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<sup>69</sup> Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 344.



From the 1920s onward, writes Niall Ferguson, the American oil companies began to take a serious interest in the region – and not only in Baku. They also began to intervene in Persia – much to the delight of the Persians (temporarily) but to the anger of the British, whose Anglo-Persian Oil Company controlled oil production there... They also forced “the reluctant British to grant them a stake in the Turkish (later Iraq) Petroleum Company a year after the British had struck oil at Baba Gurgur. It was early days; even by 1940 Middle Eastern producers were still accounting for no more than 5 percent of world production. But the Americans had by now convinced themselves of the vast untapped potential there. In the 1930s they worked assiduously, aided by the renegade British Arabist Harry St. John Philby, to turn the desert kingdom ruled by the Saudi family into an American satellite.”<sup>70</sup>

“During the war, a gritty oilman named Everette Lee DeGolyer, who had made his money in the American petroleum industry after studying geology in Oklahoma, visited the Middle East to assess the region’s existing oilfields and to advise on the long-term potential and significance of the resources of the region in its own right, and in relation to those of the Gulf of Mexico, Venezuela and the United States itself. His report, even though laced with conservative estimates and caveats, was astounding. ‘The center of world oil production is shifting from the Gulf Caribbean area to the Middle East – to the Persian Gulf area – and is likely to continue to shift until it is firmly established in the area.’ One of those who travelled with him put it more bluntly when reporting back to the State Department: ‘The oil in the region is the greatest single prize in all history...’”<sup>71</sup>

Persia was an important country because of her possession of oil, in which Britain had a commanding stake through the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. By 1930 Persia was the world’s fourth-largest producer.

The question was: what kind of government would emerge there – secularist and pro-western, or theocratic (under Shiite mullahs) and anti-western?

Mansfield writes: “Because of public disillusion with the long experience of corrupt and incompetent monarchy, there was widespread support for a republic. The religious leaders, who feared the consequences of Kemal Ataturk’s abolition of the caliphate and institution of a secular republic, opposed such a change, however, Reza Khan therefore decided to retain the monarchy and make himself shah. On 31 October 1925, by a large majority, the Majlis [parliament] declared the end of the Qajar dynasty. A new constituent assembly then vested the crown in Reza Shah, with the right of succession to his heirs. He took the name of Pahlavi for his dynasty. In 1935 he officially changed the name of the country from Persia to Iran.

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<sup>70</sup> Ferguson, *Colossus*, London: Allen Lane, 2004, p. 109.

<sup>71</sup> Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, p. 409.

“Although it was the mullahs who had helped to make him shah, he regarded most of them as backward and reactionary. In fact in many respects he modelled his regime on that of Ataturk as he embarked on a policy of westernization. He introduced a French judicial system which challenged the competence of the religious courts. Civil offices were opened for marriage, education was reorganized on Western lines and literacy steadily increased. The University of Teheran was established in 1935, with a number of Europeans on the staff. In 1936 women were compelled to discard the veil and European costume was made obligatory for both sexes. Reza Shah pursued his policy of pacifying and unifying the country – a task which had been beyond the competence of the Qajar shahs – by subduing the semi-independent tribes. The Bakhtiaris and Kashgars were placed under the rule of military officers.

“Improved communications were vital for the unification of the empire’s extensive territories. The German Junkers company organized an internal air service. Postal services and telecommunications were vastly improved. American and European engineers helped to build roads and railways. The construction of a Trans-Iranian Railway from the Caspian Sea to the Gulf was a project for which the shah aroused the enthusiasm of the whole nation.

“Progress meant industrialization, and a range of new textile, steel, cement and other factories were established. Some of them were profitable.

“Reza Shah’s firm rule and national assertiveness raised Iran’s international standing and increased its bargaining power. He denounced all treaties which conferred extraterritorial rights on the subjects of foreign powers. In a dispute with the Soviet government over the Caspian fisheries, he secured a compromise in the formation of a Persian-Russian company to exploit the fisheries. To achieve his aim of improving the meagre revenues from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, he was prepared to risk of cancelling the concession in 1932. Britain referred the matter to the League of Nations, and the dispute ended in 1933 with a compromise under which Persia received substantially better terms.”<sup>72</sup>

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“Shocked by its defeat in the Great War, Islam was relatively quiescent in this period. But underneath the surface, anti-western and anti-Christian passions seethed... In 1937 the English Catholic writer Hilaire Belloc wrote prophetically: “Millions of modern people . . . have forgotten all about Islam. They have never come in contact with it. They take for granted that it is decaying, and that, anyway, it is just a foreign religion which will not concern them. It is, as a fact, the most formidable and persistent enemy which our

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<sup>72</sup> Mansfield, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

civilization has had, and may at any moment become as large a menace in the future as it has been in the past.”<sup>73</sup>

The impression that Islam was decaying was understandable given the defeat of Turkey in the Great War, and the humiliation of the Muslim powers by the West, especially Britain, after it. However, resentment had been created – and resentment has been shown to be a powerful driver of revolution throughout history. The question was: which country could leave an Islamic revival? Turkey had chosen the path of secular westernism, and would remain on that path until the ascendancy of Erdogan in the twenty-first century. Persia was a Shiite country, and so could not lead the majority of Muslims, who were Sunnis. The holy places of Islam were in Arabia, in the possession of the Hashemite dynasty. But that dynasty had a rival in the peninsula: the ruler of what was to become Saudi Arabia...

Harry St. John Philby (the father of the famous Kim Philby, the Soviet spy), was a close advisor of Ibn Saud and now switched his allegiance from Sharif Husain to the Saudi family. He was a convert of Wahhabi Islam and helped implant the seed of Wahhabism into the kingdom. “It would appear,” writes former MI6 agent Alastair Cooke, “that Philby's vision was not confined to state-building in the conventional way, but rather was one of transforming the wider Islamic ummah (or community of believers) into a Wahhabist instrument that would entrench the al-Saud as Arabia's leaders. And for this to happen, Aziz needed to win British acquiescence (and much later, American endorsement). ‘This was the gambit that Abd al-Aziz made his own, with advice from Philby,’ notes Schwartz.

“In a sense, Philby may be said to be ‘godfather’ to this momentous pact by which the Saudi leadership would use its clout to ‘manage’ Sunni Islam on behalf of western objectives (containing socialism, Ba'athism, Nasserism, Soviet influence, Iran, etc.) - and in return, the West would acquiesce to Saudi Arabia's soft-power Wahhabisation of the Islamic ummah...”<sup>74</sup>

In 1938 oil was found in commercial quantities in Saudi Arabia. During the Second World War, continues Ferguson, the Americans “took advantage of British weakness to propose a deal: the United States would take Saudi Arabia, leaving the British Persia; Iraq and Kuwait would be shared. The pattern of US – Saudi relations was already established: cash and arms for the Saudi royal

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<sup>73</sup> Belloc, “The Great and Enduring Heresy of Mohammed”. See Maureen Mullarkey, “80 Years Ago, Hilaire Belloc Predicted Radical Islam’s Re-Emergence Because Of Secularization”, *The Federalist*, July 20, 2017, <http://thefederalist.com/2017/07/20/80-years-ago-hilaire-belloc-predicted-radical-islams-re-emergence-cultural-relativism/>

<sup>74</sup> Crooke, “You Can't Understand ISIS If You Don't Know the History of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia”, *Huffington Post*, 27 August, 2014. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia\\_b\\_5717157.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-wahhabism-saudi-arabia_b_5717157.html), and “Middle East Time Bomb: The Real Aim of ISIS is to Replace the Saudi Family as the New Emirs of Arabia”, *Huffington Post*, September 2, 2014. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-aim-saudi-arabia\\_b\\_5748744.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alastair-crooke/isis-aim-saudi-arabia_b_5748744.html).

family in exchange for oil concessions and military bases for the Americans. The consortium of oil companies that formed the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) became a channel for royal rents; soon they were paying as much as half of their revenues to the Saudis, payments that the US Treasury counted as tax-deductible. When John Foster Dulles became the first American secretary of state to visit the Middle East in 1953, he was impressed; the oil and other mineral resources of the region would, he declared, be 'vital to our welfare'.<sup>75</sup>

And so in the 1950s the Saudi kingdom's present position of great political and religious power was gradually built up. The structure of that kingdom has been described by Henry Kissinger as follows: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a traditional Arab-Islamic realm: both a tribal monarchy and an Islamic theocracy. Two leading families, united in mutual support since the eighteenth century, form the core of its governance. The political hierarchy is headed by a monarch of the Al Saud family, who serves as the head of a complex network of tribal relationships based on ancient ties of mutual loyalty and foreign affairs. The religious hierarchy is headed by the Grand Mufti and the Council of Senior Scholars, drawn largely from the Aal al-Shaykh family. The King endeavours to bridge the gap between these two branches of power by fulfilling the role of 'Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' (Mecca and Medina), reminiscent of the Holy Roman Emperor as 'Fidei defensor'.

"... Three times in as many centuries (in the 1740s, the 1820s, and the early twentieth century) the Saudi state has been founded or reunified by the same two leading families, in each case affirming their commitment to govern Islam's birthplace and holies shrines by upholding the most austere interpretation of the religion's principles. In each case, Saudi armies fanned out to unify the deserts and mountains of the peninsula in waves of conquest strikingly similar to the original sacred exaltation and holy war that produced the first Islamic state, and in the same territory. Religious absolutism, military daring, and shrewd modern statesmanship have produced the kingdom at the heart of the Muslim world and central to its fate."<sup>76</sup>

The future of the Middle East would depend to a large extent on which model – Saudi Sunni Islamism or Turkish secularism or (after the Iranian revolution, Iranian Shiite Islamism) – would prevail...

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Besides Saudi Islamism, Persian nationalism and Turkish secularism, there was a fourth force to be reckoned with in the region, although it was still weak in this period: Pan-Arab nationalism.

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<sup>75</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>76</sup> Kissinger, *World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 134-135.

Its origins may be traced to King Hussein of the Hejaz. However, his Pan-Arabism, according to Mansfield, was “haphazard and rudimentary and derived strongly from his personal and family ambitions. His claim to be king of the Arabs was recognized by no more than a few. In the exultant but brief period when [his son] Amir Feisal was established as king of Syria, he attempted to keep the pan-Arab alive. ‘We are one people,’ he said in May 1919, ‘living in the region which is bounded by the sea to the east, the south, and the west, and by the Taurus mountains to the north.’ Most significantly, he was also fond of saying ‘We are Arabs before being Muslims, and Muhammed is an Arab before being a prophet.’ This was the germ of a secular Arab nationalism. But within a year Feisal was expelled from Syria and, although the British installed him in Iraq, the Arab peoples of whom he spoke were divided by new national frontiers.

“In the years following the First World War, therefore, there were two contrary trends among the eastern Arabs. One of these trends was the development of territorial nationalism in the new nation-states as they became involved in a struggle for full independence from Britain and France. This required the creation of a national identity, and it was sustained by the ambitions and rivalries of the national leaders. The House of Saud was hostile and suspicious towards the Hashemites, and there was rivalry between the Hashemites of Iraq and Transjordan.

“The opposing trend was the aspiration towards Arab unity based on the feeling, to which all Arabs subscribed to some extent, that they had been artificially divided in order to weaken them and keep them under Western tutelage. Unity was necessary for Arab self-protection and renaissance. The growing awareness that the Zionists, with the help of the West, aimed to seize as much of Arab Palestine as they could was the strongest factor in mobilizing Arab opinion, which was frustrated but not restrained by the fact that so little that was effective could be done to help the Palestinian Arabs.

“Islam was and remains a uniquely potent element in Arab nationalism. Muslim militants, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, maintained that nationalism and Islam were incompatible since all Muslims of all races from China to Morocco were members of the same great Islamic nation or umma. Pan-Arab intellectuals attempted to demonstrate to the contrary that Arabism and Islam are mutually inclusive. As Abdul Rahman Azzam, the Arab League’s first secretary-general, said in a lecture in 1943, the ideals of Islam were the same as those of modern Arab nationalism and of the Arab nation which aimed to take its rightful place in the world and resume the mission which Muhammad had inaugurated. But the debate was largely artificial... The House of Saud, keepers of the holy places of Islam, have never had any problem about reconciling their Arab and Islamic aspirations...”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Mansfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-229, 230.

The Arab nation that stood out as something of an exception among the others was Egypt, partly because there was no consensus that they were in fact Arabs, partly because they had had a long and famous history under the Pharaohs long before the Arabs burst out of the Arabian desert, and partly because they had a significant Christian minority (both Greek Orthodox and Monophysite Copts).

“Interwar monarchical Egypt,” writes Michael Burleigh, “was a paradise of liberality compared with anywhere else in the Middle East. There were regular elections to a bicameral legislature, which dated back to 1866, full adult male suffrage and a free press. Only the last was true of contemporary Britain. Alexandria and Cairo were lively cosmopolitan cities. Of course, one should not idealize modern Egypt for in the late 1840s as little as 5 per cent of Egypt’s population controlled 65 per cent of the country’s commercial and industrial assets, while 3 per cent owned 80 per cent of the land.

“As the first entrant into the field, the liberal nationalist Al-Wafd (Delegation) Party dominated the politics of the period. Its main concerns were to wring further constitutional concessions from King Fuad, and from 1936 his child heir Faruq, and to limit British dominance of what, since 1922, when the British relinquished financial controls, was a nominally independent country. Although the 1936 Treaty of Preferential Alliance, negotiated by Anthony Eden, conceded that ‘Egypt was an independent and sovereign state’ – it joined the League of Nations a year later – two major points of tension were unresolved. First, Britain refused to acknowledge exclusive Egyptian sovereignty over the much vaster Sudan, which since 1899 had been ruled as a condominium; and second, the British retained an enormous military presence in the Suez Canal Zone as well as in Cairo and Alexandria. Suez was the juncture where the British Empire could be split in half. The Suez complex included some ten airfields and forty other major encampments capable of sustaining half a million troops or more in the event of war, in which the Canal was a vital strategic route for the defence of India...”<sup>78</sup>

During the Second World War, as the German Afrika Corps threatened from the west, the British tightened their grip on Egypt. Thus in 1942 the British ambassador Sir Miles Lampson forced the king to accept a pro-British government under Mustafa Nahas Pasha under threat of a military coup. Although this insult to the national dignity caused the stirring of nationalism among some (including the future presidents Nasser and Anwar Sadat), the Egyptians were reluctant to see their country as the focus of Arab unity. Thus “in December 1942 Nuri al-Said put forward a scheme for the unification of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan with ‘semi-autonomy’ for the Jews in Palestine, as a first step towards Arab unity. Egypt was not included. Another scheme, which was proposed by King Ibn Saud’s friend and adviser... Philby, was for the Saudi monarch to head an Arab federation with an

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<sup>78</sup> Burleigh, *Small Wars, Far Away Places*, London: Pan, 2013, pp. 85-86.

autonomous Jewish state in Palestine. This found favour with the Gentile Zionist Winston Churchill and the Zionist leadership. Again, Egypt was excluded. However, despite Ibn Saud's high prestige, which caused both Churchill and Roosevelt to imagine him as 'king of the Arabs', all such schemes were impractical because of the enmity between the Saudis and the Hashemites - neither would ever accept the others' leadership.

"However, the British Foreign Office was in favour of closer ties between the Arab states, provided that Western interests could be maintained. A major factor was the hope that it could be easier to solve the Palestine problem within a broader Arab framework. From May 1941 onwards, Anthony Eden, the British foreign secretary, made repeated statements that Britain favoured any scheme that commanded general approval among the Arabs for strengthening the cultural, economic and political ties between the Arab states. Britain now accepted that Egypt - the site of the Middle East Supply Centre and focus of the Allied war effort in the region would make the best headquarters for any Western-sponsored Arab federation. Moreover, the Wafd government led by Nahas, in wartime alliance with Britain, had begun to be attracted by the concept of an Egyptian-led Arab union. King Farouk was equally determined that Egypt should not be left out. Reluctantly Nuri al-Said and other Arab leaders came to accept the inevitable: there was no alternative to Egypt. The last act of the Wafd government before it was driven out of office in October 1944 was to sign the Protocol of Alexandria with the six other independent Arab states which led to the foundation of the Arab League in the following year..."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Mansfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231.

## 8. STALIN COMES TO POWER

1927 was a critical year in the history of the Soviet Union, when revolutions took place in both Church and State. We shall discuss the ecclesiastical revolution in the next chapter. As for the political revolution, it coincided with a crisis in the economy after a poor harvest as grain stocks fell and pressure mounted on the New Economic Policy, with “collectivization” being mentioned by Stalin. At the same time there was a war scare, discounted by those in the know, like the Foreign Ministry but whipped up by Stalin’s supporters. It served his purpose because he could try and link the “United Opposition” of Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev” to foreign (especially British) agents working inside Russia.

That opposition, which had acted in a desultory and often *disunited* manner in the years 1923-26, received a new lease of life from the catastrophe of Chiang Kai-Shek’s *pogrom* of the Chinese communists in April, 1927. This, it could not be denied, was a major defeat for the foreign policy of Stalin, who had forced the Chinese communists to enter into union with Chiang’s Kuomintang and then stood by (without breaking with Chiang officially) as they were massacred. There is no doubt that Stalin had planned that the Chinese communists should take control of the Kuomintang eventually. But Chiang beat him to the punch (as Hitler was to do with the not dissimilar situation in 1941), and there was some substance to the Trotskyites’ claim that Stalin had betrayed the Chinese revolution, that he was “the Gravedigger of the revolution”

Stalin returned from holiday on July 23, and immediately set about disposing of the opposition once and for all. The Trotskyites produced a pamphlet against Stalin, but Stalin retaliated by demonstrating that a worker in the Trotskyite press had once been a White officer – but did not reveal that he was now working for the OGPU! Trotsky, no longer targeting just “bureaucratism” and the lack of free speech in the government, went for the jugular at Stalin and Bukharin.

The vituperative language on both sides reached new heights (or lows). At the Central Committee plenum from October 21 to 23, “Trotsky, in response to a proposed resolution to expel him as well as Zinoviev from the Central Committee, quoted Lenin’s Testament, ‘Remove Stalin, who may carry the party to a split and to ruin.’ Stalin loyalists shouted him down: ‘Liar’, ‘Traitor’, ‘Scum’, and of course ‘Gravedigger of the Revolution’. Trotsky stretched out one arm and read his text through the insults. ‘First a word about the so-called Trotskyism,’ he said. ‘The falsification factory is working at full steam and around the clock to construct “Trotskyism”.’ He added: ‘The rudeness and disloyalty about which Lenin wrote are no longer simply personal qualities; they have become the hallmark of the leading faction, they have become its policy and its regime.’ He was right. When Trotsky revealed that the former Wrangel office associated with the opposition ‘printing press’ was in fact an OGPU agent, someone shouted: ‘This is outside the meeting agenda.’



Kaganovich called out: 'Menshevik! Counterrevolutionary!' The chairman of the session rang and rang the bell. One person threw a doorstep volume of economic statistics at Trotsky; another flung a glass of water... The stenographer recorded the following: 'Renewed whistling. A constantly increasing commotion. Nothing can be heard. The chairman calls for order. More whistling. Shouts of 'Get down from the dais'. The chairman adjourns the session. Comrade Trotsky continues to read his speech, but not a single word can be heard. The members of the plenum quit their seats and began to file out of the hall.'<sup>80</sup>

On November 5, "as the revolution's anniversary approached, Stalin received an eighty-person delegation of sympathetic foreigners from multiple countries, only to have them question him about Soviet secret police powers. He defended the OGPU as 'more or less equivalent to the Committee of Public Safety created during the Great French Revolution,' in words carried by *Pravda*, and suggested that the foreign bourgeoisie were engaged in slandering the Soviet secret police. 'From the point of view of the internal situation, the state of the revolution is secure and unwavering, so we could get by without the OGPU,' he allowed, but added that 'we are a country surrounded by capitalist states. The internal enemies of our revolution are agents of the capitalists of all countries. The capitalist states offer a base and a rear for the internal enemies of our country against the counterrevolutionary elements of all countries. Judge for yourself whether we could get by without punitive organs long the lines of an OGPU in such conditions.' The foreigners were said to have applauded vigorously.

"The political regime had tightened considerably. When Kamenev and Rakovski attempted to address the Moscow party organization, they were shouted down. The orchestrated vote against them was reported as 2,500 to 1. That was the context in which, on November 7, 1927, the revolution's tenth anniversary, Stalin and the rest of the leadership ascended the cube mausoleum at 10:00 a.m. for the annual parade. Film cameras were rolling as first the Red Army units and then workers from the biggest factories marched by in prearranged columns. Inner Moscow was an armed camp, in anticipation that the opposition would try to mount a counterdemonstration on and close by Red Square. Opposition marchers that day were not numerous, and Stalin and the OGPU had readied plain clothes operatives and others to pounce on any opposition banner or speech. A few oppositionists who marched in the ranks with their work collectives tried to hoist portraits of Trotsky as well as Lenin. Some of them briefly managed to disrupt the official proceedings on Red Square, in a corner of the large public space, with impromptu speeches and banners ('Down with the Kulak, the NEPman and the bureaucrat'). But vigilantes guided by plainclothes OGPU officers pummeled and took them into custody. How many marchers knew what was happening remains uncertain. No non-regime newspapers existed to broadcast the opposition's actions. Trotsky and Kamenev toured Moscow's streets by motor car, but on a

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<sup>80</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, London: Penguin, 2018, pp. 646-647.

side street near Revolution Square, they were greeted by disapproving whistles; shots were fired into the air. Regime vigilantes smashed the vehicle's windows. That night Stalin previewed Sergei Eisenstein's film *October* about 1917, and forced him to remove the frames depicting Trotsky and to make alterations in the portrayal of Lenin ('Lenin's liberalism is not timely').

"In China, the Guomindang [Kuomintang] picked this Red holiday to raid the Soviet consulate in Shanghai: a week later, the government in Nanjing would sever diplomatic relations. In Moscow, Stalin moved quickly to capitalize on the opposition's quixotic counterdemonstrations, which empowered him to press his repression of the party opposition over the objections of others in the inner regime. At a joint plenum of the Central Committee and party Control Commission on November 14, 1927, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party for incitement to counterrevolution; Kamenev, Rakovski, and others were ejected from the Central Committee. Beginning on November 16, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek and others were evicted from the Kremlin. The citadel was soon completely closed to non-regime personnel, and tourism was discontinued."<sup>81</sup>

The climax came at the 15<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in December, "the largest yet with 1,669 delegates (898 voting). Trotsky and Zinoviev were not among them. The opposition lacked even a single voting delegate."<sup>82</sup>

Kamenev was allowed to attend as a non-voting delegate; he capitulated – the first of many at the top level of government – and admitted to working to destroy the unity of the party. Stalin ungraciously accepted his repentance while the whole congress stood and applauded. A resolution condemning the opposition was passed unanimously.

"The United opposition split. On December 10, Kamenev and the Zinovievites Yevdokimov and Bakayev reported their written appeal, promising to disperse their faction and requesting release of oppositionists who had been arrested. But that same day the Trotsky supporters Muralov and Rakovski, while announcing their agreement with the impossibility of forming a second party, maintained their right to continue to defend opposing views within the single party. Stalin decided not to accept the Zinovievites' surrender. Instead of merely requiring that they remain silent, as he initially had demanded, now he ordered that they recant publicly and grovel for the rest of the week. On December 17, the expulsion of Trotsky, Zinoviev, and others from the party, which had been voted back at the previous plenum, were confirmed. Two days later, Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, twenty-three people in total, signed a degrading petition to the congress – which they were not even allowed into the hall to present in person – renouncing their 'wrong and anti-Leninist views'. Stalin again refused to reinstate them. Ordzhonikidze engaged in negotiations over the disposition of the highest-profile Trotskyites who sought

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<sup>81</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 650-651

<sup>82</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 652.

to continue working in some capacity, but Stalin soon scattered them into internal exile. Whereas in the politburo in mid-1924, Great Russians accounted for 46 percent, with a third having been Jews and the remaining three a Pole, Latvian, and Georgian, now the politburo became two-thirds Russia (and would retain a Russian majority thereafter). The talk around the congress was that 'Moses had taken the Jews out of Egypt, and Stalin took them out of the Central Committee.'"<sup>83</sup>

So by the end of 1927 Stalin ruled the country as an absolute despot with no political opposition. But what of the Church's opposition?

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<sup>83</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 655-656.

## 9. THE DECLARATION OF METROPOLITAN SERGEI

Shortly before his death in April, 1925, Patriarch Tikhon confided to his personal physician and friend, Michael Zhizhilenko, that he felt that the unceasing pressure of the government would one day force the leadership of the Church to concede too much, and that the true Church would then have to descend into the catacombs like the Roman Christians of old in order to remain faithful to Christ. And he counselled his friend, who was a widower, that when that time came, he should seek the monastic tonsure and episcopal consecration.<sup>84</sup> That time came in 1927 with the notorious pro-Soviet declaration of Metropolitan Sergei, the founder of the present-day Moscow Patriarchate; and Michael Zhizhilenko, following the advice of the holy patriarch, then became the first man to be consecrated as an underground bishop, taking the name of Maximus. He was shot on Solovki in 1931...

Following his example and in accordance with the holy patriarch's will, the best hierarchs of the Russian Church had descended into the catacombs within a decade of his death...<sup>85</sup>

The idea that the Russian Church might have to descend into the catacombs, in imitation of the Christians in early Rome, had been suggested as early as 1909 by the future head of that Catacomb Church and hieromartyr, Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Petrograd (+1937): "Now many are complaining about the hard times for the Church... Remembering the words of the Saviour with complete accuracy, we must expect still worse times for the Church... Without any exaggeration, she must truly live through a condition close to complete destruction and her being overcome by the gates of hell. Perhaps with us, exactly as in the land of freedom, America, they will drive the Name of Christ out of the schools. They will adapt prayer assemblies into ordinary meetings permitted by the police, as in that other land of freedom, France, and will convert the heritage of the Church, together with the very right of faith, into the property of the state. Perhaps the faith of Christ will again hide in the woods, the deserts, the catacombs, and the confession of the faith will be only in secret, while immoral and blasphemous presentations will come out into the open. All this may happen! The struggle against Christ will be waged with desperation, with the exertion of the last drop of human and hellish energy, and only then, perhaps, will it be given to hell and to mankind to assure us with complete obviousness of the unfailing power and might of the priceless promise of Christ: 'I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her' (Matthew 16.18)."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> I.M. Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman Brotherhood Press, 1982, p. 56.

<sup>85</sup> V. Moss, *The Russian Golgotha*, Alberta, Canada: Monastery Press, 2006.

<sup>86</sup> Archimandrite Joseph, *Kormchij*, 23 May, 1909; quoted in Sergei and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow: Rodnik, 1994, vol. I, p. 413.

On March 25 / April 7, 1925, the feast of the Annunciation, Patriarch Tikhon died. It is almost certain that he was poisoned. According to his cell-attendant, Constantine Pashkovich, his next to last words, uttered with an unusual severity, were: "Now I shall go to sleep deeply and for a long time. The night will be long, and very dark..."<sup>87</sup>

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On April 12, Patriarch Tikhon's will of January 7, 1925 was discovered and read out. It said that in the event of the Patriarch's death and the absence of the first two candidates for the post of patriarchal *locum tenens*, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Agathangel of Yaroslavl, "our patriarchal rights and duties, until the lawful election of a new patriarch,... pass to his Eminence Peter, metropolitan of Krutitsa." At the moment of the Patriarch's death, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangel were in exile and unable to rule the Church. Therefore the 59 assembled hierarchs decided that "Metropolitan Peter cannot decline from the obedience given him and... must enter upon the duties of the patriarchal *locum tenens*."<sup>88</sup>

Metropolitan Peter proved to be a strong rock against which the waves of the atheists and renovationists beat in vain. In an epistle dated July 28, 1925, he declared concerning the renovationists: "In the holy Church of God only that is lawful which is approved by the God-ordained ecclesiastical government, preserved by succession since the time of the Apostles. All arbitrary acts, everything that has been done by the new-church party without the approval of the most holy Patriarch now at rest with God, everything that is now done without our approval - all this has no validity in accordance with the canons of the holy Church (Apostolic canon 34; Council of Antioch, canon 9), for the true Church is one, and the grace of the most Holy Spirit residing in her is one, for there can be no two Churches or two graces. 'There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all' (Ephesians. 4.4-6)."<sup>89</sup>

Meanwhile, Tuchkov initiated discussions with Peter with regard to "legalizing" the Church. This "legalization" promised to relieve the Church's rightless position, but on the following conditions:

- 1) the issuing of a declaration of a pre-determined content;

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<sup>87</sup> Patriarch Tikhon, in M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 201.

In 1992, when the night of Soviet Communism had finally been dispersed, the relics of this, one of the greatest anti-communist warriors, were found to be incorrupt (Bishop Tikhon (Shevkhunov), "The Uncovering of the Relics of Patriarch Tikhon", *Orthodox Christianity*, February 24, 2018).

<sup>88</sup> M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona* (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow, 1994, p. 413.

<sup>89</sup> Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 418-421.

- 2) the exclusion from the ranks of the bishops of those who were displeasing to the authorities;
- 3) the condemnation of the émigré bishops; and
- 4) the participation of the government, in the person of Tuchkov, in the future activities of the Church.<sup>90</sup>

However, Metropolitan Peter refused to accept these conditions or sign the text of the declaration Tuchkov offered him. For, as he once said to Tuchkov: "You're all liars. You give nothing, except promises. And now please leave the room, we are about to have a meeting."

On December 12, Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned in the Lubyanka. The other *locum tenentes*, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangel, had already been exiled. There followed a tussle for power between different Church parties claiming to be the lawful deputies of Peter which was eventually won by Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky) of Nizhni-Novgorod, the former renovationist. The communists had removed the last canonical leaders of the Russian Church, and they were ready now to place their own candidate on the throne of all the Russias...

On June 7, 1926 a group of bishops imprisoned on Solovki issued an epistle that squarely faced up to the problems of Church-State relations in the Soviet Union. Although the Orthodox Church had cooperated with many kinds of regime in her history, there were definite limits to such cooperation, the bishops said, with regard to the communist state. "The Church recognizes spiritual principles of existence; Communism rejects them. The Church believes in the living God, the Creator of the world, the Leader of Her life and destinies; Communism denies His existence, believing in the spontaneity of the world's existence and in the absence of rational, ultimate causes of its history. The Church assumes that the purpose of human life is in the heavenly fatherland, even if She lives in conditions of the highest development of material culture and general well-being; Communism refuses to recognize any other purpose of mankind's existence than terrestrial welfare. The ideological differences between the Church and the State descend from the apex of philosophical observations to the region of immediately practical significance, the sphere of ethics, justice and law, which Communism considers the conditional result of class struggle, assessing phenomena in the moral sphere exclusively in terms of utility. The Church preaches love and mercy; Communism - *camaraderie* and merciless struggle. The Church instils in believers humility, which elevates the person; Communism debases man by pride. The Church preserves chastity of the body and the sacredness of reproduction; Communism sees nothing else in marital relations than the satisfaction of the instincts. The Church sees in religion a life-bearing force which does not only guarantee for men his eternal, foreordained destiny, but also serves as the source of all the greatness of man's creativity, as the basis of his earthly happiness, sanity and welfare; Communism sees religion as opium,

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<sup>90</sup> Gubonin, op. cit., p. 402.

inebriating the people and relaxing their energies, as the source of their suffering and poverty. The Church wants to see religion flourish; Communism wants its death. Such a deep contradiction in the very basis of their *Weltanschauungen* precludes any intrinsic approximation or reconciliation between the Church and the State, as there cannot be any between affirmation and negation, between yes and no, because the very soul of the Church, the condition of Her existence and the sense of Her being, is that which is categorically denied by Communism.

“The Church cannot attain such an approximation by any compromises or concessions, by any partial changes in Her teaching or reinterpretation of it in the spirit of Communism. Pitiful attempts of this kind were made by the renovationists: one of them declared it his task to instil into the consciousness of believers the idea that Communism is in its essence indistinguishable from Christianity, and that the Communist State strives for the attainment of the same aims as the Gospel, but by its own means, that is, not by the power of religious conviction, but by the path of compulsion. Others recommended a review of Christian dogmatics in such a way that its teaching about the relationship of God to the world would not remind one of the relationship of a monarch to his subjects and would rather correspond to republican conceptions. Yet others demanded the exclusion from the calendar of saints ‘of bourgeois origin’ and their removal from church veneration. These attempts, which were obviously insincere, produced a profound feeling of indignation among believing people.

“The Orthodox Church will never stand upon this unworthy path and will never, either in whole or in part, renounce her teaching of the Faith that has been winnowed through the holiness of past centuries, for one of the eternally shifting moods of society...”<sup>91</sup>

On June 10, Metropolitan Sergei issued an address to the archpastors, pastors and flock of the Russian Church in the same spirit, noting that there were certain irreconcilable differences between the Church and the State. At the same time, however, he argued for the necessity of the Church being legalized by the State. The question of legalization proved to be the Achilles’ heel through which the communists took control of the official Church.

In December Sergei was arrested, so Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd took over as Peter’s deputy, in accordance with the latter’s will of one year before.<sup>92</sup> But Joseph was prevented from leaving Yaroslavl by the authorities, so he handed the leadership of the Church to his deputies: Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev), Archbishop Thaddeus (Uspensky) and Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich. On December 29, Metropolitan Joseph was arrested,

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<sup>91</sup> Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi 1917-1945* (The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, pp. 417-20.

<sup>92</sup> Gubonin, op. cit., p. 422. Peter’s choice of deputies was: Sergei of Nizhni-Novgorod, Michael of the Ukraine, and Joseph of Rostov, in that order.

and on the same day Archbishop Seraphim wrote that he was taking upon himself the duties of the deputy of the patriarchal *locum tenens*.<sup>93</sup>

In the same month of December, 1926, Tuchkov proposed to Metropolitan Peter, who was in prison in Suzdal, that he renounce his locum tenancy. Peter refused, and then sent a message to everyone through a fellow prisoner that he would “never under any circumstances leave his post and would remain faithful to the Orthodox Church to death itself”.<sup>94</sup>

Then, on January 1, 1927, while he was in Perm on his way to exile on the island of Khe in Siberia, Metropolitan Peter confirmed Sergei as his deputy, being apparently unaware of the recent changes in the leadership of the Church.<sup>95</sup> Though he came to regret this decision, Metropolitan Peter was not able to revoke it officially from his remote exile. And Metropolitan Sergei now acted as if he did not exist...

At the beginning of March, Archbishop Seraphim was summoned from Uglich to Moscow and interrogated for three days by the GPU. He was offered a Synod, and indicated who should be its members. Seraphim refused, and put forward his own list of names, which included Metropolitan Cyril.

“But he’s in prison,” they said.

“Then free him,” said the archbishop.

The GPU then presented him with the familiar conditions for legalization.

Gustavson writes: “He refused outrightly without entering into discussions, pointing out that he was not entitled to decide such questions without the advice of his imprisoned superiors. When he was asked whom he would appoint as his executive deputy he is said to have answered that he would turn over the Church to the Lord Himself. The examining magistrate was said to have looked at him full of wonder and to have replied:

“‘All the others have appointed deputies...’

“To this Seraphim countered: ‘But I lay the Church in the hands of God, our Lord. I am doing this, so that the whole world may know what freedom Orthodox Christianity is enjoying in our free State.’”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> If Archbishop Seraphim was in prison, then Metropolitan Joseph decreed that the bishops were to govern their dioceses independently.

<sup>94</sup> Regelson, op. cit., p. 408.

<sup>95</sup> Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 492-493.

<sup>96</sup> Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960. See also N.A., op. cit., p. 18, and a tape recorded conversation with Protopriest Michael Ardov in 1983, *Church News*, vol. 13, N 11 (112), p. 6.



This was a decisive moment, for the central hierarch of the Church was effectively declaring the Church's decentralization. And not before time. For with the imprisonment of the last of the three possible *locum tenentes* there was really no canonical basis for establishing a central administration for the Church before the convocation of a Local Council. But this was prevented by the communists. The system of deputies of the deputy of the *locum tenens* had no basis in Canon Law or precedent in the history of the Church. And if it was really the case that the Church could not exist without a first hierarch and central administration, then the awful possibility existed that with the fall of the first hierarch the whole Church would fall, too...

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On March 20, 1927 Metropolitan Sergei was released from prison and was given back the reins of the Church by Archbishop Seraphim.<sup>97</sup> Whatever doubts hierarchs and people may have had about his firmness, there seemed to be no other legal claimant to the post in freedom at that time... On March 28 Metropolitan Cyril was given another term in exile – and it is clear from the court records that the main reason was his secret election as patriarch by the confessing bishops.<sup>98</sup> But why, then, was Metropolitan Sergei not imprisoned, too? Evidently, he had reached an agreement with the authorities, while Metropolitan Cyril (together with Metropolitan Agathangel) had rejected any such agreement. Indeed, the conversation between Tuchkov and Metropolitan Cyril concerning the conditions of the latter's leadership of the Church is reported to have gone something like this:-

“If we have to remove some hierarch, will you help us in this?”

“Yes, if the hierarch appears to be guilty of some ecclesiastical transgression... In the contrary case, I shall tell him directly, ‘The authorities are demanding this of me, but I have nothing against you.’”

“No!” replied Tuchkov. “You must try to find an appropriate reason and remove him as if on your own initiative.”

To this the hierarch replied: “Eugene Nikolayevich! You are not the cannon, and I am not the shot, with which you want to blow up our Church from within!”<sup>99</sup>

But they found the shot – Metropolitan Sergei, who had played a leading role in the first Church revolution in 1917 and in the second, renovationist one

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<sup>97</sup> In later years, after Sergius' betrayal of the Church, Archbishop Seraphim is reported to have reasserted his rights as patriarchal *locum tenens*. See Michael Khlebnikov, “O tserkovnoj situatsii v Kostrome v 20-30-e gody” (On the Church Situation in Kostroma in the 20s and 30s), *Pravoslavnaiia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, N 5 (569), May, 1997, p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> [http://www.pstbi.ru/cgi-htm/db.exe/no\\_dbpath/docum/cnt/ans](http://www.pstbi.ru/cgi-htm/db.exe/no_dbpath/docum/cnt/ans), “Kirill (Smirnov Konstantin Ilarionovich)”.

<sup>99</sup> Regelson, op. cit., p. 413.

in 1922, when he officially declared the renovationists' Higher Church Authority to be "the only canonical, lawful supreme ecclesiastical authority, and we consider all the decrees issuing from it to be completely lawful and binding"<sup>100</sup>. In 1923 Metropolitan Sergei had supported the renovationists' defrocking of Patriarch Tikhon as "a traitor to Orthodoxy". True, on August 27, 1923, he was forced to offer public repentance for his betrayal of Orthodoxy in renovationism. But as Hieromartyr Damascene later pointed out, he had not been in a hurry to offer repentance... Moreover, as the Catholic writer Deinber points out, "the fact of the liberation of Metropolitan Sergei at this moment, when the repressions against the Church throughout Russia were all the time increasing, when his participation in the affair of the election of Metropolitan Cyril, for which a whole series of bishops had paid with exile, was undoubted, immediately aroused anxiety, which was strengthened when, on April 25 / May 8, a Synod was unexpectedly convoked in Moscow. It became certain that between Metropolitan Sergei, during his imprisonment, and the Soviet government, i.e. the GPU, some sort of agreement had been established, which placed both him and the bishops close to him in a quite exceptional position relative to the others. Metropolitan Sergei received the right to live in Moscow, which right he had not enjoyed even before his arrest. When the names of the bishops invited to join the Synod were made known, then there could be no further doubts concerning the capitulation of Metropolitan Sergei before Soviet power. The following joined the Synod: Archbishop Sylvester (Bratanovsky) – a former renovationist; Archbishop Alexis Simansky – a former renovationist, appointed to the Petrograd see by the Living Church after the execution of Metropolitan Benjamin [Kazansky]; Archbishop Philip [Gumilevsky] – a former *beglopopovets*, i.e. one who had left the Orthodox Church for the sect of the *beglopopovtsi*; Metropolitan Seraphim [Alexandrov] of Tver, a man whose connections with the OGPU were known to all Russia and whom no-one trusted..."<sup>101</sup>

On May 20, the OGPU officially recognized this Synod, which suggested that Metropolitan Sergei had agreed to the terms of legalization that Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter had rejected. One of Sergei's closest supporters, Bishop Metrophan of Aksaisk, had once declared that "the legalisation of the church administration is a sign of heterodoxy"... In any case, Metropolitan Sergei and his "Patriarchal Holy Synod" now wrote to the bishops enclosing the OGPU document and telling them that their diocesan councils should now seek registration from the local organs of Soviet power. Then, in June, Sergei wrote to Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris directing him to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet power. He agreed... On July 14, in *ukaz* № 93, Sergei demanded that all clergy abroad should sign a formal pledge to cease criticizing the Soviet government. It also stated that any clergyman abroad who refused to sign such would no longer be considered to be a part of the Moscow Patriarchate. This *ukaz*, which completely contradicted his previous *ukaz* of September 12, 1926, which blessed the hierarchs abroad to form their

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<sup>100</sup> *The Living Church*, NN 4-5, 14 July, 1922; Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 218-19.

<sup>101</sup> Regelson, op. cit., p. 415; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 407.

own independent administration, even included the actual text of the pledge that was to be signed: "I, the undersigned, promise that because of my actual dependence upon the Moscow Patriarchate, I will not permit myself in either my social activities nor especially in my Church work, any expression that could in the least way be considered as being disloyal with regard to the Soviet government."<sup>102</sup>

The clergy abroad were given until October 15 to sign this pledge. The Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), in their encyclical dated August 26, 1927, refused this demand and declared: "The free portion of the Church of Russia must terminate relations with the ecclesiastical administration in Moscow [i.e., with Metropolitan Sergei and his synod], in view of the fact that normal relations with it are impossible and because of its enslavement by the atheist regime, which is depriving it of freedom to act according to its own will and of freedom to govern the Church in accordance with the canons."

However, Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, agreed to sign, "but on condition that the term 'loyalty' means for us the apoliticisation of the émigré Church, that is, we are obliged not to make the *ambon* a political arena, if this will relieve the difficult situation of our native Mother Church; but we cannot be 'loyal' to Soviet power: we are not citizens of the USSR, and the USSR does not recognise us as such, and therefore the political demand is from the canonical point of view non-obligatory for us..."

On July 5, 1928, the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR decreed: "The present *ukaz* [of Sergei] introduces nothing new into the position of the Church Abroad. It repeats the same notorious *ukaz* of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon in 1922, which was decisively rejected by the whole Church Abroad in its time." In response to this refusal, Metropolitan Sergei expelled the ROCOR hierarchs from membership of the Moscow Patriarchate. On September 13, Metropolitan Eulogy wrote to Sergei asking that he be given autonomy. On September 24 Sergei replied with a refusal. So the first schism between the Russian Church inside and outside Russia took place as a result of the purely political demands of Sergei's Moscow Patriarchate.

The refusal of ROCOR was supported by the Solovki bishops: "The epistle threatens those church-servers who have emigrated with exclusion from the Moscow Patriarchate on the grounds of their political activity, that is, it lays an ecclesiastical punishment upon them for political statements, which contradicts the resolution of the All-Russian Council of 1917-18 of August 3/16, 1918, which made clear the canonical impermissibility of such punishments, and rehabilitated all those people who were deprived of their orders for political crimes in the past."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Protopriest Alexander Lebedeff, "Is the Moscow Patriarchate the 'Mother Church' of the ROCOR", [Orthodox@ListServ.Indiana.Edu](mailto:Orthodox@ListServ.Indiana.Edu), 24 December, 1997.

<sup>103</sup> Regelson, op. cit., p. 436.

Meanwhile, ominous events were taking place in Georgia. "Between June 21 and 27, 1927," writes Fr. Elijah Melia, "a Council elected as Catholicos Christopher Tsitskichvili. On August 6 he wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III who replied addressing him as Catholicos. The new Catholicos entirely changed the attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchy towards the Soviet power, officially declared militant atheist, in favour of submission and collaboration with the Government."<sup>104</sup>

During a synodal session under the presidency of the new Catholicos, it was decided to introduce the new style into the Georgian Church. However, the reform was rejected by the people and the majority of the priests. So it fell through and was repealed within a few months. All this, according to Boris Sokolov, took place under the influence of the head of the Georgian KGB, Laurence Pavlovich Beria, who wrote in 1929: "By our lengthy labours we succeeded in creating an opposition to Catholicos Ambrose and the then leading group in the Georgian Church, and... in January, 1927 we succeeded in completely wresting the reins of the government of the Georgian Church from the hands of Ambrose, and in removing him and his supporters from a leading role in the Georgian Church. In April, after the death of Catholicos Ambrose, Metropolitan Christopher was elected Catholicos. He is completely loyal to Soviet power, and already the Council that elected Christopher has declared its loyalty to the power and has condemned the politics and activity of Ambrose, and in particular, the Georgian emigration."<sup>105</sup> There followed, as Fr. Samson Zateishvili writes, "the persecution of clergy and believers, the dissolution of monasteries, the destruction of churches and their transformation into warehouses and cattle-sheds... The situation of the Church in Georgia was, perhaps, still more tragic and hopeless [than in the Russian Church], insofar as the new trials were imposed on old, unhealed wounds which remained from previous epochs."<sup>106</sup>

In October, 1930, the future Archbishop Leonty of Chile noted: "I arrived in Tbilisi in the evening," he wrote in his *Memoirs*, and went straight with my letter to the cathedral church of Sion... The clergy of the cathedral were so terrified of the Bolsheviks that they were afraid to give me shelter in their houses and gave me a place to sleep in the cathedral itself."<sup>107</sup>

As if taking his cue from the Georgians, on July 16/29, Metropolitan Sergei issued the infamous Declaration that has been the basis of the existence of the

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<sup>104</sup> Melia, "The Orthodox Church of Georgia", *A Sign of God: Orthodoxy 1964*, Athens: Zoe, 1964, p. 113.

<sup>105</sup> Monk Benjamin (Gomarteli), *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1928-1938)* (Chronicle of Church Events (1928-1938), vol. 2, pp. 5-6.

<sup>106</sup> Zateishvili, "Gruzinskaia Tserkov' i polnota pravoslavia" (The Georgian Church and the Fullness of Orthodoxy), in Bessmertny and Filatov, op. cit., p. 422.

<sup>107</sup> A.B. Psarev, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Leontia Chilijskogo (1904-1971 gg.)" (A Life of Archbishop Leonty of Chile (1904-1971), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), N 3 (555), March, 1996, p. 20.

Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate ever since, and which was to cause the greatest and most destructive schism in the history of the Orthodox Church since the fall of the Papacy in the eleventh century.

First he pretended that Patriarch Tikhon had always been aiming to have the Church legalized by the State, but had been frustrated by the émigré hierarchs and by his own death. There is a limited truth in this – but it was not the émigré hierarchs that frustrated the patriarch, nor did he want the kind of legalization Sergius wanted... Then he went on: “At my proposal and with permission from the State, a blessed Patriarchal Synod has been formed by those whose signatures are affixed to this document at its conclusion. Missing are the Metropolitan of Novgorod, Arseny, who has not arrived yet, and Archbishop Sebastian of Kostroma, who is ill. Our application that this Synod be permitted to take up the administration of the Orthodox All-Russian Church has been granted. Now our Orthodox Church has not only a canonically legal central administration but a central administration that is legal also according to the law of the State of the Soviet Union. We hope that this legalization will be gradually extended to the lower administrative units, to the dioceses and the districts. It is hardly necessary to explain the significance and the consequences of this change for our Orthodox Church, her clergy and her ecclesiastical activity. Let us therefore thank the Lord, Who has thus favoured our Church. Let us also give thanks before the whole people to the Soviet Government for its understanding of the religious needs of the Orthodox population. At the same time let us assure the Government that we will not misuse the confidence it has shown us.

“In undertaking now, with the blessings of the Lord, the work of this Synod, we clearly realize the greatness of our task and that of all the representatives of the Church. We must show not only with words but with deeds, that not only people indifferent to the Orthodox Faith or traitors to the Orthodox Church can be loyal citizens of the Soviet Union and loyal subjects of the Soviet power, but also the most zealous supporters of the Orthodox Church, to whom the Church with all her dogmas and traditions, with all her laws and prescriptions, is as dear as Truth and Life.

“We want to be Orthodox, and at the same time to see the Soviet Union as our civil Fatherland, whose triumphs and successes are also our triumphs and successes, whose failures are our failures. Every attack, boycott, public catastrophe or an ordinary case of assassination, as the recent one in Warsaw, will be regarded as an attack against ourselves...”

Lebedev comments on this: “This murder in Warsaw was the murder by B. Koverdaya of the Bolshevik Voikoff (also known as Weiner), who was one of the principal organizers of the murder of the Imperial Family, which fact was well known then, in 1927. So Sergei let the Bolsheviks clearly understand that

he and his entourage were at one with them in all their evil deeds up to and including regicide.”<sup>108</sup>

Metropolitan Sergei continued: “Even if we remain Orthodox, we shall yet do our duties as citizens of the Soviet Union ‘not only for wrath but also for conscience’s sake’ (Romans 13.5), and we hope that with the help of God and through working together and giving support to one another we shall be able to fulfil this task.

“We can be hindered only by that which hindered the construction of Church life on the bases of loyalty in the first years of Soviet power. This is an inadequate consciousness of the whole seriousness of what has happened in our country. The establishment of Soviet power has seemed to many like some kind of misunderstanding, something coincidental and therefore not long lasting. People have forgotten that there are no coincidences for the Christian and that in what has happened with us, as in all places and at all times, the same right hand of God is acting, that hand which inexorably leads every nation to the end predetermined for it. To such people who do not want to understand ‘the signs of the times’, it may also seem that it is wrong to break with the former regime and even with the monarchy, without breaking with Orthodoxy... Only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities. Now, when our Patriarchate, fulfilling the will of the reposed Patriarch, has decisively and without turning back stepped on the path of loyalty, the people who think like this have to either break themselves and, leaving their political sympathies at home, offer to the Church only their faith and work with us only in the name of faith, or (if they cannot immediately break themselves) at least not hinder us, and temporarily leave the scene. We are sure that they will again, and very soon, return to work with us, being convinced that only the relationship to the authorities has changed, while faith and Orthodox Christian life remain unshaken...”<sup>109</sup>

An article in *Izvestia* immediately noted the essence of the declaration – a return to renovationism: “The far-sighted part of the clergy set out on this path already in 1922”. So “sergianism”, as Sergei’s position came to be known, was “neo-renovationism”, and therefore subject to the same condemnation as the earlier renovationism of “the Living Church”. As recently as November, 2008 the True Orthodox Church of Russia<sup>110</sup> has defined sergianism as “a neo-renovationist schism”.

The radical error that lay at the root of this declaration lay in the last sentence quoted, in the idea that, in an antichristian state whose aim was the extirpation of all religion, it was possible to preserve loyalty to the State while

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<sup>108</sup> Lebedev, “Dialogue between the ROCA and the MP: How and Why?” Great Lent, 1998.

<sup>109</sup> Regelson, op. cit., pp. 431-32.

<sup>110</sup> At its Council in Odessa under the presidency of Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia.

“faith and Orthodox Christian life remained unshaken”. This attitude presupposed that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion. But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved impossible to draw. For the Bolsheviks, there was no such dividing line; for them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accordance with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state and its ideology did not pry. Unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives in their own way so long as they showed loyalty to the state, the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Darwinism, Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as "anti-Soviet behaviour", i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it" (James 2.10), such a person was an *enemy of the people*. Metropolitan Sergei's identification of his and his Church's joys and sorrows with the joys and sorrows of Soviet communism placed the souls of the millions who followed him in the most serious jeopardy.

The publication of the Declaration was greeted with a storm of criticism. Its opponents saw in it a more subtle version of renovationism. Even its supporters and neutral commentators from the West have recognized that it marked a radical change in the relationship of the Church to the State.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Thus Professor William Fletcher comments: "This was a profound and important change in the position of the Russian Orthodox Church, one which evoked a storm of protest." (*The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1971*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 57) Again, according to the Soviet scholar Titov, "after the Patriarchal church changed its relationship to the Soviet State, undertaking a position of loyalty, in the eyes of the believers any substantial difference whatsoever between the Orthodox Church and the renovationists disappeared." (Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 59) Again, according to Archimandrite (later Metropolitan) John (Snychev), quoting from a renovationist source, in some dioceses in the Urals up to 90% of parishes sent back Sergei's declaration as a sign of protest." (in Regelson, *op. cit.*, p. 434) Again, Donald Rayfield writes: "In 1927... Metropolitan Sergei formally surrendered the Orthodox Church to the Bolshevik party and state." (*Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 123)

## 10. THE BIRTH OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

As was said above, the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergei created the most serious schism in Orthodox Church history since the schism of the Papacy in 1054.<sup>112</sup> If only a few had followed the traitor, the damage would have been limited to the loss of those few souls. But in fact the majority followed him; which brought down the just retribution of God in the form of the greatest persecution of the Church in history...

The persecution of those who rejected the Declaration began in the winter of 1927-28, which was critical in other ways in the history of the Russian revolution. In that winter Stalin came to supreme power in the Soviet Union, having banished his main rival, Trotsky, from the Party. Now, perhaps, he felt secure enough to turn to his other main rival, the Church.

Before the Declaration, although the pre-revolutionary State had been destroyed, the economy amputated and enormous damage inflicted on the Church, with huge numbers of churches and monasteries destroyed, 117 bishops in prison or exile and hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Christians martyred, the foundations of the building of Holy Rus' still stood: the mass of the population, most of the peasants and many workers and *intelligenty*, still held to the Orthodox faith and the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, while the structure of daily life in the countryside remained largely unchanged. Moreover, in some vital respects Holy Rus' was reviving. Thus the spiritual authority of the Church had never been higher, church attendance was up, and church activities of all kinds were on the increase. E. Lopeshanskaia writes: "The Church was becoming a state within the state... The prestige and authority of the imprisoned and persecuted clergy was immeasurably higher than that of the clergy under the tsars."<sup>113</sup>

Five years later, everything had changed. The official church was a slave of Soviet power; the True Church, after suffering still more thousands of martyrdoms, had gone underground. The structure of country life had been destroyed, with most of the local churches destroyed and the peasants either "dekulakized" – that is, exiled to the taiga or the steppe, with no provision for their shelter or food – or "collectivized" – that is, deprived of all their private property and herded into state farms where life was on a subsistence level. The result of all this was *hunger*: physical hunger on a vast scale, as fourteen million

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<sup>112</sup> Sergei Chechuga, "*Deklaratsia*", ili *Novij Velikij Raskol* (The "Declaration", or a New Great Schism), St. Petersburg, 2006) compares it to the schism of the Old Ritualists in the seventeenth century. There is indeed a resemblance, but the schismatics in the seventeenth century were those who rejected the Orthodox State, whereas the schismatics after 1927 were those who identified their interests with the interests of the theomachist State.

<sup>113</sup> E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki* (Bishop-Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, p. 70. See Vladimir Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo Obvinenia* (Witness for the Prosecution), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988, vol. II, pp. 167-191; D. Pospelovksy, "Podvig Very v Ateisticheskom Gosudarstve" (The Exploit of Faith in the Atheist State), *Grani* (Edges), N 147, 1988, pp. 227-265.



starved to death in the Ukraine, Kuban and Kazakhstan; and spiritual hunger, as the only true sources of spiritual food were either destroyed or hidden underground.

Vladimir Rusak writes: “The Church was divided. The majority of clergy and laymen, preserving the purity of ecclesiological consciousness, did not recognize the Declaration... On this soil fresh arrests were made. All those who did not recognize the Declaration were arrested and exiled to distant regions or confined in prisons and camps. [In 1929] about 15 hierarchs who did not share the position of Metropolitan Sergei were arrested. Metropolitan Cyril, the main ‘opponent’ of Metropolitan Sergei, was exiled to Turukhansk in June-July. The arrest procedure looked something like this: an agent of the GPU appeared before a bishop and put him a direct question: what is your attitude to the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergei? If the bishop replied that he did not recognize it, the agent drew the conclusion: that means that you are a counter-revolutionary. The bishop was arrested.”<sup>114</sup>

The first recorded verbal reaction of the anti-sergianists (or, as they now came to be called, the “True Orthodox Christians”) came from the bishops imprisoned on Solovki. On the initiative of Bishop Basil of Priluki, in a letter dated September 14/27, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, they wrote: “The subjection of the Church to the State’s decrees is expressed [in Sergius’ declaration] in such a categorical and sweeping form that it could easily be understood in the sense of a complete entanglement of Church and State... The Church cannot declare all the triumphs and successes of the State to be Her own triumphs and successes. Every government can occasionally make unwarranted, unjust and cruel decisions which become obligatory to the Church by way of coercion, but which the Church cannot rejoice in or approve of. One of the tasks of the present government is the elimination of all religion. The government’s successes in this direction cannot be recognized by the Church as Her own successes... The epistle renders to the government ‘thanks before the whole people to the Soviet government for its understanding of the religious needs of the Orthodox population’. An expression of gratitude of such a kind on the lips of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church cannot be sincere and therefore does not correspond to the dignity of the Church... The epistle of the patriarchate sweepingly accepts the official version and lays all the blame for the grievous clashes between the Church and the State on the Church...

“In 1926 Metropolitan Sergei said that he saw himself only as a temporary deputy of the patriarchal *locum tenens* and in this capacity as not empowered to address pastoral messages to the entire Russian Church. If then he thought himself empowered only to issue circular letters, why has he changed his mind now? The pastoral message of Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod leads the Church into a pact with the State. It was considered as such by its authors as well as by the government. Sergius’ action resembles the political activities of

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<sup>114</sup> Rusak, op. cit., p. 175; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 409.

the 'Living Church' and differs from them not in nature but only in form and scope..."<sup>115</sup>

Although over 20 bishops signed this epistle, the majority of them did not consider Sergei's declaration a reason for immediately breaking communion with him. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan wrote to an unknown person that the Solovki bishops wanted to wait for the repentance of Sergei "until the convening of a canonical Council... in the assurance that the Council could not fail to demand that of him".<sup>116</sup>

On October 21, Sergei directed all the clergy in Russia to commemorate the Soviet authorities, and not the bishops who were in exile. The commemoration of the authorities was seen by many as the boundary beyond which the Church would fall away from Orthodoxy. And the refusal to commemorate the exiled hierarchs implied that the hierarchs themselves were not Orthodox and constituted a break with the tradition of commemorating exiled hierarchs that extended back to the time of the Roman catacombs. Sergei was in effect cutting the faithful off from their canonical hierarchs.

On October 25, Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) proclaimed in the cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Petrograd the decision of the Provisional Synod, taken on September 13, to transfer Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) from Petrograd to Odessa. This caused major disturbances in Petrograd, henceforth one of the major centres of the True Orthodox Church. Joseph himself refused to obey Sergei, regarding his transfer as "anti-canonical, ill-advised and pleasing to an evil intrigue in which I will have no part".<sup>117</sup> He saw in it the hand of the OGPU. Certainly, the fact that more than 40 bishops were transferred by Sergei in this period was one of the main complaints of the confessing bishops against him.

On October 30 Joseph wrote to Sergei: "You made me metropolitan of Leningrad without the slightest striving for it on my part. It was not without disturbance and distress that I accepted this dangerous obedience, which others, perhaps wisely (otherwise it would have been criminal) decisively declined... Vladyko! Your firmness is yet able to correct everything and urgently put an end to every disturbance and indeterminateness. It is true, I am not free and cannot now serve my flock, but after all everybody understands this 'secret'... Now anyone who is to any degree firm and needed is unfree (and will hardly be free in the future)... You say: this is what the authorities want; they are giving back their freedom to exiled hierarchs on the condition that they change their former place of serving and residence. But what sense or benefit can we derive from the leap-frogging and shuffling of hierarchs that this has elicited, when according to the spirit of the Church

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<sup>115</sup> Regelson, op. cit., p. 440.

<sup>116</sup> Nicholas Balashov, "Esche raz o 'deklaratsii' i o 'solidarnosti' solovchan" (Again on the 'declaration' and on 'the solidarity of the Solovkians'), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 157, III-1989, pp. 197-198.

<sup>117</sup> Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 516, 524.

canons they are in an indissoluble union with their flock as with a bride? Would it not be better to say: let it be, this false human mercy, which is simply a mockery of our human dignity, which strives for a cheap effect, a spectre of clemency. Let it be as it was before; it will be better like that. Somehow we'll get to the time when they finally understand that the eternal, universal Truth cannot be conquered by exiles and vain torments... One compromise might be permissible in the given case... Let them (the hierarchs) settle in other places as temporarily governing them, but let them unfailingly retain their former title... I cannot be reconciled in my conscience with any other scheme, I am absolutely unable to recognize as correct my disgustingly tsarist-rasputinite transfer to the Odessa diocese, which took place without any fault on my part or any agreement of mine, and even without my knowledge. And I demand that my case be immediately transferred from the competence of your Synod, in whose competence I am not the only one to doubt, for discussion by a larger Council of bishops, to which alone I consider myself bound to display my unquestioning obedience."<sup>118</sup>

However, Metropolitan Sergei paid no attention to the disturbances in Petrograd. Taking upon himself the administration of the diocese, he sent in his place Bishop Alexis (Simansky), who was distrusted by the people because of his role in the betrayal of Metropolitan Benjamin in 1922. So already, only three months after the declaration, the new revolutionary cadres were being put in place... Then, on October 31, Archimandrite Sergei (Zenkevich) was consecrated Bishop of Detskoe Selo, although the canonical bishop, Gregory (Lebedev), was still alive but languishing in a GPU prison. From that moment many parishioners stopped going to churches where Metropolitan Sergei's name was commemorated, and Bishop Nicholas was not invited to serve.<sup>119</sup>

Meanwhile, antisergianist groups were forming in different parts of the country. Thus between October 3 and 6 an antisergianist diocesan assembly took place in Ufa, and on November 8 Archbishop Andrew of Ufa issued an encyclical from Kzyl-Orda in which he said that "even if the lying Sergei repents, as he repented three times before of renovationism, under no circumstances must he be received into communion". This encyclical quickly circulated throughout Eastern Russia and Siberia.

In November, Bishop Victor of Glazov broke with Sergei. He had especially noted the phrase in the declaration that "only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities." To Sergei himself Bishop Victor wrote: "The enemy has lured and seduced you a second time with the idea of an organization of the Church. But if this organization is bought for the price of the Church of Christ Herself no longer remaining the house of Grace-giving salvation for men, and he who

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<sup>118</sup> Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>119</sup> V.V. Antonov, "Otvét na Deklaratsiu" (Reply to the Declaration), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), N 24, 1996, p. 73.

received the organization ceases to be what he was – for it is written, ‘Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take’ (Acts 1.20) – then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization. What is the benefit if we, having become by God’s Grace temples of the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he who presents such pretexts for sin will be subjected.” And he concluded that Sergei’s pact with the atheists was “not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the unlying word: ‘Whosoever shall deny Me before men...’ (Matthew 10.33).”<sup>120</sup>

At the same time antisergianism began to develop in the Ukraine with the publication of the “Kievan appeal” by Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), Bishop Damascene of Glukhov and Fr. Anatolius Zhurakovsky. They wrote concerning Sergei’s declaration: “Insofar as the deputy of the patriarchal *locum tenens* makes declarations in the person of the whole Church and undertakes responsible decisions without the agreement of the *locum tenens* and an array of bishops, he is clearly going beyond the bounds of his prerogatives...”<sup>121</sup> In December the Kievans were joined by two brother bishops – Archbishops Averky and Pachomy (Kedrov).<sup>122</sup>

Typical of the attitude of True Orthodox Christians in the Ukraine was the letter of the famous writer Sergei Alexandrovich Nilus to L.A. Orlov in February, 1928: “As long as there is a church of God that is not of ‘the Church of the evildoers’, go to it whenever you can; but if not, pray at home... They will say: ‘But where will you receive communion? With whom? I reply: ‘The Lord will show you, or an Angel will give you communion, for in ‘the Church of the evildoers’ there is not and cannot be the Body and Blood of the Lord. Here in Chernigov, out of all the churches only the church of the Trinity has remained faithful to Orthodoxy; but if it, too, will commemorate the [sergianist] Exarch Michael, and, consequently, will have communion in prayer with him, acting with the blessing of Sergei and his Synod, then we shall break communion with it.”<sup>123</sup>

In Moscow the Catacomb Church was led by the future Hieromartyr Bishop Michael (Novoselov) of Sergievo (+1938), who had already distinguished himself before the revolution as a layman, when he denounced Rasputin and the Synod’s failure to expose him. He was a fine theologian, who made a new

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<sup>120</sup> Cited in Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982, pp. 141-143.

<sup>121</sup> Regelson, op. cit., p. 435.

<sup>122</sup> Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: ‘Kochuiushchij’ Sobor 1928 g.” (The Catacomb Church: The ‘Nomadic’ Council of 1928), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 3 (7), 1997, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Sergei Nilus, “Pis’mo otnositel’no ‘sergianstva’”, *Russkij Pastyr’*, 28-29, II/III, 1997, pp. 180-189.

and important distinction in ecclesiology between the Church as an organism and the Church as an organization: “One should distinguish between the Church-Organism and the Church-organization. Only to the Church-Organism are some names for the Church applicable, which we find in the Holy Scripture; for example: ‘glorious, holy, blameless’ (Ephesians 1: 4), ‘without spot or blemish’ (Ephesians 5:27), “the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 19: 7, 21:9), ‘the Body of Christ’ (Ephesians 1: 23; Colossians 1.18), “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15) and many others. These concepts do not apply to the Church organization (or are applicable with great restrictions)...

“The Church-Organism is the same in all ages, for it is eternal in essence, while the Church-organization depends on the historical conditions of its existence. The Church-Organism is the pure ‘Bride of Christ, adorned for her husband’ (Revelation 21:2), while the Church-organization has all the shortcomings of human society and always bears the imprint of human infirmities.

“The Church-Organism does not include anything that defiles, while in Church-organizations wheat and tares grow together – and they need to grow, according to the word of the Lord, to the end of this age (Matthew 13: 24-30).

“The Church-organization often persecutes the saints of God, and the Church-Organism takes them into its core. How much the Church-organization and the Church-Organism do not coincide can be seen from many examples: St. Athanasius the Great, St. John Chrysostom (who was clearly persecuted by an Orthodox church-organization), St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Gregory Palamas and others. The Church-organization throws them out of its midst, deprives them of Episcopal sees, etc., while in the Church-Organism they are and eternally remain the most glorious members...”<sup>124</sup>

But perhaps the most famous confessor of the Church in Moscow was Protopriest Valentine Sventitsky. Princess Natalia Urusova writes of him: “In the church of St. Nicholas the Great Cross, there was an old priest. Fr. Valentine Sventitsky, who was unbending in his firmness against the Bolsheviks and in his open opposition to Sergei and his decree. When he served the church was so full that masses of people stood not only on the staircase but also in the courtyard. Of course, the Bolsheviks would have killed him in exile if he had not fallen ill and died a natural death. His glory spread far, and the Bolshevik power, for which the end justified the means, needed to discredit him with a common lie before the believers. He was dying without coming to consciousness, and they printed in all the newspapers a letter supposedly written by him before his death, in which he addressed all his parishioners, beseeching them in his last moments to follow Metropolitan Sergei and recognize his decree and commemoration. A false signature was affixed to the letter. The Bolsheviks arranged a magnificent funeral for him. Many of the parishioners were led into deception and joined the sergianist church, but

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<sup>124</sup> Novoselov, *Pis'ma k Druziam* (Letters to Friends), Moscow, 1994, letter 18.

those with minds understood the new and diabolic cunning contained in the false signature. It was a terrible time, quite indescribable. Those who rejected the commemoration and did not agree to sign the demand linked with the decree were immediately arrested and shot, no matter how many they happened to be. As the rumour went, in the course of one month up to 10,000 people were shot in Moscow, beginning with a metropolitan and ending with readers, while laypeople were shot in their millions in Russia: some were imprisoned, others were exiled to the terrible conditions of the concentration camps of the North and Siberia. The Lubyanka in Moscow became a place of mass martyrdom. Passers-by tried to avoid passing by the GPU's house of death because of the intolerable stench of death that spread to a great distance. The corpses were taken out at night; they tried to do this as secretly as possible, but did not succeed."<sup>125</sup>

In Petrograd, the largest antisergianist group was being organized by Bishop Demetrius of Gdov with the blessing of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. The "Josephites" were later to assume the leadership of the antisergianists in Petrograd, Tver, Moscow, Voronezh and still further afield. On December 12, they sent a delegation led by Bishop Demetrius and representing eight Petrograd bishops, clergy and academics to Moscow to meet Sergei. Here the conversation centred, not on Sergei's canonical transgressions, but on the central issue of his relationship to Soviet power.

At one point Sergei said: "By my new church policy I am saving the Church." To which Archpriest Victorinus Dobronravov replied: "The Church does not have need of salvation; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You, yourself, Vladyka, have need of salvation through the Church."<sup>126</sup>

On December 15 Tuchkov, having received a secret report from Leningrad on this meeting with Sergei, wrote the following in his own handwriting: "To Comrade Polyansky. 1. Tell Leningrad that Sergei had a delegation with such-and-such suggestions. 2. Suggest that the most active laymen be arrested under some other pretenses. 3. Tell them that we will influence Sergei that he ban certain of the oppositional bishops from serving, and let Erushevich then ban some of the priests."<sup>127</sup>

Bishops Dimitri of Gdov and Sergei of Narva separated from Sergei on December 26: "for the sake of the peace of our conscience we reject the person and the works of our former leader [predstoiatelia – Sergei was meant], who has unlawfully and beyond measure exceeded his rights".

This was approved by Metropolitan Joseph (who had been prevented from coming to Petrograd) on January 7. We may take this date as the birthday of what became known as the Catacomb Church. From this point, the opposition

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<sup>125</sup> Urusova, "Memoirs of Prot. Valentine Sventitsky".

<sup>126</sup> Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>127</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 175.

of the True Orthodox Christians assumed a massive character, as even the “sergianists” recognize: “The leaders of the groupings and the oppositionists, spreading orally and in writing various slanders against the higher church government, persuaded believers to break prayer relations with Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod as alleged sinners against the purity of Orthodoxy and the freedom of the Church. Calling them traitors to Orthodoxy and murderers of church freedom, they persuaded the people that the temples of Sergei’s orientation were without grace, and, not considering themselves guilty of spreading confusion in the Church, openly required ‘the traitors of the Church to resign their positions and transfer the government administration into other hands, or tearfully repent of doing evil and lead the ship of the Church in the old channel.’”<sup>128</sup>

In a letter to a Soviet archimandrite, Metropolitan Joseph rejected the charge of being a schismatic and accused Sergei of being a schismatic. He went on: “The defenders of Sergius say that the canons allow one to separate oneself from a bishop only for heresy which has been condemned by a Council. Against this one may reply that the deeds of Metropolitan Sergei may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in mind such an open violation by him of the freedom and dignity of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. But beyond this, the canons themselves could not foresee many things, and can one dispute that it is even worse and more harmful than any heresy when one plunges a knife into the Church’s very heart – Her freedom and dignity?... ‘Lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own Blood’ (8<sup>th</sup> Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council)... Perhaps I do not dispute that ‘there are more of you at present than of us’. And let it be said that ‘the great mass is not for me’, as you say. But I will never consider myself a schismatic, even if I were to remain absolutely alone, as one of the holy confessors once was. The matter is not at all one of quantity, do not forget that for a minute: ‘The Son of God when He cometh shall He find faith on the earth?’ (Luke 18.8). And perhaps the last ‘rebels’ against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of Her ruin will be not only bishops and not protopriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him...”<sup>129</sup>

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It remained now to unite these scattered groups under a common leadership, or, at any rate, under a common confession, through the convening of a Council of the Catacomb Church... Now we can infer from a remark of Hieromartyr Maximus, Bishop of Serpukhov, that there was *some* Catacomb

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<sup>128</sup> Glukov, I. “Patriarch Sergei and his Activity”, *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, March, 1967, p. 66.

<sup>129</sup> Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.

Council in 1928 that anathematized the Sergianists.<sup>130</sup> Other sources describe a so-called “Nomadic Council” attended at different times by over 70 bishops in 1928 which likewise anathematized the Sergianists. But hard evidence for the existence of this council has proved hard to obtain,<sup>131</sup> and there are reasons for suspecting its historicity...

Whether or not the Catacomb Church formally anathematized the Sergianists at this time, Metropolitan Sergei considered her graceless. On August 6, 1929 his synod declared: “The sacraments performed in separation from Church unity... by the followers of the former Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad, the former Bishop Dimitri (Lyubimov) of Gdov, the former Bishop Alexei (Buj) of Urazov, as also of those who are under ban, are also invalid, and those who are converted from these schisms, if they have been baptized in schism, are to be received through Holy Chrismation.”

Bishop Alexei’s followers “set up their own autonomous church, the ‘True Orthodox Church’, which had its own clergy of wandering priests who had been expelled from the church headed by the patriarch. This ‘Desert Church’ had no buildings of its own, the faithful would meet to pray in any number of places, such as private homes, hermitages, or even caves. These ‘True Orthodox Christians’ as they called themselves, were persecuted with particular severity; several thousand of them were arrested and deported as ‘specially displaced’ or simply sent to camps.”<sup>132</sup>

The area occupied by the “Bujevtsy” in Tambov, Voronezh and Lipetsk provinces had been the focus of a major peasant rebellion against Soviet power

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<sup>130</sup> His words, as reported by Protopresbyter Michael Polsky (*Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Russian Martyrs), Jordanville, 1949-57, vol. II, p. 30), were: “The secret, desert, Catacomb Church has anathematized the ‘Sergianists’ and all those with them.”

<sup>131</sup> Our information about this Council is based exclusively on Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Katakombnaia Tserkov’: Kochuiushchij Sobor 1928 g.” (“The Catacomb Church: The ‘Nomadic’ Council of 1928”), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 3 (7), 1997, whose main source is claimed to be the archives of the president of the Council, Bishop Mark (Novoselov), as researched by the Andrewite Bishop Evagrius. Historians such as Osipova (“V otvet na statiu ‘Mif ob ‘Istinnoj Tserkvi’” (In Reply to the Article, “The Myth of ‘the True Church’”), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 3 (7), 1997, pp. 18-19) and Danilushkin (*Istoria Rossijskoj Tserkvi*, p. 534) appear to accept that this Council took place; but it is difficult to find anything other than oblique supporting evidence for it, and von Sievers has refused to allow the present writer to see the archives. A. Smirnov (perhaps von Sievers himself) writes that the “non-commemorating” branch of the Catacomb Church, whose leading priest was Fr. Sergei Mechev, had bishops who “united in a constantly active Preconciliar Convention” and who were linked with each other by special people called ‘svyazniki’” (“Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni” (The Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Passing of Time), *Simvol* (Symbol), N 40, 1998, p. 174).

<sup>132</sup> Nicholas Werth, “A State Against its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union”, in Stéphane Courtois, Nicholas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrezej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 173.



in 1921. It continued to be a major stronghold of True Orthodoxy for many decades to come.<sup>133</sup>

Out of the approximately 150 Russian bishops in 1927, 80 declared themselves definitely against Sergei's declaration, 17 separated from him but did not make their position clear, and 9 at first separated but later changed their mind.<sup>134</sup> These figures probably do not take into account all the secret bishops consecrated by the Ufa Autocephaly. In 1930 Sergei claimed he had 70% of the Orthodox bishops (not including the renovationists and Gregorians), which implies that about 30% of the Russian episcopate joined the Catacomb Church.<sup>135</sup> According to the Catholic Bishop Michel D'Herbigny, once the Vatican's representative in Russia, three quarters of the episcopate separated from him, but this is probably an exaggeration.<sup>136</sup>

So, whatever the exact figures, we can be certain that a large part of the Russian episcopate went underground and formed the "Catacomb", "Desert" or "True Orthodox" Church. These "schismatic" hierarchs, as even the sergianist Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) admitted, were among the finest in the Russian Church: "It is the best pastors who have fallen away and cut themselves off, those who by their purity in the struggle with renovationism stood much higher than the others."<sup>137</sup> They stood much higher then, in the early 1920s, and they continued to stand much higher after Metropolitan Sergei's declaration in 1927.

Wandering bishops and priests served the faithful in secret locations around the country. Particular areas buzzed with underground activity. Thus Professor Ivan Andreyevsky testified that during the war he personally knew some 200 places of worship of the Catacomb Church in the Leningrad area alone: "My friends and I had ceased going to the Sergianist churches since the end of 1927, i.e. 10 years already, and this was the routine. I arrive secretly at one of my friend's houses in Petrograd. A secret nun visits her house. She in turn takes me to the clandestine church service of the Catacomb Church. As we travel, I ask no questions and am not interested where we are going. I purposely don't want to know because if later - God forbid, I will be arrested, even under torture I would not be able to divulge information about where I had been.

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<sup>133</sup> See A.I. Demianov, *Istinno Pravoslavnoe Khristianstvo* (True Orthodox Christianity), 1977, Voronezh University Press; "New Information on the True Orthodox Christians", *Radio Liberty Research*, March 15, 1978, pp. 1-4; Christel Lane, *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978. ch. 4; "Registered and unregistered churches in Voronezh region", *Keston News Service*, 3 March, 1988, p. 8.

<sup>134</sup> *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 7.

<sup>135</sup> Pospelovsky, "Mitropolit Sergij i raskoly sprava", op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>136</sup> D'Herbigny and Alexandre Deubner, "Evêques Russes en Exil - Douze ans d'Épreuves 1918-1930" (Russian Bishops in Exile - Twelve Years of Trials, 1918-1930), *Orientalia Christiana*, vol. XXI, N 67.

<sup>137</sup> M.V. Shkarovsky, "Iosiflianskoe Dvizhenie i Oppozitsia v SSSR (1927-1943)" (The Josephite Movement and Opposition in the USSR (1927-1943)), *Minuvshee* (The Past), N 15, 1994, p. 450.

“It’s late at night...Dark. We board a train at one of the stations and travel for more than an hour. We alight at some small sub-station and trek 2-3 kilometers in the dark. We arrive at some small village. On the edge of the village there is a hut. The night is dark and quiet. A soft knock on the door. It opens and we enter the hut. We walk into a clean room with all the windows heavily curtained. In one corner there are several icons with lit lampadas. There are 15 people, mostly women wearing scarfs, 3 middle-aged men and several children 12-14 years of age...

“The night vigil begins. Pronouncements and singing are done in a whisper. Emotional tears can be seen in many eyes... prayer comes easily! Nothing distracts or disturbs. Never and nowhere have I experienced so clearly and deeply the legitimacy of Saint John of the Ladder’s demand: ‘Enclose your mind in the words of prayer!’

“It’s impossible to impart what I experienced at this night vigil. At its conclusion, I drank a cup of tea with some bread and kissed everyone three times on the cheeks... Dawn was breaking. Walking back quietly with my nun. Tranquility and focus reside in my soul. We get on the train and depart for Petrograd. I walk over to another platform and head home”.<sup>138</sup>

Popovsky writes that the Catacomb Church “arose in our midst at the end of the 20s. First one, then another priest disappeared from his parish, settled in a secret place and began the dangerous life of exiles. In decrepit little houses on the outskirts of towns chapels appeared. There they served the Liturgy, heard confessions, gave communion, baptized, married and even ordained new priests. Believers from distant towns and regions poured there in secret, passing on to each other the agreed knock on the door...”<sup>139</sup>

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As we have seen, the idea that the Russian Church might have to descend into the catacombs, in imitation of the Christians in early Rome, had been prophesied as early as 1909 by none other than the future Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Petrograd, then an archimandrite: “Now many are complaining about the hard times for the Church... Remembering the words of the Saviour with complete accuracy, we must expect still worse times for the Church... Without any exaggeration, she must truly live through a condition close to complete destruction and her being overcome by the gates of hell. Perhaps with us, exactly as in the land of freedom, America, they will drive the Name of Christ out of the schools. They will adapt prayer assemblies into ordinary meetings permitted by the police, as in that other land of freedom, France, and will convert the heritage of the Church, together with the very right of faith, into the property of the state. Perhaps the faith of Christ will again hide in the

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<sup>138</sup> Andreyevsky did land up in prison, but was later able to emigrate to the USA.

<sup>139</sup> Grabbe, op. cit., p. 79.

woods, the deserts, the catacombs, and the confession of the faith will be only in secret, while immoral and blasphemous presentations will come out into the open. All this may happen! The struggle against Christ will be waged with desperation, with the exertion of the last drop of human and hellish energy, and only then, perhaps, will it be given to hell and to mankind to assure us with complete obviousness of the unfailing power and might of the priceless promise of Christ: 'I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her' (Matthew 16.18)."<sup>140</sup>

In the birth of the Catacomb Church in 1927-28 we can see the rebirth of the spirit of the 1917-18 Council. In the previous decade, first under Patriarch Tikhon and then under Metropolitan Peter, the original fierce tone of reproach and rejection of the God-hating authorities, epitomized above all by the anathematization of Soviet power, had gradually softened under the twin pressures of the Bolsheviks from without and the renovationists from within. Although the apocalyptic spirit of the Council remained alive in the masses, and prevented the Church leaders from actually commemorating the antichristian power, compromises continued to be made – compromises that were never repaid by compromises on the part of the Bolsheviks.

However, the line separating compromise from apostasy was passed by Metropolitan Sergei when he recognized *the God-accursed power to be God-established*, and commemorated it while banning the commemoration of the confessing bishops.

From this time Metropolitan Sergei's church became a Sovietized institution. We see this already in the official church calendar for 1928, which included among the feasts of the church: the memory of the Leader of the Proletariat Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (on the 32nd Sunday after Pentecost), the Overthrow of the Autocracy (in the Third Week of the Great Fast), the memory of the Paris Commune (the same week), the Day of the Internationale and the Day of the Proletarian Revolution.<sup>141</sup>

At this point the spirit of the 1917-18 Council flared up again in all its original strength. For, as Protopresbyter Michael Polsky wrote: "The Orthodoxy that submits to the Soviets and has become a weapon of the worldwide antichristian deception is not Orthodoxy, but the deceptive heresy of antichristianity clothed in the torn raiment of historical Orthodoxy..."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Archimandrite Joseph, *In the Father's Embrace*.

<sup>141</sup> *Pravoslavnoe obozrenie* (Orthodox Review), St. Petersburg, N10 (23), 1999, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Polsky, *O Tserkvi v SSSR* (On the Church in the USSR), New York – Montreal, 1993, p. 13.

## 11. ROCOR AND METROPOLITAN SERGEI

Probably late in 1927, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), wrote: "Now everywhere two epistles are being published in the newspapers and are being read in many churches which until recently were Orthodox - epistles of two, alas, former beloved pupils of mine with whom I was once in agreement, Metropolitans Sergei and Eulogy, who have now fallen away from the saving unity of the Church and have bound themselves to the enemies of Christ and the Holy Church - the disgusting blaspheming Bolsheviki, who have submitted themselves in everything to the representatives of the Jewish false teaching which everywhere goes under the name of communism or materialism... Let these new deceivers not justify themselves by declaring that they are not the friends of the Bolsheviki and Jews who stand at the head of the Bolshevik kingdom: in their souls they may not be their friends, but they have submitted, albeit unwillingly, to these enemies of Christ, and they are trying to increase their power not only over the hapless inhabitants of Holy Russia, but also over all Russian people."

In an encyclical of August 27, 1927 the ROCOR council of Bishops pointed out that "the higher church authority in Russia finds itself in grave captivity to the enemies of the Church"; the council has decided to sever relations with the Moscow church authorities 'in view of the impossibility of having normal relations with it and in view of its captivity to the God-fighting authorities, which are depriving it of freedom in the expression of its will and in the canonical government of the Church'".

On September 1, 1927, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava wrote: "It is impossible to recognize the epistle of Metropolitan Sergei as obligatory for ourselves. The just-completed Council of Bishops rejected this epistle. It was necessary to act in this way on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers on what should be recognized as a canonical power to which Christians must submit. St. Isidore of Pelusium, having pointed to the presence of the God-established order of the submission of some to others everywhere in the life of rational and irrational beings, draws the conclusion: 'Therefore we are right to say that the thing in itself, I mean power, that is, authority and royal power, have been established by God. But if a lawless evildoer seizes this power, we do not affirm that he has been sent by God, but we say that he, like Pharaoh, has been *permitted* to spew out this cunning and thereby inflict extreme punishment on and bring to their senses those for whom cruelty was necessary, just as the King of Babylon brought the Jews to their senses.' (*Works*, part II, letter 6). Bolshevik power in its essence is an antichristian power and there is no way that it can be recognized as God-established."<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Archbishop Theophan, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1976; translated in *Selected Letters*, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1989.

On September 5, the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR declared:

“1. The abroad part of the all-Russian Church must cease relations with the Moscow church authorities in view of the impossibility of normal relations with them and in view of its enslavement to the atheist Soviet power which deprives it of its freedom in its administration of the Church.

“2. So as to free our hierarchy in Russia from responsibility for the non-recognition of Soviet power by the abroad part of our Church, until the re-establishment of normal relations with Russia and until the liberation of our Church from the persecutions of Soviet power, the abroad part of our Church must administer itself in accordance with the sacred canons, the definitions of the Sacred Council of the All-Russian Local Orthodox Church of 1917-18 and the decree of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Higher Administrative Council of November 7/20, 1920, with the help of the Hierarchical Synod and the Council of Bishops, under the presidency of Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev.

“3. The abroad part of the Russian Church considers itself to be an inseparable, spiritually-at-one branch of the Great Russian Church. It does not separate itself from its Mother Church and does not consider itself autocephalous. As before, it considers its head to be the Patriarchal Locum Tenens Metropolitan Peter and commemorates his name in Divine services.

“4. If there will come a decree of Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod on the exclusion of the abroad bishops and clergy who do not want to sign their loyalty to the Soviet government from the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, this decree will be uncanonical.”

On May 9, 1928 Metropolitan Sergei threatened to ban the ROCOR hierarchs if they did not dissolve their Administration. On June 20, his Synod issued another ukaz to the Church Abroad declaring that any clergyman who recognized the Moscow Synod but did not accept Soviet citizenship would be removed from his post.<sup>144</sup> Nobody obeyed this ukaz...

On August 28, 1928, Metropolitan Anthony issued “the completely definitive declaration of our Synod of Bishops that the Moscow Synod has deprived itself of all authority, since it has entered into agreement with the atheists, and without offering any resistance it has tolerated the closing and destruction of the holy churches, and the other innumerable crimes of the Soviet government... That illegally formed organization which has entered into union with God’s enemies, which Metropolitan Sergei calls an Orthodox Synod – but which the best Russian hierarchs, clergy and laymen have refused to recognize - ... must not be recognized by our Orthodox Churches, nor by our Synod of Bishops with its flock here abroad. Furthermore, the organization of the Moscow Synod must be recognized to be exactly the same sort of apostates from the Faith as the ancient libellatici, that is, Christians who

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<sup>144</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 4.

although they refused to blaspheme openly against Christ and offer sacrifices to the idols, nevertheless still received from the priests of the idols false documents verifying that they were in complete accord with the adherents of pagan religion..."<sup>145</sup>

Unfortunately, however, this "completely definitive" statement did not prove to be *completely* definitive for the ROCOR hierarchs in years to come; their attitude to the Moscow Patriarchate wavered between strictness and condescension, and finally, in 2007, they fell away from the faith completely and joined the MP...

Early in 1930, just after Sergei had given his interview denying that there had ever been persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia, the archbishop of Canterbury invited Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris to go to London for one day of prayers for the suffering Church of Russia. "I decided to go," he wrote. "The whole of England will pray for us, and I will remain in Paris as a witness of the unanimous sympathy of all the Churches for our suffering Church, but not take part? Impossible! My conscience ordered me to take part in these prayers; and my flock undoubtedly felt the same way.

"I spent about a week in England. It is a long time since I experienced such a radiant feeling of brotherly Christian love between the Churches as I experienced in those unforgettable days, when the whole of ecclesiastical and believing England prayed on her knees for a cessation of the terrible sufferings of our Russian Orthodox Church... I pursued no political aims in England, and nowhere gave political speeches. Everywhere that I had to give speeches I only gave thanks for their sympathy and asked them to support our suffering Mother Church by their prayers. And now these speeches have served as an excuse for a strict inquiry from Metropolitan Sergei in Moscow: on what basis could I allow myself to go round England calling people to protest against the USSR? Then it was demanded that I condemn my journey and give an undertaking not to repeat such speeches... It was bitter for me to read these unjust reproaches, which were dictated by Soviet power, and I replied sharply to Metropolitan Sergei that my prayers in England did not have a political, but only a religious character: it was a protest of the religious and in general the human conscience against the terrible persecutions against the Church in Soviet Russia..."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> *Pis'ma Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskogo)* (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106, and *Zhiznopolisaniye Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia*, vol. 7, pp.218-223, quoted in the *Archpastoral Epistle of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*, 1969 and translated in *Orthodox Christian Witness*, March 8/21, 1982. Metropolitan Anthony secretly distributed this encyclical with an appeal to the archpastors to join ROCOR; it was widely read among the Josephites (Shkarovsky, M.B. "Iosiflianskoe dvizhenie i 'Sviataia Rus'" (The Josephite Movement and 'Holy Russia'), *Mera* (Measure), 1995, # 3, p. 101).

<sup>146</sup> Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 13. If Metropolitan Sergei had been thinking ecclesiastically rather than politically, he would have protested, not at the supposedly political character of Metropolitan Evlogy's visits to England, but at his violation of the canons by his recognizing the Anglican clergy. Thus on May 16, 1935, on the initiative of the Russian Clergy

On June 10, 1930, Sergei retired Metropolitan Evlogy from his post administering the Russian parishes in Western Europe. On July 10 Evlogy broke communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, and in February was received by Constantinople...

On May 6, 1933 Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Sergei, who had reproached the ROCOR bishops for abandoning their sees: "... It is not from you and not for us to hear an exhortation to martyrdom, which we would not have avoided if we had stayed in the South of Russia. We are ready to listen to it and to many such reproaches, if we deserve them, from those who even now display an example of confession, and have not, like you, sold the purity of the faith for a mess of pottage of seeming freedom, which is in fact the most heavy and shameful slavery...

"What divides you from us is the fact that you, in your desire to guarantee a secure existence for your ecclesiastical centre, have tried to unite light with darkness. You have fallen into the temptation whose essence was revealed in the holy Gospel. Once the spirit of evil tried to draw even the Son of God Himself by a picture of external easy success, placing as a condition His worship of him, the son of destruction. You have not followed the example of Christ, the holy martyrs and confessors, who rejected such a compromise, but have bowed down to the age-old enemy of our salvation, when, for the sake of an illusory success, for the sake of the preservation of an external organization, you declared that the joys of the godless authorities are your joys and its enemies your enemies. You even tried to remove the crowns from the recent martyrs and confessors (including yourself, for I know that once you showed firmness and were in prison), affirming that they are suffering imprisonment, exile and torments not for the name of Christ, but as counter-revolutionaries. In this way you blasphemed against them. You denigrated their exploit, and dampened the enthusiasm of those who could have been numbered to the ranks of the martyrs for the faith. You excommunicated them from the flower and adornment of the Russian church. In this neither I nor my brothers abroad will ever follow you... We have no intercourse with the Orthodox archpastors, pastors and laymen who are imprisoned in Russia, except that we pray for them and know that they suffer only for the faith, though the persecutors charge them with State crimes which are alien to them, as the enemies of the Christians loved to do in ancient times... For you the way of the cross is now madness like it was to the Greeks contemporary with the Apostles (I Corinthians 1.23). I implore you, as a pupil and friend, free yourself from this temptation, renounce publicly every lie which Tuchkov and other enemies of the Church have put into your mouth, do not yield in the face of probably

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and Church Aid Fund, a prayer service was arranged in London for the cessation of the persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia. Metropolitan Evlogy came again, together with ROCOR's Archbishops Anastasy and Seraphim. During the service in the Anglican church the Orthodox hierarchs stood with their mantias on. Then, at a liturgy and moleben in the Russian church many Anglican clergy stood and prayed in their vestments. (*Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), 6, 1935, pp. 100-101; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 47)

tortures. If you are counted worthy of a martyr's crown, the earthly and heavenly Churches will combine in glorification of your courage and of the Lord Who strengthened you; but if you stay on this wide path leading you to perdition (Matthew 7.13), on which you stand now, you will be ignominiously led to the pit of hell and until the end of its earthly existence the Church will not forget your betrayal. I always think of this when I look at the panagia of the Vladimir Mother of God with the engraved inscription which you presented to me twenty years ago: 'To a dear teacher and friend.' Your further words in this inscription are: 'give us some of your oil, for our lamps are fading.' Here we offer you the salutary oil of faith and loyalty in the Holy Church. *Do not refuse it, but reunite with it* as in 1922 when you solemnly declared to Patriarch Tikhon your repentance for your former wavering loyalty. Do not refuse the friendly appeal of one who tenderly loved you and continues to love you. Metropolitan Anthony."<sup>147</sup>

On July 8, 1933 the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR issued an encyclical to the Russian Orthodox flock with regard to Sergei's epistle of March 23: "His appeal in its essence remains the same as it was in 1927 and can be formulated in the words: he who is with Soviet power is with the Russian Church; he who is against the former cannot be with the latter. In this way the link with the Mother Church can be realized for us in no other way than by accepting the God-fighting authorities that now rule in Russia. Before stretching out the hand of communion with Metropolitan Sergei, we must stretch it out first to the Bolsheviks and receive from them attestation of our political reliability, without which the deputy of the locum tenens cannot re-establish fraternal and canonical union with us..."<sup>148</sup>

At the same time, this encyclical, - penned, according to Archbishop Nikon, by Metropolitan Anastasy, - declared: "As regards relations toward the Mother Church, the Russian ecclesial organization abroad has considered itself no more than a branch of the latter, bound organically to the whole body of the Church of Russia, even though temporarily deprived only of outward unity with the latter in ecclesiastical administration.

"To the present day the entire Church organization abroad has considered and still considers itself an extraordinary and temporary institution, which must be abolished without delay after the restoration of normal social and ecclesiastical life in Russia.

"We are taking fully into account the extraordinary difficulties of the position of Metropolitan Sergei, who is now the de facto head of the Church of Russia, and are aware of the heavy burden of responsibility for the fate of the latter, which lies upon him. No one, therefore, has the audacity to accuse him

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<sup>147</sup> *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), № 8, 1933; in *Orthodox Life*, vol. 27 (2), March-April, 1977; Archbishop Nikon, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Biography of His Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. 6, pp. 263-269; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 24-27.

<sup>148</sup> Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 27.



for the mere attempt to enter into dialogue with the Soviet regime so as to obtain legal standing for the Church of Russia. Not without foundation does the deputy *locum tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne say in his aforementioned Declaration that only ‘armchair dreamers can think that such a vast community as our Orthodox Church, with all its organization, can exist peacefully in a country while walling itself off from the authorities.’ While the church exists on earth, it remains closely bound up with the fates of human society and cannot be imagined outside time and space. It is impossible for it to refrain from all contact with a powerful societal organization such as the government; otherwise it would have to leave the world.”<sup>149</sup>

However, in his 1934 Paschal encyclical Metropolitan Anthony was stricter: “It is noteworthy that several hierarchs and their flocks, for the most part Russians, have already fallen away from Ecumenical unity, and to the question: ‘What do you believe?’, reply with references to self-proclaimed heads of all sorts of schisms in Moscow, America, and Western Europe. It is clear that, without admitting it, they have ceased to believe in the unity of the Church throughout the world. They try to bear calmly the refusal of the true Church to have relations with them, and imagine that one can save one’s soul even without communion with Her... Unfortunately, some Orthodox laymen, even, alas, many priests (and hierarchs) have subjected themselves to this state of gracelessness, although still retaining the outward appearance of the church services and the apparent performance of the Mysteries...”<sup>150</sup>

On July 5, 1934, Metropolitan Sergei banned the ROCOR hierarchs. On August 7, Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania explaining that he could not accept this ban because “a hierarch cannot be removed from his see except through a trial”<sup>151</sup>.

Now Eleutherius was a supporter of Sergei, and on the departure of Metropolitan Evlogy for Constantinople was entrusted with oversight of the

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<sup>149</sup> <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/english/pages/history/1933epistle.html>;  
<http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/Poslania/poslanie.sobor.1933.html>.

<sup>150</sup> On November 26 / December 9, 1979, Metropolitan Philaret of New York wrote to Abbess Magdalena of Lesna convent: “Ponder these last words of the great Abba: the apparent performance of the Mysteries... What horror! But these words of his concur totally with my own conviction regarding the gracelessness and inefficacy of schismatic Mysteries” – and he went on to make clear that he regarded the sacraments of the Moscow Patriarchate, and of the American and Parisian jurisdictions, to be graceless.

<sup>151</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 40. It is interesting to note that Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina said the same thing when clarifying a pastoral epistle of his: “no clergyman, and certainly no hierarch, is to be deposed for wrong belief and excised from the universal body of the Eastern Orthodox Church without a prior trial and defense... For the age-old history of the Orthodox Church teaches us that no wrong-believing person who is liable to deposition and excision has ever been declared heretical or schismatic by Hierarchs acting in isolation, without any trial or defense, but by a valid and canonical Synod, coming together and taking counsel with the aid of the Holy Spirit and putting forth its vote of condemnation only after the defendant has stood trial and defended himself, and after all means of enlightenment and admonition have been exhausted...” (Letter of January 18, 1945; [http://www.trueorthodoxy.org/schismatics\\_matthewites\\_postings.shtml](http://www.trueorthodoxy.org/schismatics_matthewites_postings.shtml))

patriarchal parishes in Western Europe. In 1935 he published a book defending the MP against ROCOR and Metropolitan Anthony, in which he argued that while Soviet power acted in the religious sphere “by the inspiration of Satan”, Christians were still bound to obey it, because “all power is from God”. If they obeyed Soviet power, as God commanded, then Soviet power, “would see this, and the Spirit of God would proclaim good things for the Church through it”.<sup>152</sup>

Professor Ivan Ilyin subjected this argument to detailed criticism. The communists could not be simultaneously servants of God and servants of Satan. If they were acting “by the inspiration of Satan”, as was clearly the case, then they had to be opposed. In any case, Church history contained many examples of hierarchs refusing to obey the secular authorities, beginning with the apostles who told the Sanhedrin: “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5.29).

Ilyin quotes “the law of freedom” (James 1.25; I Peter 2.16) to illumine the meaning of the words “all power is from God”. They “signify not that power is unrestrained, but that it is bound and limited. ‘Being from God’ *means being called* to the service of God and *undertaking* this service; it binds and limits this power. It does not mean that the power is free to do any baseness or abomination, sin or iniquity, and that, whatever it does, it will always ‘come from God’, and that obedience in conscience will be demanded by it from its subjects as if it were the voice of God. But it means that the power is established by God *for the doing of good and the overcoming of evil*; that it must rule precisely in this way, and not otherwise. And if it does rule in this way, the subjects are obliged to obey it out of conscience.

“Thus the calling of the power by God becomes for it a rule and obligation, as it were a court before the face of God. While the free obedience of subjects according to conscience turns out to be strengthened, but also limited, by this law. But how far is it ‘limited’? To the extent that the law of Christian freedom calls them to loyalty or forbids them to show loyalty.

“And it is precisely to this freedom, infused with love, conscience and clear perception of its object, that we must turn for an exit when the power turns out to be in the hands of Satan, whom we can in no way serve or want to serve – neither out of fear, nor for conscience’s sake. We can and must serve only God, for we are ‘servants of God’ (I Peter 2.16); we are called to serve Him *in freedom*, speaking and acting as people who must be judged, not according to the letter of the Scripture, but according to the law of freedom. And if it turns out that according to our free and object-directed Christian conscience (not out of arbitrariness or passion!), this power is satanic, then we are called to condemn it, refuse to obey it and conduct a struggle against it in word and deed, by no means using our Christian freedom in order to cover up evil, that is, without

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<sup>152</sup> Metropolitan Eleutherius, *Moj Otvjet Mitropolitu Antoniu* (My Reply to Metropolitan Anthony), Kovno, 1935, pp. 18, 67.

distorting the voice of our Christian conscience, and not embellishing the words of Satan and not ascribing them in crookedness of soul to Christ..."<sup>153</sup>

The issue dividing ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergei is often described by the supporters of Sergei as "political" – a question only of the political recognition of the Soviet regime. However, as the Catacomb confessor Professor Ivan Andreyev pointed out: "To dissociate oneself in principle from any politics is impossible for an Orthodox person, for religion and politics are at the present time organically blended. The question: to be with Christ or against Him, has a political meaning today, because it commits one to protesting against those political systems which have as their main goal the destruction of Christianity. Whoever at the present time denies the necessity of political discussions (reasoning) and jurisdictional explanations (interpretations) denies the necessity of distinguishing the wolves in sheep's clothing and finding out where Christ is and where the Antichrist..."<sup>154</sup>

In this connection, it is worth recalling the following decree issued by Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod on July 25, 1935 recently discovered by researchers: "The decision of the former Most Holy Governing Synod of April 20, 1813 to deprive Archbishop Barlaam (Shishatsky) of Mogilev of his rank and priesthood, is to be completely rescinded as being issued for political reasons and under pressure of political circumstances. His Eminence Archbishop Barlaam Shishatsky is to be recognized as having died in his hierarchical rank. Therefore he is to be commemorated among those who have reposed as an Archbishop." Deacon Alexander Mazyrin comments on this: "Archbishop Barlaam was defrocked in his time because in the summer of 1812, after the French took Mogilev, he swore allegiance to the Emperor Napoleon. In rescinding the indicated decree of the Most Holy Synod, 'as being issued for political reasons and under pressure of political circumstances', Metropolitan Sergei clearly let us understand how we should relate to his own decrees, at the base of which there also lay political motives."<sup>155</sup>

True; and yet there is a still more pertinent conclusion to be drawn from this. Archbishop Barlaam was undoubtedly *justly* defrocked by the Most Holy Synod in 1813, because he swore allegiance to a man, Napoleon, who had been anathematized by the Synod. That being the case, Metropolitan Sergei was no less justly defrocked for swearing allegiance to the Bolsheviks, who were also under the Russian Church's anathema and whose enmity to Orthodoxy was still more obvious. For the fact that both acts were committed "under political pressure" is strictly irrelevant. Both acts, although clothed as concessions to political necessity, were acts of *ecclesiastical* betrayal; both men betrayed Christ

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<sup>153</sup> Ilyin, "O 'Bogoustanovlennosti' sovietskoj vlasti" (On the 'God-establishedness' of Soviet Power), <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=lib&id=2711>

<sup>154</sup> Andreev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 54.

<sup>155</sup> Mazyrin, "K istorii vysshevo upravlenia Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v 1935-1937 gg.", 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Theological Conference of PSTGU, Moscow, 2006, vol. 1, p. 166, <http://pstgu.ru/download/1269284749.mazyrin.pdf>

and His Holy Church, and were therefore subject to anathema and expulsion from the Church.

From distant China, Metropolitan Innocent of Peking (Figurovsky) (+1931) declared: "Metropolitan Sergei had ordered a prayer to be offered for the Soviet power before the throne of God and recognized its joys as his joys and her sorrows as his sorrows.

"It is difficult to think of a more terrible blasphemy against Orthodox hierarchs and the Orthodox people. Is it really still necessary to prove now that the government that openly fights with God, which turned more than 3,000 churches into temples of their satanic religion, which brutally destroyed thousands of hierarchs and priests, ruined more than 20 million by executions and starvation. the Russian people - that this power is not from God, but from the devil. Is it really necessary to convince someone that we cannot rejoice in the joys of the government, which has decided to wipe the very name of the Russian people from the face of the earth, which cripples and corrupts the souls of children and youth, inoculating them with vile vices and disgusting diseases! To argue otherwise, one must lose either reason or conscience.

"After 12 years of bloody terror, it is clear to everyone except those who deceive themselves that one cannot speak of any power in Russia in the human sense of the word, there are no laws and human rights; for where a wild beast reigns, instead of law, disgusting arbitrariness reigns! And this satanic power you, Your Eminence, together with Metropolitan Sergei, now you want to recognize the power as legitimate. How do you not feel the horror of such blasphemy? Do you really want, together with him and his Synod, to persecute the Orthodox Church, whose true hierarchs are now not in cities and not in royal palaces, but in prisons and in exile. Do you really want, together with Metropolitan Sergei and the Chekists to plant the abomination of desolation in the holy place, do you want to join with the Antichrist and do his work?

"Do not try to deceive yourself and others with words of guile. By recognizing Metropolitan Sergei as your head - does this not mean fulfilling all his orders, following the path along which he himself is going? To be loyal to the Bolsheviks, to renounce any active struggle with them, which is demanded by Metropolitan Sereis from all who recognize him - is not this a renunciation of Christ, the acceptance of that seal of the Antichrist, about which St. John the Evangelist speaks in his Revelation?

"You are trying in vain to play on the tender family feelings of the emigration for our brothers, who were captured in the USSR. Believe me, many of them preferred prison and exile to the confession of Metropolitan Sergei. The time is coming in the USSR, and it has already come, when all who have not accepted the seal of the antichrist will be deprived of the right to life, the right to sell and buy. You, no doubt, have read about the persecution of the

Bolsheviks against the "kulak" - honest workers who earn their bread by their labor and are guilty only of not going into slavery to satanic power. For this, their property is taken from them; many of them are killed. But they continue to fight and suffer for the Orthodox faith and Holy Russia, sacrificing everything. And here, at large, will we calmly look at their torment, will we refuse to fight their executioners in our cowardice? Or do you not feel that we will join the crimes of the Chekists, we will be guilty of the death of those tortured by them, if we do not fight with all our might against the army of Satan, which is oppressing our Motherland? The fight against the communists ... is our sacred duty."

## 12. THE EUROPEAN PROJECT AND THE TREATY OF LOCARNO

Although the Versailles Treaty had enshrined the principle of national self-determination at the heart of the international community's ideology, there were also manifestations of a tendency in the opposite direction, towards a greater integration of nations. One of these was, of course, the League of Nations. But the American Congress's refusal to endorse the League, and the non-membership of several important nations, undermined that project from the beginning. Another was the creation of Yugoslavia. A third was the zeal of the leading French and German politicians for the project of an economic European Union.

Ironically, it was neither a Frenchman nor a German, but an Englishman, William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, who sketched the first plan for a united Europe as far back as 1693. His proposal was that the Sovereign Princes of Europe should "agree to meet by their stated deputies in a General Diet, Estates or Parliament, and there Establish Rules of Justice for Sovereign Princes to observe one to another; and... before which Sovereign Assembly, should be brought all Differences depending between one Sovereign and another... Europe would quietly obtain the so much desired and needed Peace."<sup>156</sup>

The idea of a pan-European state was preceded by the idea of single European culture. "In his essay 'The Crisis of the Mind', Paul Valery, the French poet, reflected on the nature of this European culture on the eve of the First World War. 'In a book of that era - and not one of the most mediocre - we should have no trouble in finding the influence of the Russian ballet, touch of Pascal's gloom, numerous impresarios of the Goncourt type, something of Nietzsche, something of Rimbaud, certain effects due to a familiarity with painters, and sometimes the tone of a scientific publication... the whole flavoured with an indefinable British quality difficult to assess.' Valery thought this complex fusion was 'characteristic of the modern epoch', by which he meant a 'way of life', as well as a time. Europe, he maintained, had reached the apogee of this 'modernism' in 1914, just before 'the illusion of a European culture' was then lost on the battlefields of Flanders and Poland..."<sup>157</sup>

The idea of cultural unity led easily to the idea of political and/or economic unity. During the First World War, Trotsky proposed a "United States of Europe" as a way of stopping the war.<sup>158</sup> In September, 1914 the German chancellor put forward the idea of a central European customs union: "We must create a *central European economic association* through common customs treaties, to include France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Austria-Hungary,

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<sup>156</sup> Penn, "An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of an European Parliament, or Estates", in Peter Shröder, "Penn's Plan for a United Europe", *History Today*, October, 2016, p. 32.

<sup>157</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Europeans*, London: Penguin, 2020, pp. 478-479.

<sup>158</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 153.

Poland, and perhaps Italy, Sweden and Norway. This association will not have any common constitutional supreme authority and all its members will be formally equal, but in practice will be under German leadership and must stabilize Germany's economic dominance over *Mitteleuropa*."<sup>159</sup>

On the French side, "Etienne Clementel, Minister of Commerce 1915-19, wanted a national plan and an economic union of Western Europe; among his proteges were Jean Monnet and other future 'Eurocrats'."<sup>160</sup> The French were probably motivated at this time (and certainly when the project was revived after 1945) by the desire to tame and control the great German tiger. Thus "a secret delegation" from France "sounded out Berlin in January 1919 about plans for a Franco-German partnership to reorganize the European economy and, although the initiative failed, two further approaches followed in 1921 and 1922. The 1921 Wiesbaden Agreement envisaged German reparations payments to France being replaced by massive German direct investment in the devastated war zones of northern France, but British obstruction effectively derailed this initiative. The 1922 Sinnes-Lubersac Agreement, concluded between the German and French business magnates and parliamentarians, sought to revive the Wiesbaden Agreement, but failed to win over Poincaré, who had returned to office in January."<sup>161</sup>

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According to Yanis Varoufakis, the idea of a European economic union goes back to "the time-honoured Central European tradition associated with catchwords such as *Mitteleuropa* or *PanEuropa*...

"At its most wholesome, *Mitteleuropa* evoked a multinational multicultural intellectual ideal for a united Central Europe that the non-chauvinistic section of its conservative elites were rather fond of. However, *Mitteleuropa* was also the title of an influential book by Friedrich Naumann, authored in the midst of the Great War, which advocated an economically and politically integrated Central Europe run on German principles and with the 'minor' states placed under German rule.<sup>162</sup> A great deal more liberal than *Mitteleuropa*, *PanEuropa* was the brainchild of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, an Austrian-Japanese intellectual who conducted a lifelong campaign to bring about a pan-European political and economic union.

"Despite these differences, *Mitteleuropa* and *PanEuropa* were aimed at protecting Europe's centre from the geopolitical and economic encroachments of Russia from the east and the Anglosphere from the west. They also shared a view that European unity would have to be overlaid on Central Europe's existing national institutions and, indeed, on its prevailing corporate power

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<sup>159</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 171.

<sup>160</sup> Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 142.

<sup>161</sup> Conan Fischer, "The Limits of Nationhood", *History Today*, June, 2017, pp. 12-13.

<sup>162</sup> Neumann wrote that the plan could be "militarized into a form of indirect annexation" (Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, pp. 146, 262). (V.M.)

structures. A European union consistent with Mitteleuropa and Paneuropa visions would have to operate by limiting competition between corporations, between nations and between capital and labour. In short, Central Europe would resemble one gigantic corporation structured hierarchically and governed by technocrats, whose job would be to depoliticize everything and minimize all conflicts.

“Needless to say, the Mitteleuropa-Paneuropa vision enthused industrialists. Walter Rathenau, chairman of AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft) and later Germany’s foreign minister, went as far as to suggest that a Central European economic union would be ‘civilization’s greatest conquest’. The idea appealed not only to corporations like AEG, Krupp and Siemens, but also to the Roman Catholic Church and politicians like Robert Schuman, another of the European Union’s fathers, who was born in Germany but ended up French courtesy of a shifting border...”<sup>163</sup>

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But no economic union would be possible until there was some political détente – which was out of the question as long as French troops were occupying the Ruhr. Now from a legal point of view, the French had acted within their rights, acting as the policemen of the Versailles Treaty when no other power was prepared to enforce it. But world policemen then, as now, are never popular, and the French realized that they needed the friendship of the Anglo-Saxons even more than their money – and the Anglo-Saxons disapproved of France’s tactics. As a result, the French lost their resolve – and withdrew their troops...

The French were persuaded to withdraw by an American politician, Charles Dawes, who, as Simon Jenkins writes, “proposed a withdrawal of French troops from the Ruhr, a reduction and staging of reparations and the offer of loans for rebuilding.”<sup>164</sup> Under the Dawes-Young Plan (Young was another American banker), “Germany was to pay reparations at a moderate rate until 1929, then at 2,500 million Reichsmarks per annum. An Allied loan of 800 million RM was to facilitate the next instalment. But even this proved impossible. In 1929, under the Young Plan, Germany was told to pay 34,500 million RM annually over 58 years, i.e. to 1988, as a mortgage secured against the German state railways. In 1932, at the Lausanne Conference, Germany was invited to make one final payment of 3,000 million RM – which was not achieved. By that time the whole business had become irrelevant...”<sup>165</sup>

A consequence of the Dawes-Young Plan, and the French agreeing to it, “was the Locarno treaty of 1925, involving Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. It was a mutual non-aggression pact, recognizing the Versailles

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<sup>163</sup> Varoufakis, *And the Weak Suffer What They Must?* London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 56-57.

<sup>164</sup> Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 251.

<sup>165</sup> Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 943.



borders and admitting Germany to the League of Nations. France acquiesced. Stalin's Russia remained excluded.

"Locarno was the high point of diplomacy between the wars, a desperate attempt to reassert the inevitability of peace. The British Foreign Office named its chief reception room after it, and those involved secured Nobel Peace Prizes. The French foreign minister, Aristide Briand, recalled, '*A Locarno, nous avons parlé européen. C'est une langue nouvelle*', we have spoken European, a new language. Three years later, in 1928, the Kellogg-Briand pact went further and 'outlawed war as an instrument of national policy', with the critical exclusion of 'national defence'. It was an eerie reminder of the Hague conference of 1899, and was signed by fifty states."<sup>166</sup>

The Treaty was signed by the Foreign Ministers of France, Britain and Germany - that is, Aristide Briand, Austen Chamberlain and Gustav Stresemann.

"Germany, France and Belgium," writes Ian Kershaw, "undertook not to attack each other. Great Britain and Italy stood as guarantors. The central component was the guarantee by the five powers of Germany's western borders and the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland. The treaty paved the way for Germany's accession to the League of Nations in 1926, while the improved international relations created by the 'spirit of Locarno' offered hope among West Europeans for lasting peace. The French were happy that Britain was now formally guaranteeing their security. For Briand, this was the vital gain. Britain welcomed the détente and the confinement of its formal responsibilities in Europe to the Rhine frontier. For Stresemann, Locarno was a necessary step towards a longer-term goal of German resurgence. With diplomatic isolation removed, the prospects of bringing about the early withdrawal of Allied troops from the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland (scheduled for 1925) were brighter. Beyond that, it might now prove possible to win back Eupen-Malmedy from Belgium, acquire the Saar again, ease reparations and end Allied military control in Germany. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine had to be accepted, it was true, but Stresemann pointed out that there an inevitable corollary of German military weakness. And he had conceded nothing on the question of Germany's eastern borders.

"Each of the western powers had grounds for satisfaction in the outcome of Locarno. In eastern Europe the response was different. Poland in particular felt let down by the western powers, especially by its ally, France. Poland's position was significantly weakened, the country was more isolated than it had been, precariously squeezed between the Soviet Union and Germany. There had been no 'eastern Locarno'. Germany had explicitly ruled out any guarantee for Poland's frontiers. Neither Britain, which wanted no engagement in eastern Europe, nor France, despite its alliances, dating back to 1921, with Poland and the 'little Entente' of Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, had strong

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<sup>166</sup> Jenkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252.

enough motives to insist upon such a guarantee. Both had greater interest in binding Germany more closely to the west and ruling out any likelihood of it strengthening ties with the Soviet Union – advocated by some voices in German, recalling the merits of the Rapallo Treaty of 1922 which had established flourishing trading relations (as well as hidden military cooperation) of significant benefit to both countries. Germany's strident nationalists were predictably unhappy with Locarno. Stresemann himself sought to assuage his right-wing critics by leaving open the question of 'correcting' the eastern frontiers, with the prospect that at some point Danzig, the Polish Corridor and Upper Silesia would return to Germany. He gave assurances that force would not be contemplated. His own presumption was that patient diplomacy alone would bring this about in time..."<sup>167</sup>

The immediate effects of the Treaty were striking. On 10 September, 1926 Germany was admitted into the United Nations, and "an international Steel Pact was signed, in September 1926, by France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and the (then autonomous) region of the Saar, to regulate steel production and prevent excess capacity. Although the Pact was joined the following year by Czechoslovakia, Austria and Hungary, it was only ever a cartel of the traditional kind; but the German Prime Minister Gustav Stresemann certainly saw in it the embryonic shape of future trans-national accords. He was not alone..."<sup>168</sup>

This cartel was a clear forerunner of the International Coal and Steel Community of the early 1950s, which was the core of the European Economic Community. For in the modern world unity must have an economic base – which means that it is highly unlikely to have a spiritual or religious essence...

"Signing the 1925 Locarno treaties, which ushered in a new era of Franco-German cooperation, Aristide Briand heralded them as 'the draft of the constitution of a European family within the orbit of the League of Nations... the beginning of a magnificent work, the renewal of Europe'. The 1927 International Economic Conference in Geneva, gathered at French initiative, met – according to its chairman – to move towards 'an economic League of Nations whose long-term goal... is the creation of a United States of Europe.' This he envisaged as 'the sole economic formula which can fight effectively against the United States of America'."<sup>169</sup>

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So one of the impulses towards European Union, at least on the French side, was anti-Americanism. This was an unwise strategy in view of Europe's indebtedness to America. But "as the years tolled forward to 1929, and the Wall Street Crash, the uneasy and unsatisfactory relationship [between America and

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<sup>167</sup> Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 180-181.

<sup>168</sup> Judt, *Postwar*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>169</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 111.

Europe] became a habit. European anti-Americanism and American unilateralism were in unholy alliance. But much as both wished to establish the difference between America and the rest of the world, the war had made the link. The debts were real. They hired the money..."<sup>170</sup>

In spite of that, Briand was the first politician to really get the wheels of European integration moving. He insisted, writes Judt, that "the time had come to overcome past rivalries and think European, speak European, feel European. In 1924 the French economist Charles Gide joined other signatories in Europe in launching an International Committee for a European Customs Union. Three years later a junior member of the British Foreign Office would profess himself 'astonished' at the extent of continental interest in the 'pan-European' idea."<sup>171</sup>

"In June 1929," writes Tooze, "at a meeting in Madrid, Briand and Stresemann had discussed a vision of a European bloc large enough to withstand American economic competition and capable of releasing itself from dependence on Wall Street. In a speech on 5 September 1929, using the League of Nations as his stage, Briand seized the initiative. The European members of the League must move toward a closer union. The toothless peace pact that bore his name was not enough. Given the obvious downward trend in the world economy and the looming prospect of further American protectionism, Briand's first approach was to propose a system of preferential tariff reductions. But this economic approach met with such hostility that over the winter he moved to a different tack.

"In early May 1930, within weeks of the conclusion of the ticklish London Naval Conference, the French government circulated a formal proposal to all 26 of the other European member states of the League of Nations. Paris called upon its fellow-Europeans to realize the implications of their 'geographical unity' to form a conscious 'bond of solidarity'. Specifically, Briand proposed a regular European conference with a rotating presidency and a standing political committee. The ultimate aim would be a 'federation built upon the idea of union and not of unity'. 'Times have never been more propitious nor more pressing,' Briand concluded, 'for the starting of constructive work of this kind... It is a decisive hour when a watchful Europe may ordain in freedom her own fate. Unite to live and prosper!'"<sup>172</sup>

Stresemann died on October 3, 1929, and Briand's last government (his eleventh) fell on November 3, 1929.

This brought an end to the European project in its first incarnation.

Moreover, only "a few weeks later Wall Street crashed, sending waves of panic selling around the world. Unemployment soared, passing the three

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<sup>170</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>171</sup> Judt, *Postwar*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>172</sup> Tooze, *The Deluge*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 492-493.

million mark [in Germany] within months to culminate at six million by 1932. Faith in democracy dissolved, inflation took hold, and a sense of despair and hopelessness spread. Hitler was the man of the hour.”<sup>173</sup>

The European project was thus derailed. Briand’s “Memorandum on the Organization of a Regime of European Federal Union” had to wait for the fall of Hitler’s quite different scheme of European unity; it was revived and realized in something like its original form in the European Union of the late twentieth century.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Frank Dikötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 39.

<sup>174</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristide\\_Briand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristide_Briand).

### 13. THE GREAT BOOM AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The United States was the only participant in the Great War that had not been deeply scarred by it. America was still the land of the free and, by comparison with Europe, of the *happy* – a happiness and freedom expressed best perhaps in music by George Gershwin's distinctly American masterpiece, *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924). By the mid-1920s American city-dwellers, profiting from massive wartime debt repayments from Europe, were experiencing a boom time, symbolized by the Empire State Building in New York, and accompanied by the kind of excess portrayed in Fitzgerald's famous novel *The Great Gatsby* and the 1960s film *Some Like It Hot*.

The best measure of America's astonishing prosperity was car production. "In 1920 1,950,000 cars were produced; in 1929, 4,415,000 – a figure not to be surpassed until 1949. By 1929, 26, 704,800 automobiles, trucks and buses were in registered ownership..."<sup>175</sup>

American industry produced one third of global production, largely thank to its revolutionary new methods of mass production. "Consider," writes Stephen Kotkin, "Henry Ford's Model-T, whose supply could not keep pace with demand. When Ford had opened a new plant in Highland Park, he had taken advantage of mechanized conveyors to send the automobile frame along a line, along which each worker was assigned one simplified, repetitious assembly task to perform in a system known as mass production. It involved standardization of the core aspects of products and reorganized flow among shops, and allowed replacement of manual labor by machinery. At Ford's River Rouge factory near Detroit, a finished car rolled off the assembly line every ten seconds, and the effects were felt throughout the economy and thousands of communities. River Rouge alone employed 68,000, making it the largest factory in the world, but more than that, its cars required millions of tons of steel alloys, as well as vast amounts of glass, rubber, textiles, and petroleum. Cars also needed roads and service stations. Altogether, nearly four million jobs were connected directly or indirectly to the automobile, in a labor force of 45 million workers. US production and business organization mesmerized the world. And it was only half the story. Already in 1925, one of every six Americans nationally had a car, and one of every two in Los Angeles, a result of the fact that standardization enabled a drop in the price of the Model-T to \$290, from \$850. Ford had further expanded the market for his cars by paying his own workers \$5 per day, approximately twice the country's average manufacturing wage. 'The necessary precedent condition of mass production,' Ford wrote, 'is a capacity, latent or developed, of *mass consumption*, the ability to absorb large production. The two go together, and in the latter may be traced the reasons for the former.' In the 1920s, average household income in the United States rose by 25 percent. Eleven million families owned their own homes by the middle of the decade..."<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: 2019, p. 494.

<sup>176</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 612.

“The cinema,” writes Robert Tombs, “became a mass phenomenon, along with the gramophone and, soon, the wireless. There was, all over Europe, Americanization. It had begun shortly before the First World War, but American participation in the war accentuated it: ragtime, jazz (first performed in England in 1917), and their offshoots transformed popular music and dancing. It is this, of course, that has left a strong image in popular memory of the ‘Roaring Twenties’, the Jazz Age, the Charleston (1925) and flappers with bobbed hair and (relatively) short skirts. Hollywood quickly established its pre-eminence as the source of new cultural phenomena, not least the creation of global celebrities.”<sup>177</sup>

The most famous of those celebrities was Charlie Chaplin, an immigrant from the London slums and “the Charles Dickens of the Cinema”; together with four other celebrities (including Mary Pickford), he founded United Artists. He probably did more to shape the new art form than any other person. The genius of his comedy, its social-political content - especially *Modern Times* (1936) and *The Great Dictator* (1940), - his fabulous wealth, and his scandalous private life became emblematic of Hollywood stardom. His popularity with cinema-goers contrasted with his unpopularity with the American authorities (especially Hoover’s FBI), and he was forced to emigrate. But in 1972, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences offered Chaplin an Honorary Award, which was seen as a sign that America “wanted to make amends”. Chaplin was initially hesitant about accepting but decided to return to the US for the first time in 20 years. The visit attracted a large amount of press coverage and, at the Academy Awards gala, he was given a 12-minute standing ovation, the longest in the Academy’s history. Visibly emotional, Chaplin accepted his award for “the incalculable effect he has had in making motion pictures the art form of this century”<sup>178</sup> - which it certainly was.

“The coming of affluence,” writes Paul Johnson, “was one factor in the decline of radical politics and their union base. A 1929 survey quoted a union organizer: ‘The Ford Car has done an awful lot of harm to the unions here and everywhere else. As long as men have enough money to buy a second-hand Ford and tires and gasoline, they’ll be out on the road and paying no attention to union meetings.’ In 1915, 1921 and 1922 the unions lost three key Supreme Court actions, and their 1919 strikes were disastrous failures. American Federation of Labor membership dropped from a high point of 4,078,740 in 1920 to 2,532,261 in 1932. ‘Welfare capitalism’ provided company sports facilities, holidays with pay, insurance and pension schemes, so that by 1927 4,700,000 workers were covered by group insurance and 1,400,000 were members of company union. The American worker appeared to be on the threshold of a hitherto unimaginable bourgeois existence of personal provision and responsibility which made collective action increasingly superfluous...”<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 664.

<sup>178</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie\\_Chaplin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Chaplin).

<sup>179</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, p. 223.

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“As he left office in 1928,” writes A.N. Wilson, “President Coolidge told the electorate that their prosperity was ‘absolutely sound’ and that stocks were ‘cheap at current prices’.

“His successor was Herbert Hoover, born in the tiny Midwestern town of West Branch, Iowa, a devout Quaker, who had become a mining engineer in his twenties and amassed a fortune. His was an archetypal, virtuous American success story and he probably spoke with complete sincerity when, in his inaugural address in 1929, he said: ‘We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us. We have not reached the goal, but, given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, we shall soon with the help of God be in sight of the day when poverty shall be banished from this nation.’”<sup>180</sup>

Hoover had evidently not heard the words of Christ: “The poor you have with you always” (Matthew 26.11). And that in spite of the fact that he had been the major force fighting famine in Europe and Russia after 1919... Soon, beginning in America, and spreading throughout the capitalist world, the numbers of the poor would multiply rapidly. This was the Great Depression, caused by the great stock market crash of October 1929.

America in the 1920s had not been a generous place. Americans then were generous neither to their own poor (for while the city-dwellers frolicked the farmers were suffering their own depression that few paid any attention to) nor to the foreign poor (in that they erected high tariff barriers to imports from abroad at just the time when Europeans and Japanese, not to speak of the rest of the world, desperately needed export markets). The Depression therefore came as a correction, a punishment, and an incentive to radical change...

“It was in October that the crash came, and a wild scramble began to unload stocks which were tumbling in value. On 29 October the *New York Times* index of industrials fell 49 points, followed next trading day by another 43 points. The fall from high to low is awesome to consider. By 1 March 1933, the value of stocks on the New York Exchange was less than one-fifth of the market’s peak. The *New York Times* stock average, which stood at 452 on 3 September 1929, bottomed at 52 in July 1932.

“The cost in human terms was terrible. Industrial production in the United States fell by 50 per cent, and by 1933 one-third or one-quarter of the labour force – no one could calculate exactly – were out of work. The Ford Motor Corporation, which in spring 1929 employed 128,000 workers, was down to 37,000 by August 1931. This was the era of the soup kitchens, semi-starvation

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<sup>180</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 324.

in the cities, the mass exodus, described in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, of dispossessed migrants into California. Almost overnight, the richest country in the capitalist West had become what we would call a Third World country, dominated by the basic need to eat and the fear of starvation itself. Twenty thousand took part in the Bonus March of 1932 – some from as far away as California. This was when war veterans, holding government bonus certificates which were due years in the future, marched on Washington demanding that Congress pay them off now. They came in battered old cars, on freight trains, or by hitch-hiking. Chief Running Wolf, a jobless Mescalero Indian from New Mexico, came in full Indian dress with a bow and arrow. The 20,000 were mostly encamped, when they reached Washington, on Anacosta Flats, on the far side of the Potomac River from the Capitol. President Hoover, a Quaker, ordered the army to evict them. He walled himself up in the White House guarded by four troops of cavalry, four companies of infantry, a machine-gun squadron and six tanks, commanded by General Douglas MacArthur and aided by Major Dwight Eisenhower...<sup>181</sup>

President Hoover tried to save the situation by pouring state money into the economy. "More major public works were started in Hoover's four years than in the previous thirty, including the San Francisco Bay Bridge, the Los Angeles Aqueduct and the Hoover Dam; the project for a St. Lawrence Seaway was a casualty of Congressional, not White House, action. In July 1932 the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's capital was almost doubled to \$3.8 billion and the new Emergency Relief and Construction Act extended its positive role: in 1932 alone it gave credits of \$2.3 billion and \$1.6 billion in cash. Alas, as there was then unanimous agreement that the budget had to be brought back into balance after two years of deficit, the 1932 Revenue Act saw the greatest taxation increase in US history in peacetime, with the rate on high incomes jumping from a quarter to 63 per cent. This made nonsense of Hoover's earlier tax cuts but by now Hoover had lost control of Congress and was not in a position to pursue a coherent fiscal policy...

"... His incessant attacks on the stock exchanges, which he hated as parasitical, and his demands that they be investigated pushed stocks down still further and discouraged private investors. His policy of public investment prevented necessary liquidations. The businesses he hoped thus to save either went bankrupt in the end, after fearful agonies, or were burdened throughout the 1930s by a crushing load of debt. Hoover undermined property rights by weakening the bankruptcy laws and encouraging states to halt action-sales for debt, ban foreclosures or impose debt moratoria. This, in itself, impeded the ability of the banks to save themselves and maintain confidence. Hoover deliberately pushed federal credits into the banks and bullied them into inflating, thus increasing the precariousness of their position.

"The final crisis came when America's protectionist policy boomeranged. The atrocious Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930, which sharply increased import-

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<sup>181</sup> Wilson, op. cit., pp. 324-325.



duties, more than any other positive act of policy, spread the Depression to Europe. In the summer of 1931 the collapse of Austria's leading bank, the Credit Anstalt, pushed over a whole row of European dominoes (Britain had already abandoned the gold standard on 21 September 1930) and a series of debt-repudiations ensued. What remained of America's exports to Europe vanished, and her policy of foreign loans as a substitute for free trade collapsed. Foreigners lost confidence in the dollar and since the USA was still on the gold standard began to pull out their gold, a habit that spread to American customers. In a 'normal' year about 700 US banks failed. In 1931-2 there were 5,096 failures, with deposits totalling well over \$3 billion, and the process culminated early in the last weeks of the Hoover presidency, adding what appeared to be the coping stone to the President's monument of failure."<sup>182</sup>

"The oceans were deserted, the ships laid up in the silent ports, the factory smoke-stacks dead, long files of workless in the towns, poverty throughout the countryside. Argentina saw the wheat and livestock prices collapse; Brazil, the price of coffee; America, that of corn and cotton; Malaya, of rubber; Cuba, of sugar, and Burma, of rice. Then came the stage when wealth was destroyed. The Brazilians threw their sacks of coffee into the sea, and the Canadians burned their corn in railway engines. Just as a man leaving a house at a moment's notice, burns his papers, civilization seemed to destroy, before disappearing, the wealth it had created. Men questioned the value of what they had learned to admire and respect. Women became less fertile... The crisis was even more prolonged than the war. Nations were economically cut off from one another, but they shared the common lot of poverty."<sup>183</sup>

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In Britain, as Tombs writes, "the Cabinet fragmented when a run on the pound forced it to seek financial support in Wall Street, which insisted on a cut in public spending." Finally, after hanging for nearly two years of economic downturn, during which an attempt cut public wages led to the "Invergordon Mutiny" - a strike in the navy - and another run on the pound, the British National government, now a coalition of Tories, Liberals and Labour, "abandoned the gold standard in September 1931, and the pound lost 30 percent of its value - a milestone in modern economic history. But the decision was less tortured than in some countries. Britain had suffered far less from inflation in the 1920s than France or Germany: the latter had suffered the traumatic experience of hyperinflation in 1923, when people had needed barrow-loads of banknotes to buy groceries and savings had become worthless. So British politicians and public opinion were less fixated on gold, and devaluation happened without a political outcry. Not for the last time, the economy benefited from a currency debacle, followed by a cut in interest rates from 6 to 2 percent. English goods became cheaper, winning back home and foreign markets. Fifteen other countries followed suit. By 1932 the economy

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<sup>182</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>183</sup> Paul Reynaud, in Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, London: Pimlico, 2001, p. 132.

was starting to recover, growing by 4 percent per year, with average unemployment over the 1930s (9.8 percent) roughly half that in the United States (18.2 percent).

“In Europe, new and fragile democracies with average unemployment seemed impotent to halt the economic crisis. Many were hamstrung by proportional representation, which gave no clear majority to govern. Communists, radical nationalists or authoritarian conservatives were threatening to take or actually taking power in Poland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Balkans, Portugal and Spain. Even in traditionally stable countries, including Belgium and Norway, extremist populist parties emerged. In France, Europe’s oldest large democracy, a Communist party and several fascist-style movements threatened the parliamentary republic. Most seriously of all, in Germany the Nationalist Socialist German Workers’ Party began winning the votes of people desperate for some way out of the slump, blamed on reparations and the Treaty of Versailles...”<sup>184</sup>

The Socialist Beatrice Webb saw the Depression as preparing the way for the world revolution: “The U.S.A., with its cancerous growth of crime and uncounted but destitute unemployed; Germany hanging over the abyss of a nationalist dictatorship; France, its dread of a new combination of Italy, Germany and Austria against her; Spain on the brink of revolution; the Balkan states snarling at each other; the Far East in a state of anarchic ferment; the African continent uncertain whether its paramount interest and culture power will be black or white; South American states forcibly replacing pseudo-democracies by military dictatorships; and finally – acutely hostile to the rest of the world, engulfed in a fabulous [*sic*] effort, the success of which would shake capitalist civilization to its very foundations – Soviet Russia.

And truly, the Depression benefited the Soviets greatly, not only because it confirmed their ideological expectations of the fall of capitalism, but also in that it brought them an economic lifeline at a time when Stalin’s collectivization and dekulakization were wreaking economic disaster. “The upshot was a windfall. More than one thousand factories would be newly built or overhauled from top to bottom, and nearly every single blueprint and advanced machine came from abroad. The Depression afforded Stalin unprecedented leverage: suddenly, the capitalists needed the Soviet market as much as the Soviets needed their advanced technology. Without the Great Depression would the capitalists have developed such overwhelming incentives to pursue the Soviet market no matter what? Indeed, the capitalist powers not only sold their best technology to the Communist regime; they continued doing so even after the Soviets were found to be violating contracts by purchasing designs for one factory and using them for others, trickery that was amply recorded in

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<sup>184</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 669. Thus “the reaction to mainstream politics,” writes Dani Rodrik, “took two forms. Communists chose social reconstruction over the international economy, while fascists and Nazis chose national reassertion. Both paths took a sharp turn away from globalisation.” (“The Great Globalisation Lie”, *Prospect*, January, 2018, p. 31)

indignant internal foreign company records: the capitalist had no other customers for massive capital goods..."<sup>185</sup>

And yet, as Andrew Roberts writes, "Through the years of Depression, stagnation and widespread want, red-blooded socialism had utterly failed to make any electoral headway in Canada, as in much of the rest of the English-speaking world. Disunity, personality clashes, the stigma of Marxism, lack of leadership, but above all the ability of centre-left parties to reposition themselves effectively, all led to socialism missing its best opportunity of the twentieth century to impose a command economy and dismantle capitalism. Scholars who write of Moscow facing an 'uncooperative world economy' have it exactly backward. Ideology and the party monopoly were the constraints, the global economy, the enabler..."<sup>186</sup>

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An important aspect of the Stock Market Crash is the possible participation in it of Hitler... According to Sara Moore, Hitler and his powerful ally, Alfred Hugenburg, the leader of the DNVP, played an important role in the stock market crash and the subsequent Depression. In the spring of 1929 Hugenburg had sent a letter to the government "with a plea for a generous new reparations agreement, in order to 'save Germany from Bolshevism'.

"Yet, after the Americans listened to Hugenburg's warnings and gave generous terms to Germany in the new agreement, Hugenburg produced a pernicious new petition, backed by all his five hundred newspapers and put the minority leader, Adolf Hitler, in a prominent position on the petition's committee, which would give Hitler enormous publicity and have a dire effect on the American stock market.

"Hugenburg's petition asserted that the German President and all his cabinet should be tried for treason for agreeing to pay any war reparations at all, on the grounds that Germany was guiltless of starting the First World War. If his petition gained sufficient votes, the government would have to hold a national referendum on it."<sup>187</sup>

A key member of the government was Gustav Stresemann, who, though a liberal and a supporter of the Weimar republic, had always worked hard to reduce Germany's reparation payments. However, he considered Hugenburg's petition dangerous for Germany, and one of his last acts was to get his People's Party to issue a clear resolution opposing it. But this bugbear of the Right (he was a Freemason married to a Jewess) died on October 3...

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<sup>185</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 733-734.

<sup>186</sup> Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples from 1900*, p. 205.

<sup>187</sup> Moore, *The Fourth Reich?* Jollies Publishing, 2016, pp. 164-165.

“On 13<sup>th</sup> October 1929 the German socialist coalition government considered itself sufficiently threatened by Hugenburg’s propaganda campaign to issue an official proclamation that Hugenburg’s petition was a ‘monstrous attempt to incite the German people against the government and to annihilate the ten-year good-will policy of the republic with Germany’s former enemies.’

“On 17<sup>th</sup> October 1929, counting on Hugenburg’s petition began. It was scheduled to take two weeks. *The New York Times* believed the Hugenburg would gain the necessary four million votes to trigger a national referendum on his petition because he could count on Hitler’s 800,000 votes, and those of other extremist parties, if some of his 4.4 million. Faithful fell by the wayside. It reported selling on Wall Street. There had been a move to ‘force’ stocks down. On 18<sup>th</sup> October *The New York Times* again predicted that Hugenburg and Hitler’s petition would succeed because it had opened up the ‘war guilt’ issue.

“On 21<sup>st</sup> October ‘perpendicular’ falls were recorded on the American stock exchange remarking ‘The outstanding feature of the past week’s Berling money market was the rapid descent of the dollar exchange in favour of the mark’.

“On 24<sup>th</sup> October 1929 Wall Street collapsed and 19,226,400 shares were sold. The American stock market was hit by a devastating crash as it became apparent that Hugenburg’s rejection of reparation payments threatened not only the payment of the Allies war debts [to America] but that Hugenburg and new friend, Hitler, were capable of defaulting on all America’s loans [to German industry]. The paper loss in October and November 1929 at 876,078,000,000 was equal to the entire wartime increase in the American national debt.

“Most of the German money that had been on Wall Street, and escaped before the crash, was not sent back to Germany, but was lodged in Switzerland and France.

“The American stock market continued to plunge until the national referendum on Hugenburg and Hitler’s petition was turned down by the German people on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. The Allies and America breathed a sigh of relief. Yet, as Harold James wrote in his book *A German Identity*: ‘It was the joint DNVP and Nazi sponsored plebiscite against the Young Plan that took the Nazis back into the centre of the political scene.’ When the economic climate worsened the following year and the German people were asked to pay the reparations out of their diminished pay, they would flock to Hitler...”<sup>188</sup>

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The Depression may plausibly be represented as having prepared the way for world war.

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<sup>188</sup> Moore, op. cit., pp. 167-168.

As Piers Brendon writes, "It was the worst peacetime crisis to afflict humanity since the Black Death. It was the economic equivalent of Armageddon. During the 1930s, therefore, the globe was enveloped by something like the fog of war. It was a time of systematic obfuscation, darkness at noon. Governments sought to maintain control by manipulating minds and mobilising opinion. They did so in a fashion 'unprecedented in history', employing new means of mass communication and even drawing on the advertising techniques which had lifted the cigarette from 'its status of lowly "coffin nail" to that of a national necessity'. Instead of protecting truth with a bodyguard of lies, they threatened to liquidate it. They confused friends as well as foes distorting reality or attempting to change its nature, fostering 'the illusion that we live entirely in a world of propaganda myths'. But the Depression not only occluded the contemporary vision of war, it also made war more likely.

"The old liberal world order, which had been severely damaged by the First World War and was further undermined by the Communist revolution in Russia, finally collapsed during the 1930s. The Depression wrecked the Weimar Republic and brought Hitler to power in Germany. It smashed the fragile internationalist parliamentary consensus in Japan, opening the door to the militarists. It prompted Mussolini to seek domestic dividends by means of foreign adventures. It completed the isolation of the Soviet Union, which claimed to be immune to the crisis but starved its citizens in order to arm socialism for the apparently inevitable clash with fascism – the last stage of doomed, desperate capitalism. The mutual hostility of the rival totalitarian systems, each bidding to transcend and fulfil the historical process, each polarising opinion accordingly, did much to form the character of the age...

"The Depression also sapped the strength and self-confidence of the democracies. Britain experienced a naval mutiny, fascist demonstrations and hunger marches. France was lacerated by the worst civil strife since the Commune. To avert what appeared to be incipient revolution, Roosevelt embarked on the most far-reaching federal programme in American peacetime history. Other nations responded to the catastrophe, which hit the poorest countries hardest, in different ways. But all the major currencies eventually went off the gold standard, dethroning the 'old idol of liberal economics'. And to balance their budgets governments abandoned laissez-faire in favour of protectionism. The tariff barrier became the economic analogue of the Maginot Line. Bitter commercial contention, with rival devaluations, replaced the ideal of international cooperation. In fact, trade ceased to be a matter of mutual advantage and turned into a system of 'beggar-thy-neighbour'. Economic nationalism easily developed into political aggression...

"... The Depression had so demoralised the leaders of Britain and France that they were reluctant to imperil recovery by spending too heavily on munitions. They thus found themselves adopting increasingly humiliating postures of appeasement, particularly after missing a crucial chance to check Mussolini over Ethiopia. In stark contrast, Hitler helped to revive the Germany

economy by making rearmament his priority. The logical conclusion of Nazi autarky was war..."<sup>189</sup>

But did that mean that the opposite of autarky, free trade, guarantees peace? By no means. The First World War broke out when free trade was at its peak; the Second World War broke out when autarky was at its peak...

War cannot be predicted from economic conditions or policies, although extreme hedonism is always followed by retribution in the longer term. It is God Who creates war for strictly moral purposes, to save the elect and condemn the damned. For "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create war; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah 45.7).

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<sup>189</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 590, 591.

## 14. COLLECTIVIZATION AND DEKULAKIZATION

As we have seen, in his notorious Declaration of July, 1927 Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod bowed down to the Soviet god, while the True Church of Russia, refusing to sacrifice to idols, descended into the catacombs. The punishment of God destined for the idolaters was not slow in appearing, while the glorification through martyrdom of the confessors of the truth was even quicker... Early in 1928 Stalin returned from Siberia, convinced that the peasant farms had to be collectivized, and the more successful peasants, the so-called kulaks, crushed out of existence...

This was class warfare, pure and simple. The strategy was as follows. First, the more successful peasants, the "kulaks", were to be allowed to "enrich themselves", as Bukharin put it, so that their profits could be squeezed for industrialization. But this was, of course, capitalism, so it could not last. When the kulaks' grain had been requisitioned, and what was left subjected to massive taxation, the peasants would have all their lands and possessions seized and collectivized because, in Stalin's opinion (based largely on the American experience), large farms were more efficient and profitable. Moreover, collectivization would root out the last elements of capitalism in the countryside. Those who resisted would be exiled or killed outright. In this way, it was thought, the class problem in the countryside would be solved and the income needed for industrialization would be obtained. But it didn't work out quite like that...

The first step was the abandonment of the New Economic Policy, introduced by Lenin in 1921, which had ended requisitioning, legalized private trade, and abandoned the semi-militarization of labour. The NEP had been forced upon the Bolsheviks because they were waging a civil war against the peasantry, who desperately opposed the confiscation of their property. Someone had to bend, and Lenin bent. But he always described NEP as a "temporary" concession. The concession was removed by Stalin from 1928...

Not that the results from NEP had been bad: "Harvest yields of the 1920s were 17 per cent higher than those of the 1900s... The Soviet economy grew rapidly between 1921 and 1928. Industry did well, arguably achieving higher rates of growth than in the 1930s."<sup>190</sup>

"The NEP entailed a reprieve for the remnants of 'bourgeois culture' which the revolution promised to eliminate but could not yet do without. It brought a halt to the war against the professional class - the 'bourgeois specialists', technicians, engineers and scientists - whose experience was needed by the Soviet economy. It also meant a relaxation in the war against religion: churches were no longer closed or the clergy persecuted as they had been before (or would be afterwards). Under Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Enlightenment, the Bolsheviks adopted a permissive cultural policy. The artistic avant garde

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<sup>190</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 194.

of Russia's 'Silver Age', the first two decades of the century, continued to flourish in the third, when many artists took inspiration from the revolution's promise to create a new and more spiritual world.

"The NEP, however, did not mean a halt in the war against bourgeois customs and mentalities (what they called *byt*). With the ending of the Civil War, the Bolsheviks prepared for a longer struggle on this cultural front. They saw the revolution's goal as the creation of a higher type of human being – more collective, more actively engaged in public life – and set about the liberation of the personality from the individualism of the old society. The Communist Utopia would be built by engineering this New Soviet Man.

"From Marx the Bolsheviks had learned that consciousness was formed by the environment. So they set about their task of human engineering by forming social policies to alter modes of thinking and behaviour..."<sup>191</sup>

The positive economic results of the NEP years had not satisfied Stalin, who wanted to return to the "real" communism of the Civil War years, and had plans for a still more radical reshaping of human nature and culture. One of the things he wanted to destroy was Russian national feeling. Already in his speech to the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party in 1923 he had shown opposition to NEP because it supposedly encouraged Russian nationalism: "The national question is significant for us... In these last two years we have introduced the so-called NEP, and in connection with this Great Russian nationalism has begun to grow and get stronger... Thus in connection with NEP, a new force is being born in our inner life – Great Russian chauvinism, which nests in our institutions, penetrating not only into Soviet, but also party institutions, pacing throughout every corner of our federation and leading to a situation in which, if we do not give a decisive rebuff to this new force, if we do not cut it off at the root – and NEP conditions foster its growth – we risk finding ourselves before the picture of a schism between the proletariat of the former ruling nation and the peasants of the formerly oppressed nations, which will mean the undermining of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

By 1927 the situation was still worse in Stalin's mind. It was time to "cut off at the root" the Russian and Orthodox mentality of the ordinary Russian Orthodox Christian... "Two events occurred in 1927 to turn Bolshevik opinion against the NEP. The first was another breakdown in the supply of grain to the cities. A poor harvest coincided with a shortage of consumer goods, and as the price of manufactures rose the peasants reduced their sales of grain. The state's procurements from the peasantry that autumn were half what they had been the previous year. The second incident was a war scare. The press reported false rumours that the British were about to launch an 'imperialist war' against the Soviet Union. Stalin exploited these reports to attack the United Opposition, accusing its leaders, Trotsky and Zinoviev, of undermining the unity of the

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<sup>191</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 195-196.



Soviet state at a time of great danger. The two issues – the ‘kulak’ grain strike and the threat of war with the capitalist states – were connected in his view.

“Trotsky and Zinoviev opposed raising the procurement price. They favoured a gradual return to requisitioning to secure the stocks of food needed by the state to boost production of consumer goods. That in turn would give the peasants more incentive to sell their grain. At this point Stalin sided with Bukharin against Trotsky and Zinoviev, who were defeated at the Fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927. But after that he turned against Bukharin and the NEP...

“Returning to the violent language of the Civil War, Stalin called for a new battle for grain to industrialize the Soviet Union in a Five-Year Plan. The war scare played into his hands, enabling him to push for the NEP to be abandoned on the grounds that it was too slow as a means of industrial armament, and too uncertain as a means of procuring food in the event of war...

“Stalin’s call for a return to the class struggle of the Civil War appealed to a broad section of the Party’s rank and file, among whom there was a growing sense that the NEP represented a retreat from the revolution’s goals. His rhetoric of industrial progress had a powerful appeal to all those lower-class Bolsheviks who as young men had fled the peasant world of icons and cockroaches, and who saw the revolution as an overturning of this legacy of poverty. Most of them had joined the party in the Civil War and had been promoted by Stalin. They were practical people, without much grasp of Marxist theory, whose allegiance to the Bolsheviks was intimately linked with their own identity as ‘proletarians’. They identified with Stalin’s simple vision of the Five-Year Plan as a new revolutionary offensive and make it a great industrial power in the world.

“Stalin’s fighting words also had a special attraction to younger Communists – those born in the first two decades of the century – who were too young to have fought in the Civil War but who had been educated in the ‘cult of struggle’ based on stories about it...”<sup>192</sup>

There were hints that Stalin’s reign of terror would extend into industry. At the “Shakhty” show trial in 1928, amidst huge publicity, several technical specialists – that class which the NEP had spared because no modern economy can do without them – were condemned for espionage and sabotage... Relations with Germany deteriorated because several of the specialists were German. But this only confirmed Stalin in his conviction that the internal and external enemies of the state were working together, a delusion that played an increasingly important part in his thinking...

However, Stalin still had one major potential internal opponent to his plans within the party – Bukharin. “The big clash came on 10 July 1928 at a meeting

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<sup>192</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 201-202, 203

of the Central Committee, when Bukharin argued that while the kulak himself was not a threat – ‘we can shoot him down with machine-guns’ – forced collectivization would unite all the peasants against the government. Stalin interrupted him with sinister piety. ‘A fearful dream, but God is merciful! God might be merciful; but not the General-Secretary. The next day, a scared Bukharin speaking on behalf of his allies Rykov, the nominal head of the government, and Tomsy, the hack ‘trade union’ leader, had a secret meeting with Kamenev and offered to form a united front to stop Stalin. He now realized, he said, that Stalin was not primarily interested in policy but in sole power. ‘He will strangle us. He is an unprincipled intriguer who subordinates everything to his appetite for power. At any given moment he will change his theories in order to get rid of someone... [He is] Genghis Khan!’ He seems to have thought that Yagoda, head of the OGPU, would come over to them, but he was misinformed. None of these nervous men had the numerical support in the key party bodies to outvote Stalin, or the means, in the shape of trained men with guns, to overrule him by force, or the skill and resolution – both of which he had shown in abundance – to destroy him by intrigue. In 1929 they were all dealt with: Rykov ousted from the premiership, Tomsy from the trade union leadership, and both, plus Bukharin, forced publicly to confess their errors. (Kamenev and Zinoviev had already done so.) They would now be tried and murdered at leisure.

“Stalin had already begun to perfect the dramaturgy of terror. Drawing on his monkish memories, he arranged party meetings to provide a well-rehearsed antiphonal dialogue between himself and his clique, with Stalin suggesting moderation in dealing with party ‘enemies’ and the clique insisting on severity. Thus, reluctantly demanding the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev, Stalin said he had been against this before and had been ‘cursed’ by ‘honest Bolsheviks’ for being too lenient. The clique: ‘Yes – and we still curse you for it.’ In May-June 1929 Stalin staged the first of his show trials, against a group of Donbass mining engineers charged with ‘sabotage’. The script was written by the OGPU official Y.G. Yevdokimov, one of Stalin’s creatures, and featured the twelve-year-old son of one of the accused, who denounced his father and called for his execution. The actual head of the OGPU, Menzhinsky, opposed this trial, as did some Politburo members. But this was the last time Stalin met genuine opposition from within the secret police or security apparatus. Towards the end of the year he ordered the shooting of the senior OGPU official Yakov Biyumkin, the first party member to be executed for an intra-party crime.

“Thereafter the trials went exactly as Stalin planned them, down to the last indignant crowd scene, like some gigantic production by the Soviet cineaste Sergei Eisenstein. While the trial of the ‘Industrial Party’ was taking place the next year, the boy of the court shouted, at carefully arranged intervals, ‘Death to the wreckers!’ and in the streets outside, thousands of workers marched past shouting ‘Death, death, death!’”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 266-267.

“The initial results,” of the return of forcible requisitioning, writes Sir Geoffrey Hosking, “were encouraging: a good deal of grain was discovered, stored away for alcoholic distillation, feeding to livestock, or the advent of better prices. There was short-lived abundance in the state shops. But in 1929 things got much worse. Reading the signals from the Urals, peasants reduced their sowings to what was needed for subsistence. Why produce what would merely be confiscated? The state responded as in 1918, by setting up committees of poor peasants to ‘unleash class war in the village’ and to help requisition teams find hidden produce. Village assemblies were instructed to hold meetings at which their members were labelled ‘poor peasants’, ‘middle peasants’ or ‘kulaks’: very heavy taxes and delivery targets were imposed on the latter.”<sup>194</sup>

This showed that the private producers of grain, the peasants, still held power. But the peasants were not going to sell their grain on the open market when the Five-Year-Plan for industry offered them so few goods to buy in exchange. Stalin announced that he would not allow industry to become “dependent on the caprice of the kulaks”, the richer peasantry...

Collectivization began on 27 December, 1929, when Stalin “declared war with the slogan: “Liquidate the *kulaks* as a class!” The Civil War had begun again... It is estimated that in 1930 alone there were 13,754 peasant uprisings.<sup>195</sup>

“The result was what the great Marxist scholar Leszek Kolakowski has called ‘probably the most massive warlike operation ever conducted by a state against its own citizens.’ The number of peasants actually shot by the regime is not yet known and may not be discoverable even when, and if, scholars ever get at the Soviet archives. Churchill said that, in Moscow in August 1942, Stalin told him coolly that ‘ten millions’ of peasants had been ‘dealt with’.”<sup>196</sup>

Stalin decided, writes Kotkin, “to recruit urban workers to build socialism in the countryside... [This had been announced at the November 29 plenum. Trade union (“Time does not wait!”) were recruiting ‘politically literate’ workers who were to inject their superior ‘consciousness’ into the vast ‘spontaneity’ of

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<sup>194</sup> Hosking, *Russia and Russians*, London: Penguin, 2012, pp. 448-449.

<sup>195</sup> S.A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, p. 371. (V.M.)

<sup>196</sup> “Tell me,” asked Churchill. “Is the tension of the present war as severe for you personally as was the burden of the politics of collectivization?” “Oh no,” replied “the father of the peoples”. “The politics of collectivization was a terrible struggle.” “I thought so. After all, you had to deal then not with a handful of aristocrats and landowners, but with millions of small peasants.” “Tens of millions,” cried Stalin, raising his hands. “It was terrible. And it lasted for four years. But it was absolutely necessary for Russia to avoid famine and guarantee tractors for the countryside...” (Berezhkov, “Memoirs”, chapter 6, in *Voennaia Literatura*, [http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/berezhkov\\_vm/06.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/berezhkov_vm/06.html)) (V.M.)

the petit bourgeois countryside. Red Army men would be used sparingly – the OGPU was warning of ‘kulak’ moods even among poor peasant soldiers – but thousands of internal OGPU troops were deployed. ‘Those who are joining the collective farm sign up with me,’ one activist announced. ‘Those who do not want to join, sign up with police chief.’

“Of Stalin’s many instruments, however, none was greater than the enchanted vision of building a new world. The regime had planned to mobilize up to 25,000 urban workers: more than 70,000 were said to have volunteered, and around four-fifths were from industrial regions. The vast majority had between five and twelve years’ factory experience, but nearly half belonged to the 23-29 age cohort. Only one in fourteen were female. ‘Your role is the role of the proletarian leader,’ Kaganovich told a group of Moscow and Leningrad ‘25,000ers’ about to depart for villages. ‘There will be difficulties, there will be kulak resistance and sometimes even collective farmer resistance, but history is moving in our favor... Either we destroy the kulaks as a class, or the kulaks will grow as a class of capitalists and liquidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.’ Semyon Budyonny, the civil war cavalry hero, and Voroshilov had appeared at Moscow train stations to conduct send-offs to ‘the grain front’. One worker recruit was quoted as saying, ‘It has been necessary for a long time to carry out such a firm policy, the sooner to catch up to capitalist countries.’

“The 25,000ers descended on the countryside in late January/February 1930, in advance of the spring sowing drive. They discovered that the regime-instigated class was effecting both social solidarity – poor peasants hiding or aiding kulaks – and peasant eagerness to benefit from expropriating those better off. Peasant property seized in the name of the state without compensation, was supposed to be turned over to the new collectives after settlement of outstanding debts of the household in question, and its value counted toward the joining fees for poor peasant members. But activists (or onlookers) who evicted ‘kulaks’ could take their possessions. One OGPU report stated that members ‘of lower echelons of the party soviet apparatus deprived members of kulak and middle peasant households of their clothing and warm underwear (directly from their body), “confiscated” headwear from children’s heads, and removed shoes from people’s feet.’ A favored trick was the ‘auction’: one village party secretary managed to obtain a four-room house, valued at 700 rubles, for 25.

“The OGPU secretly reported that some of the volunteers tried to rape village women and lusted for power. {‘If I command you, you must do it, whether to jump into water or fire, otherwise a bullet in the forehead.’} Administrative chaos ensued in many places. Even conscientious 25,000ers were not well versed in management or agronomy, and most faced material hardships on site, or well-armed resistance. ‘Remember, you sons of bitches, we’ll get even with you,’ read notes delivered to 25,000ers in their names. Ambushed by peasants with axes and sawed-off shotguns spread fear, concretizing the Manichaen propaganda. But the orgy of confiscation occurred alongside rampant idealism. Some 25,000ers reported indignantly that

*kommuna* – not *artel* – collective farms had been imposed, others wrote earnest letters about ‘violations of socialist legality’ (to the very authorities who committed them) risking charges of playing into the ‘kulak’s hands’. Many of the 25,000ers had escaped villages not long before and imagined that they were helping to overcome darkness and bring modern life to the countryside.”<sup>197</sup>

“... The large-scale violence began at the end of 1929 and continued to the end of February, by which time the number of collectivized households had jumped to about 30 per cent. Disturbed by the scale of the resistance, Stalin suddenly reversed his policy in a *Pravda* article of 2 March 1930: ‘One cannot implant collective farms by violence – that would be stupid and reactionary.’ But half the collectives then voted to denationalize themselves in a few weeks, and by early summer he had resumed his ‘stupid and reactionary’ policy of force, this time carrying it through to the bitter end.

“According to one scholarly estimate, in addition to those peasants executed by the OGPU or killed in battle with it, between 10 and 11 million were transported to north European Russia, to Siberia and Central Asia; of these one-third went into concentration camps, a third into internal exile and a third were executed or died in transit...”<sup>198</sup>

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“Collectivization,” writes Orlando Figes, “destroyed a way of life that had developed over many centuries - a life based on the family farm, the ancient peasant commune, the independent village and its church and the rural market, all of which were seen by the Bolsheviks as obstacles to socialist industrialization. Millions of people were uprooted from their homes and dispersed across the Soviet Union: runaways from the collective farms; victims of the famine that resulted from the over-requisitioning of kolkhoz grain; orphaned children; ‘kulaks’ and their families. This nomadic population became the main labour force of Stalin’s industrial revolution, filling the cities and industrial building-sites, the labour camps and ‘special settlements’ of the Gulag (Main Camp Administration). The First Five Year Plan, which set this pattern of forced development, launched a new type of social revolution, a ‘revolution from above’, that consolidated the Stalinist regime: old ties and loyalties were broken down, morality dissolved, and new (‘Soviet’) values and identities were imposed, as the whole population was subordinated to the state and forced to depend on it for almost everything – housing, schooling, jobs and food – controlled by the planned economy.

“The eradication of the peasant family farm was the starting-point of this ‘revolution from above’. The Bolsheviks had a fundamental mistrust of the peasantry. In 1917, without influence in the countryside, they had been forced to tolerate the peasant revolution on the land, which they had exploited to

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<sup>197</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol.II, London: Penguin, 2018, pp. 36-38.

<sup>198</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 271.

undermine the old regime; but they had always made it clear that their long-term goal was to sweep away the peasant smallholding system, replacing it with large-scale mechanized collective farms in which the peasants would be transformed into a 'rural proletariat'. Marxist ideology had taught the Bolsheviks to regard the peasantry as a 'petty-bourgeois' relic of the old society that was ultimately incompatible with the development of a Communist society. It was too closely tied to the patriarchal customs and traditions of Old Russia, too imbued in the principles and habits of free trade and private property and too given over to the 'egotism' of the family ever to be fully socialized.

"The Bolsheviks believed that the peasants were a potential threat to the Revolution, as long as they controlled the main supply of food. As the Civil War had shown, the peasantry could bring the Soviet regime to the verge of collapse by keeping grain from the market. The grain crisis of 1927-8 renewed fears of a 'kulak strike' in Stalinist circles. In response, Stalin reinstated requisitioning of food supplies and engineered an atmosphere of 'civil war' against the 'kulak threat' to justify the policy. In January 1928, Stalin travelled to Siberia, a key grain-producing area, and urged the local activists to show no mercy to 'kulaks' suspected of withholding grain. His battle-cry was backed up by a series of Emergency Measures instructing local organs to use the Criminal Code to arrest any peasants and confiscate their property if they refused to give their grain to the requisitioning brigades (a wild interpretation of the Code that met with some resistance in the government). Hundreds of thousands of 'malicious kulaks'... were arrested and sent to labour camps, their property destroyed or confiscated, as the regime sought to break the 'kulak strike' and transform its overcrowded prisons into a network of labour camps (soon to become known as the Gulag).

"As the battle for grain intensified, Stalin and his supporters moved towards a policy of mass collectivization in order to strengthen the state's control of food production and remove the 'kulak threat' once and for all. 'We must devise a procedure whereby the collective farms will over their entire marketable production of grain to the state and co-operative organizations under the threat of withdrawal of state subsidies and credits', Stalin said in 1928. Stalin spoke with growing optimism about the potential of large-scale mechanized collective farms. Statistics showed that the few such farms already in existence had a much larger marketable surplus than the small agricultural surpluses produced by the vast majority of peasant family farms.

"This enthusiasm for collective farms was relatively new. Previously, the Party had not placed much emphasis on collectivization. Under the NEP, the organization of collective farms was encouraged by the state through financial and agronomic aid, yet in Party circles it was generally agreed that collectivization was to be a gradual and voluntary process. During the NEP the peasants showed no sign of coming round to the collective principle, and the growth of the kolkhoz sector was pretty insignificant. After 1927, when the state exerted greater pressure through taxation policies - giving credits to

collective farms and imposing heavy fees on 'kulak' farms – the kolkhoz sector grew more rapidly. But it was not the large *kommuny* (where all the land and property was pooled) but the smaller, more informal and 'peasant-like' associations called *TOZy* (where the land was farmed in common but the livestock and the tools were retained by the peasants as their private property) that attracted the most peasant interest. The Five Year Plan gave little indication that the Party was about to change its policies; it projected a moderate increase in the land sown by collective farms, and made no mention of departing from the voluntary principle.

"The sudden change in policy was forced through by Stalin in 1929. The *volte face* was a decisive blow against Bukharin, who was desperately trying to retain the market mechanism of the NEP within the structure of the Five Year Plan, which in its original version (adopted in the spring of 1929 but dated retroactively to 1928) had envisaged optimistic but reasonable targets of socialist industrialization. Stalin pushed for even higher rates of industrial growth and in the autumn of 1929, the target figures of the Five Year Plan had been raised dramatically. Investment was to triple; coal output was to double; and the production of pig-iron (which had been set to rise by 250 per cent in the original version of the Plan) was now set to quadruple by 1932. In a wave of frenzied optimism, which was widely shared by the Party rank and file, the Soviet press advanced the slogan 'The Five Year Plan in Four!' It was these utopian rates of growth that forced the Party to accept the Stalinist policy of mass collectivization as, it seemed, the only way to obtain a cheap and guaranteed supply of foodstuffs for the rapidly expanding industrial labour force (and for sale abroad to bring in capital).

"At the heart of these policies was the Party's war against the peasantry. The collectivization of agriculture was a direct assault on the peasantry's attachment to the village and the Church, to the individual family farm, to private trade and property, which all rooted Russia in the past. On 7 November 1929, Stalin wrote an article in *Pravda*, 'The Year of the Great Break', in which he heralded the Five-Year Plan as the start of the last great revolutionary struggle against 'capitalist elements' in the USSR, leading to the foundation of a Communist society built by socialist industry. What Stalin meant by the 'great break', as he explained to Gorky, was the 'total breaking up of the old society and the feverish building of the new'.

"From the summer of 1929, thousands of Party activists were sent into the countryside to agitate for the collective farms... Most of the peasants were afraid to give up a centuries-old way of life to make a leap of faith into the unknown. [This was reminiscent of their rejection of the revolutionary "going to the people" students of the 1870s.] There were precious few examples of good collective farms to persuade the peasantry. A German agricultural specialist working in Siberia in 1929 described the collective farms as 'candidates for death'. Very few had tractors or modern implements. They were badly run by people who knew little about agriculture and made 'crude mistakes', which 'discredited the whole process of collectivization'.

According to OGPU, the perception of the peasants was that they would 'lose everything' – their land and cows, their horses and their tools, their homes and family – if they entered a kolkhoz. As one old peasant said: 'Lecturer after lecturer is coming and telling us that we ought to forget possessions and have everything in common. Why then is the desire for it in our blood?'

"Unable to persuade the peasantry, the activists began to use coercive measures. From December 1929, when Stalin called for the 'liquidation of the kulaks as a class', the campaign to drive the peasants into the collective farms took on the form of a war. The Party and the Komsomol were fully armed and mobilized, reinforced by the local militia, special army and OGPU units, urban workers and student volunteers, and sent into the villages with strict instructions not to come back to the district centres without having organized a kolkhoz. 'It is better to overstep the mark than to fall short,' they were told by their instructors. 'Remember that we won't condemn you for an excess, but if you fall short – watch out!' One activist recalls a speech by the Bolshevik leader Mendel Khataevich, in which he told a meeting of eighty Party organizers in the Volga region: 'You must assume your duties with a feeling of the strictest Party responsibility, without whimpering, without any rotten liberalism. Throw your bourgeois humanitarianism out of the window and act like Bolsheviks worthy of comrade Stalin. Beat down the kulak agent wherever he raises his head. It's war – it's them or us. The last decayed remnant of capitalist farming must be wiped out at any cost.'

"During just the first two months of 1930, half the Soviet peasantry (about 60 million people in over 100,000 villages) was herded into the collective farms. The activists employed various tactics of intimidation at the village meetings where the decisive vote to join the kolkhoz took place. In one Siberian village, for example, the peasants were reluctant to accept the motion to join the collective farm. When the time came for the vote, the activists brought in armed soldiers and called on those opposed to the motion to speak out: no one dared to raise objections, so it was declared that the motion had been 'passed unanimously'. In another village, after the peasants had voted against joining the kolkhoz, the activists demanded to know which peasants were opposed to Soviet power, explaining that it was the command of the Soviet government that the peasants join the collective farms. When nobody was willing to state their opposition to the government, it was recorded by activists that the village had 'voted unanimously' for collectivization. In other villages only a small minority of the inhabitants (hand-picked by the activists) was allowed to attend the meeting, although the result of the vote was made binding on the population as a whole. In the village of Cheremukhova in the Komi region, for example, there were 437 households, but only 52 had representatives at the village assembly: 18 voted in favour of collectivization and 16 against, yet on this basis the entire village was enrolled in the kolkhoz.

"Peasants who spoke out against collectivization were beaten, tortured, threatened and harassed, until they agreed to join the collective farm. Many were expelled as 'kulaks' from their homes and driven out of the village. The



herding of the peasants into the collective farms was accompanied by a violent assault against the Church, the focal point of the old way of life in the village, which was regarded by the Bolsheviks as a source of potential opposition to collectivization. Thousands of priests were arrested and churches were looted and destroyed, forcing millions of believers to maintain their faith in the secrecy of their own homes."<sup>199</sup>

"In January 1930, a Politburo commission drew up a target of 60,000 'malicious kulaks' to be sent to labour camps and 150,000 other kulak households to be exiled to the north, Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan. The figures were part of an overall plan for 1 million 'kulak' households (about 6 million people) to be dispossessed and sent to labour camps or 'special settlements'. The fulfillment of the quotas was assigned to OGPU and Party organizations (which frequently exceeded them to demonstrate their vigilance). The rural Soviet, Komsomol and Party activists drew up lists of 'kulaks' for arrest in each village. In many the peasants chose the 'kulaks' from their own number (isolated farmers, widows and old people were particularly vulnerable). In some they drew lots to decide.

"It is difficult to give accurate statistics for the number repressed as 'kulaks'. At the height of the campaign the country roads were jammed with long convoys of deportees, each one carrying the last of their possessions or pulling them by cart. One eyewitness in the Sumy region of Ukraine saw lines stretching as far as the eye could see in both directions, with people from new villages continuously joining', as the column marched towards the collecting point on the railway. By 1932, there were 1.4 million 'kulaks' in the 'special settlements', mostly in the Urals and Siberia, and even larger numbers in labour camps attached to Gulag factories and construction sites, or simply living on the run. Stalin called this social holocaust the 'liquidation of the kulaks as a class'."<sup>200</sup>

Piers Brendon writes: "Stalin declared war on his own people - a class war to end class... Brigades of workers conscripted from the towns, backed by contingents of the Red Army, and the OGPU (which had replaced the Cheka), swept through the countryside 'like raging beasts'. They rounded up the best farmers and their families, banished them to the barren outskirts of their villages or drove them into the northern wastes. Often they shot the heads of households, cramming their dependents into 'death trains' - a prolonged process owing to a shortage of the blood-coloured cattle trucks known as 'red cows'. While they waited, women and children expired of cold, hunger and disease. Muscovites, at first shocked by glimpses of the terror being inflicted on the countryside, became inured to the sight of peasants being herded from one station to another at gunpoint. A witness wrote: 'Trainloads of deported peasants left for the icy North, the forests, the steppes, the deserts. There were whole populations, denuded of everything; the old folk starved to death in

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<sup>199</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers*, London: Allen Lane Press, 2007, pp. 81-86.

<sup>200</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 211-212.

mid-journey, new-born babies were buried on the banks of the roadside, and each wilderness had its crop of little crosses of boughs or white wood.' The survivors of these ghastly odysseys were concentrated in primitive camps which they often had to scratch with their bare hands from taiga or tundra. They were then sent to work at digging canals, lumbering and other projects, Stalin having recently been dazzled by the prospect of 'constructing socialism through the use of prison labour'.

"Whatever Stalin may have envisaged, the assault on the kulaks was less like a considered piece of social engineering than 'a nation-wide *pogrom*'. Often the urban cadres simply pillaged for private gain, eating the kulaks' food and drinking their vodka on the spot, donning their felt boots and clothes, right down to their woollen underwear. Moreover the spoliation was marked by caprice and chaos since it was virtually impossible to decide which peasants were kulaks. Peasants of all sorts (including women) resisted, fighting back with anything from sporadic terror to full-scale revolt. There were major uprisings in Moldavia, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Crimea, Azerbaijan, Soviet Central Asia and elsewhere. To quell them Stalin employed tanks and even military aircraft, unusual adjuncts to agrarian reform (though Lenin had also used poison gas). Some units refused to kill their countrymen and these he punished. Where troops did not mutiny their morale was shattered. 'I am an old Bolshevik,' sobbed one OGPU colonel to a foreign writer. 'I worked in the underground against the Tsar and then I fought in the civil war. Did I do all that in order that I should now surround villages with machine-guns and order my men to fire indiscriminately into crowds of peasants? Oh, no, no!'

"Some kulaks fled from the holocaust, seeking refuge in the towns or the woods and selling as many of their possessions as they could. Braving the machine-guns of the blue-capped border guards, others crossed into Poland, Romania, China or Alaska, taking portable property with them, occasionally even driving their flocks and herds. Some tried to bribe their persecutors. Some committed suicide. Some appealed for mercy, of all Communist commodities the one in shortest supply. Like the troops, some Party members were indeed horrified at the vicious acts which they were called upon to perform. One exclaimed, 'We are no longer people, we are animals.' Many were brutes, official gangsters who revelled in licensed thuggery... Still others were idealists of a different stamp, convinced that they were doing their 'revolutionary duty'. They had no time for what Trotsky had once called the 'papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life'. According to Marx's iron laws of history, they shed the blood of the kulaks to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without this sacrifice the Soviet Union could not modernise and socialism could not survive. As one apparatchik expressed it: 'When you are attacking there is no place for mercy; don't think of the kulak's hunger children; in the class struggle philanthropy is evil.' This view, incidentally, was often shared by Western fellow-travellers. Upton Sinclair and A.J.P. Taylor both argued that to preserve the Workers' State the kulaks 'had to be destroyed'.

“Whether facing expropriation and exile or collectivisation and servitude, masses of peasants retaliated by smashing their implements and killing their animals – live beasts would have to be handed over to the collectives whereas meat and hides could be respectively consumed and concealed. In the first two months of 1930 millions of cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and goats were slaughtered. Many others starved to death because grain was lacking or the collective farmers neglected them. A quarter of the nation’s livestock perished, a greater loss than that sustained during the Civil War and one not made up until the 1960s. It was ironic, therefore, that on 2 March 1930 Stalin should call a halt in an article in *Pravda* entitled ‘Dizzy with Success’. This declared that over-zealous local officials had made mistakes and that peasants should not be forced to join collectives. Under the spur of coercion no fewer than 15 million households (numbering over 70 million souls, or 60 per cent of all peasants) had already done so. But now, within a few weeks, nine million households withdrew from what they regarded as a new form of serfdom. Processions of peasants marched round villages with copies of Stalin’s article blazoned aloft on banners. As a foreign journalist recorded, Russia’s *muzhiks* had live under ‘lowering clouds of gloom, fear and evil foreboding... until the colour of them seemed to have entered their very souls’. Now, thanks to Stalin, the pall had lifted and the reign of terror had ended.

“It was a false dawn. Stalin was retreating the better to advance...

“... In the autumn of 1930 he resumed the policy of forcible collectivisation. Peasant anguish was fed by rumours that women would be socialised, that unproductive old people would be prematurely cremated and that children were to be sent to crèches in China. Such fears did not seem extravagant, for the authorities themselves were offering peasants apocalyptic inducements to join the collectives: ‘They promised golden mountains... They said that women would be freed from doing the washing, from milking and cleaning the animals, weeding the garden, etc. Electricity can do that, they said.’ Under the hammer and sickle all things would be made new.

“In 1930, Year XIII of the Communist era, a new calendar was introduced. It began the year on November 1 and established a five-day week: Sundays were abolished and rest days rotated so that work could be continuous. The anti-God crusade became more vicious and the church was portrayed as the ‘kulaks’ agitprop [agitation and propaganda agency]’. Priests were persecuted. Icons were burned and replaced with portraits of Stalin. The bells of basilicas were silenced, many being melted down for the metal. Monasteries were demolished or turned into prison camps. Abbeys and convents were smashed to pieces and factories rose on their ruins. Churches were destroyed, scores in Moscow itself. Chief among them was the gold-domed Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer, Russia’s largest place of worship and (according to the League of Militant Atheists) ‘the ideological fortress of the accused old world’, which was dynamited to make way for the Palace of Soviets on 5 December 1931. Stalin was unprepared for the explosion and asked tremulously, ‘Where’s the bombardment?’

“The new Russian orthodoxy was instilled through everything from schools in which pupils learned to chant thanks to Comrade Stalin for their happy childhood to libraries purged of ‘harmful literature’, from atheistic playing-cards to ideologically sound performances by circus clowns. An early signal that the Party was becoming the arbiter of all intellectual life was the suicide of Vladimir Mayakovsky: he was tormented by having turned himself into a poetry factory; he had stepped ‘on the throat of my own song’. (Even so he became a posthumous propagandist: as Pasternak wrote, ‘Mayakovsky began to be introduced forcibly, like potatoes under Catherine the Great. This was his second death. He had no hand in it.’) Of more concern to the average Soviet citizen was the socialist transformation of everyday life: the final elimination of small traders and private businessmen, the establishment of communal kitchens and lavatories, the direction of labour, the proliferation of informers (a marble monument was raised to Pavel Morozov, who supposedly denounced his father as a kulak), the purging of ‘wreckers’ and the attempt to impose ‘iron discipline’ at every level. Stalin called for an increase in the power of the State to assist in its withering away. Like Peter the Great, he would bend Russia to his will even if he had to decimate the inhabitants – as he had once presciently observed, ‘full conformity of views can be achieved only at a cemetery’.

“Destroying the nation’s best farmers, disrupting the agricultural system and extracting grain from a famished countryside in return for Western technology – all this had a fatal impact on the Soviet standard of living. By 1930 bread and other foodstuffs were rationed, as were staple goods such as soap. But even rations were hard to get: sugar, for example, had ‘ceased to exist as a commodity’. The cooperative shops were generally empty, though gathering dust on their shelves were items that no one wanted, among them French horns and hockey sticks. There were also ‘tantalisingly realistic and mouth-watering’ wooden cheeses, dummy hams, enamelled cakes and other fake promises of future abundance. On the black market bread cost 43 roubles a kilo, while the average collective farmer earned 3 roubles a day. Some Muscovite workers shortened the slogan ‘*pobeda*’ (victory) to ‘*obed*’ (food), or even to ‘*beda*’ (misfortune).’ ...”<sup>201</sup>

“All told, around 5 million people were ‘dekulakized’ – by the police, by their fellow peasants, or by choosing to flee, with an untold number perishing during deportation or not long after. Up to 30,000 heads of households were summarily executed. OGPU operatives improvised collectivization: villages, soon rechristened ‘special settlements’, which were intended to be self-sufficient, but despite a torrent of decrees, actual settlements with housing would be formed only belatedly. The dispossessed who survived the journeys in cold, dark cattle cars in the taiga had to make it through the first winter in tents or under the open sky. They helped build the Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Combine, the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant, and other Five-Year Pln showcases.

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<sup>201</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 202-206.

The self-dekulakized and peasants who were dispossessed but not internally deported sought livelihoods at the same construction sites, provoking accusations of 'infiltration'. The deputy OGPU plenipotentiary to Eastern Siberia reported mass flight from the special settlements, too, because of 'severe living conditions and the food situation', as well as 'epidemic diseases and high mortality among children.' People, he wrote, 'were completely covered in filth.'"<sup>202</sup>

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Stephen Kotkin has argued persuasively that the years of the Great War, the revolution and the civil war effected *two* revolutions, one in the cities and the other in the countryside. The revolution in the countryside had only been incited by the Bolsheviks: the real revolutionaries had been the peasants themselves, who had seized the land and were determined to hold on to it however hard the "city Bolsheviks" tried to deprive them of it. "These two revolutions were on a collision course. The entrenched peasant revolution could not hold back entrenchment of the Communist dictatorship, but, not less than the international environment, it acted as a severe constraint on Bolshevik ambitions. Accommodation to the peasant, in turn, proved extremely difficult to stomach for many party stalwarts. Indeed, over time, exactly as the militants feared, the forced accommodation of the New Economic Policy would begin to change the composition and political mood in the Communist Party, much to Stalin's alarm. His collision with Trotsky in the wake of Lenin's illness would turn out to be mere prelude. More profoundly, the stage was set for one of the truly manifold collisions in Russian and indeed world history – between Stalin's personal dictatorship and the entire Russian Eurasian peasantry.

"That Stalin would end up launching a violent reversal of the peasant revolution was literally fantastic. A perspicacious German scholar of Russian agriculture, Max Sering, had concluded in an analysis in 1921 that 'a regime in Russia under which the peasants would not independently own the land they cultivate is now *inconceivable*.' Sering erred in that the peasants did not, de jure, own the land, but they did assume that their usage rights were tantamount to ownership, and overturning that did seem inconceivable. Stalin, however, would prove Sering, as well as a mostly disbelieving Communist party, wrong. Collectivization and violent expropriation of better-off farmers (dekulakization) – Stalin's revolutionary shock of 1928-30 – would turn out to be significantly more ramified even than Lenin's shock coup of 1917. What stands out in Stalin's action is not just his desire to launch a socialist transformation of the countryside, which all Bolsheviks expected to see eventually, but the fact that when the gamble met mass resistance and caused unfathomable ruin, Stalin *saw it through to completion*. No one else in or near the Bolshevik leadership, Trotsky included, could have stayed the course on such a bloody social engineering escapade on such a scale. ..."203

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<sup>202</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 75.

<sup>203</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, pp. 420-421.

“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord”; and God’s vengeance on the peasants was manifest in Stalin’s collectivization. The peasants had seized landlords’ lands and property at the beginning of the revolution. And “Father Lenin”, who had “blessed” their crimes, was still respected by many of them... So now they would pay for their stubborn impenitence: they in turn would be robbed and killed *en masse*...

On November 9, 1932 Stalin’s wife Nadya shot herself. Molotov recalled: “I had never seen Stalin weeping before, but as he stood there by the coffin, tears ran down his cheeks. She loved Stalin very much – that is a fact... He went up to the coffin and said, ‘I did not take enough care of you.’”<sup>204</sup>

So God applied a hammer to the man of steel – and made a dent in his hardness. But it didn’t last long... From now on, the evil of Stalin revealed itself in all its mercilessness.

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<sup>204</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 111.

## 15. INDUSTRIALIZATION

With the peasantry destroyed, Stalin proceeded to industrialize the country at breakneck speed, herding millions of dispossessed peasants into the building of huge enterprises for which there existed as yet not even the most basic workers' living and working conditions.

At the same time, to accommodate other kulaks, it was necessary to expand the camp system. And so "from 1929", writes Anne Applebaum, "the camps took on a new significance. In that year, Stalin decided to use forced labour both to speed up the Soviet Union's industrialization and to excavate the natural resources in the Soviet Union's barely habitable far north. In that year, the Soviet secret police also began to take control of the Soviet penal system, slowly wresting all of the country's camps and prisons away from the judicial establishment. Helped by the mass arrests of 1937 and 1938, the camps entered a period of rapid expansion. By the end of the 1930s, they could be found in every one of the Soviet Union's twelve time zones..."<sup>205</sup>

One of the prisoners at the first Gulag camp of Solovki, writes Figes, "was Naftaly Frenkel, "a [Jewish] businessman from Palestine arrested for smuggling contraband to Soviet Russia. Shocked by the prison's inefficiency, Frenkel wrote a letter setting out his ideas on how to run the camp, and put it in the 'suggestions box' (they had them even in prisons). Somehow the letter got to Genrikh Yagoda, the fast rising OGPU boss. Frenkel was whisked off to Moscow, where he explained his Darwinian plans for the economic use of prison labour to Stalin. Prisoners, he said, should be organized by their physical abilities and given rations only if they met their work quota. The strong would survive and the weak would die, but that would improve efficiency and rations would not be wasted.

"Frenkel was released in 1927 and placed in charge of turning SLON into a profit-making enterprise. The prison's population expanded rapidly, from 10,000 in 1927 to 71,000 in 1931, as SLON won contracts to fell timber and build roads, and took over factories in Karelia...

"The first major Gulag project was the White Sea Canal (Belomorkanal), 227 kilometres of waterway between the Baltic and the White Sea, which employed 100,000 prisoners by 1932. It was a fantastically ambitious project, given that the planners intended to complete it without machines or even proper surveys of the land. Critics argued that the huge construction costs could not be justified given the little shipping on the White Sea. But Stalin was insistent that the canal could be built both cheaply and in record time - a symbol of the Party's will and power in the Five Year Plan - as long as OGPU supplied sufficient prison labour to dig it all by hand.

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<sup>205</sup> Applebaum, *The Gulag. A History*, London: Penguin, 2004, p. 4.

“Frenkel was in charge of construction. The methods he had used in Solovki were re-employed on the canal, as were many of the prisoners. To save time and money, the depth of the canal was reduced from twenty-two feet to just twelve, rendering it virtually useless for all but shallow barges and passenger vessels. Prisoners were given primitive hand tools – crudely fashioned axes, saws and hammers – instead of dynamite and machinery. Worked to exhaustion in the freezing cold, an estimated 25,000 prisoners died during the first winter of 1931-32 alone. Their frozen corpses were thrown into the ditch.

“In August 1933 the canal was opened by Stalin. A few weeks later it was toured by a ‘brigade’ of leading Soviet writers, who sang its praises in a volume commissioned by OGPU to celebrate its completion. Edited by Gorky, who had recently returned from exile to the Soviet Union, the book’s chief theme was the redemptive power of physical labour. It was a propaganda victory. Western socialists were taken in (Sidney and Beatrice Webb called the canal ‘a great engineering feat’ and a ‘triumph in human regeneration’). In the Soviet Union a new brand of cigarettes (Belomorkanal) was launched to mark this great breakthrough. Built on top of bones, the canal was a fitting symbol of the Stalinist regime, whose greatest propaganda successes were achieved with total disregard for the millions of lives they cost.”<sup>206</sup>

“Egalitarian ideals were scrapped,” writes Brendon, “to increase productivity. For example, skilled workers received extra incentives in the shape of higher pay, better food and improved accommodation – at the massive steel plant of Magnitogorsk in the Urals there was a whole hierarchy of canteens. But Stalin favoured the stick rather than the carrot and those infringing industrial discipline were harshly punished. Men were tied to their machines like helots. Those arriving late could be imprisoned. Dismissal might mean starvation – the loss of a work card resulted in the denial of a food card. Diligence was kept at fever pitch by the arrest and execution of large numbers of economic ‘wreckers’, plus well-publicised show trials of ‘spies’ and ‘saboteurs’. Morbidly suspicious, Stalin seems to have persuaded himself of their guilt; but even if they were innocent their punishment would encourage the others. His solution to the shortage of small coins, hoarded for their tiny silver content because the government had printed so much paper money to pay for its own incompetence, was to shoot ‘wreckers’ in the banking system, ‘including several dozen common cashiers’.

“In 1931 Stalin also tried to squeeze the last valuables, particularly gold, from Russian citizens in order to purchase more foreign equipment. Among the methods of torture used were the ‘conveyer’, whereby relays of interrogators deprived prisoners of sleep; the sweat- and ice-rooms, to which victims were confined in conditions of intolerable heat and cold; the tormenting of children in front of their parents. Alternatively the OGPU might just beat their prey to death with a felt boot full of bricks. These bestial practices were theoretically illegal but their employment was an open secret. When a

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<sup>206</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2014, pp. 221, 222-223.



defendant at one show trial protested over-indignantly that he had suffered no maltreatment in the Lubyanka it was too much even for a court which had solemnly swallowed stories of a conspiracy masterminded by the likes of President Poincaré and Lawrence of Arabia: everyone simply roared with laughter. The Lubyanka, the tall grey OGPU headquarters (formerly the office of the Rossiya Insurance Company) in Dzerzhinsky Square, was a place 'fraught with horror'. Appropriately it was embellished with a sculpture representing the Greek Fates cutting short the threads of human life. Stalin saw himself as the atavist of destiny, the embodiment of the will of history, the personification of progress...

"The achievements of Stalin's revolution were almost as staggering as the costs, even when propagandist fictions are discounted. Although its targets kept growing in the making, the first Five Year Plan was anything but 'Utopian'. Initiated in 1928, its purpose was to transform the Russian economy at unprecedented speed. As the British Ambassador reported, it was 'one of the most important and far reaching [experiments] that has ever been undertaken.' Between 1928 and 1932 investment in industry increased from two billion to nine billion roubles and the labour force doubled to six million workers. Productivity too nearly doubled and huge new enterprises were established - factories making machine tools, automobiles, chemicals, turbines, synthetic rubber and so on. The number of tractors produced rose from just over 3,000 to almost 50,000. Special emphasis was placed on armaments and factories were established out of the reach of invaders - by 1936 a plant at Sverdlovsk in the Urals was actually turning out submarines, which were transported in sections to the Pacific, the Baltic and the Black Sea. In just four years, by a mixture of heroic effort, 'economic patriotism' and implacable coercion, the foundations of Soviet industrial greatness were laid. Cities had grown by 44 per cent. Literacy was advancing dramatically. By the mid-1930s Russia was spending nearly twice as much as the United States on research and development; by the end of the decade its output was rivalling that of Germany.

"In this initial stage, of course, progress was patchy and the quality of manufactured goods was poor. There were many reasons for this, such as the unremitting pressure to increase quantity and the fact that (as Sukhanov had said) 'one only had to scratch a worker to find a peasant'. The novelist Ilya Ehrenburg described new factory hands as looking 'mistrustfully at the machines; when a lever would not work they grew angry and treated it like a baulking horse, often damaging the machine'. After visiting Russia David Low drew a cartoon of a dairymaid-turned-engineer absent-mindedly trying to milk a steam-hammer. Managers were little help. They were terrorised from above: an American specialist sharing a hotel bedroom with his mill boss was woken by 'the most ghastly sounds imaginable' as the man ground his teeth in his sleep, tormented by stark, primitive 'fears that none but his subconscious mind could know'. Managers in their turn were encouraged to behave like 'little Stalins': as the Moscow Party chief Lazar Kaganovich said, 'The earth should tremble when the director is entering the factory.'

“The atmosphere of intimidation was hardly conducive to enterprise even if management had been competent, which it generally was not. At the Gorky automobile plant, which had been designed by engineers from Detroit, several different types of vehicle were made simultaneously on one assembly line, thus making nonsense of Ford’s plan to standardise parts and performance. In the Urals asbestos ore was mined underground when it could have been dug from the surface by mechanical shovel far more safely and at a tenth of the cost. Everywhere so many older managers were purged that inexperienced young men had to be promoted – one found himself head of the State Institute of Metal Work Projects two days after he had graduated from Moscow’s Mining Academy. Vigour could compensate for callowness. Foreign experts, often Communists and others fleeing from unemployment in the West, were impressed by the frenetic enthusiasm and hysterical tempo with which their Russian colleagues tried to complete the Five Year plan in four years, a task expressed in Stalinist arithmetic as  $2+2=5$ . They were even more impressed by the suffering involved. In the words of an American technician who worked at Magnitogorsk: ‘I would wager that Russia’s battle of ferrous metallurgy alone involved more casualties than the battle of the Marne.’

“Magnitogorsk, situated on the mineral-rich boundary between Europe and Asia, was a monument to Stalin’s gigantomania. Built to American designs, it was to be a showpiece of ‘socialist construction’ and the largest steelworks in the world. It was also the most important project in the Five Year Plan. So between 1928 and 1932 250,000 people were drawn willy-nilly to the remote ‘magnetic heart’ of the new complex. There were horny-handed peasants from the Ukraine, sparsely-bearded nomads from Mongolia, sheepskin-clad Tartars who had never before seen a locomotive, an electric light, even a staircase. There were Jews, Finns, Georgians and Russians, some of them products of three-month crash-courses in engineering and disparaged by the American and German experts as ‘90-day wonders’. There were 50,000 prisoners under OGPU supervision, including scientists, kulaks, criminals, prostitutes and child slave-labourers swept up from the gutters of Moscow. There was even a brigade of long-haired, bushy-bearded bishops and priests wearing ragged black robes and mitre-like hats.

“To accommodate this labour force a rash of tents, earthen huts and wooden barracks sprang up on the rolling steppe. These grossly overcrowded refuges were verminous and insanitary, especially during the spring thaw when Magnitogorsk became a sea of mud and there were outbreaks of bubonic plague. Moreover they afforded scant protection against the scorching summers and freezing winters. The same was true of the rows of porous, box-like structures for the privileged, set up with such haste that for years the streets lacked names and the buildings lacked numbers. These were the first houses of the socialist city which was to rise out of chaos during the 1930s, a city which would boast 50 schools, 17 libraries and 8 theatres but not a single church. There was, however, a Communist cathedral – the steel plant itself. No place of worship was built with more fervour or more labour. Its construction

involved the excavation of 500 million cubic feet of earth, the pouring of 42 million cubic feet of reinforced concrete, the laying of 5 million cubic feet of fire bricks and the erection of 250,000 tons of structural steel.

“Ill-clad, half-starved and inadequately equipped, the workers were pitilessly sacrificed to the work. Driven by terror and zeal, they were also the victims of incompetence. They lacked the tools and the skill to weld metal on rickety scaffolding 100 feet high in temperatures of -50 Fahrenheit. Countless accidents occurred, many of which damaged the plant. Confusion was worse confounded by gross management failures. American experts were horrified to find that Party propagandists rather than engineers were determining priorities – tall, open-hearth stacks were erected earlier than they should have been because they ‘made a nice picture’. But despite every setback the stately blast furnaces rose from their concrete beds, to the tune of ‘incessant hammering, resembling machine-gun fire’. By 1 February 1932 the first pig-iron was produced. Although less than half built by 1937 (its target date for completion), Magnitogorsk was already one of the biggest metallurgical works on earth.

“To the faithful it was a huge crucible for the Promethean energies unleashed by Russia’s man of steel. Enterprises such as Magnitogorsk symbolised Stalin’s successful ‘break’ with the past (*perelom*) and Russia’s great leap forward. It was a leap in the dark. But the shape of future terrors could be discerned and even committed Communists feared that too much was being sacrificed to the industrial Moloch. In the final speech at his show trial Nikolai Bukharin likened ‘our huge, gigantically growing factories’ to ‘monstrous gluttons which consumed everything’. What they certainly consumed was vast quantities of grain, both directly to feed the workers and indirectly to exchange [export] for the sinews of technology. In the 2 years after 1928 government grain requisitions had doubled and only a good harvest in 1930 enabled Stalin to commandeer 22 million tons (over a quarter of the total yield) from a countryside devastated by collectivisation and ‘dekulakisation’. Yet in 1931 he took slightly more grain even though the harvest was poor. The result was massive rural famine. It was the largest organised famine in history until that of Mao Tse-tung in 1959-60...”<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Brendon, op. cit., 208-211.

## 16. THE UKRAINIAN FAMINE

Stalin grimly stuck to his genocidal policies well into the 1930s. (The Five-Year-Plan had been officially launched in October, 1928, but then the achievements appointed for five years' work were appointed to be done in four, necessitating still greater suffering.) But there were rebellions – and not only in the USSR. In the Soviet satellite of Mongolia “zealots of the Mongolian People’s Party, egged on by Comintern advisers, had launched a ‘class war’ against ‘feudalism’, confiscating estates, ransacking Buddhist lamaseries, killing nobles and lamas, and collectivizing herders. At least one third of the livestock – the country’s main wealth – was lost. Inflation soared, shortages proliferated. In spring 1932, revolts led by lamas overtook four provinces in the northwest, amid rumours that either the elderly Panchen Lama (from Tibetan exile) or the Japanese would arrive with troops to liberate Mongolia from Communist occupation. The uprisings took Stalin by surprise (“The latest telegrams reported successes: therefore such an unexpected and sharp deterioration is incomprehensible”). The Soviet dispatched consumer goods and ten fighter planes, which strafed the rebels: about 1,500 would be killed. Facing annihilation, rebels engaged in murder and cannibalism. On May 16, the Politburo condemned the Mongolian party for ‘blindly copying the policy of Soviet power in the USSR.’ Mongolian ruling officials were ordered to abandon collectivization of nomads, proclaim an ‘all-people’s government’, and publicly repudiate the noncapitalist path in Mongolia’s current conditions. The shift would be confirmed at a Mongolian People’s Party plenum and be dubbed the New Course. It was the full reversal Stalin would not countenance at home...”<sup>208</sup>

And especially in Ukraine, where the famine, or *golodomor*, has become the subject of intense debate in recent times... The question is: was the killing deliberate or not?

The historian Sergei Naumov writes: “One of the most horrific crimes of the God-hating communist regime was the artificially contrived famine in the Ukraine and the South of Russia in 1932-1933. As a result, in the Ukraine alone more than nine million people died within two years<sup>209</sup>, while as a whole in the USSR more than thirteen million died. The blow was deliberately directed against the age-old strongholds of Orthodox culture and tradition in the people for the defence of the Faith and the Church. This sin, the responsibility for this inhuman crime, lies like an ineradicable blot on all the heirs of communism without exception. In the Ukraine this campaign for the mass annihilation of the Orthodox peasantry was carried out from the centre by the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine under the leadership of Lazarus Moiseyevich Kaganovich.

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<sup>208</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 97.

<sup>209</sup> Estimates of the number of those killed in the artificially-created Ukrainian famine range from two million to ten million souls. Kotkin (*Stalin*, vol. II, p. 127) gives a figure of 3.5 million out of a population of 33 million (V.M.)

“Kaganovich personally headed the campaign for the forcible requisitioning of all reserves of bread from the Ukrainian peasantry, which elicited the artificial famine of the 1930s. Thus on December 29, 1932, on the initiative of Kaganovich, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine adopted a directive in which the collective farms were required to give up ‘*all the grain they have, including the so-called seed funds*’. It was ordered that all available funds be removed immediately, in the course of five to six days. Every delay was viewed as the sabotage of bread deliveries with all the consequences that ensued from that... (*Istoria SSSR*, №2/1989, p. 14). Or one more characteristic example, which helps us to understand much. At the January [1933] united Plenum of the Central Committee and the TsKK of the Communist Party one of its participants cried out during Kaganovich’s speech: ‘But you know, they have begun to eat people in our area!’ To which Kaganovich cynically replied: ‘If we give rein to our nerves, then they will be eating you and us... Will that be better?’ Nothing needs to be added to this cannibalistic revelation. Although, it must be said, already at the dawn of the Bolshevik dictatorship, ‘Trotsky, on receiving a delegation of church-parish councils from Moscow, in reply to Professor Kuznetsov’s declaration that the city was literally dying from hunger, declared: “This is not hunger. When Titus conquered Jerusalem, the Jewish mothers ate their own children. Then you can come and say: ‘We’re hungry.’”’ (“Tsinichnoe zaiavlenie”, *Donskie Vedomosti* (Novocherkassk), N 268/1919).

“One should point out that the famine artificially organized by the Bolsheviks in 1932-1933 was a logical step in the long chain of genocide of the Slavic Orthodox population of the country. Long before the year 1937 that is so bewailed by *Memorial*, G.E. Zinoviev (Ovsej-Hershen Aaronovich Radomyshelsky) defined the task directly: ‘We must keep ninety million out of the one hundred that populates Soviet Russia. We don’t need to talk to the rest – they must be annihilated’... The control figure of those marked for annihilation by Zinoviev was reached with interest already before the forcible collectivization of the countryside began. Collectivization and ‘dekulakization’, in the carrying out of which the People’s Commissar for Agriculture, Yakov Arkadyevich Yakovlev (Epstein) and the president of the collective farm centre, Gregory Nakhumovich Kaminsky particularly distinguished themselves, brought fresh millions of peasants to their deaths. To suppress the numerous peasant rebellions, on the orders of Over-Chekist Genrikh Girshevich Yagoda (Ieguda) ‘individually selected GPU soldiers accustomed to civil war, the guardians of present order,’ were thrown in. ‘Machine guns were wheeled out, cannons were stations, balloons of poison gas were unscrewed... And often there was nobody you could ask: what was in this village? There was no village. None of those who lived in it were alive: neither the women nor the children nor the old men. Nobody was spared by the shells and the gas...’ (Dmitrievsky S., *Stalin*, Berlin, 1931, p. 330).

“The famine of 1932-1933 was specially organized so as finally to crush the active and passive resistance of the Orthodox peasantry to collectivization. To break their resistance to their forcible regeneration from an Orthodox people

into a faceless mass, the so-called 'collective farmers' and *homo sovieticus*. That explains what at first sight appears to be the paradoxical fact that the boundaries of the famine coincided with the boundaries of the bread baskets of the country, which were always regions of agricultural abundance and strongholds of Orthodoxy. As the member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Mendel Markovich Khatayevich, said: 'There had to be a famine, in order to show them who is boss here. That cost millions of lives, but we won.'...<sup>210</sup>

"The Bolsheviks dekulakized about one million peasant household (5-6 million people), and in the ten pre-war years about four million people were subjected to exile from their native lands. In the period from 1930 to 1940 inclusively, on the way during the stages of 'kulak exile' and in distant places of special habitation - unfit for human life - no less than one million dekulakized peasants and members of their families perished from deprivation, frost, hunger, diseases, the cruelty of the guards and in flight.

"In reply to the authorities' collectivization and dekulakization the countryside replied with desperate resistance and sabotage of the building of collective farms. So as to break this resistance, Stalin and the members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the end of 1932 sanctioned the carrying out of total bread-collections. In Ukraine, in the Middle and Lower Volga, on the Don and in the Kuban, and in Western Siberia, the Soviet and party activists swept the bread out 'under a broom'. The nomadic animal-herders of Kazakhstan suffered cruelly.<sup>211</sup>

"As a result of the Stalinist policies, in the winter of 1933 in the above-mentioned regions of the USSR an artificial famine began: without wars, drought or elemental catastrophes, 25-30 million people were starving. Moreover, the Golodomor [as it was called] became de facto a state secret. On January 22, 1933 Stalin signed a directive forbidding the removal of the population from the regions struck down with famine. According to his declaration, the elemental peasant migration was organized by SRs and Polish agents in order to carry out anti-collective farm and anti-Soviet agitation. In total, no less than 6.5 million people starved to death in torments. Only in 2008 did the State Duma of the Russian Federation officially recognize the death of 'about 7 million people'.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Naumov, "Golodomor, 1932-33 godov", *Na Kazachem Postu*, N 4 2004, [http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print\\_page&pid=1496](http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1496).

<sup>211</sup> "Archival data show that the number of Kazakh households declined from 1,233,000 in 1929 to 565,000 household in 1936' as a result of the drastic collectivization imposed in the first three years of this period, during which four-fifths of the cattle belonging to the still largely nomadic Kazakhs were destroyed" (Lieven, *Nicholas II*, London: Pimlico, 1993, pp. 240-241). (V.M.)

<sup>212</sup> Kirill Alexandrov, "Stalin i sovremennaiia Rossia: vybor istoricheskikh otsenok ili vybor buduschego?" (Stalin and contemporary Russia: a choice of historical estimates or a choice of the future?), report read at the Russian Centre, San Francisco, February 3, 2017.

“The fertile Ukraine,” writes Brendon, “where Stalin was already persecuting anyone suspected of local nationalism, suffered worst. But other regions were also affected, notably Kazakhstan where about 40 per cent of the 4 million inhabitants died as a result of the attempt to turn them from nomadic herders into collective farmers. As early as December 1931 hordes of Ukrainian peasants were surging into towns and besieging railway stations with cries of ‘Bread, bread, bread!’ By the spring of 1932, when Stalin demanded nearly half of the Ukrainian harvest, the granary of Russia was in the grip of starvation. While peasants collapsed from hunger Communist shock brigades, supported by units of the OGPU in their brown tunics and red and blue caps, invaded their cabins and took their last ounces of food, including seed for the spring sowing. They used long steel rods to probe for buried grain, stationed armed guards in the fields and sent up spotter planes to prevent the pilfering of Soviet property. This was now an offence punishable by death or, to use the jargon of the time, ‘the highest measure of social defence’. The OGPU suspected anyone who was not starving of hoarding. It also attempted to stop peasants from migrating in search of food; but by the summer of 1932 three million were on the move. Some Communist cadres tried to avoid carrying out their task. One rebellious Party man reported that he could fulfil his meat quota, but only with human corpses. He fled, while others like him were driven to madness and suicide. But most activists were so frightened for their own skins that they endorsed Stalin’s ukase.

“So the Ukraine came to resemble ‘one vast Belsen’. A population of ‘walking corpses’ struggled to survive on a diet of roots, weeds, grass, bark and furry catkins. They devoured dogs, cats, snails, mice, ants, earthworms. They boiled up old skins and ground down dry bones. They even ate horse-manure for the whole grains of seed it contained. Cannibalism became so commonplace that the OGPU received a special directive on the subject from Moscow and local authorities issued hundreds of posters announcing that ‘EATING DEAD CHILDREN IS BARBARISM’.<sup>213</sup> Some peasants braved machine-guns in desperate assaults on grain stockpiles. Others robbed graves for gold to sell in Torgsin shops. Parents unable to feed their offspring sent them away from home to beg. Cities such as Kiev, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Poltava, Odessa and Belgorod were overrun by pathetic waifs with huge heads, stunted limbs and swollen bellies. Arthur Koestler said that they ‘looked like embryos out of alcohol bottles’. Periodically the OGPU rounded them up, sending some to brutal orphanages or juvenile labour colonies, training others to be informers or secret policemen. Still others became the victims of ‘mass shootings’.

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<sup>213</sup> “Over 2,000 people were punished for cannibalism in 1932-3” (Kershaw, op. cit., p. 165). “Parents were killing one child and feeding it to the others; some prepared soup stock and salted the remaining flesh in barrels to preserve it. The secret police reported on cannibal bands that targeted orphans: ‘The group cut up and consumed as food three children, including an eleven-year-old son and an orphan whose parents perished from starvation’ (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 122). (V.M.)

“Meanwhile adults, frantic to follow the slightest rumour of sustenance, continued to desert their villages. They staggered into towns and collapsed in the squares, at first objects of pity, later of indifference. Haunting the railway stations these ‘swollen human shadows, full of rubbish, alive with lice’, followed passengers with mute appeals and ‘hungry eyes’. A few managed to get out of the region despite the guards (who confiscated the food of Ukrainians returning to help), but for the most part these ‘miserable hulks of humanity dragged themselves along, begging for bread or searching for scraps in garbage heaps, frozen and filthy. Each morning wagons rolled along the streets picking up the remains of the dead.’ Some were picked up before they died and buried in pits so extensive that they resembled sand dunes and so shallow that bodies were dug up and devoured by wolves. In the summer of 1932 Stalin increased his squeeze on the villages, ordering blockades of those which did not supply their grain quotas and blaming kulak sabotage for the shortfall...

“The better to control his victims Stalin reintroduced the internal passport.<sup>214</sup> Communists had always denounced this as a prime instance of tsarist tyranny. Now it enabled them to hide the famine, or at any rate to render it less visible, by ensuring that most deaths occurred outside urban areas. This is not to suggest that Stalin was prepared to acknowledge the existence of the tragedy. When a courageous Ukrainian Communist gave details of what was happening Stalin replied that he had made up ‘a fable about famine, thinking to frighten us, but it won’t work’. It is clear, though, that Stalin was deliberately employing starvation as an instrument of policy. Early in 1933 he sent Pavel Postyshev to the Ukraine with orders to extract further deliveries from the barren countryside. Postyshev announced that the region had failed to provide the requisite grain because of the Party’s ‘leniency’. The consequence of his strictness was that, over the next few months, the famine reached its terrible climax. Entire families died in agony. Buildings decayed, schools closed, fields were choked with weeds, livestock perished and the countryside became a gigantic charnel-house. About a quarter of the rural population was wiped out and the mortality rate only began to decline in the summer of 1933, after it had become clear that no more grain could be procured and the State’s demands were relaxed...”<sup>215</sup>

Part of Stalin’s motivation for creating the famine was fear that Ukraine might rise in rebellion against the Soviet authorities as it had done in 1919. Stalin always felt particularly sensitive about that time and place, because it was the scene of his greatest personal failure, when as political commissar during the Civil War he prevented the southern army around Lvov from joining up with the northern army of Tukachevsky near Warsaw, leading to the great Polish victory on the Vistula in 1920.

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<sup>214</sup> Many True Orthodox Christians refused to take passports, and from this time the “passportless” movement begins. See Mervyn Matthews, *The Passport Society*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1993, chapter 3; E.A. Petrova, “Perestroika Vavilonskoj Bashni (The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babylon)”, Moscow, 1991, pp. 5-6 (samizdat MS). (V.M.)

<sup>215</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 211-213.



Anne Applebaum, wife of former Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, writes: "Russian unease about Ukraine goes back to the very beginning of the Soviet Union, in 1917, when the Ukrainians first tried to set up their own state. During the civil war that followed the revolutions in Moscow and Kiev, Ukrainian peasants – radical, left wing and anti-Bolshevik all at once – rejected the imposition of Soviet rule. They pushed out the Red Army and, for a time, had the upper hand. But in the anarchy that followed the Red Army's retreat, Polish armies as well as the Czarist White Army re-entered Ukraine. One White general, Anton Denikin, crossed into Russia and came within 200 miles of Moscow, nearly ending the revolution before it really got underway.

"The Bolsheviks recovered – but they were stunned. For years, they spoke obsessively of the 'cruel lesson of 1919.' A decade later, in 1932, Stalin had cause to remember that lesson. That year, the Soviet Union was once again in turmoil, following his disastrous decision to collectivize agriculture. As famine began spreading, he became alarmed by news that Ukrainian Communist Party members were refusing to help Moscow requisition grain from starving Ukrainian peasants. 'I do not want to accept this plan. I will not complete this grain requisition plan,' an informer reported one saying before he 'put his party card on the table and left the room.'

"Stalin sent a blistering letter to his colleagues: 'The chief thing now is Ukraine. Things in Ukraine are terrible. . . . If we don't make an effort now to improve the situation in Ukraine, we may lose' it.<sup>216</sup> He recalled the Ukrainian national movement, and the Polish and White Army interventions. It was time, he declared, to make Ukraine a 'real fortress of the USSR, into a genuinely exemplary republic.' To do so, harsher tactics were required: 'Lenin was right in saying that a person who does not have the courage to swim against the current when necessary cannot be a real Bolshevik leader.'

"Those harsher tactics included the blacklisting of many Ukrainian towns and villages, which were forbidden from receiving manufactured goods and food. They also prohibited Ukrainian peasants from leaving the republic and set up roadblocks between villages and cities, preventing internal migration. Teams of activists arrived in Ukrainian villages and confiscated everything edible, not just wheat but potatoes, beets, squash, beans, peas, farm animals and even pets. They searched barns and closets, smashed open walls and ovens, looking for food.

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<sup>216</sup> In August 1932 Stalin wrote to Kaganovich: "Keep in mind that the Ukrainian Communist party (500,000 members, ha-ha) contains quite a few (yes, many!) rotten elements, conscious and unconscious Petliurites [a reference to the civil war Ukrainian nationalists], even direct agents of [Polish president] Pilsudsi. If things get worse, these elements will not hesitate to open a front inside (and outside) the party against the party... Without these and similar measures (economic and political strengthening of Ukraine, in the first place in its *border districts* and so on), we may lose Ukraine." (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 102). (V.M.)

“The result was a humanitarian catastrophe: At least 5 million people perished of hunger between 1931 and 1934 across the Soviet Union. Among them were nearly 4 million of 31 million Ukrainians, and they died not because of neglect or crop failure but because their food had been taken. The overall death rate was 13 percent, but it was as high as 50 percent in some provinces. Those who survived did so by eating grass and insects, frogs and toads, shoe leather and leaves. Hunger drove people to madness: Previously law-abiding people committed theft and murder in order to eat. There were incidents of cannibalism, which the police noted, recorded and sent to the authorities in Moscow, who never responded. (In acknowledgment of its scale, the famine of 1932-33 is known in Ukraine as the Holodomor, a word derived from the Ukrainian for hunger, ‘holod,’ and for extermination, ‘mor’.)

“After the famine, Stalin launched a new wave of terror. Ukrainian writers, artists, historians, intellectuals – anyone with a link to the nationalist governments or armies of 1917-1919 – was arrested, sent to the Gulag or executed.

“His goal was no mystery: He wanted to crush the Ukrainian national movement and to ensure that Ukraine would never again rebel against the Soviet state. He spoke obsessively about loss of control because he knew that another Ukrainian uprising could thwart the Soviet project, not only by depriving the U.S.S.R. of grain but also by robbing it of legitimacy. Ukraine had been a Russian colony for centuries; the two cultures remained closely intertwined; the languages were closely related.

“If Ukraine rejected Soviet ideology and the Soviet system, Stalin feared that rejection could lead to the downfall of the whole Soviet Union. Ukrainian rebellion could inspire Georgians, Armenians or Tajiks. And if the Ukrainians could establish a more open, more tolerant state, or if they could orient themselves, as so many wanted, toward European culture and values, then why wouldn’t many Russians want the same?”<sup>217</sup>

Contrary to Naumov and Applebaum, Kotkin thinks that the Ukrainian famine was not deliberate so much as the result of ideology, incompetence, false information and self-delusion: “Many contemporaries, such as the Italian ambassador, who travelled through Ukraine in summer 1933, deemed the famine deliberate. Monstrously, Stalin himself made the same accusation – accusing peasants of not wanting to work. Regime propaganda castigated the starving refugees besieging towns for ‘passing themselves off as ruined collective farmers’. Nonetheless, the famine was not intentional. It resulted from Stalin’s policies of forced collectivization-dekulakization, as well as the pitiless and incompetent management of the sowing and procurement campaigns, all of which put the country on a knife-edge, highly susceptible to

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<sup>217</sup> Applebaum, “Why does Putin want to control Ukraine? Ask Stalin”, *The Washington Post*, October 20, 2017.

drought and sudden torrential rains. Stalin appears to have genuinely imagined that increasing the scale of farms, mechanization and collective efficiency would boost agricultural output. He dismissed the loss of better-off peasants from villages, only belatedly recognized the crucial role of incentives, and wildly overestimated the influx of machines. He twice deluded himself – partly from false reporting by frightened statisticians, partly from his own magical thinking – that the country was on the verge of a recovery harvest...<sup>218</sup>

But Kotkin appears to be unreasonable in thinking that “collectivization-dekulakization” – a policy of mass theft and murder – cannot be called “intentional” or “deliberate”. The policy of class warfare was a conscious, deliberate policy of mass murder. It cannot be excused as somehow involuntary or the result of ignorance or miscalculation, just as Hitler’s contemporary policy of exterminating the Jews cannot be considered involuntary or the result of ignorance and miscalculation. The murderous intent of both dictators must be recognized. The only major difference between them was that Hitler decided to murder *ethnic* enemies – Jews and Slavs – whereas Stalin decided to murder *class* enemies...

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“In the aftermath of the 1932-33 famine,” writes Applebaum, “a drastic information blackout was imposed. The deaths of millions were covered up and denied. It was illegal to mention the famine in public. Officials were told to alter the causes of death in public documents. In 1937, a Soviet census that revealed too many missing people in Ukraine and elsewhere was repressed; the heads of the census bureau were shot. Foreign journalists were pressured to conceal the famine, and with a few exceptions, most complied.”<sup>219</sup>

Perhaps it was not surprising the truth should have been concealed at home: “The Soviet agricultural press in November 1932 carried headlines of peasants dying from starvation in Poland (‘It is not a crisis: it is a catastrophe’), Czechoslovakia (‘dying villages’), China (‘hunger despite a good harvest’) and the United States (‘poverty and ruin’). Not a word about the famine in the Soviet Union...”<sup>220</sup>

More surprising was the silence in the free world... But, as Paul Johnson writes, “to the outside world, the magnitude of the Stalin tyranny – or indeed its very existence – was scarcely grasped at all. Most of those who travelled to Russia were either businessmen, anxious to trade and with no desire to probe or criticize what did not concern them, or intellectuals who came to admire and, still more, to believe. If the decline of Christianity created the modern political zealot – and his crimes – so the evaporation of religious faith among

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<sup>218</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 128.

<sup>219</sup> Applebaum, *op. cit.*

<sup>220</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 113.

the educated left a vacuum in the minds of Western intellectuals easily filled by secular superstition. There is no other explanation for the credulity with which scientists, accustomed to evaluating evidence, and writers, whose whole function was to study and criticize society, accepted the crudest Stalinist propaganda at its face value. They needed to believe, they wanted to be duped. Thus, Annabel Williams-Ellis wrote an introduction to a book about the building of the White Sea Canal, later so harrowingly described by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, which contains the sentence: 'This tale of accomplishment of a ticklish engineering job, in the middle of primaeval forests, by tens of thousands of enemies of the state, helped – or should it be guarded – by only thirty-seven officers, is one of the most exciting stories that has ever appeared in print.' Sidney and Beatrice Webb said of the same project: 'It is pleasant to think that the warmest appreciation was officially expressed at the success of the OGPU, not merely in performing a great engineering feat, but in achieving a triumph in human regeneration.' Harold Laski praised Soviet prisons for enabling convicts to lead 'a full and self-respecting life'; Anna Louise Strong recorded: 'The labour camps have won a high reputation throughout the Soviet Union as places where tens of thousands of men have been reclaimed.' 'So well-known and effective is the Soviet method of remaking human beings,' she added, 'that criminals occasionally now apply to be admitted.' Whereas in Britain, wrote George Bernard Shaw, a man enters prison a human being and emerges a criminal type, in Russia he entered 'as a criminal type and would come out an ordinary man but for the difficulty of inducing him to come out at all. As far as I could make out, they could stay as long as they liked.'"<sup>221</sup>

Perhaps the most egregious example of self-delusion was that of the Reverend Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean" of Canterbury. As Robert Service writes: "In a decade when Stalin was exterminating tens of thousands of Orthodox Church priests, this prominent English cleric declared: 'The communist puts the Christian to shame in the thoroughness of his quest for a harmonious society. Here he proves himself to be the heir of the Christian intention.' Johnson's visit to the Soviet Union in 1937 left him permanently transfixed by its achievements; and as Vice-President of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR he spoke up for the communist spirit of the times more fervently than for the Holy Spirit..."<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 275-276.

<sup>222</sup> Service, *Comrades*, London: Pan Books, 2007, p. 205.

## 17. STALIN'S WAR ON THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Stalin's collectivization campaign was so destructive, so self-defeating and so senseless by any normal political or economic calculation, that its motivation, according to Stephen Kotkin, could only have been ideological: "Collectivization would give the Communists control over the vast countryside, a coveted goal no regime in Russia had ever had. But still more fundamentally, collectivization, like state-run and state-owned industry, constituted a form of ostensible modernization that negated capitalism."<sup>223</sup> "Capitalism" here meant the kulaks, farming that was just one step less primitive than subsistence agriculture. So collectivization was dekulakization, a campaign of *class warfare* designed to extirpate a whole class in order to make way for the classless (or one-class) socialist society.

But there was another aspect of the campaign almost all historians ignore, that was also ideological, but of a deeper kind: the war against religion. Stalin's collectivization campaign recalled Lenin's campaign of War Communism in 1918-21. And, as in Lenin's time, it was, in the words of Alan Bullock, "as much an attack on [the peasants'] traditional *religion* as on their individual holdings".<sup>224</sup> For, as Vladimir Rusak writes, "Stalin could no longer 'leave the Church in the countryside'. In one interview he gave at that time he directly complained against 'the reactionary clergy' who were poisoning the souls of the masses. 'The only thing I can complain about is that the clergy were not liquidated root and branch,' he said. At the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of the party [in December 1927] he demanded that all weariness in the anti-religious struggle be overcome."<sup>225</sup>

The 15<sup>th</sup> Congress took place just after the tenth anniversary of the October revolution. This was during the peak of the modernist (and therefore westernizing) revolution in Soviet culture, when new styles in poetry, in drama, in painting, in music and in architecture were all the rage. The old was being swept away to make way for the new. This was especially the case in architecture, where the plans of the likes of Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier could be realized most naturally by the destruction of Orthodox churches such as the Chudov monastery and the cathedral of Christ the Saviour. As Catherine Merridale writes, "the pressure to 'cleanse' (that is, remove) religious buildings and imperial sites increased."<sup>226</sup>

But the pressure that Stalin brought to bear was on the cleansing of minds rather than cityscapes. And so, "on 8 April 1929," as W. Husband writes, "the VtsIK and Sovnarkom declaration 'On Religious Associations' largely superseded the 1918 separation of church and state and redefined freedom of conscience. Though reiterating central aspects of the 1918 separation decree,

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<sup>223</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 726.

<sup>224</sup> Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin*, p. 430.

<sup>225</sup> Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo Obvinenia*, Jordanville, NY.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988, part I, p. 176.

<sup>226</sup> Merridale, *Red Fortress* New York: Picador, 2013, p. 103.

the new law introduced important limitations. Religious associations of twenty or more adults were allowed, but only if registered and approved in advance by government authorities. They retained their previous right to the free use of buildings for worship but still could not exist as a judicial person. Most important, the new regulations rescinded the previously guaranteed [!] right to conduct religious propaganda, and it reaffirmed the ban on religious instructions in state educational institutions. In effect, proselytising and instruction outside the home were illegal except in officially sanctioned classes, and religious rights of assembly and property were now more circumscribed."<sup>227</sup>

"Henceforth," writes Nicholas Werth, "any activity 'going beyond the limits of the simple satisfaction of religious aspirations' fell under the law. Notably, section 10 of the much-feared Article 58 of the penal code stipulated that 'any use of the religious prejudices of the masses... for destabilizing the state' was punishable 'by anything from a minimum three-year sentence up to and including the death penalty'. On 26 August 1929 the government instituted the new five-day work-week – five days of work, and one day of rest – which made it impossible to observe Sunday as a day of rest. This measure deliberately introduced 'to facilitate the struggle to eliminate religion'.

"These decrees were no more than a prelude to a second, much larger phase of the antireligious campaign. In October 1929 the seizure of all church bells was ordered because 'the sound of bells disturbs the right to peace of the vast majority of atheists in the towns and the countryside'. Anyone closely associated with the church was treated like a kulak and forced to pay special taxes. The taxes paid by religious leaders increased tenfold from 1928 to 1930, and the leaders were stripped of their civil rights, which meant that they lost their ration cards and their right to medical care. Many were arrested, exiled, or deported. According to the incomplete records, more than 13,000 priests were 'dekulakised' in 1930. In many villages and towns, collectivisation began symbolically with the closure of the church, and dekulakization began with the removal of the local religious leaders. Significantly, nearly 14 percent of riots and peasant uprisings in 1930 were sparked by the closure of a church or the removal of its bells. The antireligious campaign reached its height in the winter of 1929-30; by 1 March 1930, 6,715 churches had been closed or destroyed. In the aftermath of Stalin's famous article 'Dizzy with Success' on 2 March 1930, a resolution from the Central Committee cynically condemned 'inadmissible deviations in the struggle against religious prejudices, particularly the administrative closure of churches without the consent of the local inhabitants'. This formal condemnation had no effect on the fate of the people deported on religious grounds.

"Over the next few years these great offensives against the church were replaced by daily administrative harassment of priests and religious organizations. Freely interpreting the sixty-eight articles of the government

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<sup>227</sup> Husband, *"Godless Communists"*, Northern University of Illinois Press, 2000, p. 66.

decree of 8 April 1929, and going considerably beyond their mandate when it came to the closure of churches, local authorities continued their guerrilla war with a series of justifications: 'unsanitary condition or extreme age' of the buildings in question, 'unpaid insurance', and non-payment of taxes or other of the innumerable contributions imposed on the members of religious communities. Stripped of their civil rights and their right to teach, and without the possibility of taking up other paid employment – a status that left them arbitrarily classified as 'parasitic elements living on unearned wages' – a number of priests had no option but to become peripatetic and to lead a secret life on the edges of society."<sup>228</sup>

It was the True Orthodox Church that took the brunt of this offensive. For opposition to the betrayal of the Church by Metropolitan Sergei went hand in hand with opposition to collectivization. The collectivization of agriculture and persecution of its opponents coincided with a general attack on religion<sup>229</sup> spearheaded by Yaroslavsky's League of Militant Godless, who numbered 17 million by 1933. As Naumov points out, in Ukraine "the boundaries of the famine coincided with the boundaries of the bread baskets of the country, which were always regions of agricultural abundance and *strongholds of Orthodoxy*."<sup>230</sup>

Thus in 1929, the Bolsheviks began to imprison the True Orthodox on the basis of membership of a "church monarchist organization" called "True Orthodoxy". The numbers of True Orthodox Christians arrested between 1929 and 1933 exceeded by seven times the numbers of clergy repressed from 1924 to 1928.<sup>231</sup> The main case against the True Orthodox was called the case of "The All-Union Counter-Revolutionary Church Monarchist Organization, 'the True Orthodox Church'". In 1929 5000 clergy were repressed, three times more than in 1928; in 1930 – 13,000; in 1931-32 – 19,000.<sup>232</sup> On February 18, 1932, in a single night, almost the whole monastic population of Petrograd, the national centre of True Orthodoxy was arrested and imprisoned - with the full knowledge and acquiescence of Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky).

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<sup>228</sup> Werth, "A State against its People", in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172-173.

<sup>229</sup> The Protestants and Jews had welcomed the revolution and thus escaped the earlier persecutions, but were now subjected to the same torments as the Orthodox (D. Pospelovsky, "Podvig very", pp. 233-34).

<sup>230</sup> Naumov, op. cit.

<sup>231</sup> I.I. Osipova, "Istoria Istinno Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po Materialam Sledstvennago Dela" (The History of the True Orthodox Church according to Materials from the Interrogation Process), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 2.

<sup>232</sup> I.I. Osipova, *O Premiloserdij... Budi s nami neotstupno... Vospominania veruiuschikh Istinno-Pravoslavnoj (Katakombnoj) Tserkvi. Konets 1920-kh – nachalo 1970-kh godov* (O Most Merciful One... Remain with us without fail. Reminiscences of believers of the True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Church. End of the 1920s – beginning of the 1970s), Moscow, 2008.

A distinction must be made between the rebellions against collectivization by True Orthodox Christians, and the rebellions by non-Christian peasants. Thus in Ivanovo ten thousand demonstrators "ransacked the party and police buildings ('Toss the Communists... out of the window'). Stalin dispatched Kaganovich, who mobilized local party agitators to speak with workers and himself heard out their grievances. [However,] Ivanovo's striking workers did not reject socialism, only its building at their expense, and mostly blamed local officials for their plight."<sup>233</sup> But the war of the True Orthodox against collectivization was much more principled, being motivated by a root-and-branch rejection of Soviet power. It was especially fierce in the Central Black Earth region, where resistance to collectivization and resistance to Soviet power and the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate crystallized into a single powerful movement under the leadership of Bishop Alexis (Buy) of Voronezh.<sup>234</sup> Meetings of the "Buyevtsy", as Bishop Alexis' followers were called, took place in the Alexeyev monastery in Voronezh. During one of these, in December, 1929, Archimandrite Tikhon said that collectivization was a way of removing the peasants from their churches, which were then closed. And Igumen Joseph (Yatsk) said: "Now the times of the Antichrist have arrived, so everything that Soviet power tried to impose upon the peasantry: collective farms, cooperatives, etc., should be rejected." At the beginning of 1930 the Voronezh peasantry rebelled against forcible collectivization in several places. Thus in Ostrog district alone between January 4 and February 5 there were demonstrations in twenty villages: Nizhny Ikorets, Peskovatka, Kopanishche, Podserednoye, Platava, Kazatskoye, Uryv, Dyevitsa, Godlayevka, Troitskoye, Drakonovo, Mashkino, Badyeyevo, Selyavnoye and others. At the same time there were demonstrations in the neighbouring areas of Usman district, from where they moved to the Kozlov, Yelets, Belgorod and other districts, encompassing more than forty districts in all. The OGPU considered that these demonstrations took place under the influence of the "Buyevtsy". On January 21-22, in Nizhny Ikorets, some hundreds of peasants, mainly women, destroyed the village soviet, tore down the red flag, tore up the portraits of the "leaders" and walked down the streets with a black flag, shouting: "Down with the collective farms! Down with the antichrist communists!" An active participant in this event was Nun Macrina (Maslovskaya), who said at her interrogation: "I preached Christ everywhere... [I urged] the citizens to struggle with the apostates from God, who are emissaries of the Antichrist, and [I urged] the peasants not to go into the collective farms because by going into the collectives they were giving their souls to the Antichrist, who would appear soon..."

In February-March, 1930, the OGPU investigated 492 people in connection with these disturbances. The anti-Soviet organization called "The Flock" which they uncovered was supposedly made up of 22 leaders and 470 followers,

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<sup>233</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol II, p. 95.

<sup>234</sup> M.V. Shkarovsky, "Iz Novyeishej Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 15 (1540), August 15/28, 1995, pp. 6-10; *Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 232, 233.



including 4 officers, 8 noblemen, 33 traders, 8 policemen, 13 members of the "Union of the Russian people", 81 priests, 75 monastics, 210 kulaks, 24 middle peasants, and 2 beggars. 134 people were arrested, of whom some were freed, some had their cases referred to higher authorities and some died during the investigation because of the violent methods used to extort confessions. There were several more trials of "Buyevites" in the 1930s, and Voronezh remains a citadel of the True Orthodox Church to this day...<sup>235</sup>

This persecution began to arouse criticism in the West – specifically, from Pope Pius XI and the Archbishop of Canterbury. On February 14, 1930 the Politburo decided "to entrust to Comrades Yaroslavsky, Stalin and Molotov the decision of the question of an interview" to counter-act these criticisms. The result was two interviews, the first to Soviet correspondents on February 15 and published on February 16 in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* in the name of Sergei and those members of his Synod who were still in freedom, and a second to foreign correspondents three days later. In the first interview, which is now thought to have been composed entirely by the Bolsheviks with the active participation of Stalin, but whose authenticity was never denied by Sergei<sup>236</sup>, it was asserted that "in the Soviet Union there was not and is not now any religious persecution", that "churches are closed not on the orders of the authorities, but at the wish of the population, and in many cases even at the request of the believers", that "the priests themselves are to blame, because they do not use the opportunities presented to them by the freedom to preach" and that "the Church herself does not want to have any theological-educational institutions".

Sergei's lying interview caused great grief in Russia. Hieroconfessor Schema-Bishop Peter Ladygin (+1957) writes in his *Autobiography* that in June, 1930 he was in exile in a remote village: "The village soviet had five bishops and 450 priests and deacons living in exile in flats. We all came together to pray in one church. At this time they published in a Russian newspaper Metropolitan Sergius' declaration to the effect that Orthodoxy was triumphing in our country, that no one was exiled or arrested for church activity, and that those who had been exiled were enemies of Soviet power. When we read this newspaper, there was great weeping in the church. Everyone wept, and when we began to sing 'O fervent protectress', the whole church was sobbing..."

Commenting on the interview, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, who was shot in 1937, wrote: "Such is the opinion of the false-head of the false-patriarchal church of Metropolitan Sergei... But who is going to recognize this head after

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<sup>235</sup> Vladimir Moss, *A Century of Russian Martyrdom*, vol. 2, pp. 124-125, <https://www.lulu.com/en/gb/shop/vladimir-moss/a-century-of-russian-martyrdom-volume-2/paperback/product-j8zdg.html?page=1&pageSize=4>

<sup>236</sup> Igor Kurlyandsky, "Nash Otvet Rimskomu Pape: kak tt. Stalin, Yaroslavsky i Molotov v 1930 godu pisali 'interview' Mitropolita Sergia i ego Sinoda" (Our Reply to the Pope of Rome: how Comrades Stalin, Yaroslavsky and Molotov wrote the 'interview' of Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod in 1930), *Politicheskij Zhurnal* (The Political Journal), 183-184, N 21, April, 2008; <http://www.politjournal.ru/index.php?action=Articles&dirid=50&tek=8111&issue=218>

all this? For whom does this lying head remain a head, in spite of his betrayal of Christ?... All the followers of the lying Metropolitan Sergei... have fallen away from the Church of Christ. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is somewhere else, not near Metropolitan Sergei and not near his 'Synod'."<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Zelenogorsky, M. *Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' Arkhiepiskopa Andreia (Kniazia Ukhtomskogo)* (The Life and Activity of Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhtomsky)), Moscow, 1991, p. 216. According to Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov), who never joined the Catacomb Church, the whole activity of Metropolitan Sergei was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Bolsheviks (*Za Khrista Postradaushie* (Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1997, p. 220).

## 18. STALIN AND THE VATICAN

There was one way in which Stalin, without meaning to, did a certain service to Orthodoxy – in hindering closer relations with the Vatican...

On the eve of the Russian revolution, Pope Pius X declared: “Russia is the greatest enemy of the [Roman] Church”. In spite of this age-old enmity, the Vatican at first appeared to condemn the revolution, and support the Orthodox. Thus on March 12, 1919 Pope Benedict XV protested to Lenin against the persecutions of the Orthodox clergy, while Archbishop Ropp sent Patriarch Tikhon a letter of sympathy. The Bolshevik Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin noted with dissatisfaction this “solidarity with the servers of the Orthodox Church”.<sup>238</sup>

However, such sympathy was not typical. Fr. Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty writes: “The Roman Catholic world greeted the Bolshevik Revolution with joy. ‘After the Jews the Catholics did probably more than anyone else to organize the overthrow of tsarist power. At least they did nothing to stop it.’ Shamelessly and with great candour they wrote in Rome as soon as the Bolshevik ‘victory’ became evident: ‘there has been uncontainable pleasure over the fall of the tsarist government and Rome has not wasted any time in entering into negotiations with the Soviet government.’ When a leading Vatican dignitary was asked why the Vatican was against France during World War I, he exclaimed: ‘The victory of the Entente allied with Russia would have been as great a catastrophe for the Roman Catholic Church as the Reformation was.’ Pope Pius conveyed this feeling in his typically abrupt manner: ‘If Russia is victorious, then the schism is victorious.’...

“Even though the Vatican had long prepared for it, the collapse of the Orthodox Russian Empire caught it unawares. It very quickly came to its senses. The collapse of Russia did not yet mean that Russia could turn Roman Catholic. For this, a new plan of attack was needed. Realizing that it would be as difficult for a Pole to proselytise in Russia as for an Englishman in Ireland, the Vatican understood the necessity of finding a totally different method of battle with Orthodoxy, which would painlessly and without raising the slightest suspicion, ensnare and subordinate the Russian people to the Roman Pope. This Machiavellian scheme was the appearance of the so-called ‘Eastern Rite’, which its defenders understood as ‘the bridge by which Rome will enter Russia’, to quote an apt expression of K.N. Nikolaiev.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Peter Sokolov, “Put’ Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v Rossii-SSSR (1917-1961)” (The Path of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia-USSR (1917-1961)), in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ v SSSR: Sbornik* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR: A Collection), Munich, 1962, p. 16.

<sup>239</sup> Nicholas Boyeikov writes: “In his epistle of 25 June, 1925, the locum tenens of the All-Russian Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, who suffered torture in Soviet exile, expressed himself on the ‘Eastern Rite’ as follows: ‘the Orthodox Christian Church has many enemies. Now they have increased their activity against Orthodoxy. The Catholics, by introducing the rites of our divine services, are seducing the believing people – especially those among the western churches which have been Orthodox since antiquity – into accepting the

“This treacherous plot, which can be likened to a ship sailing under a false flag, had very rapid success in the first years after the establishment of Soviet power. This too place in blood-drenched Russia and abroad, where feverish activity was begun amongst the hapless émigrés, such as finding them work, putting their immigration status in order, and opening Russian-language schools for them and their children.

“It cannot be denied that there were cases of unmercenary help, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, this charitable work had a thinly disguised confessional goal, to lure by various means the unfortunate refugees into what seemed at first glance to be true Orthodox churches, but which at the same time commemorated the pope...”<sup>240</sup>

In 1922 Hieromartyr Benjamin of Petrograd said to the exarch of the Russian Catholics, Leonid Fyodorov: “You offer us unification... and all the while your Latin priests, behind our backs, are sowing ruin amongst our flock.” For the Latins, following the “prophecy” of Fatima in 1917, welcomed the revolution as providing a wonderful, God-sent opportunity to convert Russia to the “Holy Father”. As the Benedictine monk Chrysostom Bayer put it in *Bayrischer Kurier*: “Bolshevism is creating the possibility of the conversion of stagnant Russia to Catholicism.” So powerful was this desire to convert Russia that even when Fyodorov was put on trial by the Bolsheviks in March 1923 along with fourteen other clergymen and one layman, “he pathetically testified to the sincerity of his feelings in relation to the Soviet authorities, who, Fyodorov thought later, did not fully understand what could be expected from Roman Catholicism. He explained: ‘From the time that I gave myself to the Roman Catholic Church, my cherished dream has been to reconcile my homeland with this church, which for me is the only true one. But we were not understood by the government. All Latin Catholics heaved a sigh of relief when the October Revolution took place. I myself greeted with enthusiasm the decree on the separation of Church and State... Only under Soviet rule, when Church and State are separated, could we breathe freely. As a religious believer, I saw in this liberation the hand of God.’”<sup>241</sup>

“The Catholics,” continues Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “were ready to close their eyes to all the atrocities of Bolshevism, including the shooting of the Roman Catholic Bishop Butkevich in April of 1923 and the imprisonment of Bishops Tseplyak, Malyetsky and Fyodorov. Six weeks later, the Vatican expressed its sorrow over the assassination of the Soviet agent Vorovsky in Lausanne! The People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs told the German Ambassador, ‘Pius XI was amiable to me in Genoa, expressing the hope that we [the Bolsheviks]

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unia, and by this means they are distracting the forces of the Orthodox Church from the more urgent struggle against unbelief.” (*Tserkovnie Vedomosti* (Church Gazette), 1925, NN 21-22); Boyeikov, *Tserkov', Rus' i Rim* (The Church, Russia and Rome), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, p. 13). (V.M.)

<sup>240</sup> Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “The Vatican and Russia”, <http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/new.htm>.

<sup>241</sup> Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, op. cit.

would break the monopoly of the Orthodox Church in Russia, thus clearing a path for him.'

"We have discovered information of the greatest importance in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A secret telegram N 266 of February 6, 1925 from Berlin, stated that the Soviet ambassador, Krestinsky, told Cardinal Pacelli (the future Pius XII) that Moscow would not oppose the existence of Roman Catholic bishops and a metropolitan on Russian territory. Furthermore, the Roman clergy were offered the very best conditions. Six days later, secret telegram № 284 spoke of permission being granted for the opening of a Roman Catholic seminary. Thus, while our holy New Martyrs were being annihilated with incredible cruelty, the Vatican was conducting secret negotiations with Moscow. In short, Rome attempted to gain permission to appoint the necessary bishops and even permission to open a seminary. Our evidence shows that this question was discussed once more in high circles in the autumn of 1926."<sup>242</sup>

But this did not stop the persecution of Catholics. Thus, as John Cornwell, writes, "by 1925 most of the bishops of the Latin rite in Soviet Russia had been thrown out, imprisoned, or executed. [In spite of that,] that year, Pius XI sent a French Jesuit, Michel d'Herbigny, on a secret mission to Russia to ordain as bishop half a dozen clandestine priests.<sup>243</sup> On his way to Moscow, d'Herbigny stayed in Berlin with Pacelli [then papal nuncio to Germany], who advised him and secretly ordained him bishop. Herbigny's mission was successful insofar as he managed to ordain his six secret Russian bishops, but they were all discovered and eliminated.

"In 1929, the year Pacelli was appointed Cardinal Secretary of State, Pius XI founded a Vatican 'Commission for Russia'. Later that year he opened on Vatican territory the 'Pontifical Russian College', better known as the Russicum, and the 'Pontifical Ruthenian College' where students were to be trained for service in the Soviet Union.<sup>244</sup> Other institutions were also secretly enlisted to educate men for the Russian mission...

"Meanwhile, many hundreds of bishops, clergy, and laity were rounded up and transported to... Solovki... By 1930 there were no more than three hundred

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<sup>242</sup> Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, op. cit.

<sup>243</sup> The Pope's continued optimism, according to Mark Aarons and John Loftus, was based on his confidence "that Communism was corrupt and transitory. The inevitable collapse of Soviet rule in Russia would give the Vatican the longed for opportunity to bring the Orthodox schismatics back into Rome's fold. Therefore, 'quiet but thorough preparations [were] continually being made in Rome' for eventual missionary work in the East" (Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: the Vatican, the Nazis and the Swiss Banks*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998, p. 5). (V.M.)

<sup>244</sup> Hieromonk Constantine (Simon) writes: "The Jesuits who founded the Russicum at the end of the 1920's wanted very much to convert all of Russia to (Roman) Catholicism. Monsignor d'Herbigny, who was really the founder of the Russicum behind the scenes, had the view that the Communists would probably completely destroy the Orthodox Church in Russia, and then the (Roman) Catholics would simply move in and convert the people." (V.M.)

Catholic priests in Soviet Russia (compared with 923 in 1921), of whom a hundred were in prison.”<sup>245</sup>

However, the decisive factor in convincing the Vatican to turn against the Bolsheviks was an “unexpected and indirect result” of the declaration of Metropolitan Sergei. For “Moscow put an end to the negotiations and the attention it was devoting to Vatican offers... The restitution of the traditional [in appearance] Russian Orthodox Church, neutralized as it were, seemed more useful to the Soviet authorities than the Vatican. From then on, the Soviets lost interest in the Vatican. Only at the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1930 did the Vatican finally admit that it had suffered a political defeat and began vociferously to condemn the Bolshevik crimes. It had somehow not noticed them until 1930. Only in 1937 did Pope Pius XI release the encyclical *Divini Redemptori* (Divine Redeemer), which denounced communism...”<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Cornwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 263, 112-113.

<sup>246</sup> Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, *op. cit.*

## 19. MUSSOLINI AND THE VATICAN

Both Communism and Fascism were hostile to the dominant, but moribund, religion of contemporary Europe - Christianity. But they came to power in countries imbued with the old religion in the course of many centuries. Therefore, in order to spread their own message more quickly and effectively, they tried to clothe the wolf of the new religion in the sheep's clothing of the old. Exploiting the religious sentiments of their subject populations, the Nazis, the Fascists and even, to a degree, the Communists united their essentially secular doctrines with traditional religion. Thus Michael Burleigh argues that "the totalitarian movements [had] a more or less conscious mimetic relationship to the Churches, not least the Bolsheviks in Russia..."<sup>247</sup>

This is most clearly seen in Fascist Italy. Pope Pius XI was one of the most desotic of popes, fully in the tradition of Popes Gregory VII, Innocent III and Pius IX. As he said: "If a totalitarian regime exists – totalitarian in fact and by right – it is the regime of the Church."<sup>248</sup> It is sometimes forgotten that there were not two, but three great totalitarian dictators who reached the pinnacle of their power in this period. The third, after Hitler and Stalin, was the Papacy, whose totalitarian nature, in spite of the loss of its earthly dominions in 1870, was clearly demonstrated on March 12, 1939, when Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli was enthroned as Pope Pius XII in a ceremony of extraordinary pomp and circumstance. "Receive this Tiara," intoned the cardinal deacon, "adorned with three crowns, that thou mayest know that thou art the father of princes and of kings, the ruler of the world, the Vicar on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whom be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen."<sup>249</sup>

Being a totalitarian dictator himself, with pretensions to be "the ruler of the world", it might have been expected that the Pope would never have been able to come to an agreement with the totalitarian atheist Mussolini. But the inter-war years were an era of unexpected alliances. And there were common traits and common interests that made an alliance between Mussolini and Pius XI both possible and rational.

"The Duce's approach to the Vatican," as Brendon notes, "was based on Realpolitik. The Catholic Church was not only a universal organisation, it was the most powerful force in Italian society – over 2 percent of the 44 million population were in holy orders. Claiming a divine commission, the papacy was also a link with a glorious temporal past. It was, as Hobbes had said, the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned upon its grave. To have the support of this venerable institution would be of inestimable benefit to the new order. It would make Fascism respectable. It would augment Italy's standing in the

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<sup>247</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>248</sup> Pius XI, in Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>249</sup> John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. 214.

world. It would garb the nation in the seamless robe of totalitarianism. Mussolini would become Caesar.”<sup>250</sup>

The papacy also stood to gain from the Concordat, which was eventually thrashed out and signed in the Lateran pacts of February, 1929. It gave the Pope a sovereign state in the Vatican, a large indemnity and recognition of Catholicism as the state religion. Moreover, as the philosopher Benedetto Croce noted, the Pope “had discovered in Mussolini a pillar of the hierarchic principle in the state, a divine instrument called upon to impose the dogmatic doctrine of absolute sovereignty on a people led astray by the nefarious liberal revolution”.<sup>251</sup>

But which hierarchy was the higher, and which absolute sovereign was the more absolute? That was the question. Of course, if the papacy were truly a Church, and not a State in clerical guise, this would not have been such a problem; the establishment of some form of “symphony” would have been possible in principle, albeit difficult in view of the totalitarian tendencies of both parties. But the Catholic Church had ceased to be a true Church already in the eleventh century; and although its temporal power had been severely reduced in 1870, it still had temporal pretensions. Stalin’s ironic question: “How many divisions has the Pope?” belied the fact that he had considerable temporal power in other forms, especially financial. Clearly Mussolini wanted to reduce that power to a minimum. He disbanded Catholic Action and incautiously said to parliament in 1931: “We have not revived the temporal power of the Popes. We have left them with as much territory as would suffice for them to bury its corpse.”<sup>252</sup> The Pope predictably took offence at this remark. He furiously “suggested that Mussolini had signed the Concordat in the hope of dominating the Church and not from any love of religion. He proposed that Catholics swearing loyalty oaths to the Duce should make a mental reservation that these took second place to the laws of God. Finally, he damned the regime’s efforts to convert the young to ‘Statolatry’ – ‘a real pagan worship of the state’.” Nevertheless, *Realpolitik* dictated that the offence should be forgiven. So Mussolini and the Pope met in 1932 and were reconciled. The Pope said that he saw nothing contrary to Catholicism in Fascist ideology and that “Fascist totalitarianism” should cooperate with “Catholic totalitarianism”...<sup>253</sup>

The two parties needed each other; and there were indeed close similarities between them. In fact, as Brendon writes, they were “legion. Both were autocracies [i.e. despotisms] ranged against freemasonry, Communism and democracy. Both relied on ceremonial and censorship, dogma and propaganda. Both opposed birth control and other modern fashions. Both exalted their own martyrs and favoured the subordination of women. Like the

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<sup>250</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>251</sup> Croce, in Brendon, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>252</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>253</sup> Brendon, op, cit., pp. 125-126.



Pope, the Duce claimed infallibility. Many wearing black shirts and black soutances believed that a *rapprochement* between the two faiths might be as advantageous as the alliance familiar elsewhere between throne and altar. The Fascist State would receive a pontifical blessing in return for lending the Church its secular arm. The Pope would re-enter the life of the nation and reinvigorate its spirit. But though both sides felt the attraction of the alliance, both knew that the claims of God and the claims of Caesar were proverbially hard to reconcile. Now that the champions of Church and State were competing tyrants the difficulties were compounded. Thus the stage was set, against a background of acute Depression, for a clash of characters as well as creeds..."<sup>254</sup>

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However, the concordat undoubtedly worked more in favour of Mussolini than of the Church. This was clearly seen by the German Chancellor Brüning, a devout Catholic and a leader of the German Catholic Centre Party, who tried in vain to stop the Vatican from entering into a similar Concordat with the Nazis. "Reflecting on the crisis between the Vatican and Mussolini's government," writes John Cornwell, "Brüning told Pacelli [the future Pope Pius XII] that 'it was obvious to all that the Fascist leadership laughed at the feebleness of the Vatican's denunciations in the face of constant infringements of the Lateran Treaty'. He said that he 'saw great dangers for the Church in too close identification between the Vatican and Italian Fascism in the long term'."<sup>255</sup>

He was right. For, as Emilio Gentile wrote, "Fascism is a religion, a new lay religion which sanctifies the State and which Mussolini tried to insinuate into millions of Italians. The same could be said about National Socialism..."

"Fascism and Nazism confessed a conception of man and life that was contrary to Christian doctrine and ethics. The complicating factor was that this did not prevent their leaders from doing homage to Christianity and to the civilization that came from it, to the extent of signing the concordats with the Holy See on February 11, 1929 for Italy and July 20, 1933 for Germany."<sup>256</sup>

"In Italy a sort of fascist catechism inspired by that of the Catholic Church no longer looked on the saints as witnesses of their faith, but celebrated them as Italians, links in the great line begun by the Roman wolverine and continuing up to Mussolini, and in which one never speaks of the Church but of the 'religion of the fathers'. All this ends up by forging a 'new man'. With some success: 'In Italy,' points out Sturzo in 1938, 'fascism is progressively taking possession of the souls of the young, is increasing its political power in

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<sup>254</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

<sup>255</sup> Cornwell, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>256</sup> Gentile, in Frédéric Valloire and Isabelle Schmitz, "Les totalitarismes contre Dieu", *Histoire*, N 8, June-July, 2013, pp. 17-18.

all domains at the expense of the spiritual and religious power, is taking over minds and enslaving wills: it is helping a slow asphyxiation, a gradual and continuous poisoning.' He concluded that no politics of compromise could ever 'efface the incompatibility between Christianity and the totalitarian State'."<sup>257</sup>

For, as Mussolini himself put it in his *Doctrine of Fascism* (1932), "the Fascist conception of the State is all embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value". And since, in Fascist Italy, the State *was* Mussolini, the Fascists worshipped Mussolini. "He is like a god," said one Fascist. "Like a god? No, no," said another, "He *is* a god."<sup>258</sup> So the Pope had a real rival for the adoration of the masses, an anti-pope in military uniform...

Michael Burleigh writes: "Intelligent opponents of Fascism, such as the journalist Giovanni Amendola, recognised that Fascism differed in intensity and ambition from traditional political movements: 'Fascism wants to own the private conscience of every citizen, it wants the "conversion" of Italians... Fascism has pretensions to being a religion... the overweening intransigence of a religious crusade. It does not promise happiness to those who convert; it allows no escape to those who refuse baptism.' The Fascists gloried in the alleged intolerance of the medieval preaching orders, notably the Dominican friars, turning public fanaticism into a Fascist virtue. Notoriously, in 1926 Roberto Davanzati proudly announced: 'When our opponents tell us we are totalitarian, Dominicans, implacable, tyrannical, we don't recoil from these epithets in fright. Accept them with honour and pride... Don't reject any of it! Yes indeed, we are totalitarians! We want to be from morning to evening, without distracting thoughts.' The Church's destruction of unrepentant heretics became the model for Fascist treatment of political dissidence: 'Fascism is a closed political party, not politically but religiously. It can accept only those who believe in the truth of its faith... As the Church has its own religious dogmas, so Fascism has its own dogmas of national faith.'

"Alfredo Rocco made the totalitarian analogy between the Church and Fascism explicit: 'One of the basic innovations of the Fascist State is that in some respects, like another centuries-old institution, the Catholic Church, it too has, parallel to the normal organization of its public powers, another organization with an infinity of institutions whose purpose is to bring the State nearer to the masses, to penetrate them, organize them, to look after their economic and spiritual well-being at a more intimate level, to be the channel and interpreter of their needs and aspirations.' From here it was a relatively short step to lauding the more sanguinary episodes in the history of the Catholic Church as they have settled in vulgar memory. Fascism had learned 'from those great and imperishable pillars of the Church, its great saints, its pontiffs, bishops and missionaries: political and warrior spirits who wielded both sword and cross, and used without distinction the stake and

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<sup>257</sup> Gentile, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>258</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 280.

excommunication, torture and poison – not of course in pursuit of temporal or personal power, but on behalf of the Church’s power and glory.

“... The Fascist youth organisation would be modelled after the Society of Jesus, with the operating credo ‘Believe, Obey, Fight’, while Fascism’s protean and pretentious doctrine would be modernised into a simple catechism for schoolchildren.

“Official statements of Fascist doctrine were routinely characterised by a pretentiously woolly religiosity, whose opacity (in any language) faithfully reflected the philosophical tone of the times. In 1932 Mussolini himself claimed that ‘Fascism is a religious conception in which man in his immanent relationship with a superior law and with an objective Will that transcends the particular individual and raises him to conscious membership of a spiritual society.’ He was careful, however, to eschew the vaulting ambitions of either the Jacobins or Bolsheviks: ‘The Fascist State does not create a “God” of its own, as Robespierre once, at the height of the Convention’s foolishness, wished to do; nor does it vainly seek, like Bolshevism, to expel religion from the minds of men; Fascism respects the God of the ascetics, of the saints, of the heroes, and also God as seen and prayed to be the simple and primitive heart of the people.’”<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

## 20. HITLER AND THE VATICAN

The German Chancellor in 1930 was the leader of the Catholic Centre Party, Heinrich Brüning, a “scholarly Catholic with the soul of a monk and a soldier”, whom President Hindenburg, the former commander-in-chief of the German Army in the Great War, had “appointed Chancellor with the admonition that in forming his cabinet he should take no account of party allegiances”.<sup>260</sup>

“Brüning,” writes Golo Mann, “was the very curious case – anywhere, but particularly in Weimar Germany – of a politician who represented no class, group or material interests. He was patriotism, scholarship, self-control and selfless virtue incarnate. Of course, pure virtue does not exist in man, certainly not in political man, and the psychologist whom we do not wish to emulate will speculate on the sympathies, sorrows and longings hidden behind the irreproachable façade of the new Chancellor. What soon became apparent was his weakness for anything military, anything Prussian: matters fundamentally alien to him (for what connection was there between the Westphalian middle class and ‘Prussia’?); particularly for the old man in the presidential palace [Hindenburg]. Above all he wished to ‘serve’ Hindenburg, to derive his authority from the President’s confidence; just as Bismarck’s position had depended on the confidence of William I. The difference, however, was that the year was no longer 1862 and that the return to a king-and-chancellor relationship, long since refuted by history as a basis of authority, could not be a genuine repetition. Hindenburg was a substitute monarch, his authority was based on deep-rooted, supra-personal tradition. The king, as long as people believed in kingship, had no need to pretend to be more than he was. With Hindenburg it was necessary to persuade people that he was something which the poor old man could never be. Although the new king-and-chancellor loyalty lasted two years instead of a quarter of a century there was something curious in this subconscious attempt in a crisis to return to an antiquated form of German constitutional life...”<sup>261</sup>

Brüning, writes Ian Kershaw, “pinned his entire political strategy to the removal of reparations by demonstrating that Germany, wracked by the ever-deepening Depression, was unable to pay. The deepening of social misery at home was, in his eyes, the necessary price to pay in order to rid Germany of the reparations burden. By June 1931 his goal had come within reach when the US President, Herbert Hoover, in the face of French opposition, pushed through a one-year moratorium on German reparations payments. By the end of the year a committee established under the terms of the Young Plan to determine Germany’s ability to pay concluded that it would not be able to do so once the moratorium had expired. The committee proposed the cancellation of German reparations payments, and also of inter-Allied war debts. At a conference in Lausanne the following summer, the proposal was adopted. Germany agreed to pay a small final instalment (which, in fact, was never

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<sup>260</sup> Golo Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 388.

<sup>261</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.

actually handed over). With that, reparations, since 1919 a political more than an outrightly economic millstone around Germany's neck, were written off. Brüning was, however, no longer in a position to reap any credit. He had lost the confidence of Reich President Hindenburg, who had dismissed him as Chancellor just before the Lausanne conference. Brüning had served Hindenburg's purpose, and was now surplus to requirements.

"With the end of reparation, revisionists could start to muse more realistically about removing the shackles of Versailles, the army about rebuilding strength, and anti-democratic elites about firmer authoritarian rule. Hindenburg started to show his true colours. Government in Germany moved further to the Right under the Chancellorships, in quick succession, of Franz von Papen (June-November 1932) and General Kurt von Schleicher (December 1932 - January 1933). But, lacking mass support, neither was able come close to solving the rapidly worsening crisis not just of the economy but of the German state. Their problem was that any solution needed Hitler..."<sup>262</sup>

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But Hitler also had problems to solve. One was that while he was assured of the backing of the Right - and the enmity of the Left, - the balance of power lay with the two Catholic parties of the Centre, who had about 15% of the vote. But how to win their support? Hitler decided to imitate Mussolini by establishing a Concordat with the Pope. However, there was a problem: Brüning, the leader of the Catholic Centre Party, had warned the Pope that it was impossible to make honourable deals with Hitler...

Fortunately for Hitler, both Pope Pius XI and his Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli were in favour of a Pact with him, for two main reasons. First, the main enemy of the Church was now seen to be Bolshevism, so it was deemed expedient to support Hitler's militant anti-communism. Pacelli felt particularly strongly about the communists ever since he had personally faced them down in Munich in 1919. He saw a "red triangle" of communist persecution of the Church stretching from Russia to Spain to Mexico.

Secondly, in 1917, under Pacelli's supervision, the Church had passed a new, highly centralized code of canon law, and the Vatican - and Pacelli in particular - now wanted this applied in Germany, which meant bringing the German bishops to heel and all local ecclesiastical initiatives in Germany to an end. But securing such centralized control over the Catholic Church in Germany required the agreement of the government (not to speak of the German clergy and laity) through the delineation of separate ecclesiastical and political spheres.

The deal that Pacelli envisaged would have meant the German State allowing the Vatican complete control over Church appointments and Church

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<sup>262</sup> Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 209.

education and youth movements in Germany, while conceding strict non-interference of the Church in all political matters. But where did politics end and private or ecclesiastical spheres begin in a totalitarian state? The answer was: *nowhere*, because totalitarianism of its nature demanded *total* control of all spheres of life. This fact was being demonstrated most forcibly in the contemporary Soviet Union, where Metropolitan Sergei had surrendered control of the Orthodox Church to the State. Moreover, the Catholics should have known this better than anyone insofar as the Catholic Church since at least the late eleventh century had been herself a totalitarian organism allowing no clear boundary between Church and State. At that time Pope Gregory VII had claimed the right to depose all monarchs who contradicted his almighty, godlike (but not godly) will, and it was precisely in Germany under Emperor Henry IV and his "Holy Roman" successors that the struggle to resist this totalitarian vision (in the so-called "Investiture Conflict") had been played out.

Of course, times had changed since the eleventh century, and the Vatican was too realistic to attempt to impose its will on German leaders *now*, in the twentieth century. But Pacelli did think that one could have two parallel totalitarianisms – one in the Church and the other in the State. In other words, the papacy wanted a Catholic version of the Byzantine "symphony of powers" ... However, "symphony" was not what Hitler had in mind...

The tragedy for the German Church was that until 1933 it had waged a noble struggle against Nazism, openly condemning its incompatibility with Christianity and forbidding Catholics to join the party. So had the Catholic Centre Party, whose approximately 18% of the vote was vital in preventing Hitler from coming to power through the passing of an Enabling Act that would suspend parliamentary democracy.

But in 1932 Brüning fell from power, dismissed by his master Hindenburg. In fact, Hindenburg "had no authority to dismiss the Chancellor... But Brüning, who saw himself as serving Hindenburg and depending on the will and mercy of this substitute monarch, was so surprised and deeply hurt by the old man's lack of loyalty that it never occurred to him to think a return to the parliamentary system. He was 'dismissed' because he felt himself to be dismissed; the ex-lieutenant felt that he could not remain in command if the Field-Marshal did not wish him to remain. He retired immediately and refused with bitter pride any office or favour from the new rulers."<sup>263</sup>

Together with the Communists, there were still enough relatively healthy forces in the centre and right of German politics to prevent Hitler's accession to power. But the country as a whole had descended into a state of soporific passivity. And the chancellor, Papen, foolishly thought he could use Hitler, and contain him even if he became chancellor. And this is what he suggested to

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<sup>263</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

Hindenburg. Hindenburg, in spite of his well-known contempt for “the Bavaian corporal”, agreed...

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But it was not over yet. The Catholic Centre Party still held the balance of power, and in the end it was that party's monarch, the Pope, who let Hitler in. For in March, 1933, on the eve of the crucial vote, the Centre Party *dissolved itself*, enabling Hitler to win the two-thirds majority he needed. This extraordinary act was made possible through the Centre Party's new leader, Ludwig Kaas, who, being a bishop as well as a politician, connived with Pacelli to negotiate between Hitler above the heads of the Party.

A party that calls itself “Roman Catholic” but has no support from the Pope in Rome is vulnerable to pressure from without and schisms from within, and the Centre Party soon folded. Hitler came to power in March, the concordat was signed in July, and immediately, as was to be expected, the public opposition of the German Catholics to Nazism ceased. For the Vatican's signing of the concordat implied a recognition of the Nazis as a legitimate power, which was very useful to Hitler. Even when persecution of Catholics began, protests from the Vatican were muted; for the Nazis argued that the people they killed or imprisoned had been “dabbling in politics” – and politics, according to the concordat, was exclusively the government's domain.

Only in 1937 did the Pope issue his *Mit brennender Sorge* in criticism of the Nazis. But that was followed, only five days later, by a still stronger condemnation of the communists in *Divini redemptoris* – communism was still seen as the greater evil.

Which it was... But by making a pact with the smaller devil in order to fight against the bigger one the Vatican had suffered a serious dent in its spiritual authority. In fact, the Papacy should be considered an appeaser of Nazism in the 1930s no less than the governments of France and Great Britain...

In Germany as in Italy, there were striking similarities between the totalitarians of Church and State. Thus Olga Chetverikova writes: “Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Schellenberg and others were powerfully influenced by the Jesuits in particular. V. Schellenberg, the head of the SS's security service, pointed out in his memoirs: ‘Himmler had the best and most extensive library of books on the Jesuit order. For years he studied this extensive literature by night. Therefore he constructed the organization of the SS on the principles of the Jesuit order. In that he relied on the constitution of the order and the works of Ignatius Loyola: the highest law was absolute obedience and the unquestioning fulfilment of every command. Himmler himself as Reichsführer of the SS was general of the order. The structure of his leadership resembled the hierarchical system of the Catholic Church.’ It was no accident that Hitler used to say of Himmler: ‘I see in him our Ignatius Loyola’. As for Franz von Papen, who called himself a zealous Catholic and was a knight of the Maltese

order, it is to him that belong the words: 'The Third Reich is the first state in the world that incarnates the principles of the papacy'..."<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Chetverikova, *Izmena v Vatikane, ili Zagovor pap protiv khristianstva* (Betrayal in the Vatican, or The Plot of the Popes against Christianity), Moscow: Algoritm, 2011, p. 17.



## *II. HITLER VERSUS EUROPE (1933-1939)*

## 21. HITLER COMES TO POWER

As economic conditions worsened in Germany, “the middle-class parties demanded an increase in the unemployment insurance contribution – to meet the rapidly rising costs of unemployment insurance.”<sup>265</sup> As a result, the SPD-led government collapsed in March, 1930. Then, in the following three years, writes Norman Davies, “the Nazis took part for the first time in a rash of five parliamentary elections. On three successive occasions they increased both their popular vote and their list of elected deputies. On the fourth occasion, in November 1932, their support declined; and they never won an outright majority. But in a very short time they had established themselves as the largest single party in the Reichstag. What is more, the rising tide of street violence, to which Nazi gangs greatly contributed, took place in a much-changed international setting. In the early 1920s, Communist-led strikes and demonstrations were overshadowed by the apparently limitless power of the *Entente*. German industrialists and German democrats knew exactly whom to call in if the Communists ever tried to take over. But in the early 1930s Britain, France and the USA were in no better fettle than Germany; and the Soviet Union was seen to be modernizing with remarkable energy. With the communists claiming almost as many votes as the Nazis, Germany’s conservative leaders had much-reduced means to keep the red menace at bay.

“In September 1930, in the interests of democracy, one minority Chancellor persuaded President Hindenburg to activate Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution. Henceforth, the German president could ‘use armed force to restore order and safety’ and suspend ‘the fundamental rights of the citizen’. It was an instrument which others could exploit to overthrow democracy.

“The sequence of events was crucial. The storm raged for three years: deepening recession, growing cohorts of unemployed [43.7 per cent at one point in 1932], communists fighting anti-communists on the streets, indecisive elections, and endless Cabinet crises. In June 1932 another minority Chancellor, Franz von Papen, gained the support of the Reichstag by working with the Nazi deputies. Six months later, he cooked up another combination: he decided to make Hitler Chancellor, with himself as Vice-Chancellor, and to put three Nazi ministers out of twelve into the Cabinet. President Hindenburg, and the German right in general, thought it a clever idea: they thought they were using Hitler against the Communists. In fact, when Hitler accepted the invitation, suitably dressed in top hat and tails, it was Hitler who was using them.”<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Tampakke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, pp.223-224.

<sup>266</sup> Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 967. As Stephan Malinowski writes, “The elites thought they could ride Hitler like a horse. But they soon discovered that they were the horse and that Hitler was the horseman.” (*BBC History Magazine*, October, 2019, p. 26). Again, Piers Brendon writes: “Evidently, Hindenburg capitulated. Papen, like so many others, was confident that he could civilise Hitler, whose barbaric utterances seemed a mark of his political gaucherie. Hindenburg was tired of responsibility and perhaps moved by Nazi threats to reveal details of tax evasion on his Neudeck estate. So Hitler came to power thanks to the

Hitler became chancellor on January 30, 1933. He now formed a cabinet of twelve men, only three of whom were Nazis. But these three – Hitler himself, Goering (Prussian Minister of the Interior) and Frick (Minister of the Interior) – were the vital ones for his seizure of power.

“30 January 1933, therefore, was a point of no return, for Germany and indeed for the world. As Goebbels remarked, ‘If we have the power we’ll never give it up again unless we’re carried out of our offices as corpses.’ The moment he set foot in the Chancellery Hitler acted with the same speed as Lenin in October 1917. He immediately moved 25,000 men into the ministerial quarter in Berlin. That night a massed torchlight parade of his men took place, marching through the Brandenburg Gate and in front of the Chancellery for nearly six hours, while Hitler’s own police ‘specials’ kept a vast, cheerful crowd in order. At one of the illuminated windows, the excited figure of Hitler could be seen. At another was the impassive shape of Hindenburg the Wooden Titan, pounding his cane in time to the military beat of the band.

“The crowd was cheerful because politics were unpopular with most Germans and Hitler had promised to end them and substitute a one-party state. The great theme of his speeches throughout the previous year was that ‘politicians had ruined the Reich’. Now he would use politics to wage war on politicians, his election was an election to end elections, his party a party to end parties: ‘I tell all those sorry politicians, “Germany will become one single party of a great, heroic nation.’ What he was proposing was a revolution for stability, a revolt against chaos, a legal *putsch* for unity. As such he was in a powerful German tradition. Wagner had presented politics as an immoral, un-German activity. Thomas Mann had denounced ‘the terrorism of politics’. Hitler offered what the Marxist writer Walter Benjamin called ‘the aestheticization of politics’, the art without the substance. In 1919 the Surrealists had called for a ‘government of artists’. Now they had one. Of the Nazi bosses, Hitler was not the only ‘Bohemian’, as Hindenburg put it. Funk wrote music, Baldar von Schirach and Hans Frank poetry, Goebbels novels; Rosenberg was an architect, Dietrich Eckart a painter. Hitler gave the Germans the unifying side of public life: spectacle, parades, speeches and ceremony; the divisive side, the debates, voting and decision-making, was either abolished completely or conducted by a tiny elite in secret. The parade on 30 January was a foretaste of the first, which Hitler did better than anyone else and which was the first aspect of his regime Stalin began to imitate.

“The second began the next morning with Goering’s take-over of the Prussian state machine, marked by massive changes in personnel, especially of senior police-officers, and the issue of orders for the rapid expansion of the state *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Gestapo) under Nazi officers. Four days later Hitler issued a decree, using his powers under Article 48, ‘For the Protection of the

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chicanery of a political fop and the weakness of an old soldier, which proved fatal to a sick republic, mortally wounded by the Depression...” (*The Dark Valley*, p. 106) (V.M.)

Common People', which gave the government complete discretion in banning public meetings and newspapers. On 22 February Goering created an additional 'auxiliary police', 50,000 strong, composed entirely from Nazi units. The idea was to break up any non-Nazi organizations capable of resisting. As he put it: 'My measures will not be qualified by legal scruples or bureaucracy. It is not my business to do justice. It is my business to annihilate and exterminate - that's all!' He said to his police: 'Whoever did his duty in the service of the state, whoever obeyed my orders and took severe measures against the enemy of the state, whoever ruthlessly made use of his revolver when attacked could be certain of protection... If one calls this murder, then I am a murderer.'

"Goering's task was made much easier by the burning of the Reichstag on 28 February, now generally seen as indeed the work of the feeble-minded Martinus van der Lubbe, but in any event mighty convenient to the new regime. The same day Hitler put through the Emergency Decree of 28 February 1933, 'For the Protection of the People and the State', supplemented by another 'Against Betrayal of the German People and Treasonable Machinations'. They formed the real basis of Nazi rule, since they enabled the police to bypass the courts completely. The key passage reads: 'Articles 114-118, 123-4 and 133 of the Constitution of the German Reich are for the time being annulled. Consequently, curbs on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press, of telephone communications, searches of homes and confiscations of as well as restrictions on property, are hereby permissible beyond the limits hitherto established by law.'

"This decree gave Hitler everything he needed to set up a totalitarian state and was indeed the basis of his rule, remaining in fore until 1945. But following the election of 5 March, which gave the Nazis 43.9 per cent of the votes (288 seats), Hitler brought in an Enabling Act, which he got debated and passed by the Reichstage (sitting temporarily in the Kroll Opera House, surrounded by SA and SS units) on 23 March. The first article transferred the right to legislate from the Reichstage to the administration, the second gave the latter power to make constitutional changes, the third passed the right to draft laws from the president to the chancellor, the fourth extended the act to treaties and the fifth limited it to four years (it was extended in 1937, 1941 and again in 1943). It was, in effect, an act for the abolition of the constitution and legal government - and Hitler never saw the need, or took the trouble, to replace the old Weimar Constitution with one of his own. It really added nothing to the 28 February decree, except in a metaphysical sense. It was actually debated, the only political debate Hitler as ruler ever allowed, not like Lenin with the solitary meeting of the Provisional Assembly. The parallels are almost uncanny, except that Hitler, unlike Lenin, took part in the debate himself - furiously retorting to a speech on behalf of the Social Democrats, who opposed the bill (twenty-six of them and eight-one Communists were already under arrest or in flight). But the Right and Centre parties voted for the bill, which was carried 441-94, so this act of abdication marked the moral death of a republic which had died in law already on 28 February...

“Resistance was feeble or non-existent. Some of the Communist leaders, who only a few weeks before had believed Hitler’s entry into office would be an ephemeral prelude to their own triumph, were simply murdered. Others fled to Russia where the same fate soon awaited them. The great mass of the Communist rank-and-file humbly submitted and nothing more was heard of them. The unions surrendered without the least hint of a struggle. On 10 May the Social Democrats, insisting that the Nazis were merely ‘the last card of reaction’, allowed all their property and newspapers to be taken from them. A week later their deputies actually voted for Hitler’s foreign policy, so that Goering was able to declare: ‘The world has just seen that the German people are united where their fate is at stake.’ In June all the non-Nazi parties of Right, Left and Centre, together with their paramilitaries, were declared dissolved. At the end of the month, Hugenburg, the great ‘container’ of Hitler, was ignominiously pitched out of his office. Finally, in July the National Socialists were declared the only legal party. It had taken Hitler less than five months to destroy German democracy completely, about the same time as Lenin. Not a soul stirred...

“With the mature Soviet model to guide him, Hitler set up the apparatus of terror and the machinery of the police state even more quickly than Lenin – and soon on a scale as large as Stalin’s...”<sup>267</sup>

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In retrospect, we can see that the West’s leash on German revanchism began to slip at the Treaty of Locarno in 1925. As Tombs points out: “The vestigial organization for monitoring German disarmament was abolished and a blind eye was turned to its evasion of the Versailles limitations, which many in Britain regarded as a dead letter. Whitehall hoped its Continental entanglements were ended. Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer voiced a common opinion when he argued that Britain should concentrate on defending the empire. But he resisted naval expansion – ‘Why should there be a war with Japan?’ he demanded in 1924. ‘I do not believe there is the slightest chance of it in my lifetime.’ In 1928 the highly publicized Kellogg-Briand pact (initiated by the American and French foreign ministers) was an international renunciation of war, signed with a golden pen by statesmen who privately regarded it as an empty gesture, a ‘pious declaration against sin’. But it was very popular and revived public optimism. In 1929-30, the Labour government slashed naval strength, stopped work on the Singapore naval base, and in 1930 limited warship-building by treaty with the United States and Japan. This was the time when powerful literary works appeared exposing the horrors of the Great War. Churchill assured an audience in Montreal in 1929 that ‘the outlook for peace has never been better for fifty years’.

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<sup>267</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 283-286.

“But a large part of the German public was not reconciled. Even the relatively moderate Weimar Republic was evading arms limitations by tank training with the Red Army in Russia, developing civil aircraft that could be converted for military use, and building ‘pocket battleships’ just inside the tonnage limits. Its politicians invoked the ‘spirit of Locarno’ to press for a reduction of the French army and immediate evacuation of the Rhineland, garrisoned by Allied troops. Prominent German politicians also demanded union with Austria, forbidden by the Versailles treaty. The French rather desperately urged a federal ‘European Union’, and began building the Maginot Line of fortifications to defend their eastern frontier.

“The international peace movement, in its multifarious forms, was probably strongest in Britain. It spread across ages, classes and parties, and attracted unparalleled mass involvement in which women were particularly prominent. Vast quantities of literature were disseminated. Schoolchildren were taught that ‘collective security’ through the League of Nations was like the whole class standing up against a bully. A World Disarmament Conference of fifty-nine states met in Geneva in February 1932, the object of hopes, prayers and millions of petitions. But disarmament was a dangerous issue. It caused disagreement among the democratic states, which all claimed to have special security needs and wanted disarmament to be led by others. Worse, it gave a platform to Germany, which although it was secretly rearming was legally under restraints, and it demanded ‘equal treatment’, for which MacDonal’s government thought it had ‘strong moral backing’. In effect, this would mean Germany rearming and everyone else disarming. Churchill raised a rare warning voice: ‘When they have the weapons, believe me they will ask for the return... of lost territories.’ But he too urged that ‘the just grievances of the vanquished’ should be addressed.

“In January 1933, while the Disarmament Conference was in session, Adolf Hitler, supported by some 40 percent of the electorate, became head of a coalition government. The Nazis soon seized sole power. At first there was no change in German foreign policy. The new regime continued to press for ‘equal rights’, and Hitler put on a convincing show of being a man of peace...<sup>268</sup>

At the Conference the Germans “chose to represent themselves as insulted by the French. In October that year Germany had withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference and left the League of Nations...”<sup>269</sup>

On 3 February, 1933, Hitler “told the army Chief of Staff, General von Hammerstein, and the other responsible military leaders, that he intended to restore German might and to use it to conquer new living space in the East which could be ‘Germanized’ regardless of the consequences. To make this possible the youth of Germany must be converted to the belief that only battle could save their country. The ‘cancer’ of democracy must be abolished.

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<sup>268</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2014, pp. 675-677.

<sup>269</sup> Rebecca Fraser, *A People’s History of Britain*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2003, p. 691.

Rearmament was the essential prerequisite for the achievement of these goals because without military power Germany could not exercise political power...<sup>270</sup>

The army chiefs were convinced... But what place now for the SA, the Nazi Party's paramilitary wing, led by Hitler's old friend Ernst Röhm, who had been attempting to take control of the regular army? The army under its leader, Junker defence minister General Werner von Blomberg, was outraged by his activities. Hitler sensed the danger and acted quickly: he struck a deal with Blomberg on board the battleship *Deutschland*.

"He would tame the SA and vastly expand the army if the generals promised to back him as total leader of Germany after Hindenburg's death. To fulfill the bargain, Röhm and between 150 and 200 SA leaders were killed on the *Night of the Long Knives*" (30 June 1934).

"President Hindenburg publicly congratulated his Chancellor. Hitler knew that he'd been entirely in the hands of the generals during the crisis, and hurried to thank them in public. He announced that the army was to be the *sole bearer of arms in the land* and even said that it was all right if any individual soldier didn't *find his way to us*. This meant that you could still officially rise in the armed forces (as many did) without ever joining the Nazi party. It was a unique concession and meant that the senior echelons of the German Army could still delude themselves that they were somewhere above the dirty business of politics.

"The Junker officer caste were delighted with the deal. Hitler, it turned out, was just the sort of civilian leader they'd more or less openly longed for ever since 1919. On the very day the ancient Hindenburg died (2 August 1934), Blomberg introduced a new oath without even being asked by Hitler, never mind ordered: soldiers now swore *unconditional loyalty* to the *Führer of the German Reich and People, Adolf Hitler*."<sup>271</sup>

Elected mainly by Protestant Prussians, and united by an oath of loyalty to the Prussian Junker elite, Hitler could now claim to be the successor of the Prussian leaders: the Great Elector, Frederick the Great, Bismarck and Wilhelm I. This was a fraud because Hitler's values were very different from those of the Prussian kings, just as his despotism was very different from their monarchism. They were traditionalists and at least nominally Christians (with the exception of Frederick the Great), while he was an anti-Christian revolutionary. And it is very telling that, as Clark writes, "much to the disgust of some of the traditionalist noble families, the new regime made no attempt to restore the old monarchy after 1933."<sup>272</sup> Nevertheless, the deception worked: the Junkers and

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<sup>270</sup> Mark Arnold-Forster, *The World at War*, London: Collins, 1973, pp. 15-16.

<sup>271</sup> James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany*, Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2018, pp. 171-172.

<sup>272</sup> Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, p. 664.

the army were now on Hitler's side; his dominant position inside Germany was now assured...



## 22. HITLER'S ECONOMIC MIRACLE

Having (through his alliance with Hugenburg in 1929) already made a large contribution to the collapse of world capitalism, Hitler, once in power, acted to restore the economics of his own country. Thus in 1934 he appointed Schacht to become Minister of Economics. "Schacht decided on a policy of spending, but only by the state and the armaments manufacturers. He allocated so-called Mefo notes to the armaments manufacturers, and encouraged them to use them to massively expand their production, while he defrauded all Germany's creditors. As his former friends in America held the most German loans, they were naturally the worst affected.

"On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1934 Schacht told Germany's medium-term and long-term creditors, 'A moratorium seems inevitable'. He declared that it was unnecessary to call an international conference 'to establish the complete incapacity of Germany to make transfers... since the facts are clear to everybody.'

"On 14<sup>th</sup> June 1934 he declared a moratorium not only on Germany's long-term and medium-term debts but also on the Dawes and Young Plan loans, which had been offered to Germany to persuade it to accept the agreements.

"America still believed that Germany was poor. The countries she was really irate with were the Allies. Small savers in America had lent the Allies money in the First World War, in the expectation that Germany would be defeated and the money repaid. Yet, contrary to their wishes in the med-term elections on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1918, Germany had been given an Armistice. Then supposedly draconian war reparations had been imposed. Now, when US citizens had need of the money, the French and the British were renegeing on their debts.

"Britain originally owed America £938 million in war debts but she had doggedly continued to pay while receiving negligible cash sums from Germany. Meanwhile she had let all the Allies off their war debt payments to her many years before. In 1931 President Hoover had explicitly recognized the connection between the war debts owed to America and Germany's war reparations when he gave Germany and the Allies a moratorium on all debts payable from the war. So the British were confidently expecting that when America let Hitler off paying reparations that she would agree to the Allied war debts being cancelled too.

"Indeed France said that she would never have accepted the 1929 Young Plan Reparations agreement except on that basis. The restoration of France after the First World War alone had cost £830 million and she had received practically nothing towards it. She was acutely worried by Hitler's arrival in power and was running out of money to complete the Maginot Line of fortifications.

“Yet hundreds of American banks had gone bankrupt since Hoover’s Moratorium and the Americans were seeking someone to blame. When the Allies refused to pay their war debts any longer, the impoverished Americans passed the infamous Johnson Act, forbidding any new loans to nations that had not repaid their First World War debts while Randolph Hearst’s *New York American* declared of Britain’s decision to abandon payment: ‘Someday this will be regarded as the most tragic mistake in England’s history.’

“The Allies’ war reparations demands have always been regarded as extortionate so it is worthwhile looking at how much Germany actually paid in reparations. The headline figure was the modest sum of £1,038,000,000. Yet as the Dawes and Young Plan loans had not been repaid, only £938,000,000 was actually received by the Allies before the second World War, most being credited in the form of land, ships, soloies, etc., rather than in actual cash. The Czech economist G. Borsky, in his book on the reparations called *The Greatest Swindle in the World*, estimated that the actual amount of cash that Germany had paid in total between 1919 and 1933 was £153 million net in cash reparations, or under £11 million a year.

“Meanwhile, the American historian, Stephen A. Schuker, asserted that Germany received a net inflow of funds from America since the First World War of ‘no less than 17.75 milliard Reichsmarks,’ (approximately £850 million) or 2.1 per cent of national income for the whole period from 1919-1933 and concluded: ‘In price adjusted terms, this sum approached four times the total assistance that the United States government would provide to West Germany between 1948 to 1952 under the much-heralded Marshall Plan.’”<sup>273</sup>

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In Germany, writes Ian Kershaw, “the most remarkably rapid economic recovery took place exactly where the Depression had been deepest. The speed of recovery astonished and impressed contemporaries, within and outside Germany, helped to consolidate the support for Hitler’s dictatorship, and gave rise to the notion of a Nazi ‘economic miracle’. The Nazis had come to power without any clearly formulated blueprint for economic recovery. At his first speech on becoming Reich Chancellor, on 1 February 1933, Hitler had promised two big ‘four-year plans’ to rescue German farmers and to eliminate unemployment. How these aims might be achieved he did not disclose, and did not know. Economic for him was not a matter of technical finesse, but – like everything else – of will. In his crudely deterministic mind, political power, not economics, was decisive.

“What Hitler and his regime did in the early months of Nazi rule, as he had promised the leaders of big business before taking power, was to replace the political conditions within which the economy could function. The destruction of the parties of the Left and of the trade unions gave industrialists what they

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<sup>273</sup> Moore, *The Fourth Reich?* Jollies Publishing, 2016, pp. 192-194.

wanted. Labour relations were restructured, providing employers with dominance in the workplace, State repression underpinned the new freedom given to economic enterprise. Wages could be held down and profits maximized. In return, however, industrialists were left in no doubt that the interests of the state, not the liberal market economy, had to determine the framework of economic enterprise. Hitler was content for financial experts in the state bureaucracy and for economic leaders to devise plans to get the economy moving again. For him, the *image* of new dynamism, of revitalization, was the key factor. And in instilling the confidence that recovery was taking place, he made his most personal contribution to making it happen.

“The Nazis were fortunate in that their takeover of power coincided with the bottom point of the Depression, so that some cyclical recovery would have taken place under any government. However, the speed and scale of the German recovery – reviving faster than the world economy in general – were beyond any normal rebound from recession. Early recovery owed much to ideas that had already been developed (and were in some stage of implementation before the Nazis came to power), which were now picked up and greatly expanded. Work-creation schemes had been introduced in 1932. But they were insignificant, without any hope of making an impact on the scale of unemployment. Where the Papen government in 1932 had provided 167 million Reich marks for job creation, the Nazi regime made 5 billion Reich marks available by 1935. In itself this still accounted for only 1 per cent of gross national product – far too small to restimulate the economy. But the propaganda impact was much greater than implied by the limited sum involved. Germany seemed to be working again.

“The work-creation scheme – local road-building, ditch-digging, land reclamation and the like – were highly visible, whatever their actual economic value. Columns of those on the voluntary Labour Service (compulsory from 1933) added to the impression of a country starting to pick up. Pay was miserable, but those disinclined to undertake back-breaking work for minimal recompense found themselves in a concentration camp, brutally compelled to reconsider their attitude towards work. Those on the various emergency schemes were struck off the unemployment register. The rapidly falling level of unemployment – the fall was genuine, but smaller than the statistics seemed to demonstrate – again instilled confidence in a country revitalizing its economy through dynamism and energy.

“Work creation, alongside significant expenditure on construction projects, tax concessions for the motor industry, and further measures to strengthen agricultural protection against low prices and so benefit farmers (whose earnings rose at three times the level of weekly wages over the following five years) , all added up to a major step by the Nazi regime towards economic stimulus. This was well before high levels of expenditure on rearmament from the mid-1930s started to take the recovery onto a new level, wiping out unemployment entirely and leading to a labour shortage. The car industry received a boost through Hitler’s instinct for effective propaganda. At the very

beginning of his rule he promised tax relief on car manufacturing, a major road-building programme and the production of a cheap 'people's car' (although the Volkswagen was never to be available to the civilian population until after the war). Car production was 50 per cent higher in 1934 than it had been in 1929, the peak year before the Depression. Road-building – including the initiation of motorways, a great propaganda success – was expanded in spectacular fashion. Expenditure on roads was 100 per cent higher in 1934 than at any time in the 1920s. State investment in the construction industry also spurred private house-building, creating business for innumerable small firms that produced the goods and services needed both by construction firms and by the consumers wanting to furnish their houses..."<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 223-225.

## 23. HITLER, CULTURE AND RELIGION

Nazism did not grow on an empty place. Already in the 1920s resentment at the supposed injustice of the Versailles Treaty combined with the anarchy introduced by hyperinflation encouraged nationalism and the cult of war. And after the hyperinflation, during the economic prosperity and peaceful conditions created under Stresemann's chancellorship, another factor undermining the Weimar democracy arose: cultural and moral decadence.

Germany at this time was the centre of many of the world's most avant-garde artists, architects, musicians and film-makers. "The *Bauhaus*," writes Jurgen Tampke, "was created by architects Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe in March 1919 in Weimar. Designed primarily as an educational centre, it accommodated artists from all fields. Gropius saw no difference between a craftsperson and an artist. 'Architects, sculptors, painters, we must all turn back to craft.' Art and architecture should be functional, contributing to a new future. Teachers at the Bauhaus included painters Wassily Kandinsky, Oscar Schlemmer, Paul Klee, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. The modernity of the paintings and architectural designs was not appreciated by Weimar's general population, nor the liberal lifestyle of the school's male and female students. Funding was withdrawn in 1924. The Bauhaus then moved to Dessau in the small central German state of Anhalt, where it continued a troubled existence for a few more years before being closed down by the newly elected Nazi town council in 1931. The Bauhaus movement, nevertheless, continued to influence international modern architecture.

"Because of the left-leaning tendencies of writers such as Bertolt Brecht and Alfred Doblin, the journalists Kurt Tucholsky and Carl von Ossietzky, and Bauhaus director Hannes Mayer and other intellectuals, the broader public coined the term 'Cultural Bolshevism'.

"Most people did not like the new forms of entertainment from across the Atlantic either. American-style variety shows and new dances such as the Charleston and the foxtrot offended social conservatism. Jazz, in particular, angered traditional music lovers. Albert Einstein, Germany's leading music critic, wrote that jazz 'was the most disgusting treason against all occidental civilized music.' That most jazz musicians performing in German nightclubs were black made things worse.

"Promiscuity encouraged by the comparatively mild censorship laws in many German states also caused outrage. Berlin was seen as a *Sundenbabel*. Stefan Zweig, the Austrian poet and novelist, was dumfounded. 'Even the Rome of Suetonius had not known orgies like the Berlin transvestite balls, where hundreds of men in women's clothes and women in men's clothes danced under the benevolent eyes of the police... made-up boys with artificial waistlines promenaded along the *Kurfurstendamm* - and not professionals alone: every high-school student wanted to make some money, and in the darkened bars one could see high public officials and high financiers courting

drunken sailors without shame... Young ladies proudly boasted that they were perverted, and to be suspected of virginity at sixteen would have been a disgrace in every school in Berlin.'

"All this was perhaps exaggerated, but the staging of transvestite and other shows in city nightclubs made people believe that the Republic was decadent and outside the norm of what they regarded as civilized social behaviour.

"Belief that proud, traditional German values such as decency and honour were being eroded was also fostered by the changing role of women in society. Their share of the overall workforce did not differ significantly from pre-war levels, but by 1930 the share of female university students had risen to 16 per cent, opening the university and the legal and medical professions to women. They had been given the vote in 1918, and could stand for elections to local councils, state parliaments, or the Reichstag. This allowed them to play a more prominent role in public life. The conservatives felt that this trend should be remedied. The Nazi Party became more successful in elections in the late 1920s because of its demand that Germany's future depended on the return of women to their proper place in the home as wives and mothers. This was an election trump card, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas.

"The rise of the cheap 'boulevard press' in the 1920s also proved detrimental to Weimar democracy. Attacks on politicians, often plucked out of the air, alleging sexual or financial misconduct, harmed the Republic. The publicity given to murder trials and police investigations also helped create the impression that society was being submerged in a wave of violence. This impression was reinforced by the increasing street battles between the paramilitary arms of political parties, none more vicious than the clashes between the Nazis' SA (*Sturmabteilung*) and the Communists' Red Front. In short, the average citizen could see few positive achievements in the Weimar Republic."<sup>275</sup>

Nazi rejection of democracy was given intellectual expression by such thinkers as the philosopher Martin Heidegger. "The philosophy of this highly complex and sophisticated thinker, whose international renown had been established through his *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*), published in 1925, predisposed him towards ideals that he saw represented by the Nazi Movement. Crucial was his belief in the 'spiritual decay' of the age, in the erosion of what Heidegger called 'authentic being', and his accompanying belief in the special destiny of the German people to bring about cultural renewal. Despite his brilliant mind, much of this came close to romantic mysticism. He saw Germany as centrally located between 'the great pincer-grip formed by Russia on the one hand and America on the other', which together produced the same frenzy of unbounded technology and unlimited organization of the average human being. Europe's 'road to annihilation', he wrote in 1933, could only be blocked by 'the unfolding of new historically

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<sup>275</sup> Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, pp. 219-222.

spiritual forces from the centre'. By this time Heidegger had long since committed himself to Hitler's Nazi Movement, joining the party of 1 May 1933. Three weeks later he had delivered an encomium of praise to the new regime in his address as the newly appointed Rector of Freiburg University, had glorified Hitler (speaking of him as 'the German reality, present and future, and its law'), and had brought about the dismissal from the university of 'non-Aryan' colleagues (including his former teacher and mentor, Edmund Husserl).

"Belief in the need for cultural or 'spiritual' revolution went hand in hand with a fundamental rejection of liberal democracy. Both tendencies were particularly strong in Germany, though they were far from confined to that country. The German cultural historian Arthur Moeller van den Bruck blamed 'the whole political misery of Germany' on political parties. His book *Das Dritte Reich* (*The Third Reich*), published in 1923, offered a chilastic vision of German perfection that had to be striven after even though it could never be fulfilled. Bruck did not live to see his slogan adopted by the Nazi state and, like other German 'neo-conservative' radicals who advocated a 'conservative revolution', he might well have been disillusioned by experience of the reality of Hitler's regime. Another neo-conservative, Edgar Jung, who had foreseen the construction of an organic German nation as the way to national resurgence and spiritual renewal, swiftly became disillusioned with the reality of Nazi rule, leading to his murder by Hitler's henchmen during the infamous 'Night of the Long Knives' in June 1934.

"The German theorist of constitutional law, Carl Schmitt, proved more easily capable of adjusting to the realities of the new order in Germany. Schmitt, who had already gained prominence during the 1920s, rejected parliamentary institutions as the true expression of democracy. He argued for a strong sovereign state and a leader who represented the unity of the rulers and the ruled and was capable of exercising decisive power, if need be freed from any legal restraints, in order to serve the public interest. Law, in this sense, did not bind rulers and ruled. Rather, it derived from the 'decisionism' of the sovereign power whose responsibility it was to preserve order. Schmitt, who joined the Nazi Party in May 1933, later helped to legitimate the notion of the 'Leader State'. Adolf Hitler had ordered the murder of the stormtrooper leadership in the 'Night of the Long Knives', it was no aberration that Schmitt published an article entitled 'The Fuhrer protects the Law'.<sup>276</sup>

Nevertheless, Schmitt has remained an influential figure to the present day (he died in 1985), and if his ideas on sovereignty and democracy can be separated from his respect for Adolf Hitler – which I believe they can – then we shall see that he made some important and valid points about political order...

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<sup>276</sup> Kershaw, op. cit., pp. 453-455.

“Most Nazi leaders,” writes Norman Davies, “were unbelievers; Hitler himself was a lapsed Catholic. Their rituals owed more to the parody of ancient German paganism than to any modern religion. So they had a major problem in defining their relationship with a German nation that was still predominantly Christian. As often as not, they ignored the theoretical issues. But to pacify the Catholics, Hitler signed a Concordat with the Vatican in July 1933, confirming the autonomy of the German See in return for the hierarchy’s renunciation of political involvement. The compromise encouraged some Catholic prelates, such as Archbishop Innitzer of Vienna, to express sympathy for Nazi aims. But it did not prevent the Vatican from ordering *Mit brennender Sorge* (1937), which denounced Nazi ideology, to be read in all Catholic churches in Germany. To manage the Protestants, Hitler announced the creation in 1935 of a state-controlled Union of Protestant Churches. There was also an attempt to found a new movement for ‘German Christians’, where the swastika embraced the cross, under Reichsbishop Dr. Müller. In November 1933 these pseudo-Christian Nazi surrogates staged a demonstration in Berlin to the honour of ‘Christ the Hero’. In the end, religion and irreligion had to co-exist as best they could.”<sup>277</sup>

Hitler believed in some kind of Supreme Being. But he despised Christianity for very much the same reasons as Nietzsche despised it – because it was too meek and merciful. His real faith was in an idiosyncratic, blood-drenched kind of paganism...

In general, German Catholics saw through Hitler more than Protestants. In 1931 a German Franciscan, Fr. Ingbert Naab, published a work entitled “Is Hitler Christian?” “Relying on passages taken from his works, from *Mein Kampf*, and from the Party journal, *Völkishcher Beobachter*, he came to a negative conclusion. Besides [him], there were also high-flying intellectuals such as Luigi Sturzo, a priest, theologian and philosopher... What does he say? That fascism ‘is an inversion of values whose roots go back to classical paganism’ and which ends up with ‘a pantheist conception of the State’ in which the community ‘personifies itself, idealizes itself, sees itself as a whole and deifies itself. It does not know its limits: it enjoys an absolute sovereignty’. Or Anton Hilckman, a Catholic philosopher who, from July, 1932, develops an interpretation of National Socialism as a phenomenon of the sanctification of politics and the deification of the Nordic or German race, ‘a definitive and absolute unity’. He proclaims: ‘The Church will become the principal centre of resistance to the introduction of the new heresy of Neo-Wotanism which is called the German national Church’.”<sup>278</sup>

When not trying to woo the Churches, the Nazis were hostile to Christianity. Thus A. Rosenberg, the head of the ministry of the East, said that

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<sup>277</sup> Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 975.

<sup>278</sup> Gentile, *op. cit.*, p. 19.



“the Church’s Yahweh is now dead, as Wotan was dead 1500 years ago”.<sup>279</sup> Hitler, while feigning religious tolerance for political reasons, was “utterly irreligious”.<sup>280</sup> Thus “you are either a Christian or a German,” he said. “You cannot be both.”<sup>281</sup> “The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew. The deliberate lie in religion was introduced into the world by Christianity. Bolshevism practises a lie of the same nature, when it claims to bring liberty to men, only to enslave them.”<sup>282</sup> At the same time he recognized that Christianity “can't be broken so simply. It must rot and die off like a gangrened limb.” “We must avoid having one solitary church to satisfy the religious needs of large districts, and each village must be made into an independent sect, worshipping God in its own fashion. If some villages as a result wish to practise black magic, after the fashion of Negroes or Indians, we should do nothing to hinder them. In short, our policy in the wide Russian spaces should be to encourage any and every form of dissension and schism.”<sup>283</sup>

Tom Holland writes: “Hitler, who in 1928 had loudly proclaimed his movement to be Christian had come to regard Christianity with active hostility. Its morality, its concern for the weak, he had always viewed as cowardly and shameful. Now that he was in power, he recognized in the claim of the Church to a sphere distinct from the state... a direct challenge to the totalitarian mission of National Socialism. Although, like Mussolini, Hitler was willing to tread carefully at first – and even, in 1933, to sign a concordat with the papacy – he had no intention of holding to it for long. Christian morality had resulted in any number of grotesque excrescences: alcoholics breeding promiscuously while upstanding national comrades struggled to put food on the table for their families, mental patients enjoying clean sheets while healthy children were obliged to sleep three or four in a bed; cripples having money and attention lavished on them that should properly be devoted to the fit. Idiocies such as these were precisely what National Socialism existed to terminate. The churches had had their day. The new order, if it were to endure for a millennium, would require a new order of man. It would require *Übermenschen*...”<sup>284</sup>

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The Nazis’ relationship to Hitler was frankly idolatrous. Brendon writes: “Many people really did worship the Führer. Typically they confessed their creed in quite straightforward terms: ‘My belief is that our Leader, Adolf Hitler, was given by fate to the German nation as our Saviour, bringing light

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<sup>279</sup> Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Cf. S. Bulgakov, *Khristianstvo i Evrejskij Vopros* (Christianity and the Jewish Question), Paris: YMCA Press, 1991, p. 22.

<sup>280</sup> Overy, *Russia’s War*, p. 162.

<sup>281</sup> Cornwell, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>282</sup> Bullock, op. cit., p. 801.

<sup>283</sup> W. Alexeyev and T. Stavrou, *The Great Revival*, Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing, 1979, pp. 60-61.

<sup>284</sup> Holland, *Dominion*, p. 459.

into darkness.' Attending the Passion Play at Oberammergau, the American Ambassador found that Hitler was identified with Jesus and Röhm [the SA leader whom Hitler later murdered] with Judas – the only character played by a Jew."<sup>285</sup>

According to the philosopher Ivan Ilyin, "the greatest fascist error was the restoration of idolatrous Caesarism. 'Caesarism' [i.e. Despotism] is the direct opposite of monarchism. Caesarism is godless, irresponsible, and despotic; it holds in contempt freedom, law, legitimacy, justice and the individual rights of men. It is demagogic, terroristic and haughty; it lusts for flattery, 'glory' and worship, and it sees in the people a mob and stokes its passions. Caesarism is amoral, militaristic and callous. It compromises the principle of authority and autocracy, for its rule does not prosecute state or national interests, but personal ends."<sup>286</sup>

The worship of an infallible man-god served a similar psychological need in Germany and Russia, that need of man, identified by Dostoyevksy, to worship something higher than oneself – so long as one worships him *together*.

According to Ida Vermehren, "the most seductive factor [in Nazism] was Hitler's messianic image. For Germany found itself in an ideological and ethical vacuum. We had lost our Emperor, our national identity had been damaged. The majority of the population had no religious faith. I think that for many, National Socialism was a substitute religion which aroused a deep enthusiasm and provided a new source of strength. People wanted to get stuck in and work for a better life."

Much the same could be said of Russia, especially after the most educated and religious people had been exterminated. The remainder found in their faith in Communism and Stalinism a substitute for their former faith in Orthodoxy and Tsarism which they had lost.

The religious nature of the two totalitarian ideologies was described in 1937 by Winston Churchill, who said: "It is a strange thing that certain parts of the world should now be wishing to revive the old religious wars. There are those non-God religions Nazism and Communism... I repudiate both and will have nothing to do with either... They are as alike as two peas. Tweedledum and Tweedledee were violently contrasted compared with them. You leave out God and you substitute the devil."<sup>287</sup>

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A special cult of Hitler was invented by Himmler for the SS. "Sometimes its members were known as the Nazi Jesuits. Certainly Himmler, who had been

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<sup>285</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>286</sup> Ilyin, "On Fascism", <http://souloftheeast.org/2013/12/27/ivan-ilyin-on-fascism>.

<sup>287</sup> Churchill, in Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 209.

brought up a Roman Catholic, though he was later to call for the Pope's public execution, admired the black-cassocked society's discipline. The Führer went so far as to call him 'our Ignatius de Loyola'. But Himmler also drew inspiration, in fashioning his élite, from the myths of King Arthur and the sagas of the Teutonic Knights. He developed an SS code of honour, including rules for duelling and committing suicide. As well as oath-taking ceremonies for initiates, he evolved a series of pseudo-chivalric, neo-pagan rituals to be performed in his medieval castle at Wewelsburg in the mountain forests of Westphalia. Here 12 senior SS paladins would sit around Himmler's massive oaken table in high-backed, pigskin-covered chairs inscribed with their occupants' names on silver plates and engage in something like a secular séance. Himmler apparently believed that he had the power to summon up the spirits of the dead and he seems at times to have regarded himself as the reincarnation of one of them, the Dark Age German King, Henry the Fowler.

"Himmler also dabbled in astrology, mesmerism and homeopathy. He favoured herbal remedies - every concentration camp perforced had its herbal garden. He also foisted his food fads on subordinates, urging the saving properties of porridge, mineral water and wild mare's milk. Above all Himmler insisted on the redemptive quality of blood, blood generated on German soil. This magic fluid he invoked with solemn incantation. 'Only good blood, blood which history has proved to be leading and creative and the foundation of every state and of all military activities, only Nordic blood, can be considered.' So Himmler recruited the 'purest' possible specimens of the master race, who were permitted to marry only their female counterparts. However, what these bogus notions of biological supremacy chiefly spawned was a sanguinary contempt for lesser breeds, 'the offal of criminals and freaks... [with] slave-like souls'. These 'sub-humans' were fit only for the concentration and extermination camps. It was in the organisation of these 'mills of death' that Himmler really fulfilled himself. Here was his proper memorial, for here the bloodless bureaucrat united with the bloodthirsty fantasist to produce an unprecedented apparatus of mass murder..."<sup>288</sup>

Again, "children of the SS were supposed to undergo an alternative form of baptism with SS standard bearers instead of clergy officiating, and a portrait of Hitler rather than a font as the focal point of the ceremony".<sup>289</sup>

"The purpose of his Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment," writes Barbar Ehrenreich, "was to communicate not information, he remarked, 'but holy conviction and unconditional faith'. Nazism had its own prophet, the Führer; its own rituals of mass rallies and parades; even its own 'holy days'...

"Ordinary citizens found many ways to participate in the new religion. They displayed *Mein Kampf* in their homes in the place of honor once reserved for the Bible; they even addressed prayers to the Führer. The League of

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<sup>288</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 254-255.

<sup>289</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, p. 267.

German Girls, for example, developed its own version of the Lord's Prayer: 'Adolf Hitler, you are our great Leader. Thy name makes the enemy tremble. Thy Third Reich comes, thy will alone is law upon earth', and so on..."<sup>290</sup>

Niall Ferguson has noted the messianic nature of Nazism: "As an SA sergeant explained: 'Our opponents... committed a fundamental error when equating us as a party with the Economic Party, the Democrats or the Marxist parties. All these parties were only interest groups, they lacked soul, spiritual ties. Adolf Hitler emerged as bearer of a new political religion.' The Nazis developed a self-conscious liturgy, with November 9 (the date of the 1918 Revolution and the failed 1923 Beer Hall *putsch*) as a Day of Mourning, complete with fires, wreaths, altars, blood-stained relics and even a Nazi book of martyrs. Initiates into the elite *Schutzstaffel* (SS) had to incant a catechism with lines like 'We believe in God, we believe in Germany which He created... and in the Führer... whom He has sent us.' It was not just that Christ was more or less overtly supplanted by Hitler in the iconography and liturgy of 'the brown cult'. As the SS magazine *Das Schwarze Korps* argued, the very ethical foundation of Christianity had to go too: 'The abstruse doctrine of Original Sin... indeed the whole notion of sin as set forth by the Church... is something intolerable to Nordic man, since it is incompatible with the "heroic" ideology of our blood.'

"The Nazis' opponents also recognized the pseudo-religious character of the movement. As the Catholic exile Eric Voegelin put it, Nazism was 'an ideology akin to Christian heresies of redemption in the here and now... fused with post-Enlightenment doctrines of social transformation'. The journalist Konrad Heiden called Hitler 'a pure fragment of the modern mass soul' whose speeches always ended 'in overjoyed redemption'. An anonymous Social Democrat called the Nazi regime a 'counter-church'. Two individuals as different as Eva Klemperer, wife of the Jewish-born philologist Victor, and the East Prussian conservative Friedrich Reck-Malleczewen could agree in likening Hitler to the sixteenth-century Anabaptist Jan of Leyden: 'As in our case, a misbegotten failure conceived, so to speak, in the gutter, became the great prophet, and the opposition simply disintegrated, while the rest of the world looked on in astonishment and incomprehension. As with us... hysterical females, schoolmasters, renegade priests, the dregs and outsiders from everywhere formed the main support of the regime... A thin sauce of ideology covered lewdness, greed, sadism, and fathomless lust for power... and whoever would not completely accept the new teaching was turned over to the executioner.'

"Still, all this leaves one question unanswered: What had gone wrong with the existing religions in Germany? For if National Socialism was a political religion, the fragmentation of the old political parties cannot satisfactorily be presented as the essential precondition for its success. Evidence of declining religious belief among German Christians is in fact not hard to find: a

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<sup>290</sup> Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites*, London: Virago, 1998, pp. 209, 210.

substantial proportion of Germans exercised the option to be registered as *konfessionslos* in the 1920s. There were marked declines in church attendance, particularly in North German cities. Significantly, unlike the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church had suffered very heavy financial losses in the hyperinflation. Morale among the Protestant clergy was low; many were attracted to the Nazi notion of a new 'Positive Christianity'. All this may offer a clue as to why the former were more likely than the latter to vote Nazi in the crucial elections of 1930-33 - ... though here too there was considerable regional variation and it would be quite wrong to infer from this anything stronger than inertia in Catholic voting patterns. After all, Austrians were scarcely less enthusiastic about National Socialism and they were virtually all Catholics. And nearly all the fascist dictators were themselves raised as Catholics: Franco, Hitler, Mussolini, to say nothing of wartime puppets like Ante Pavelić in Croatia and Josef Tiso in Slovakia, who was himself a priest..."<sup>291</sup>

"German Protestantism," writes Burleigh, "was subjected to three pressures after 1933, which were designed to de-Judaize it, to heroise it and to unify it. These came from within, although beyond the Churches there were clusters of neo-pagans whose clamorous agitations encouraged Protestant Nazi sympathizers to 'Nazify' their own Churches before they were replaced by something wholly unrelated to Christianity.

"The idea of fusing extreme racist nationalism with Christianity was not new; a League for a German Church had been founded in 1921 precisely for that purpose. Some 120 Protestant pastors belonged to the Party by 1930, eight having stood as candidates in elections. Wilhelm Kube, the gauleiter of Brandenburg, was both leader of the Nazi caucus in the Prussian parliament and an active member of the synod of the diocese of Berlin. In late 1931 he suggested the formation of 'Protestant National Socialists', a Church party not formally integrated with the NSDAP itself. Hitler thought that 'German Christians' would be less contentious. From their inception in 1932, the German Christians, a group of clergy and laity, sought to impose an ecclesiology defined by race rather than grace, blending 'traditional' anti-Judaism with new-fangled scientific racism to establish a new 'Church of blood'. They wished to revivify Protestantism by incorporating those things that had made Nazism itself such a potent force. Their banner consisted of a cross and the initials DC with a swastika in the centre...

"Since the German Christians seemed to give empty churches a new lease of life - albeit by introducing the lurid razzamatazz of Nazism into places of worship - they were welcomed by some senior Protestant clergy as a way of restoring the popularity of religion. Bishop Theophil Wurm of Württemberg was not alone in imagining that Nazism might represent a revival of the fusion of nationalism and religiosity that had last been seen in Germany during the Wars of Liberation..."<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 243-245.

<sup>292</sup> Burleigh, op. cit., p. 202.

Of course, there were German Protestants who refused to be duped by Nazism. The most famous of them was Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, head of the "Confessing Church", which protested against the pro-Nazi stance of the "Evangelical Church of the German nation", which considered it its duty to proclaim to the world "a German Christ of a de-Judaized Church". He wrote from prison (where he was hanged on April 9, 1945): "On close inspection it turns out that any powerful strengthening of the external power (whether it be political or religious) strikes a significant number of people with stupidity. The impression is created that this is a strictly sociological and psychological law. The power of some needs the stupidity of others... When talking to such a person, you simply feel that you are not speaking with the man himself, and not with his personality, but with the slogans and appeals that have taken control of him."

In extreme circumstances, wrote Bonhoeffer, the lawgiver must be disobeyed for the sake of obedience to God. Reversing the Machiavellian and Cromwellian use of "necessity" to justify lawgivers' occasional lawlessness, he writes: "In the course of historical life there comes a point where the exact observance of the formal law of a state, of a commercial undertaking, of a family, or for that matter of a scientific discovery, suddenly finds itself in violent conflict with the ineluctable necessities of the lives of men; at this point responsible and pertinent action leaves behind it the domain of principles and convention, the domain of the normal and regular, and is confronted by the extraordinary situation which no law can control. It was for this situation that Machiavelli in his political theory coined the term *necessita*... There can be no doubt that such necessities exist; to deny their existence is to abandon the attempt to act in accordance with reality. But it is equally certain that these necessities cannot be governed by any law or themselves constitute a law. They appeal directly to the free responsibility of the agent, a responsibility which is bounded by no [human] law..."<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995, p. 235; in Elshtain, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

## 24. HITLER AND THE JEWS

Hitler's deepest emotion was probably his hatred of the Jews, which needs to be examined more closely...

Hitler, writes Paul Kennedy, "intended to create a society racially 'purified' by the elimination of Jews, gypsies, and any other allegedly non-Teutonic elements; a people whose minds and souls were given over to unquestioned support of the regime, which would thereby replace the older loyalties of class, church, region and family; an economy mobilized and controlled for the purposes of expanding *Deutschtum* whenever or whatever the leader decreed that to be necessary, and against however many of the Great Powers; and ideology of force and struggle and hatred, which rejoiced in smashing foes and scorned the very idea of compromise."<sup>294</sup>

The most striking and unique of these aims was, of course, Hitler's anti-semitism. "Why was it," asks Niall Ferguson, "that the assimilation of the German Jews, which appeared to have been so successful prior to 1914, was so dramatically reversed thereafter, culminating in their near-annihilation? There are few more difficult questions in history. One argument... is that assimilation was never complete and that there always remained a strain of exceptionally aggressive anti-Semitism in German culture. Another is that we should understand the surge of support for anti-Semitic policies as a backlash against assimilation, precipitated in large measure by economic crisis. It is surely no coincidence that the high points of electoral support for anti-Semitic parties came immediately after the hyperinflation of 1922-23 and the depression of 1929-32. Jews were in relative terms the most successful ethnic group in Germany: they were less than 1 percent of the population but had significantly more than 1 percent of the wealth. Moreover, political and territorial changes to the east of Germany led to an influx of so-called *Ostjuden*, who attracted public disapprobation precisely because they were not assimilated. The virulently anti-Semitic magazine *Der Stürmer* began weekly publication in Nuremberg in April 1923... The front-page masthead for each issue read simply 'The Jews are our Misfortune'. Even before the Nazis came to power, steps were already being taken in Bavaria to restrict the rights of Jews, notably the 1929 vote by the Bavarian *Landtag* to ban ritual slaughter by Jewish butchers..."<sup>295</sup>

As for Hitler, "in January 1939, even before the outbreak of war, he had made a chilling prophecy: 'If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!'"<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, London: William Collins, 2008, p. 393.

<sup>295</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, pp. 55-56.

<sup>296</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger*, p. 79.

There was another important source of anti-semitism: the apparent dominance of the Weimar republic's decadent modernist culture by Jews. They were less dominant in business and politics, but in culture they were everywhere: in criticism and journalism, in the important new art of cinematography, in music, in the visual arts and in literature.<sup>297</sup> As a (failed) artist, Hitler was sensitive to culture; he hated Weimar modernism in almost all its forms, as did the East Elbian Prussians who became his primary constituency; and his struggle against modernism was part and parcel of his struggle against Jewry.

In the opinion of the German historian Golo Mann, anti-semitism was not central to the Nazi ideology. Let us examine his thesis.

“National Socialism’, its spokesman often said, was a *Weltanschauung*, an ideology. Basically, however, it was not; not in the sense that Communism for example was. Communism was an elaborate system of doctrines about the world, man and history; false science, false religion which many people seriously believed in. Many people died willingly for Communism, including German Communists. In places where the party was proscribed its followers went underground and when, years later, the pressure was lifted, they reappeared – genuine, indestructible fanatics that they were. The Nazis also boasted of their fanatical faith – they were very fond of the word ‘fanatical’ – but their fanaticism was only skin deep. Fanaticism demands faith, and what did the Nazis believe in? When Hitler’s Reich was broken up almost no National Socialists were to be found. People claimed that they had never been Nazis, that they had known nothing, that they had been forced to join in or had joined in merely to prevent worse things from happening, not because they acted in accordance with their beliefs. Only in the disputed frontier regions where there was momentarily no distinction between the Nazi cause and the pan-German nationalistic one, as in Austria in 1934, were people ready to die for the cause. This was the exception, not the rule. Democrats, Socialists, students, conservative noblemen and trade unionists risked their lives in Germany for the sake of human decency. The Nazis wanted to live and enjoy life.

“When these words were written people were saying that there were still or again ‘National Socialists’ in Germany. One wonders why they should be called thus. Because they believe that not everything that Hitler did was wrong; that Germany was entitled to tear up the Versailles treaty; that the West should not have stabbed Germany in the back when it was defending Europe against Bolshevism; that the Germans were the most industrious nation in Europe; that firm, secure government was needed; and more such things. These may have been sentiments and opinions which National Socialists made use of. But they were there before; they survived National Socialism, and their sum total does not by any means add up to the essence of National Socialism.

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<sup>297</sup> Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1990, pp. 116-118.



“What then was National Socialism? It was an historically unique phenomenon, dependent on an individual and on a moment, a phenomenon which can never reappear in the same form. It was a state of intoxication produced by a gang of intoxicated experts, kept up for a few years. It was a machine for the manufacture of power, for the safeguarding of power and for the extension of power. The machine was located in Germany and therefore used to fuel German energies, German interests, passions and ideas. ‘We want power’ – this cry of the year 1932 was the essence of the new message. Power means organization, indoctrination and the authority to give orders; it meant the suppression of all independent life, of anything capable of resistance. In that sense it was essentially a negative element. The power of National Socialism over Germany thus only became complete when the Reich was close to collapse, when its army had already been defeated.

“The determination to have power was considerable; the doctrine was not. Who can say today what the Nazis ‘taught’? The superiority of the Nordic race? They made fun of it, admitting when they were among themselves that it was a weapon not a truth. Few of them seemed to have seriously believed this nonsense. Anti-semitism? This was probably the most genuine feeling of which Hitler was capable, but it was hardly a *Weltanschauung*. Nor did anti-Semitism arouse the imagination of the Germans among whom it was no stronger than among most other nations.<sup>298</sup> Later, when the authorities ordered the murder of Europe’s Jews there were people prepared to do this, just as they would have carried out any other order. Himmler himself said shortly before the end that it was time for Germans and Jews to bury the hatchet and become reconciled. When he wanted to save himself and worm his way into the Allies’ favour he pretended that the murder of the Jews was nothing but a regrettable misunderstanding. This was not an article of faith but crime produced by evil propaganda. The same was true of the old Party programme, abandoned as soon as the Nazis came to power, of the economic theories and the talk about the common good. One member of the gang, the President of the People’s Court during the war years, said that the bond between National Socialism and Christianity was that both claimed the whole man. Yet even that was evil propaganda, boasting, imitation of the Communists, of the Jacobins. He would not have been able to say for what National Socialism required the whole man. Relatively the most interesting formulations of the Nazi theory came from outsiders who were quick to place their talents at the disposal of the new rulers and to credit them with all sorts of refinements. Equally there were German scholars who did not find it difficult to avoid the whole mish-mash and who followed their pursuits as before; much less difficult than it is under Communism. As personified in its leaders ‘National Socialism’ was a determination of tremendous intensity which cared for nothing but itself and was for that reason identical with cynical opportunism; without its leaders it

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<sup>298</sup> This assertion is dubious. Anti-semitism had been built up in Germany since at least the 1870s. It was certainly strong also in other countries, especially France and Romania, but it was particularly strong in Germany. See Paul Johnson, *History of the Jews*, London, 1987, part 6. (V.M.)

did not exist at all. Hence it vanished with Hitler's death and at the same time people looked at each other in surprise as though they had woken from a long period of bewitchment. If the Nazis believed in anything they believed in the great man. If he believed in anything it was in himself; in the last years of his life his conviction that he was the chosen one assumed dimensions which can no longer be called human..."<sup>299</sup>

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However, history does not confirm Mann's affirmation that Nazi anti-semitism was a kind of passing fashion that "vanished with Hitler's death". It was a real *Weltanschauung*, insofar as the struggle between the Jewish and Aryan races explained for the Nazis the whole of history; the world war was the final stage in that struggle, a war that would end in the final destruction of the Jews or their dominion over all the races of the earth. And if, as Mann admits, anti-semitism was the most genuine emotion of which Hitler was capable, then we need to examine the counter-thesis that anti-Semitism was the key to, and core of, his ideology...

First, a brief summary of the history of inter-war anti-semitism...

"The first Nazi" in relation to Jewry was probably Ludendorff, who blamed Germany's failure on the Jews and other "undesirables" who put profit before patriotism. As for Hitler, hatred of Jewry had been his prime obsession and the central part of his ideology already for many years before he came to power, since he lived in Vienna under its anti-semitic mayor. "Hitler himself says that it took him considerable time to grasp the meaning of the Jewish problem. The crucial discovery was that Jews were not, as he had hitherto believed, Germans with a special form of religion, but a separate race. There is no evidence to suggest that, at this early date when he was still in his early twenties, Hitler had any clear view of what should be done to 'solve' the Jewish problem, or that he had conceived the possibility of extermination. Nevertheless race was to provide the master key to Hitler's view of history and to his ideology. His emphasis on it fitted well with that other widespread late-nineteenth-century faith which was the foundation of his philosophy: Social Darwinism, the belief that all life was engaged in a struggle for existence in which only the fittest survived. He confronted the socialist belief in equality with 'the aristocratic principle of Nature', the natural inequality of individuals and races. The circle was closed with the demonstration that Marxism was a doctrine invented by a Jew, Karl Marx, and used by the Jewish leaders of the Social Democratic Party to ensnare the masses and turn them against the state, the German nation and the Aryan master race."<sup>300</sup>

Paradoxically, Jews were well integrated into German society before Hitler, and the number of mixed marriages had increased. But this is precisely what

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<sup>299</sup> Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, pp. 445-447.

<sup>300</sup> Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin. Parallel Lives*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 25.

disgusted Hitler: mixed marriages, the pollution of the pure German blood line by sexual relations with Jews. "Along with most of his senior henchmen," writes Niall Ferguson, "Hitler seems genuinely to have believed that Jews constituted an insidious biological threat to the German *Volk*."<sup>301</sup>

And not only to the German people: "After the Bolshevik revolution he [the Jew] completely tore down the bonds of order, of morality, of custom, etc., abolished marriage as a lofty institution and instead proclaimed a general copulation with the aim of breeding a general inferior human mish-mash, by way of a chaotic bastardizaion, which by itself would be incapable of leadership and which ultimately would no longer be able to do without the Jews as its only intellectual element... At the moment, he is exerting himself to lead the remaining states toward the same condition..."<sup>302</sup>

In 1920 Hitler gave a speech, "Why are we Antisemites", in which, as Daniel Goldhagen writes, he "declared the general eliminationist intent 'the removal of the Jews from our *Volk*' and specified his preferred exterminationist solution, which he hoped the German people would 'one day' implement. Hitler explained: 'We are animated with an inexorable resolve to seize the Evil [the Jews] by the roots and to exterminate it root and branch. To attain our aim we should stop at nothing.' This is an utterly clear *and* carefully formulated statement of the eliminationist, in this case exterminationist, ideal. According to Hitler, (1) the Jews are so evil and dangerous that (2) they must be exterminated - root and branch - that is, totally, and (3) the need to do so is so acute that Germans should let nothing stay their hand. To make it unmistakable that this was no frivolous statement either about the extent of the putative danger or the utter emergency of eliminating it, Hitler continued his declaration 'we should stop at nothing' by concluding, 'even if we must join forces with the Devil.'..."<sup>303</sup>

The cleansing of the world of Jews was proclaimed again in *Mein Kampf* and the *Secret Book* of 1928. "Being a race-socialist as opposed to a class-socialist, Hitler believed the dynamic of history was race. The dynamic was interrupted when race-poisoning took place. The poison came, above all, from the Jews. He admired Jews as 'negative supermen'. In his *Table-Talk* he said that if 5,000 Jews emigrated to Sweden, in no time at all they would occupy all the key positions: this was because 'blood-purity', as he put it in *Mein Kampf*, 'is a thing the Jew preserves better than any other people on earth'. The Germans, on the other hand, had been 'poisoned'. That was why they lost the First World War. Even he was poisoned: that was why he occasionally made mistakes - 'all of us suffer from the sickness of mixed, corrupt blood'. Race-poisoning was a comparatively common obsession in the time of Hitler's youth, rather as ecological poisoning became an obsession of many in the 1970s and 1980s. The

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<sup>301</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 256.

<sup>302</sup> Hitler's *Second Book* (1928), in Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, London: Serif, 1996, p. 205.

<sup>303</sup> Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Worse than War. Genocide, Eliminationism and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*, London: Abacus, 2012, p. 18.

notion of ubiquitous poisoning appealed strongly to the same type of person who accepted conspiracies as the machinery of public events. As with the later ecologists, they thought the race-poison was spreading fast, that total disaster was imminent, and that it would take a long time to reverse even if the right policies were adopted promptly. Hitler calculated it would take a hundred years for the regime to eliminate racial poisoning in Germany: on the other hand, if Germany became the first nation-state to do so successfully, it would inevitably become 'lord of the Earth' (*Main Kampf*).

"What distinguished Hitlerian race-theory was, first, this rooted belief that 'cleansing' could make Germany the first true superpower, and ultimately the first paramount power in the world; and secondly, his absolute conviction that 'Jewish race-poison' and Bolshevism were one and the same phenomenon...

"Hitler's full programme, therefore, was as follows. First, gain control of Germany itself, and begin the cleansing process at home. Second, destroy the Versailles settlement and establish Germany as the dominant power in Central Europe. All this could be achieved without war. Third, on this power basis, destroy the Soviet Union (by war) to rid the 'breeding-ground' of the 'bacillus' and, by colonization, create a solid economic and strategic power-base from which to establish a continental empire, in which France and Italy would be mere satellites. In the fourth stage Germany would acquire a large colonial empire in Africa, plus a big ocean navy, to make her one of the four superpowers, in addition to Britain, Japan and the United States. Finally, in the generation after his death, Hitler envisaged a decisive struggle between Germany and the United States for world domination..."<sup>304</sup>

Knowing Hitler's plans, the Jews of America reacted quickly to his coming to power. "In late July 1933, an International Jewish Boycott Conference (*New York Times*, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1933) was held in Amsterdam to devise means of bringing Germany to terms. Samuel Untermyer of New York presided over the Conference and was elected President of the World Jewish Economic Federation. Returning to America, Mr. Untermyer described the planned Jewish move against Germany as a 'holy war... a war must be waged unremittingly.' (*New York Times*, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1933)... The immediately feasible tactic of the 'economic boycott' was described by Mr. Untermyer as 'nothing new', for 'President Roosevelt, whose wise statesmanship and vision are the wonder of the civilized world, is invoking it in furtherance of his noble conception of the relations between capital and labor'. Mr. Untermyer gave his hearers and readers specific instructions..."<sup>305</sup>

In spite of the Jewish economic boycott, which only confirmed Hitler's belief that the Jews were the root of all evil, he was able to employ a combination of Keynesian economics and massive spending on rearmament to drag his nation

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<sup>304</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>305</sup> J. Beaty, *The Iron Curtain over America*, p. 62; in Comte Léon de Poncins, *State Secrets*, Chulmleigh, Devon: Britons Publishing Company, 1975, p. 23.

out of depression, both psychological and economic. "Single-handed," as Antony Beevor writes, "he had restored German pride, while rearmament, far more than his vaunted public works programme, halted the rise in unemployment. The brutality of the Nazis and the loss of freedom seemed to most Germans a small price to pay..."<sup>306</sup>

Immediately after coming to power, Hitler began a global war against the Jews – the most critical of all his wars, in his opinion. In 1935 the Reichstag passed the Nuremberg laws forbidding sexual relations between Jews and Germans. In 1938 "Kristallnacht" took place, "the proto-genocidal nationwide assault upon Germany's Jews, their synagogues and communal institutions, their businessmen and homes."<sup>307</sup> By the end of the 1930s two-thirds of Jews had been expelled or eliminated from Germany.<sup>308</sup>

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"Soon after the invasion of Poland in September 1939, the persecution of European Jews was raised to unprecedented levels, but systematic killing of men, women, and children only began in June 1941, after the onset of Operation Barbarossa against the Soviets. On 31 July 1941, Hermann Göring gave written authorization to Heydrich to prepare and submit a plan for a 'total solution of the Jewish question' in territories under German control and to coordinate the participation of all involved government organisations. At [a conference in] Wannsee [in January, 1942], Heydrich emphasized that once the mass deportation was complete, the SS would take complete charge of the exterminations. A secondary goal was to arrive at a definition of who was formally Jewish, and thus determine the scope of the genocide."<sup>309</sup>

So great was the priority attached to the Final Solution, and so vast and complex was Heydrich's operation (six million Jews were killed), that it hindered German military operations in the later part of the war insofar as trains that could have transported soldiers to the front were used instead to take Jews to the death-camps. That is why the war can be said to have begun already in 1933, with the beginning of Hitler's war against Jewry... For in the last analysis all his conquests were subordinated to the overriding aim of destroying the Jews; the anti-Jewish *leit-motif* increased in intensity throughout the period 1933-45. Thus the closing words of his testament, written during the last hours of his life, were a call "to merciless opposition to the world-poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry..."

In Hitler we see an explosive mixture between his Austrian origins (anti-Semitism was particularly virulent in Austria), his experience in the war, the profound impact on him of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the *völkisch*-racist-

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<sup>306</sup> Beevor, *The Second World War*, London: Phoenix, 2014, p. 5.

<sup>307</sup> Goldhagen, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>308</sup> Goldhagen, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>309</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wannsee\\_Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wannsee_Conference).

Darwinist ideology of the nineteenth century and the general ferment and sense of crisis in the German-speaking resulting from the defeat in the world war.

Hitler's obsession with the Jews was fuelled by several elements in the post-1918 era. First was the undeniable fact that the leadership of the communist movement, in Russia (until the rise of Stalin) as elsewhere, was mainly Jewish ("non-Jewish Jews", in Paul Johnson's classification, since they were not religious or nationalist but atheist internationalists). This fact was the primary cause of the rise in anti-semitism in the Russian Civil War, which in turn increased the popularity of anti-semitic forgeries like *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that so influenced the Nazis. For it was not only anti-Soviet Russians who were reading the *Protocols*: those Germans, like Ludendorff, who believed that Germany had been "stabbed in the back" by the Jews, eagerly read the same material. Thus in 1920 F.M. Vinberg, a White Russian officer of German ancestry, published, together with a German anti-Semite, the first translation of the *Protocols*, which made a profound influence on Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German with a Russian passport who had emigrated to Germany in 1918. He introduced the forgery to Hitler.

Now the leader of the German delegation at Rapallo was Walter Rathenau, a highly talented industrialist – and a Jew. He became the target of Rosenberg. "As Rosenberg saw it, Rathenau was closely connected with those all-powerful Jewish Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union: they shared with him the wealth they derived from Russian industry, while in return he arranged, through the Treaty of Rapallo, for the German people to be exploited in the interest of 'stock exchange and Soviet Jews'. If he and his like had their way, Letts and Chinese under Jewish command would soon be shooting down German workers. Who could deny that such people were 'long since ripe for prison and gallows'? Shortly after the appearance of this booklet [in 1922] Rathenau was assassinated by young men holding precisely these views. It was an appropriate beginning to a career which was to end, a generation later, with Rosenberg's execution as a major war criminal."<sup>310</sup>

Daniel Pipes writes: "The *Protocols* made on the future Führer an overwhelming impression. 'I have read *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – it simply appalled me,' he told Hermann Rauschning, an early associate, 'the stealthiness of the enemy, and his ubiquity! I saw at once that we must copy it – in our own way, of course.' According to Rauschning, the *Protocols* served Hitler as a major source of political inspiration. Hitler thus used a spurious manual of Jewish strategy for world domination, not only to depict the Jews as the mortal enemy of Germany, but to carry out his own quest for world domination employing its methods. He so admired the alleged cunning of Jews in their drive to master the world that he decided to adopt fully their 'ideology' and 'program'.

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<sup>310</sup> Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, London: Serif, 1996, p. 216.

“It was only after he had read the *Protocols* that Hitler turned anti-Communist: ‘Rosenberg left a permanent mark on Nazi ideology. The party was rabidly anti-Semitic from the moment of its foundation in 1919, but it became obsessed with Russian communism only in 1921-22; and this seems to have been largely Rosenberg’s doing. He provided the link between Russian anti-Semitism of the Black Hundred type and the anti-Semitism of the German racists; more precisely, he took over Vinberg’s view of Bolshevism as a Jewish conspiracy and reinterpreted it in *völkisch*-racist terms. The resulting fantasy, as expounded in innumerable articles and pamphlets, became an obsessive theme in Hitler’s thinking and in the outlook and propaganda of the Nazi party.’ It has been said that Hitler had only two major political objectives: the destruction of Jewry and the expansion into the East European *Lebensraum* (‘Living Space’), all other elements of his program, capitalist as well as socialist, being only means to this end. The right-wing Russian theory linking Jews with Communism allowed him to connect these two objectives.

“...The rationale for the Nazi extermination of Jews came from Russian right-wing circles: it was Vinberg and his friends who first called publicly for the physical extermination of Jews. The Jewish Holocaust thus turned out to be one of the many unanticipated and unintended consequences of the Russian Revolution.”<sup>311</sup>

Hitler’s anti-semitism became the rationale for his continuation of the war on a global scale and to the bitter end. Limited conquests in Europe, even German domination of Europe to the borders of the Soviet Union, were not compatible with his aims. For if the Jews were the root of all evil, they had to be rooted out throughout the world, from Russia to America...

The “Final Solution” to this problem was later entrusted to Himmler, who believed that the Germans were descended from a master race that had survived the flooding of Atlantis and had migrated to Tibet. In the 1930s he sent scientific expeditions to Tibet to verify his theory. In 1935 he started the *Lebensborn* eugenics programme in order to select the finest specimens of the Nordic race, mate them and thereby create a super race embodying the finest physical and spiritual characteristics.<sup>312</sup> Eventually this would lead to the birth of a superman, a kind of Antichrist figure. At this point Social Darwinism combined with Nietzscheanism and paganism and anti-semitism to form a lethal mixture that justified the extermination of lower races for the sake of the ultimate triumph of the master race.

Hitler’s anti-semitism influenced and distorted his judgement on many issues. Thus when Stalin sacked his Jewish foreign minister, Litvinov, Hitler saw this as a sign that he could be trusted – and therefore agreed to the

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<sup>311</sup> Pipes, op. cit., p. 258. See Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917-1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2005; and the review of the book by Michael Hoffman, “The Russian Roots of Nazism”, *Revisionist History*, N 39, January, 2006, pp. 1-5.

<sup>312</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazism\\_and\\_race](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazism_and_race)

Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. It has even been argued that the central mistake of his life – the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 – was dictated by his hatred of the Jews. For it was in Poland and the Soviet Union that the main concentration of European Jewry was found.

“We are not a movement,” said Hitler, “rather we are a religion. It is more even than a religion. It is the will to create mankind anew...”<sup>313</sup> – that is, a mankind purified from all the “bacilli” of Jewish blood.

So just as the Soviets wanted “to create mankind anew” with *Homo Sovieticus*, and the liberal West with *Homo Illuminatus*, so did the Nazis with *Homo Aryanis*... The idea of the recreation of human nature was not a new idea. It goes back to the Enlightenment, and is common to all the varieties of the humanist faith of the Enlightenment philosophers.

Thus Yuval Noah Harari sees Hitler’s doctrine as a species of *evolutionary humanism*, to range alongside liberal humanism and socialist humanism. “Like liberal humanism, socialist humanism is built on monotheist foundations. The idea that all humans are equal is a revamped version of the monotheist conviction that all souls are equal before God. The only humanist sect that has actually broken loose from traditional monotheism is evolutionary humanism, whose most famous representatives are the Nazis. What distinguished the Nazis from other humanist sects was a different definition of ‘humanity’, one deeply influenced by the theory of evolution. In contrast to the other humanists, the Nazis believed that humankind is not something universal and eternal, but rather a mutable species that can evolve or degenerate. Man can evolve into superman, or degenerate into a subhuman.

“The main ambition of the Nazis was to protect humankind from degeneration and encourage its progressive evolution. This is why the Nazis said that the Aryan race, the most advanced form of humanity, had to be protected and fostered, while degenerate kinds of *Homo Sapiens* like Jews, Roma, homosexuals and the mentally ill had to be quarantined and even exterminated. The Nazis explained that *Homo Sapiens* itself appeared when one ‘superior’ population of ancient humans evolved, whereas ‘inferior’ populations such as the Neanderthals became extinct. These different populations were at first no more than different races, but developed independently along their own evolutionary paths. This might well happen again. According to the Nazis, *Homo Sapiens* had already divided into several distinct races, each with its own unique qualities. One of those races, the Aryan race, had the finest qualities – rationalism, beauty, integrity, diligence. The Aryan race therefore had the potential to turn man into superman. Other races, such as Jews and blacks, were today’s Neanderthals, possessing inferior qualities. If allowed to breed, and in particular to intermarry with Aryans, they would adulterate all human populations and doom *Homo Sapiens* to extinction.

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<sup>313</sup> Hitler, in Jonathan Glover, *Humanity. A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1999, p. 315.



“Biologists have since debunked Nazi racial theory. In particular, genetic research conducted since 1945 has demonstrated that the differences between the various human lineages are far smaller than the Nazis postulated. But these conclusions are relatively new. Given the state of scientific knowledge in 1933, Nazi beliefs were hardly outside the pale. The existence of different human races, the superiority of the white race, and the need to protect and cultivate this superior race were widely held beliefs among most Western elites. Scholars in the most prestigious Western universities, using the orthodox scientific methods of the day, published studies that allegedly proved that members of the white race were more intelligent, more ethical and more skilled than Africans or Indians. Politicians in Washington, London and Canberra took it for granted that it was their job to prevent the adulteration and degeneration of the white race, by, for example, restricting immigration from China or even Italy to ‘Aryan’ countries such as the USA and Australia.

“These positions did not change simply because new scientific research was published. Sociological and political developments were far more powerful instruments of change. In this sense, Hitler dug not just his own grave but that of racism in general. When he launched the Second World War, he compelled his enemies to make clear distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Afterwards, precisely because Nazi ideology was so racist, racism became discredited in the West. But the change took time. White supremacy remained a mainstream ideology in American politics at least until the 1960s. The White Australia policy which restricted immigration of non-white people to Australia remained in force until 1973. Aboriginal Australians did not receive equal political rights until the 1960s, and most were prevented from voting in elections because they were deemed unfit to function as citizens...”<sup>314</sup>

In 1930, the novelist Thomas Mann, who was a Christian married to a Jewess, “gave a high-profile “Address to the Germans: An Appeal to Reason”. “The anti-semitism of today,” he said, “is... nothing but a wrench to unscrew, bit by bit, the whole machinery of our civilization.” Mann argued that the Nazis’ attack on the Jews was “but a starting signal for a general drive against the foundations of Christianity, that humanitarian creed for which we are forever indebted to the people of the Holy Writ, originated in the old Mediterranean world. What we are witnessing today is nothing else than the ever-recurrent revolt of unconquered pagan instincts, protesting against the restrictions imposed by the Ten Commandments...”<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 258-260.

<sup>315</sup> Mann, in *History, Literature*, June 6, 2013.

## 25. ROOSEVELT'S NEW DEAL

The depth of America's collapse in the Depression was the more striking in that she seemed to possess major advantages over every other Great Power: geographical isolation from the European and Asian war zones, virtual economic self-sufficiency, huge financial reserves, a high standard of living and high productivity... It only served to demonstrate that, where God wills, the richest and most powerful nation can be plunged into poverty. In America's case, her sensuality, riotous living and failure significantly to help her own or Europe's paupers in the days of her prosperity clearly attracted the wrath of God.

But not for long... In God's Providence America was destined to be the power that, more than any other, destroyed Nazi totalitarianism during the Second World War (the Soviet war effort could not have been maintained without massive American aid) and contained the threat of Soviet totalitarianism after it. For during the Depression her productive capacity remained *under-utilized* rather than destroyed. But a different kind of leader was needed to utilize it...

Economic salvation for the United States came with a new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Paralyzed by polio several years before, he now raised a paralyzed nation to its feet again economic policies were not that different from those of his predecessor (they were both interventionists), but whose sunny character was different.

Roosevelt's inauguration as president on March 4, 1933, like Hitler's inauguration as German chancellor only a few days later, had an energizing effect on his people. But it was a different kind of energy... Certainly, the economy needed energizing: "No one has ever reckoned with certainty," writes Hugh Brogan, "the number of unemployed on Inauguration Day, 1933 [in America]: estimates vary from twelve to sixteen million - say, a quarter of the labour force."<sup>316</sup> But Roosevelt's remedies worked. On April 6, only one month into his presidency, he abolished prohibition of alcohol. The nation's mood immediately lifted...

"This great Nation," he said, "will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

Indeed, it was a fact that fear - and its opposite, self-confidence - are the short-term determinants of the prosperity of man.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 2019, p. 540.

<sup>317</sup> A point wittily illustrated in the Gregory Peck comedy, *The Million Pound Note* (1954).

“America’s new president,” writes David Reynolds, “understood the power of confidence to vanquish fear and that became the watchword of his presidency. It was needed in his very first crisis: how to get the banking system going again. Using the dubious pretext of the wartime Trading with the Enemy Act, the president declared a three-day Bank Holiday during which Treasury officials worked round the clock to draw up a list of which banks could open for business again and which were so rickety that they should be shut down for good. To cover the expected dash for cash when the banks reopened the Federal Reserve was authorized to issue additional notes. These emergency measures were passed by the House of Representatives in less than forty minutes, sight unseen – the Speaker read out the bill from the one available draft...

“When the banks reopened, to general amazement deposits far exceeded withdrawals. Roosevelt, the political artist, had pulled off the trick in a way Hoover, the dour technocrat, never could have. In legislation passed during a congressional session from 9 March to 16 June 1933 which was dubbed the ‘Hundred Days’ FDR went on to honour the Democrats’ election pledge to end Prohibition and its sordid underworld of bootleg liquor and violent crime. Congress and the states quickly amended the Constitution and beer became legal again within a month of Roosevelt’s inauguration. By April the national mood was upbeat and positive – testament that the Depression was in part a psychological malaise.

“By the summer Congress had addressed the fundamentals of the banking system, at the heart of the nation’s crisis of confidence. The Glass-Steagall Act of June 1933 established a system of federal insurance for bank deposits, initially set at \$2,500 per account but raised over the years. The Act also separated investment banks (engaged in the capital markets) from commercial banks (handling loans and deposits) because a blurring of the line, it was believed, had contributed to the Crash [of 1929] and Depression. This legal demarcation remained in place until 1999; its removal... led in part to the financial crisis of 2008...”<sup>318</sup>

The National Recovery Act, passed on June 16, “gave Roosevelt extraordinary powers, unprecedented in the United States in peacetime”.<sup>319</sup> And those extra powers were successfully challenged in the Supreme Court as being unconstitutional. But it worked: the American economy spluttered into life; already by the summer of 1933 it was on the road to recovery.

The main reason why national recovery was slow in coming was that Roosevelt’s “New Deal” had no international dimension. Thus he “made it clear, in breaking up the proposed world economic conference in July 1933, that

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<sup>318</sup> Reynolds, *America: Empire of Liberty*, London: Penguin, 2010, pp. 344-346.

<sup>319</sup> Martin Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2: 1933-1951, London: HarperCollins, 1998, p. 28.

his New Deal was incompatible with a negotiated world trading system: he stood for 'Capitalism in One Country' just as Stalin stood for 'Socialism in One Country'. This isolation was formalized in 1935 when a Democratic Congress passed the Neutrality Act."<sup>320</sup>

Thus while Roosevelt's New Deal placed America on the *road* to recovery, the end of the road was not reached for a long time. It came, paradoxically, only with the outbreak of world war and the huge fillip that war gave to American industrial production. As Varoufakis writes, "it took industrial-scale carnage (aka the Second World War), and similarly sized public 'investment' in mega-death, to lift the world economy out of the slump."<sup>321</sup> In Europe, meanwhile, Germany was the only country to emerge fully from the Depression; German "recovery was 'due more to Mr. Hitler than to Mr. Keynes'"<sup>322</sup> In Britain, recovery began with rearmament in 1936. So all the major capitalist and fascist economies recovered through rearmament – which is ironic in view of the fact that the main political movement in the West at that time, outside Germany, was for disarmament...

It was not just the misery created by unemployment in a country whose fiercely individualistic capitalist system had prevented the creation of a welfare state. One of Roosevelt's main helpers, Harry Hopkins, declared "the perfectly sound principle that the souls of the reliefers must be saved as well as their bodies. Proud and individualistic Americans found going on the dole a horribly humiliating experience. It involved a means test; it was a confession of failure; once it was accepted it tended (many thought) to become narcotic: its recipients lost the will, the hope to seek work again. This last point was dubious, for most of the reliefers jumped at the chance of earning. Hopkins saw to it that they got the chance..."<sup>323</sup>

In any case, in the mid-1930s the economy was still some way from full recovery. "Unlike in Germany," writes Neil Ferguson, "in the United States the Depression was not yet over in 1938. On the contrary, after four years of recovery, the economy had slumped back into recession in the second half of 1937. In October 1937 the stock market had capitulated. 'We are headed right into another Depression,' Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau warned. From peak to trough, stocks fell by a third. Industrial production slumped 40 percent. Roosevelt and his sidekicks complained of a 'capitalist strike'; the capitalists retorted that the New Deal had created too much uncertainty for business to invest with confidence. The New Dealers within the administration blamed monetary and fiscal tightening for the 'Roosevelt Recession'. The most influential American Keynesian, Harvard's Alvin H. Hansen, argued in his 1938 track, *Full Recovery or Stagnation*, that only massive government deficits could maintain full employment – and certainly, it took the approach of war

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<sup>320</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 344.

<sup>321</sup> Varoufakis, *The Global Minotaur*, London: Zed Books, 2013, p. 45.

<sup>322</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2014, p. 675.

<sup>323</sup> Brogan, *op. cit.*, p. 542.

and unprecedented public borrowing to generate recovery. From the vantage point of Republicans, however, deficits were one of the things eroding business confidence. Meanwhile, the still-large agricultural sector of the economy languished. Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor captured the agony of the economic migration from the Dust Bowl in *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*, published in 1938."<sup>324</sup>

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What effect did Roosevelt's New Deal have on the struggle for power in Europe?

In Europe, democracy was in a bad condition; having no positive content of its own, it was tossed to and fro between the extremes of Left and Right. Thus in Britain, T.S. Eliot opined that "the present system does not work properly, and more and more people are inclined to believe that it never did and never will".<sup>325</sup> But the British Mussolini, Sir Oswald Mosley, failed to ignite a fire in Britain, and the country, though deeply affected by the Depression, "preserved a relative equilibrium without benefit of a New Deal, let alone a Five Year Plan. [However,] Riots shook France, a socialist uprising convulsed Austria, bitter strife racked Spain, terrorism did its bloody work in Germany and Italy, 'government by assassination' prevailed in Japan."<sup>326</sup>

The comparative success of the New Deal helped revive democracy in the New World. It wasn't just that the economy recovered. Faith in government, which faltered during the Depression as gangsters and bank robbers like Bonnie and Clyde became attractive and popular, recovered also.

"Nevertheless," writes Brendon, "critics, some of whom had earlier called for a dictatorship, damned Roosevelt for having established one. This charge, which reveals much about the power of ideas to transcend reality, soon became the common currency of polite conversation. It was repeated in the press, most rabidly by Colonel Robert R. McCormick's *Chicago Tribune*, which described Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler and Roosevelt as the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. It was first heard from the pulpit in the summer of 1933, when Roosevelt was denounced as a 'dictator' by the President of the Church of Latter-day Saints. Similarities can be adduced, it is true, between Roosevelt's remedies for the Depression and those of fascist and Communist leaders. FDR himself said that he was doing, in a more orderly way, 'some of the things that were being done in Russia and even some of the things that were being done under Hitler in Germany'. The President built highways while the Führer built *autobahns*. Roosevelt regarded the CCC work camps as a means of getting young people 'off the city street corners'; Hitler described similar projects as a way to keep the youth from 'rotting helplessly in the streets'. When Roosevelt refused to

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<sup>324</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, p. 83.

<sup>325</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>326</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

cooperate at the World Economic Conference of June 1933 – he feared its attempt to stabilise international currency would interfere with his price-raising efforts in the United States – Hjalmar Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, congratulated him for being an economic nationalist like the Führer. He may even have been influenced by writers such as Stuart Chase, populariser of the term ‘New Deal’, who likened Communism to ‘the flaming sword of Allah’ seen ‘over the plains of Mecca’.

“However, Roosevelt’s diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union in November 1933 was not prompted by any ideological sympathy. On the contrary, religious Americans went so far as to hope that he had ‘restored God to Russia’. In fact the President wanted good relations with the USSR to counter Japan and to promote trade. At home he was clearly trying to preserve the American way of life. His version of the planned economy was not socialism but state capitalism...

“Equally, the President was repelled by Hitler’s organised savagery, especially as expressed in war-mongering and anti-Semitism – though in practice FDR would do as little to succour German Jews as to assist American blacks. As chief of the world’s greatest trading nation he did not, like Hitler and Mussolini, lust for autarky; though at a time when European states were refusing to pay their war debts Roosevelt was inclined to ignore the warning of his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that economic wars are the germs of real wars. While the President was influenced by isolationism – he wrecked the World Economic Conference with his bombshell message urging each nation to set its own house in order – he aspired (as his later policies showed) towards internationalism. Furthermore, Roosevelt’s New Deal hardly compares in essentials with Hitler’s *Gleichschaltung* (coordination). The Blue Eagle could not be mistaken for the swastika. The fireside chat was the antithesis of the Nuremberg rally. Organised labour flourished under Roosevelt whereas Hitler smashed the trade unions. Roosevelt’s manipulation of the media bore no relation to the national brainwashing attempted by Goebbels. The President did not possess, as the *New York Times* sagely observed, ‘a private army of, say, 2,000,000 Blueshirts’. The American constitution remained intact. No senators were sent to concentration camps; no congressmen were forcibly fed on castor oil. True, there were Americans who believed that a little castor oil might have started the wheels of industry going, not least the red-necked, red-suspended, Red-hating Governor Eugene Talmadge of Georgia. But Roosevelt organised no ‘Fascist movement’ – a vital necessity, in the opinion of Sir Oswald Mosley, if the President were to become a *bona fide* dictator.”<sup>327</sup>

Thus Roosevelt avoided revolution (whether fascist or otherwise) by a heavy injection of state capitalism (even if his enemies called it “socialism”), proving thereby that, at least as regards the economy, the big state could work without destroying democracy or engendering the terrible cruelty seen in Germany or the Soviet Union. And this in a country that, more than any other, believed in

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<sup>327</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 232-233.

private enterprise... Tsar Nicholas had shown that the big state could do real good for the ordinary people when ruled by a true Christian – but was not thanked for it. Roosevelt, who considered himself a Christian and a Democrat, did something similar – and received only a little more gratitude (at the time, at any rate).

The same was true of his main co-workers. Thus Harold Ickes, writes Hugh Brogan, “was widely regarded as Roosevelt’s evil genius, but this former social worker from Iowa, with his selfless passion for the public service... rendered, in peace as in war, ‘a service to his country which will never even vaguely be appreciated’ because it was, literally, incalculable...”<sup>328</sup>

While Roosevelt was that, while he was not always consistent, he did not allow the dogmas of American individualism, or self-help capitalism to interfere with his determination to save his people from the most primitive threat, death by starvation. And this, argues Brendon, “was the only issue that mattered, despite the international gloom precipitated by Japan’s seizure of Manchuria, Italy’s attack on Ethiopia and Germany’s occupation of the Rhineland. These events, indeed, strengthened the traditional American determination to avoid foreign entanglements. Furthermore, isolationism was reinforced by pacifism, by hostility to the military establishment so bitter that officers in the War Department worked in civilian clothes, and by revulsion against arms dealers, who were denounced as ‘high priests of war’ and ‘death’s recruiting agent’. Roosevelt himself hankered for collective security. But he could not ignore the isolationist spirit, pithily expressed by Senator Thomas D. Schall: ‘To Hell with Europe and with the rest of those nations.’ And he signed the Neutrality Acts (1935-7), which were designed to keep the United States out of future wars – a move which the likes of Hitler and Mussolini welcomed as clearing the decks for their own aggression. The fact was that Roosevelt needed the support of the isolationists to carry through the New Deal. To defeat the Depression at home he stood aloof from the foreign fray. He sacrificed the alien scapegoat to the domestic underdog. And America applauded his compassion...”<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Brogan, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

<sup>329</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.

## 26. REBELS AGAINST FASCISM: GRAMSCI AND DE GASPERI

The Italian communist, Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), was the real founder of the modern movement known as “cultural Marxism”, becoming in the longer term as influential as any orthodox Fascist or Communist thinker or leader of the period.

As Angelo M. Codevilla writes, Gramsci was “a brilliant Communist theoretician for whom ‘cultural hegemony’ is the very purpose of the struggle as well as its principal instrument. His writings envisage a totalitarianism that eliminates the very possibility of cultural resistance to progressivism. But owing more to Machiavelli than to Marx or Lenin, they are more than a little complex about the means and are far from identical with the raw sort of power over culture enforced by the Soviet Empire or, for that matter, that is rife among us today...”

Although Gramsci died before the war, he became influential only later. “Gramsci started from mixed philosophical premises. First, orthodox Marxism: ‘There is no such thing as “human nature,” fixed and immutable,’ he wrote. Rather, ‘human nature is the sum of historically determined social relationships.’ The modern prince’s job is to change it. Wholly unorthodox, however, was his scorn for Marxism’s insistence that economic factors are fundamental while all else is superstructural. No, ‘stuff like that is for common folk,’ a ‘little formula’ for ‘half-baked intellectuals who don’t want to work their brains.’ For Gramsci, economic relations were just one part of social reality, the chief parts of which were intellectual and moral...”

“Gramsci co-founded Italy’s Communist Party in 1921. In 1926, Mussolini jailed him. By the time he died eleven years later, he had composed twelve ‘prison notebooks.’ In private correspondence, he criticized Stalin’s literary judgment and deemed his attacks on Leon Trotsky ‘irresponsible and dangerous.’ But publicly, he supported every turn of the Soviet Party line—even giving his party boss, Palmiro Togliatti, authority to modify his writings. Imprisoned and in failing health, he was intellectually freer and physically safer than if he had been exposed to the intra-Communist purges that killed so many of his comrades.

“Gramsci’s concept of ‘cultural hegemony’ also swung both ways. Its emphasis on transforming the enemy rather than killing him outright was at odds with the Communist Party’s brute-force approach. His focus on cultural matters, reversing as it did the standard distinction between structure and superstructure, suggested belief in the mind’s autonomy. On the other hand, the very idea of persuading minds not through reasoning on what is true and false, good and bad, according to nature, but rather by creating a new historical reality, is precisely what he shares with Marx and... with the fountainhead of modern thought, Niccolò Machiavelli.



“Gramsci turned to Machiavelli more than to Marx to discover how best to replace the existing order and to secure that replacement. Chapter V of Machiavelli’s *The Prince* stated that ‘the only secure way’ to control a people who had been accustomed to live under its own laws is to destroy it. But Machiavelli’s objective was to conquer people through their minds, not to destroy them. In Chapter VI of *The Prince* he wrote that nothing is more difficult than to establish ‘new modes and orders,’ that this requires ‘persuading’ peoples of certain things, that it is necessary ‘when they no longer believe to make them believe by force,’ and that this is especially difficult for ‘unarmed prophets.’ But Machiavelli also wrote that, if such prophets succeed in inculcating a new set of beliefs, they can count on being ‘powerful, secure, honored and happy.’ He clarified this insight in *Discourses on Livy* Book II, chapter 5: ‘when it happens that the founders of the new religion speak a different language, the destruction of the old religion is easily effected.’ The Machiavellian revolutionary, then, must inculcate new ways of thinking and speaking that amount to a new language. In the *Discourse Upon Our Language*, Machiavelli had compared using one’s own language to infiltrate the enemy’s thoughts with Rome’s use of its own troops to control allied armies. This is the template that Gramsci superimposed on the problems of the Communist revolution – a template made by one ‘unarmed prophet’ for use by others.

“Machiavelli is the point of departure in a section of Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* that describes how the party is to rule as “the modern prince.” But the modern prince’s task is so big that it can be undertaken seriously only by a party (in some 50 references he leaves out the word ‘Communist’), which he defines as “an organism; a complex, collective element of society which has already begun to crystallize as a collective will that has become conscious of itself through action.” This prince, this party, has to be “the organizer and the active expression of moral and intellectual reform...that cannot be tied to an economic program.” Rather, when economic reform grows out of moral and intellectual reform, from “germs of collective will that tend to become universal and total,” then it can become the basis of the secularization of all life and custom.

“The party-prince accomplishes this by being Jacobin ‘in the historic and conceptual sense.’ Gramsci writes: ‘that is what Machiavelli meant by reform of the militia, which the Jacobins did in the French Revolution.’ The party must gather consensus from each of society’s discrete parts by persuading – inducing – people who had never thought of such things to join in ways of life radically different from their own. The party develops ‘its organized force’ by a ‘minutely careful, molecular, capillary process manifested in an endless quantity of books and pamphlets, of articles in magazines and newspapers, and by personal debates repeated infinitely and which, in their gigantic altogether, comprise the work out of which arises a collective will with a certain homogeneity.’

“Which is it then for Gramsci? Does the party inspire or perhaps cajole consensus – or does it force it? His answer is ambiguous: ‘Machiavelli affirms

rather clearly that the state is to be run by fixed principles by which virtuous citizens can live secure against arbitrary treatment. Justly, however, Machiavelli reduces all to politics, to the art of governing men, of assuring their permanent consensus.' The matter, he writes, must be regarded from the "'double perspective" ...[that] corresponds to the double nature of Machiavelli's centaur, beastly and human, of force and consensus, of authority and hegemony... of tactics and strategy.' Indeed that is Machiavelli's point: whatever it takes.

"The key to Gramsci's generalities and subtleties is to be found in his gingerly discussion of the relationship between the party and Christianity. 'Although other political parties may no longer exist, there will always exist de facto parties or tendencies... in such parties, cultural matters predominate... hence, political controversies take on cultural forms and, as such, tend to become irresolvable.' Translation: the progressive party-state (the party acting as a government, the government acting as a party) cannot escape the role of authoritative – perhaps forceful – mediator of societal conflicts having to do with cultural matters and must see to it that they are resolved its way.

"Specifically: as Gramsci was writing, Mussolini's 1929 Concordat with the Vatican was proving to be his most successful political manoeuvre. By removing the formal enmity between the Church and the post-French-Revolution state, making Catholicism the state religion and paying its hierarchy, Mussolini had turned Italy's most pervasive cultural institution from an enemy to a friendly vassal. Thousands of priests and millions of their flock would bend thoughts, words, and deeds to fit the party-state's definition of good citizenship. Gramsci described the post-Concordat Church as having 'become an integral part of the State, of political society monopolized by a certain privileged group that aggregated the Church unto itself the better to sustain its monopoly with the support of that part of civil society represented by the Church.' A morally and intellectually compromised Church in the fascist state's hands, Mussolini hoped and Gramsci feared, would redefine its teachings and its social presence to fascist specifications. The alternative to this subversion – denigrating and restricting the Church in the name of fascism – would have pushed many Catholics to embrace their doctrine's fundamentals ever more tightly in opposition to the party. The Concordat was the effective template for the rest of what Mussolini called the corporate state.

"Gramsci called the same phenomenon a '*blocco storico*,' historic bloc, that aggregates society's various sectors under the party-state's direction. The intellectuals, said Gramsci, are the *blocco's* leading element. In any given epoch they weld workers, peasants, the church, and other groups into a unit in which the people live and move and have their being, and from within which it is difficult if not impossible to imagine alternatives. Power, used judiciously, acts on people the way the sun acts on sunflowers. Within this bloc, ideas may retain their names while changing in substance, while a new language grows organically. As Gramsci noted, Machiavelli had argued that language is the key to the mastery of consciousness - a mastery more secure than anything that

force alone can achieve. But note that Machiavelli's metaphors on linguistic warfare all refer to violence. How much force does it take to make this historic bloc cohere and to keep recalcitrants in it? Gramsci's silence seems to say; 'whatever may be needed.' After all, Mussolini used as much as he thought *he* needed.

"In sum, Mussolini, not Stalin; forceful seduction, not rape, is Gramsci's practical advice regarding 'cultural hegemony.' Gramsci means to replace Western culture by subverting it, by doing what it takes to compel it to redefine itself, rather than by picking fights with it..."

"The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters", said Gramsci. He himself made a significant contribution to its monstrosity, although not so much in his own generation as in later ones. For, following his lead, beginning in the 1960s, Cultural Marxists accomplished a "march through the institutions" of western society of such destructive power that it threatened the complete collapse of western civilization...

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Gramsci's Cultural Marxism is not the only important movement generated in opposition to Mussolini's fascism. Another, almost its polar opposite, was the Christian Democratic movement of the future Italian Prime Minister, Alcide de Gasperi (1891-1954). With the German chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, he could be said to have founded European Christian Democracy after the Second World War. "Both were men from the borders [De Gasperi from Trentino, Adenauer from the Rhineland], devout Catholics, anti-nationalists, men who revered the family as the social unit, hated the state (except as a minimal, regrettable necessity), and believed the most important characteristic of organized society to be the rule of law, which must reflect Natural Law, that is the ascendancy of absolute values. In short they set their faces against many of the salient features of the twentieth century. And theirs were obstinate faces, strange faces. A terrible accident in 1917 had given Adenauer's the impassiveness of a cigar-store Indian. De Gasperi, like Adenauer, tall and excessively thin in youth, faced life with the scowl of a guard-dog. Both were confederalists. Adenauer represented the polycentrist Germany of the Holy Roman Empire, de Gasperi - the northern Italy of the Habsburgs.

"De Gasperi, indeed, was born under Austrian rule. As his father commanded the local gendarmerie, he felt a secular loyalty to a royal house rather than a nation state. But his primary allegiance was spiritual. Throughout his life he went to Mass every day if possible. In the remarkable letter proposing marriage to his future wife, Francesca Romani, in 1921, he wrote: 'The personality of the living Christ pulls me, enslaves me and comforts me as though I were a child. Come, I want you with me, to be drawn to that same attraction, as though to an abyss of light.' He went to Vienna University and admired the city's famous mayor, Karl Lueger, though for quite different reasons to Hitler. He believed Lueger had indicated ways in which the 'social

encyclicals' of the more progressive popes could be realized. His formation was thus German Catholic populism and his earlier writing was in the Austrian Catholic paper, the *Reichspost*. De Gasperi, indeed, was almost immune to the two great diseases of modern times: ethnic nationalism and the belief that states based upon it can be transformed into Utopias. In his first speech, made in Trento in 1902, he urged his listeners: 'Be Catholic first, then Italian!' He said he 'deplored' the 'idolization' of the nation and the *religione della patria*. His motto was: 'Catholic, Italian, then democratic' - in that order.

"Hence de Gasperi was the natural antipode to Mussolini. The two men debated 'Socialism in History' in a Merano beer-hall in 1909, Mussolini urging the need for violence, de Gasperi the necessity for basing political action on absolute principle. He had to leave early to catch a train, followed to the door by Mussolini's fluent jeers. He called de Gasperi: 'A man of slovenly, ungrammatical prose, a superficial man who invokes an Austrian timetable to avoid embarrassing debate.' De Gasperi, for his part, never recognized in Mussolini anything except a destructive radical: 'Bolshevism is black', as he put it.<sup>330</sup> His own *Partito Popolare Trentino* was welcomed by Don Luigi Sturzo into the Catholic Popular Party, which might have ruled inter-war Italy but for Mussolini's *putsch*. De Gasperi disliked Italian parliamentary politics ('an equestrian circus'), with their theatricals and oratorical tricks, which he always spurned. But he hated the big totalitarian state still more. As he said to the last *Partito Popolare* National Congress, 28 June 1925: 'The theoretical and practical principles of fascism are the antithesis of the Christian concept of the state, which lays down that the natural rights of personality, family and society exist before the State.' Fascism was just 'the old Police State reappearing in disguise, holding over Christian institutions the sword of Damocles'. Hauled before a fascist tribunal in November 1926, he insisted: 'It is the very concept of the fascist state I cannot accept. For there are natural rights which the state cannot trample upon.' De Gasperi was lucky: Mussolini threw him into the Regina Coeli prison in 1927. He might not have survived the regime any more than Gramsci. But the signature of the Lateran Treaty in 1929 enabled Pius XI to get de Gasperi out of custody into the Vatican library, where he was sheltered for the next fourteen years.

"Hence when fascism collapsed, de Gasperi was the only unsullied major figure to offer the Italian people an alternative to it which was not another form of statism..."<sup>331</sup>

De Gasperi was one of the last of the old-fashioned type of politician for whom Christianity was more important than politics, and who sought to make his politics serve his Christianity. Hence he became Italy's most respected and

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<sup>330</sup> In 1937 he declared that the German Church was correct in preferring Nazism to Bolshevism. (V.M.)

<sup>331</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 577-579.

longest-serving post-war leader, steering his country away both from the black-shirted fascists and from “black Bolshevism”...

## 27. THE JAPANESE INVASION OF CHINA

Japan had a collectivist, statist ethic that rejected the rights of the individual and made the country psychologically akin to the totalitarian dictatorships of Europe. For as the Ministry of Justice put it, "human beings, while having their independent existence and life, depend in a deeper sense on the whole and live in co-ordinated relationship with each other. They are born from the state, sustained by the state and brought up in the traditions and history of the state. Individuals can only exist as links in an infinite and vast chain of life called the state; they are links through whom the inheritance of ancestors is handed down to posterity... Individuals participate in the highest and greatest value when they serve the state as part of it."<sup>332</sup>

From the beginning of the 1930s the Japanese embarked on a programme of expansion that was related to rivalry with Britain, its poverty in raw materials (food and oil), and to the Depression. "Certainly Japan, the newest industrial nation, was catching up with Britain, the oldest, at an extraordinary rate between the wars. The Land of the Rising Sun actually seemed capable of eclipsing the empire on which the sun never set. But the Far Eastern colossus was to be seriously hurt by the Depression. Accordingly Japan became the first major power during the 1930s to export its aggression...

"The Depression smashed the liberal, parliamentary, internationalist consensus which had, broadly speaking, prevailed in Japan during the 1920s. Many people concluded that if democracy led to dissension, patriots should follow *Kodo*, the Imperial Way. If laissez-faire caused chaos, authoritarianism should impose order. If free trade and cooperation with the West produced crises like that of 1929, the Japanese should embrace economic nationalism and political chauvinism. Moreover, if orthodox deflationary policies resulted in massive social hardship, the State should intervene, financing its ameliorative efforts with loans. Thus the scene was set for a revolution in the affairs of Nippon."<sup>333</sup>

Japan already had 10,000 troops in Kwantung, the region leased from China that Japan won from Russia in 1905. This was the platform from which China and the Far East was to be conquered. "The first stage of Japan's divine mission was to secure the Orient for Orientals, to enforce (as Kito Ikki recommended) 'an Asian Monroe doctrine'. China was a woman while Japan was a man, nationalists intoned; the Japanese were people of clay while the Chinese were people of sand. As a preliminary, however, Japan would have to overwhelm Manchuria, itself a holy land 'consecrated by the sacrifice of one hundred thousand brothers who shed their blood in the war led by the great Meiji emperor'."<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 312-313.

<sup>333</sup> Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, pp. 173, 177.

<sup>334</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

The Japanese economy had been damaged by the tariff wall erected by America against foreign imports. And now, as Antony Beevor writes: "Anti-western feeling grew with the effects of the Wall Street Crash and the worldwide depression. And an increasingly nationalistic officer class viewed Manchuria and China in a similar way to the Nazis' designs on the Soviet Union: as a landmass and a population to be subjugated to feed the home islands of Japan..."

"In September 1931, the Japanese military created the Mukden Incident, in which they blew up a railway to justify their seizure of the whole of Manchuria. They hoped to turn the regime into a major food-producing region as their own domestic agriculture had declined disastrously. They called it Manchukuo and set up a puppet regime, with the deposed [Qing] emperor Henry Pu Yi as figurehead. The civilian government in Tokyo, although despised by officers, felt obliged to support the army. And the League of Nations in Geneva refused Chinese calls for sanctions against Japan. Japanese colonists, mainly peasants, poured in to seize land for themselves with the government's encouragement. It wanted 'one million households' established as colonial farmers over the next twenty years. Japan's actions left it isolated diplomatically, but the country exulted in its triumph. This marked the start of a fateful progression, both in foreign expansion and in military influence over the government in Tokyo..."<sup>335</sup>

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The Japanese had refused to sign the Geneva Convention of 1929 and the people had been taught to hate foreigners in general.

Thus later Japanese atrocities, writes Paul Ham, "involved American soldiers: on the Bataan Death March, for example, 2330 American and 7000 Filipino prisoners died of starvation, sickness, torture and execution after General Douglas MacArthur's forces surrendered to the Japanese in the Philippines on 9 April 1942. 'To show mercy is to prolong the war,' was how the *Japan Times* justified the general treatment of prisoners at the time..."

"A series of spectacular military triumphs had persuaded many ordinary Japanese of their sacred destiny - to rule the world. By 1945 this notion relied on a mystical faith in Japanese 'spirit', the residual delusion of four decades of unbeaten conquest. In 1894, the Meiji Emperor looked out from his headquarters in Hiroshima, the point of his troops' embarkation and triumphal return, flushed with pride after victory in the first modern war with China. Greater laurels awaited the armies of Nippon: only the fall of Singapore in 1942 would imbue the Imperial name with greater reverence than Japan's defeat of Russia in 1904-05..."

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<sup>335</sup> Beevor, *The Second World War*, London: Phoenix, 2014, p. 8.

“Throughout Japan’s military expansion, the Imperial forces claimed to be acting in the Emperor’s name, or with the Emperor’s tacit approval. Since the 1920s, the Japanese people had been taught to believe in the policy of military expansion as the divine right of Nippon, an expression of the Imperial Will. In the 1930s, Tokyo’s newly minted propagandists dusted down the ancient idea of the Emperor’s divinity. *The Essence of the Kokutai* (the Imperial state), published in 1937 by the Thought Bureau of the Ministry of Education, described the Emperor as a deity in whom the blood of all Japan ran, back to Jimmu and the Sun Goddess. ‘Our country is a divine country’ stressed *The Essence*, ‘governed by an Emperor who is a deity incarnate.’ Belief in the *Kokutai* became orthodoxy.

“Hirohito, accordingly, despite his diminutive appearance, shrill voice and spectacles, embodied the power of the sun, ‘the eternal essence of his subjects and the imperial land’. He existed at the heart of Japanese identity. The people worshipped him as *Tenno Heiko*, the ‘Son of Heaven’, and a divine monarch. Their adoration of the Emperor cannot be understated: killing or removing him dismembered the body and soul of the nation; the rough equivalent of the crucifixion of Christ.”<sup>336</sup>

This pagan faith shows how superficial had been Japan’s westernization programme, assimilating the technological achievements of European civilization, but not its deeper beliefs. Except, that is, those beliefs linked to Europe’s recent return to paganism in the form of communism and fascism... And so, in imitation of the Gestapo and the KGB, “in the 1940s, ‘Thought Prosecutors’ roamed the cities under the control of the Justice Ministry, ferreting out ‘dangerous thinkers’ – pacifists, leftists, journalists and Koreans. Meanwhile, Special Higher Police (*tokko ka*), deployed under the Peace Preservation Law, monitored the mind as well as the voice of Japan. That meant throttling the expression of both. In 1944, a *Mainichi* reporter thoughtfully asked in an article, ‘Can Japan Defeat America with Bamboo Spears?’ A furious [Prime Minister] Tojo had the miscreant dispatched to China. Persistent dissidents were tortured. But few challenged the censorship laws. Between 1928 and 1945, only 5000 people were found guilty of violating the Peace Preservation Law. In 1934, the peak year, 14,822 were arrested and 1285, prosecuted; in 1943, those figures were 159 and 52 respectively...

“By 1945, most Japanese had become compliant self-censurers who rallied around the war effort. State-approved intellectuals applauded the war as a sacred cause against ‘Anglo-Saxon exploitation’. Poets eagerly volunteered to recite their haiku in factories and at the front. Newspaper editors exulted in news of victory and distorted evidence of looming defeat...”<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Ham, *Hiroshima Nagasaki*, London: Doubleday, 2011, pp. 12, 15-16, 17.

<sup>337</sup> Ham, *op. cit.*, p. 20.



The Japanese occupation of Manchuria placed an important part of the Russian emigration in great spiritual danger in what was in effect a militantly pagan country. In the autumn of 1940 the Japanese passed a new law forbidding foreigners to lead religious organizations. Metropolitan Sergei (Tikhomirov) was forced to retire. But in March, 1941 Protopriest Ioann (Ono) was consecrated by ROCOR bishops in Japan as Bishop Nicholas, the first Japanese Orthodox bishop. On his return, some parishioners rejected him. However, with the help of the retired Metropolitan Sergei, the believers were pacified.<sup>338</sup> Then, in Harbin, in May, 1943, the Japanese placed a statue of their goddess Amateras, the supposed foundress of the imperial race, directly opposite the Orthodox cathedral of St. Nicholas, and demanded that Russians going to church in the cathedral should first make a "reverential bow" towards the goddess. They also required that on certain days Japanese temples should be venerated, while a statue of the goddess was to be put in Orthodox churches.

The question of the admissibility of participating in such ritual veneration was discussed at the diocesan assemblies of the Harbin diocese on September 8 and October 2, 1943, in the presence of the hierarchs of the Harbin diocese: Metropolitan Meletius, Bishop Demetrius and Bishop Juvenal (Archbishop Nestor was not present). According to the witness of the secretary of the Episcopal conference, Fr. Leonid Upshinsky, "the session was stormy, since some objected that... Amateras was not a goddess but the Ancestress." It was decided "to accept completely and direct to the authorities" the reports of Bishop Demetrius of Hailar and Professor K.I. Zaitsev (the future Archimandrite Constantine), which expressed the official view of the episcopate that participation in the ritual veneration was inadmissible.

However, on February 5, 1944 the congress of leaders of the Russian emigration in Manchuria met in Harbin. The congress opened with a moleben in the St. Nicholas cathedral, after which the participants went to the Japanese temple "Harbin-Jinjya", where they carried out a veneration of the goddess Amateras. On February 12 the Harbin hierarchs responded with an archpastoral epistle, in which they said: "Since any kind of veneration of pagan divinities and temples is forbidden by the commandments of God..., Orthodox Christians, in obedience to the will of God and his Law, cannot and must not carry out this veneration, for such veneration contradicts the basic theses of the Orthodox Faith." Archbishop Nestor refused to sign this epistle. In March both vicars of the Harbin diocese, Bishop Demetrius and Bishop Juvenal, were

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<sup>338</sup> Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij* (Chronicle of Church Events), part 3, pp. 13-14, 19. Hieromonk Enoch quotes a friend: "Upon the enactment of the Religious Organizations Law in 1940 which gave the state full control over all religious bodies, the vast majority, if not all, of Orthodox Christians succumbed to state-mandated shinto worship. As far as I know, there was no notable attempt by any priests or lay people to resist state shinto. I only know of two "Christian" organizations (protestant) during WW II in Japan that fiercely resisted the evil of Shinto worship: Mino Mission and Orthodox Presbyterian Church Japan Mission. A small group of Roman Catholic college students refused to worship at Yasukuni shrine citing their religious belief. However, they were later reprimanded by their bishop and the Vatican intervened directly to approve Shinto worship among all Catholics. It is now known as The 1932 Sophia University Yasukuni Incident." (*Facebook*, November 30, 2016)

summoned to the police, where they were closely interrogated about the circumstances of the illegal distribution of the archpastoral epistle and about the attitude of the flock to this question. On April 28 Metropolitan Meletius was subjected to interrogation. The conversation, which lasted for several hours, produced no result. Referring to his extreme exhaustion and illness, Vladyka Meletius asked that the conversation be continued on May 1. This again produced no result. Bishop Demetrius, who also took part, categorically and sharply protested against the veneration.

On May 2, an Episcopal Convention took place (Archbishop Nestor, as usual, was not present), at which this position was confirmed. Several days later, Metropolitan Meletius presented the text of the Episcopal Convention to Mr. Kobayasi. Kobayasi demanded that he give a written promise not to raise the question of veneration until the end of the war. Metropolitan Meletius asked that the words "if there will be no compulsion to veneration" should be added to the text. Vladyka's demand again elicited a quarrel. However, in the end Kobayasi gave in. On August 31 the Harbin archpastors sent a letter to Archbishop Nestor in which they appealed to him "to unite with us, return and may your voice sound out in defence of the purity of the Faith and zeal for its confession. Sign (better late than never) our Archpastoral Epistle and announce this publicly - in whatever way and place you can." In reply, Vladyka Nestor wrote that he did not disagree with his brother archpastors about the inadmissibility of venerating the temples of Amateras.<sup>339</sup>

Eventually the Japanese climbed down - through the courageous confession of Archimandrite Philaret (Voznesensky), the future first-hierarch of the Russian Church Outside Russia. The Japanese tortured him, almost tearing out his eye, and saying: "We have a red-hot electrical instrument here. Everybody who has had it applied to them has agreed to our requests. And you will also agree." The torturer brought the instrument forward.

Fr. Philaret prayed to St. Nicholas: "Holy Hierarch Nicholas, help me, otherwise there may be a betrayal." The torturer commenced his work. He stripped the confessor to his waist and started to burn his spine with the burning iron.

Then a miracle took place. Fr. Philaret could smell his burning flesh, but felt no pain. He felt joyful in his soul. The torturer could not understand why he was silent, and did not cry out or writhe from the unbearable pain. Then he turned and looked at his face. Amazed, he waved his hand, muttered something in Japanese and fled, conquered by the superhuman power of the confessor's endurance. Fr. Philaret was brought, almost dead, to his relatives. There he passed out. When he came to, he said: "I was in hell itself."

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<sup>339</sup> Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 67-69.

Gradually his wounds healed. The Japanese no longer tried to compel the Orthodox to worship their idol...<sup>340</sup>

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Having secured Manchuria, the question then arose for the Japanese: should they go north against the Soviet Union, or south against China and the British, Dutch and American colonies of South-East Asia? The issue was decided in the wake of an abortive coup by 1,500 officers of the Tokyo garrison, whose ideology was anti-capitalist and quasi-communist in tone. "Their manifesto denounced the 'many people whose chief aim and purpose have been to amass personal material wealth disregarding the general welfare and prosperity of the Japanese people... The *Genro*, the senior statesmen, military cliques, plutocrats, bureaucrats and political parties are all traitors who are destroying the national essence.' The young officers involved were quite prepared to introduce a form of Communism into Japan, through a mixture of Marxism and *Kodo* (the 'Imperial Way') with a Communist puppet-Emperor. This was the view of the Soviet agent Richard Sorge, who worked from within the Nazi embassy. He guessed, and so informed his masters in Moscow, that the mutiny would favour Soviet policy since it would mark a movement away from the 'Northern' route of confrontation with Russia along the Manchukuo border, and towards the further penetration of China [southwards]. That was doubly welcome to Stalin since an all-out war between China and Japan would not only rule out an attack on his vulnerable eastern bases but, in all probability, force Chiang and the Kuomintang to drop their differences with the Chinese Communists, form a Popular Front, and thus hasten the moment when the whole of China would join the Soviet bloc.

"That, indeed, is exactly what happened. The mutineers had wanted a more active Japanese military policy, favouring a 'Northern' outlet for it. The Japanese military establishment, having hanged the mutineers, promptly and cravenly adopted their activism, but - as Sorge had guessed - gave it a 'Southern' twist..."<sup>341</sup>

The Japanese aggression in Manchuria elicited the appearance of that most characteristic trait of the 1930s: *appeasement*. For "the nations of the world," writes Brendon, "even if they had been inclined to take action over the Manchurian Incident, could think of nothing but their own parlous state. Britain went off the gold standard a couple of days after the explosion at Mukden. Anyway Britain wanted to protect its valuable Far Eastern trade and was not entirely averse to seeing imperialist Japan facing Communist Russia. Nor was France, vulnerable at home and concerned about the safety of Indo-China. Moreover, the European press was inclined to praise Japan for having

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<sup>340</sup> Protopriest Alexis Mikrikov, "Unia s MP privedet k dukhovnoj katastrofe" (The Unia with the MP will lead to a spiritual catastrophe), <http://metanthonymemorial.org/VernostNo34.html>.

<sup>341</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 314-315.

created in Manchuria 'a flourishing oasis in a howling desert of Chinese misrule.' China itself was tormented by flood, famine, poverty, banditry, warlordism and civil strife... America was paralysed by the economic crisis and Hoover concluded that he must talk softly because he did not have a big stick. Even the more militant Stimson made calming gestures towards Japan in response to his ambassador's advice that criticism 'only further inflamed the situation and played into the hands of the chauvinistic elements'."<sup>342</sup>

"Under the hammer of Thor," writes Brendon, "China was evidently being forged into a united nation. To be sure, the country was so vast, amorphous and diverse that it was less a state than a geographical expression. Bounded by steppe, mountain, desert, forest and ocean, it stretched from the harsh brown plain of the arid north to the lush green uplands of the subtropical south, from the Himalayan peaks of Tsinghai to the Yangtse basin in Kiangsu. The threads holding this immense territory together were sparse. By 1938 China had only 70,000 miles of high road and 10,000 miles of railway track. Language was an equally inadequate means of communication: the province of Fukin alone was said to have 108 dialects... Differences of race, religion and even diet (rice versus noodles) further divided the inhabitants. In any case, they were for the most part virtually embedded in their native earth. Ninety per cent of the 500 million souls were peasants at the mercy of flood, famine, drought and disease; subject to warlords, landlords, money-lenders and tax-collectors. The Chinese peasant was so poor, a British ambassador noted, that whereas his equal in the Dutch East Indies could always get a banana, he would 'often be heartily grateful if he could get a share in an old banana skin.' Yet the Communist Chairman, Mao Tse-tung, discerned in the ground-down peasant an incipient revolutionary and the Kuomintang Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, perceived him as an instinctive nationalist. Neither was wrong. Under the agonising imperative of the Japanese invasion, the Chinese masses were mobilised as a political force as never before..."<sup>343</sup>

"Stalin thought he had much more to gain from Chiang Kai-shek than from Mao Tse-tung. This was a reasonable assumption since until 1937 Chiang seemed to be succeeding in his campaign to appease the Japanese in order to destroy the Reds. With a ferocity all his own, he had followed the traditional Chinese policy of tackling domestic rebels before foreign aggressors. 'Rather slay a thousand innocent men,' he insisted, 'than let one Communist escape.' By 1934 the Nationalists had almost exterminated the Communists, who set off on the epic retreat to north China which is known as the Long March. It became, in the theology of Chinese Marxists, an exodus like that of the children of Israel. The chosen cadres also had their own Moses, in the person of Mao Tse-tung...

"... In a year Mao's force travelled 6,000 miles, crossed 18 mountain ranges and 24 rivers, captured 62 towns and broke through the armies of 10 warlords. Only a few thousand survivors (including a handful of women) reached

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<sup>342</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>343</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 547.

Shensi province, walled and moated by nature, where Mao set up his headquarters in the tiny, ancient city of Yen-an, 'South of the Clouds'..."<sup>344</sup>

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Mao's "Long March" lasted from October 1934 to December 1936. "By the time the process of Communist concentration was complete and the March was over, towards the end of 1936, Stalin was pushing his 'Popular Front' policy of getting the CCP and the KMT to act together in war with Japan. Mao was at first reluctant: he thought Chiang should be shot. But during a visit to the northern front late in 1936, Chiang was arrested in a mysterious episode known as the 'Sian Incident'; his papers were searched and Chou En-lai got access to his diaries revealing the fierceness of his anti-Japanese feelings. As a result Mao allowed himself to be persuaded; and by 1 March 1937 he reverted to his earlier nationalism, telling a visitor, Agnes Smedley: 'The Communists absolutely do not tie their viewpoint to the interests of a single class at a single time, but are most passionately concerned with the fate of the Chinese nation.'<sup>345</sup>

"To be pursued successfully, a nationalist line required a full-scale 'patriotic war'. On 5 July 1937, the Chinese Communists and the KMT signed a working agreement. Two days later, on the night of 7 July, came the first 'incident' between KMT and Japanese forces at Marco Polo Bridge outside Peking, the first shots coming from the Chinese side. It was this escalating episode which led to full-scale war. It is significant that the opposing commanders, Sung Chi-yuen, KMT Commander-in-Chief in North China, and the Japanese C-in-C, General Gun Hashimoto, were on friendly terms and did everything in their power to damp down the affair. But repeated and inexplicable acts of violence made it clear that somebody was deliberately seeking a full-scale conflict. General Hu Ying-chin, the KMT Minister of War in 1937, believed to his dying day that it was the work of the Japanese military radicals, the same group who had staged the Tokyo mutiny the year before. But Japanese officers present during the Bridge affair thought at the time that the violence was the work of subversive elements in the Chinese forces, and after Mao's post-war triumph they were convinced that his agents, acting on Soviet instruction, provoked the war. The Japanese Soviet expert, General Akio Doi, said in 1967: 'We were then too simple to realize that this was all a Communist plot.' What is quite clear is that the Marco Polo affair was not a repetition of the Manchurian Incident of 1931. There was no conspiracy in the Japanese army. The Chinese behaved with rather more intransigence and arrogance than the Japanese once the incident took place, and they took the initiative in spreading the war.

"What is equally clear is that Russia was the great beneficiary of the Sino-Japanese war. The Japanese had been the last to abandon the attempt to crush

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<sup>344</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 550, 551.

<sup>345</sup> According to another version, Chiang was kidnapped by the warlord Chang Hsueh-liang, being released only at the price of ending the civil war and concentrating on fighting the Japanese... (V.M.)

the Bolshevik regime by force. Their frontier with the Soviets remained tense, and in the late 1930s there were several very serious military encounters: in 1937 on the Amur River; in 1938 at Chungkufeng, seventy miles from Vladivostok; and in May-June of 1939 on the Mongolian-Manchukuo border – the last being a large-scale armoured engagement, foreshadowing the vast tank battles of the Second World War. Without the China war, Japan would undoubtedly have been able to engage the Russians in full-scale conflict, and drive them from the Far East. As it was, she could not divert sufficient forces, and the 1939 battle, in which General Zhukov made his reputation, was a Soviet victory and the first defeat the Japanese forces had suffered in modern times.

“The other gainer was Mao. In the autumn of 1937, with the war now waging uncontrollably, he told his generals: ‘The Sino-Japanese conflict gives us, the Chinese Communists, an excellent opportunity for expansion. Our policy is to devote 70 per cent of our effort to this end, 20 per cent to coping with the government, and 10 per cent to fighting Japanese. This policy is to be carried out in three stages. During the first stage we are to work with the KMT to ensure our existence and growth. During the second stage we are to achieve parity in strength with the KMT. During the third we are to penetrate deep into parts of China to establish bases for counter-attack against the KMT.’ This policy was carried out to the letter. Chiang retired to Chungking, deep in the interior. Mao remained in the north-west, avoiding large-scale engagements with the Japanese but fighting a low-key guerrilla war and creating a military and political empire among the peasants.”<sup>346</sup>

By the end of 1937, the Japanese occupied both the industrial north and the coast, including the cities of Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai – without, however, proving able to deliver the knock-out blow upon either Chiang’s nationalists or Mao’s communists. By the end of 1941 they had suffered 185,000 dead.<sup>347</sup>

Meanwhile, the Western powers, according to Hugh Brogan, had pledged themselves “to preserve China’s territorial integrity and independence; they wished to continue to plunder the helpless giant without getting in each other’s way.

“But the old system was already doomed. Britain, France and Holland were, after 1918, over-stretched: they lacked the resources to defend themselves and their empires at the same time. And Japan, an Asian power, had with astonishing speed learned everything the West had to teach, and was very well placed to apply the lessons. Japan, her rulers decided, had a mission, like other civilized states: she would be the leader of a resurrected Asia. A new empire would be carved out, superseding all the old ones, in which grateful, disciplined Koreans, Manchurians, Chinese, Filipinos, Indonesians – even, perhaps, Indians – would learn the arts of civilization from the new master race.

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<sup>346</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 316-317.

<sup>347</sup> Max Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, London: Harper, 2011, p. 191

Japanese exports, which were unable to cross such barriers as the American tariff, would instead monopolize a huge market created by conquest. Dominance in the East Indies and Malaya would ensure supplies of oil and rubber, and thus make Japan self-sufficient in raw materials at last."<sup>348</sup>

As Maria Hsia Chang writes, Japan's invasion of Manchuria "was conceived to be the beginning of what was disingenuously referred to as a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' that would ultimately encompass not just Japan, Korea, and Manchuria but all of China, Mongolia, Nepal, Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, the Andaman Islands, India, New Zealand, and Australia..."<sup>349</sup>

"These developments created enormous difficulties for America. She might, in theory, have acquiesced in the Japanese adventure and traded with the new empire until it foundered. But this would have been to conspire with an aggressor nation against the people of China, would have been to frankly condone imperialism; would have led to a quarrel with Japan's rivals and America's friends, the European imperialists (Portugal did not count, and Germany had lost her colonies after the First World War); and would have brought on a ceaseless storm of protest and denunciation from the American businessmen and missionaries who still hoped to exploit China themselves. Besides, the United States had colonies in the Pacific (the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii) which, thanks to the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-2, were inadequately defended. Now that Japan was the predominant naval power in the western Pacific she could pick off America's possessions at any time. The possibility did not make Washington feel any more kindly towards her..."<sup>350</sup>

Roosevelt "accepted the euphemism 'China Incident' since he was thus able to export arms to Chiang Kai-shek, the Neutrality Act banning their sale only to nations at war. He also demanded, in his famous 'quarantine' speech of 5 October 1937, that the forces of 'international anarchy' should be ostracised like the carriers of infectious disease. This alarmed isolationists in the United States and Roosevelt, only willing to lead when Americans were willing to follow, temporised. He even responded softly when the *Panay* was sunk [on the Yangtse]. Neville Chamberlain's sour opinion - that nothing could be expected from the American government except words - was confirmed. But the British Prime Minister was actually relieved. He considered that sanctions would incense Japan and that appeasement was a panacea which would also work in the Orient."<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 2019, pp. 561-562.

<sup>349</sup> Chang, *Return of the Dragon*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2001. In this "New Order in Asia", writes Henry Kissinger, "Japan strove to organize its own anti-Westphalian sphere of influence - a 'bloc of nations led by the Japanese and free of Western powers,' arranged hierarchically to 'thereby enable all nations to find each its proper place in the world.' In this new order, other Asian states' sovereignty would be elided into a form of Japanese tutelage" (*World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 188). (V.M.)

<sup>350</sup> Brogan, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

<sup>351</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

As for the Soviets, "Appeasement had been Russia's policy before Japan became embroiled in China. Scores of skirmishes had taken place each year on the Soviet Union's frontier with Manchukuo. Running for 3,000 miles across forests, mountains and deserts, it bristled with pillboxes, barbed wire and observation posts. The last major clash had occurred on the Amur River just a few days before the fatal spark flew at the Marco Polo Bridge. Then Moscow had retreated ignominiously, convincing Tokyo that Stalin's purges were incapacitating Russia. But once its enemy's back was turned the Bear unsheathed its claws. Stalin quickly concluded an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek and sent him military aid, delighted that the Chinese were doing the fighting in the Far East as the Spanish were in Europe. The Japanese fumed and chafed, particularly since many of the soldiers regarded Communist Russia as more of a menace than Nationalist China. To modern Samurai consumed by an unbearable sense of hardship and injustice, acquiring one enemy was no reason for losing another. Nobody expressed the chauvinists' creed more ardently than Matsuoko Yusoke, who had led Japan from the League of Nations and was soon to take an even more prominent role in his country's destiny. With the stern fatalism so typical of his compatriots on their long march through the dark valley, Matsuoko proclaimed that the Anti-Comintern Pact was not the guiding star of Nippon. Imperial Japan would go forward with Nazi Germany, he declared, 'even if it means committing 'double suicide'.'<sup>352</sup>

So every nation had its excuses for not getting involved or raising its voice in anger. And it must be admitted: some of the excuses were not bad... Thus it is difficult to see how any effective action could have been taken to stop the Japanese at that time. Perhaps only the Soviets could have intervened successfully - but only, of course, in order to impose their own revolution...

This only underlined the flimsiness of the structure of collective security that had been built around the League of Nations. How different from the year 1900, when the Boxer Rebellion had elicited a prompt and effective international expedition to restore order (albeit for imperialist aims)! It was a new and more terrible age now, when there was no longer any power capable of restraining evil, even the most terrible evil, and each nation sought to make its own accommodation with that evil.

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<sup>352</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-396.



## 28. KING ALEXANDER OF YUGOSLAVIA

We have seen how in 1925 King Alexander acted as a righteous peace-maker amongst the squabbling politicians of his Yugoslav kingdom, accomplishing a reconciliation between the Serbian Radical Party's Nikola Pašić and the Croatian Peasant Party's Stjepan Radić, But the question arose: could the peace hold? Was the idea of Yugoslavia as a multi-ethnic yet Serb-dominated, democratic yet monarchical, multi-faith yet officially Orthodox state, viable in the longer term?

The idea would be sorely tested when, on June 14, 1928 Radić was shot in the Yugoslav *skupština* by Serbian members of the Radical Party. He died a few weeks later. Immediately, Croat representatives walked out in protest and refused to return. The kingdom's politics became deadlocked again.

King Alexander now faced a difficult dilemma. The dilemma consisted in the fact that, on the one hand, parliament was being exploited by dissident Croats and Slovenes (and also increasing numbers of Serbs) in order to paralyze the country. And now, after the murder of Radić, the Croats were even less inclined to compromise... But on the other hand, any attempt to suspend the constitution, or introduce a new political order, might elicit protests that would paralyze the country ...

In a last throw of the dice, King Alexander appointed the Slovene cleric Korošec as the first and last non-Serb Prime Minister of the kingdom. But this attempt at conciliating the non-Serbs failed because the Croat delegates continued to boycott parliament, while the beginning of the Great Depression cast a dark cloud of pessimism over the country. The result was that Korošec resigned on December 30, 1928.

It was time to change course... On January 6, 1929 King Alexander prorogued parliament and took all political power into his own hands. He did this, not out of vanity or lust for power, but of love for his country and care for her salvation. As he proclaimed when he prorogued parliament and suspended the constitution, "My expectations and those of my people that the evolution of our internal political life would bring about order and consolidation within our country have not been realised. Both parliamentary life and the political outlook generally have become more and more negative and both the nation and the State are today suffering from the consequences of this state of affairs.

"All useful institutions within the State and the development of our national life have been jeopardized. Such an unhealthy political situation is not only prejudicial to internal life and progress, but also to the development of our external relations as well as to our prestige and credit abroad.

"Parliamentary life, which as a political instrument was a tradition of my late revered father, has also always been my ideal, but blind political passions

have so abused it, that it has become an obstacle to all profitable work in the State. The regrettable disputes and the events in the *Skupština* have undermined the confidence of the nation in this institution. All harmony and even those elementary relations between parties and individuals have become altogether impossible. Instead of developing and strengthening the feeling of national unity, Parliamentarism as it has developed has begun to provoke moral disorganisation and national disunion.

“It is my sacred duty to preserve by all means national unity and the State. I am determined to fulfil my duty without flinching until the end. The preservation of the unity of the people and the safeguarding of the unity of the State, the highest ideal of my reign, must also be the most important law for me and for all...”<sup>353</sup>

National unity was indeed King Alexander’s highest political ideal, and after ten years of failed experiment with his other ideal of parliamentarism, he was now prepared, while not rejecting parliamentarism permanently, to place it temporarily but firmly in subjection to national unity. As he explained to an American journalist, “a house divided against itself cannot stand. The politicians tried to divide our people.”<sup>354</sup>

“As a gesture to advocates of federalism he renamed the country ‘Yugoslavia’ and reorganized it into nine *banovine*, districts named for points of geographical interest. These modifications, along with a strict ban on activities and organizations deemed political or ethnocentric, were to be the basis of a new Yugoslav patriotism that admitted no national distinctions. In order to guarantee cooperation with this new program, the king capped his list of decrees with a new Law for the Defense of the State, an expansion of the 1921 *obzana* to cover any would-be dissenters. Thus Aleksandar joined the ranks of East European dictators, although he always rejected that interpretation. ‘This was not a dictatorship,’ he said shortly before his death. ‘I only took a few necessary measures to further the unity of the state until political passions cooled.’”<sup>355</sup>

Be that as it may, and while officially wedded to the Yugoslav idea, Alexander always resisted making the state into a confederation, insisting on its centralist character. And he continued to rely almost exclusively on Serbs from the old kingdom to staff the major posts in the army, police and administration. Moreover, he made a major mistake at the beginning of his dictatorship when he appointed General Peter Živković as Prime Minister. Živković was a close friend of the king, but also a regicide; for he “had opened the oak gates to Belgrade’s royal residence on the night in May 1903 when Apis

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<sup>353</sup> Ulrick Loring and James Page, *Yugoslavia’s Royal Dynasty*, London: The Monarchist Press Association, 1976, p. 63.

<sup>354</sup> “Alexander tells Yugoslavia’s woes”, *New York Times*, March 10, 1929, p. 3.

<sup>355</sup> Brigit Farley, “Aleksandar Karadjordjevic and the Royal Dictatorship in Yugoslavia”, in Berndt J. Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Strongmen of South Eastern Europe*, London: Hurst & Company, 2006, pp. 72-73.

and his co-conspirators stormed the palace and murdered King Aleksandar Obrenović and Queen Draga. Later, Živković turned on Apis and formed a counter-conspiracy to the Black Hand called the White Hand, which exerted considerable influence on the young Prince. Aleksandar participated in the conspiracy hatched against Apis in Salonika during the Great War which led to the trial and execution of the Black Hand's leader in 1917." However, Živković's appointment "was greeted with undisguised dismay not only in Croatia but also in Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Montenegro..."<sup>356</sup>

A more accurate description of what Alexander did in 1929 might be: an attempted transition from constitutional monarchy to autocratic monarchy of the traditional Orthodox kind. Of course, he could not say this, even if he had been fully conscious that this was his goal; for the West, and the westernized classes in the East, no longer understood the concept of the Orthodox autocracy, which they mistakenly equated with an oriental variety of Catholic absolutism. For Orthodox autocracy means a close relationship between Church and State in which the hierarchy is the conscience of the king, advising and correcting him in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel, while according him the supremacy in the political sphere – a supremacy that the Popes did not concede to their Catholic kings.

King Alexander had a close friend and advisor from the hierarchy in the person of Bishop Nikolai Velimirović of Ohrid. Bishop Nikolai appears to have gradually changed his political position from his earlier enthusiastic Yugoslavism and ecumenism to a closer concentration on the preservation of Serbia and her Orthodox traditions. Dr. Jean-Claude Larchet wrote: "While he was bishop of Ochrid, Archbishop Nikolaj went every summer to Mount Athos, where he did not miss paying a visit to the Russian monastery of Saint Panteleimon, and the monk Silouan (the future St. Silouan of Athos). At that time, he was one of the few people to be able to see the exceptional spiritual stature of the starets, behind the simple appearance of the monk. Under the influence of Mount Athos, his relationship with the elder Silouan (whom he considered his 'master'), and his close contact with the works of the Fathers, he began to read and study a lot at that time. A deep inner change took place in him, marked by a focus on Orthodoxy and by a personal transformation that could be noticed by all. In terms of ideas, Bishop Nikolaj threw away from himself whatever (either from the West or the Far East) was foreign to the Orthodox Tradition. In terms of behaviour, this inner spiritual rebirth was manifested not only in his very simple manner of speaking, of behaving and of clothing, but also in his speeches and writings."<sup>357</sup>

This "conversion" appears to have taken place in the mid-1920s and almost certainly influenced his friend the king. Always a fervent anti-communist, Nikolai retained his close friendships in the democratic powers of Britain and

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<sup>356</sup> Misha Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 429.

<sup>357</sup> Larchet, *La vie et l'œuvre de Saint Nicolas de Zitcha* (The Life and Work of St. Nicholas of Zicha).

America – a fact that later made the Germans imprison him in Dachau. But his political ideal was the Serbian Orthodox autocracy of the Nemanjas.<sup>358</sup>

Having said that, neither king nor bishop spoke openly about the Orthodox autocracy. That would have been impossible in an age in which the only political choices seemed to be between democracy and totalitarianism. Besides, a transition from constitutionalism to autocracy had never been attempted in history, and would probably have been possible only in a country, like Russia, with a recent strong tradition of autocracy.

So the king's only alternative was to hold on grimly, forced to repress those dissidents whom he was unable to persuade. At least he could not be accused of discriminating in favour of the Serbs - his repressive measures landed many Serbs, too, in prison. And "he underscored his personal Yugoslavism [and ecumenism] by vacationing in Slovenia, naming a son after the Croatian king Tomislav, and standing as godfather to a Muslim child."<sup>359</sup>

The genuine Yugoslavism of the king is illustrated by the following anecdote: "Once while the king was in Zagreb, there was a reception and a ball. At the ball they introduced to the king a lady who, after curtseying, said: 'I am a Serb from Zagreb.'" And I,' replied the king with a gentle smile, 'am a Croat from Belgrade...'"<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> "In those days," wrote Bishop Nikolai, "the problem of relations between the Church and the State did not disquiet people as it does in our days, at least not in the Orthodox countries. It had been regulated as it were by itself, through long tradition. Whenever Caesaropapism or Papocaesarism tried to prevail by force, it had been overcome in a short time. For there existed no tradition in the Church of the East of an augustus [emperor] being at the same time Pontifex Maximus, or vice-versa. There were unfortunate clashes between civil and ecclesiastical authorities on personal grounds, but those clashes were temporary and passing. Or, if such clashes and disagreements arose on matters of religious doctrines and principles, threatening the unity of the Christian people, the Councils had to judge and decide. Whoever was found guilty could not escape condemnation by the Councils, be he Emperor or Patriarch or anybody else.

"Savva's conception of the mutual relations between Church and State was founded upon a deeper conception of the aim of man's life on earth. He clearly realized that all rightful terrestrial aims should be considered only as means towards a celestial end. He was tireless in pointing out the true aim of man's existence in this short life span on earth. That aim is the Kingdom of Heaven according to Christ's revelation. Consequently, both the Church and the State authorities are duty-bound to help people towards that supreme end. If they want to compete with one another, let them compete in serving people in the fear of God and not by quarrelling about honors and rights or by grabbing prerogatives from one another. The King and the Archbishop are called to be servants of God by serving the people towards the final and eternal aim..." ("The Life of St. Sava", in *Sabrana Dela* (Collected Works), volume 12, Khimelstir, 1984, pp. 573-574)

<sup>359</sup> Farley, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>360</sup> T.V., "Svetloj pamiati nezabvennago ego velichestva korolia vitiazia Aleksandra I Yugoslavianskago" (To the Radiant Memory of his Majesty, the Unforgettable Knight, Alexander I of Yugoslavia), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 24 (1765), December 15/28, 2004, p. 7.

Perhaps surprisingly, many democrats accepted the necessity of his dictatorship - at first. "Generally," writes Farley, "Aleksandar's new regime received favourable reviews. Yugoslavia's Great Power allies swallowed their distaste for non-parliamentary solutions. The London *Times* expressed confidence that the end-result would be a 'well-knit state', while the erstwhile leftist French Prime Minister, Briand, said only that Aleksandar should avoid 'fascist-style bombast'. None of the king's allies wanted to see Yugoslavia, the crucial link between Danubian and Balkan Europe, fractured and disunited. At home Croat leaders expressed their relief at the end of an era. 'This was a necessary step,' declared Ante Trumbić, who had continued to promote his vision of an equal partnership among the leading groups in the state. Despairing of effecting change through the *Skupština*, they turned hopefully to Aleksandar after its suspension... They believed that the end of politics-as-usual would lead to initiatives addressing their fundamental grievance..."<sup>361</sup>

But this optimism did not last long; and by the summer of 1929 Croatia's politicians resumed the offensive. Indeed, the whole province was not simply discontented but seething with revolutionary violence. And so, as a result of the continuous, uncompromising demands of the Croats, the "Dictatorship, which Alexander had hoped to raise above Nationalism, became essentially anti-Croatian".<sup>362</sup> For, despite his efforts "to be a colorless Yugoslav," according to Hugh Seton-Watson, "he was the symbol of the hegemony of the Serbs".<sup>363</sup> And so, "whatever his intentions, Aleksandar's personal rule stripped Croats of what little influence they had had in the state".<sup>364</sup>

Recognizing that his policy was not working, he decided on a cosmetic change. In November, 1931 elections were permitted - but all opposition to the government list was banned. And so 306 members of parliament were returned, all belonging to the pro-government National Party. Yugoslavia had become a one-party state, even if the appearance of genuine democracy was maintained. And her king was now a real dictator, albeit less cruel and more genuinely impartial than other dictators of the time.

Increasingly prominent in the political struggle now was the Catholic Church under Archbishop Stepinac, who was already showing evidence of those viciously anti-Serb and anti-Orthodox tendencies that were to explode into mass murder in 1941. This was evident already in 1932, when Metropolitan Dositheus (Vasić) was appointed to the see of Zagreb. Alexis Gerovsky, the Carpatho-Russian political and religious activist, wrote: "Dositheus' appointment to Zagreb elicited great discontent among the Catholics. The name of Bishop Dositheus was already blacklisted because he 'by his propaganda has converted the Carpatho-Russians to Orthodoxy'... When some years before the Second World War Bishop Dositheus told me that

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<sup>361</sup> Farley, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>362</sup> Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the wars*, Cambridge University Press, 1945, p 226.

<sup>363</sup> Stephen Graham, *Alexander of Yugoslavia*, Yale University Press, 1939, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972, p. 169.

<sup>364</sup> Farley, op. cit., p. 75.

he had been appointed as metropolitan in Zagreb, I besought him not to accept this appointment, since he had never been there and did not know the religious fanaticism of the Zagreb Croats... I mentioned to him [the Catholic Archbishop] Stepinac, who was already famous for his religious intolerance, and I warned him that he would suffer many unpleasantnesses from him. 'Stepinac, who was educated for seven years in a Jesuit seminary in Rome,' I said, 'will feel offended that an Orthodox metropolitan should be implanted in his capital'... I advised him to convince the members of the Synod to send to Zagreb a bishop from those who had been born before the First World War and raised in Austria-Hungary, and who was already familiar with types like Stepinac. But Vladyka told me that it was his duty to obey the will of the patriarch, and he went to Zagreb. When, several months later, I again met him in Belgrade, he told me that I had been right. He was often insulted in the street. Sometime the windows of his house were broken at night. Stones even fell into his bedroom. I asked Vladyka whether he had spoken to the police. He replied that it was not fitting for a bishop to call the police. But when I told him that in such a case his enemies would think that he feared them, and would be still more brazen, Vladyka replied: 'No, they know that I am not afraid of them. When they revile me or spit at me, I simply raise my hands and bless them with the sign of the cross.'"<sup>365</sup>

Another important new factor allied to this militant Catholicism was the rise of the Ustaše Party under Ante Pavelić, who fled Yugoslavia in 1929 in order to organize the training of his terrorists in Italy and Hungary. Pavelić's Ustaše (literally: "Rebel") Party was an extreme offshoot of the Croatian Party of Rights, founded in 1861 by Ante Starčević. As John Cox writes, "Starčević advocated Croatian unity and independence. His party pursued a line that was both anti-Habsburg and anti-Serbian... Starčević... advocated the construction of a 'greater Croatia' which would include territory inhabited by Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and even Slovenes. He wrote that, on the whole Serbs were simply Croats who had wandered away from their Catholic Christianity; other members of the substantial Serbian minority living in Croatia were either recent arrivals, encouraged to settle by the Habsburgs, or members of other groups such as 'Vlachs' who had taken up Orthodoxy. The Catholic Slovenes to the north, with whom Croats have traditionally had few conflicts, were supposedly not a distinct nation but merely 'mountain Croats' who spoke a different dialect. Furthermore the Muslims of Bosnia were just islamicized Croats, and actually very admirable Croats indeed since they had even been willing to adopt Islam under the Turks to gain autonomy and maintain their political and economic control over what had been medieval Croatia. This point would be very important to Pavelić later, when he tried to justify Croatia's annexation of Bosnia after the Axis invasion of 1941. He would argue

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<sup>365</sup> Andrew Shestakov, *Kogda terror stanovitsa zakonom, iz istorii gonjenij na Pravoslavnuuu Tserkov' v Khorvatii v seredine XX v.* (When terror becomes the law: from the history of the persecutions on the Orthodox Church in Croatia in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century); in Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (A Chronicle of Church Events of the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>, part 2, pp. 22-23.

that NDH [the independent state of Croatia] was a Croat state with two religions: Catholic Christianity and Islam.

“While Starčević was right about the Bosnian Muslims being overwhelmingly of Slavic origin, he was grossly over-estimating their Croatian or non-Serbian character. Starčević’s ethnic nationalism meant that the Bosnian Muslims would be co-opted later by the Croatian fascists, but that they would also, at least initially, be spared much of the violence directed at Croatia’s Serbs and Jews.

“The Party of Rights had moved through various declarations of who were its allies and what were its goals. Pavelić belonged to the most anti-Serbian branch of the Party, initiated by Josip Frank in 1894. By Pavelić’s day the Ustaša line was that Croatia needed to get out of Yugoslavia fast and take Bosnia with it, and that it should use any means necessary to carry out its goals. This is what the Axis invasion of April 1941 allowed Pavelić to do. A tragic fate then awaited the Serbs: as Ustaša leaders publicly boasted, one-third of them were to be slaughtered, one-third forcibly converted to Catholic Christianity, and the rest expelled from the country.”<sup>366</sup>

Unlike the Croatian Peasant Party under Maček, which continued to negotiate with King Alexander, and in 1939 even came to an agreement or sporazum on Croatian autonomy with his successor, Prince Paul, Pavelić and the Ustaše were hate-filled terrorists with whom it was impossible for the king to negotiate. Thus Pavelić once “visited Bulgaria, where he made several public appearances with leading members of Vanche Mihailov’s VMRO, the wing of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization which was committed to the violent overthrow of Yugoslav rule in Macedonia: ‘We cannot fight against those forest bandits [Serbs/Yugoslavs] with a prayer book in our hands,’ Pavelić told large crowds of VMRO supporters in Vidin and Sofia. ‘After the World War many believed that we would have peace... But what sort of peace is it when Croats and Macedonians are imprisoned? These two peoples were enslaved on the basis of a great lie – that Serbs live in Macedonia and Croatia and that the Macedonian people is Serbian... If we tie our hands and wait until the civilized world helps us, our grandchildren will die in slavery. If we wish to see our homeland free, we must unbind our hands and go into battle.’

“Pavelić’s appeal for the violent overthrow of Yugoslavia and the secession of Croat lands led to a Belgrade court sentencing him to death in absentia on a charge of high treason. *Persona non grata* in Austria, Pavelić chose Italy as his place of exile. With the financial assistance of the Italian government, Pavelić set about the construction of two main training camps, one in Hungary, one in

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<sup>366</sup> Fox, “Ante Pavelic and the Ustaše State in Croatia”, in Berndt J. Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Strongmen of South Eastern Europe*, London: Hurst & Company, 2006, pp. 207-208.

Italy, for his new organization, the UHRO [Ustaše Hrvatska Revolucionarna Organizacija]."<sup>367</sup>

Soon Pavelić felt ready to strike. On March 23, 1929 he sent a hit team to Zagreb to kill Toni Schlegel, the Croat editor of the pro-Yugoslav newspaper *Novosti*, and a personal friend of King Alexander. Then, in 1932, "a unit of the Ustaše 'invaded' the town of Brušani in Like by stealing across the Italian border (Italy had annexed large amounts of Croatian territory after the World War); it attacked some government buildings and many of the men were then caught. Inside the country they inspired sporadic bombings and shootings."<sup>368</sup>

Finally, in December, 1933 Pavelić sent three men from Italy to kill the king in Zagreb. But the leading conspirator, Peter Oreb, couldn't carry it through, partly because he did not want to kill innocent civilians and the Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb, who was blessing the king, but also because he was amazed at the warmth with which the Croats greeted the king, which was not what he had been led to believe. And so he "made a full confession, incriminating Pavelić and compromising Italy. The trial [took place] in March, in Yugoslavia, in a blaze of publicity. The position of Pavelić, suborned by Italy, was made clear to the Yugoslavs, perhaps to the world. On April 1 the three men [were] condemned to death."<sup>369</sup>

At the beginning of the 1930s, as both Fascism and Communism were becoming stronger on the international stage, Alexander's task was not becoming any easier. Within, his kingdom was seething with malcontents and revolutionaries. From outside, hostile powers such as Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria were helping his internal enemies. Faced with this mounting, and increasingly united opposition, King Alexander was forced to seek friends - or rather, *counterweights to his enemies* - in one or other of the European blocs: the communists, the fascists and the liberals.

There was no question of him, the main protector of the White Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, entering into an alliance with the communists, especially after the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia came out in defence of the *Ustaše's* incursion into Lika...<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Glenny, op. cit., p. 431.

<sup>368</sup> Fox, op. cit.

<sup>369</sup> Graham, op. cit., pp. 29. 213-220.

<sup>370</sup> The statement declared: "The Communist Party is addressing the whole Croatian people inviting it to support the Ustashes' struggle with utmost effort, and in doing so, not to rely exclusively on the Ustashes' terrorist actions, but also to rely on the widest masses of the Croatian people against the Serbian nationalist domineering oppressors..."

"At the same time," writes Novica Vojnovic, "the communists financially supported the issuing of the Ustashes' publications and other press, criticised the Ustashes' leader Ante Pavelic for not fighting more vehemently against the "nationalist Serbian regime", threatening him that they would assume the leadership of the Ustashes' movement, that it would be managed by the communists if he continued with such insufficient activities against the Serbs.

"In order to be able to act more successfully against the Serbian people in Yugoslavia, the... trio Broz[Tito]-Kardelj-Bakaric convened in 1934 the Fourth Conference of the Communist



The fascists were also unacceptable allies because of Italy's territorial incursions into Yugoslavia and support for the *Ustaše*.

That left the democrats, who at least supported the idea of a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, and had close brotherly (i.e. masonic) links with many of Yugoslavia's leading politicians, bankers and industrialists. And so in February, 1933 Alexander joined a "Little Entente" consisting of the democratic powers of France, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia...

The problem, however, was that these nations were militarily weaker and geographically more disconnected from each other than the fascist bloc, and that they included none of Yugoslavia's main trading partners. Besides, the leaders of the "Little Entente" were angry with Alexander for betraying their masonic-democratic ideals on January 6, 1929. Perhaps that is why both Britain and France were rather slow in coming to the aid, political or economic, of their former wartime ally...

And so Alexander decided, while not abandoning his democratic allies, to make feelers towards the fascist bloc... First, in 1932, he entered into secret negotiations with Mussolini. But in spite of intense diplomatic activity, these came to nothing. "To the proposal for a meeting with the King, [Mussolini] replied arrogantly. Alexander must first of all consolidate the internal divisions of his country, then if he would apply again Mussolini would consider it. 'I wait at my window,' said Mussolini.

"That amounted to an affront. From that time on Alexander worked more vigorously to thwart Italian policy in the Balkans. But the phrase, 'I wait at my window', was seen afterwards to have a sinister meaning. Mussolini was staging a revolt at Lika on the boundary of Croatia and Dalmatia. His window looked across the Adriatic. He was going to drop a lighted match into the

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Party of Yugoslavia in Ljubljana, in the Bishop's Court, with the black wine from the Bishop's cellar and with roast lamb which was specially prepared by the Diocese for the communists as 'dear guests', as the Bishop himself told when he greeted them at the meeting.

"The nationalist communist parties of Croatia and Slovenia were formed at the Conference, and it was decided not to form the communist party of Serbia because the Serbs were 'the oppressive people', and so the other peoples, especially the Croats and Slovenians, should defend themselves from the Serbs by having their national communist parties.

"Having assumed all the power in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1934, the... trio Broz[Tito]-Kardelj-Bakaric strengthened the anti-Serbian propaganda in the country, satanising the Serbs and the whole Serbian people, accusing it of being the primary impediment to the creation of a new, democratic, brotherly community of nations and nationalities in Yugoslavia, in which they were fully supported in Moscow, by the Comintern, and the Soviet regime. Thus, the Serbian people were even then de facto proclaimed a reactionary people, which should be destroyed for it stood in the way of creating a better, more just, socialist society, as in the Soviet Russia, even though Russia was at the time ruled by the most undemocratic regime in the world." ("Communist Crimes over the Serbian People in the XX Century",

[http://www.akademedia.srbija.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=789:communist-crimes-against-serbs-and-russians&catid=45:english&Itemid=59](http://www.akademedia.srbija.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=789:communist-crimes-against-serbs-and-russians&catid=45:english&Itemid=59)).

supposed powder factory of Croat and Dalmatian disaffection and watch the effects. Perhaps Yugoslavia would be blown to bits. Then he could move in and impose Fascist order on the other side of the Adriatic..."<sup>371</sup>

But Yugoslavia did not blow up, and "there are signs that in 1933 the Fascists became discontented. Yugoslavia had not been obviously weakened by terrorism. There was no unrest, no political ferment. The various political parties remained passive under the dictatorship. The propaganda conducted in the foreign press had raised no agitation against the Yugoslav government. Great Britain had privately expressed her desire that Yugoslavia should return to democratic institutions, but she was too occupied with other pressing problems to take sides in Balkan politics. France was engrossed by the spectre of resurgent Germany. Travellers to Yugoslavia heard little or nothing of the train wrecks and outrages. They reported an uncommonly peaceful country. Tourists swarmed to the Dalmatian resorts..."<sup>372</sup>

As Italy fumed, Hungary, the other main supporter of the *Ustaša*, began to rethink her relations with Yugoslavia. Yelka Pogorolets, the girlfriend of the Croatian terrorist Perchets, had revealed the role of both Italy and Hungary in financing *Ustaša* camps on their soil, and Yugoslavia protested to the League of Nations. Admiral Horthy sent Alexander a diplomatic representative, who was warmly received. The *Ustaša* camp in Hungary was closed<sup>373</sup>, and relations with Hungary developed well. By October, 1934 they appeared to have achieved a break-through.<sup>374</sup>

Italy still threatened - in December, 1933 the Italians and the *Ustaša* were behind an attempt on Alexander's life in Zagreb. But his stock internationally was rising, and in the summer of 1933, only a few months after Hitler came to power, the king decided to approach the most powerful country in the fascist bloc. He travelled *incognito* by car to southern Germany, where he met Goering...<sup>375</sup>

However, French diplomats still hoped to enlist both Yugoslavia and Italy into their anti-Hitler alliance, in spite of Alexander's annoyingly dictatorial and anti-Croatian ways. "If Aleksandar solved the Croat problem, they thought, Mussolini's opportunities for troublemaking with the *Ustaša* would vanish and France would enlist both states in the campaign to limit German expansion. The king reacted badly to this request, curtly informing the French ambassador, Emile Naggiar, that federalism condemned the country to anarchy. Why was Italy not being pressured to stop its support for the *Ustaša*? Aleksandar then accepted some overtures from the German government, whose representatives were probing weak links in the French alliance system. They hastened to assure the king that Serbs were the rightful rulers of

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<sup>371</sup> Graham, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

<sup>372</sup> Graham, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>373</sup> Graham, op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>374</sup> Anthony Komjathy, *Give Peace a Chance!*, University Press of America, 1992, p 127.

<sup>375</sup> Milan Banic, *Masonerija i Jugoslavija*, 1997.

Yugoslavia and proffered economic assistance that addressed pressing needs. For a time Aleksandar contemplated using his German connections as leverage against unreasonable French demands – until his diplomats learned that Germany was secretly bankrolling various Ustaša activities both in Germany and elsewhere...<sup>376</sup>

Nevertheless, common interests continued to draw Alexander and the Germans together. On the one hand, the French and the Czechs appeared to want to expand the Little Entente to include Soviet Russia.<sup>377</sup> Alexander could not countenance that... On the other hand, the Germans had their own reasons, both political and economic, for talking to Alexander. “On the political front, Hitler was disturbed by the defence pact signed by the leaders of the Little Entente... By improving Germany’s relations with Belgrade and Bucharest, he hoped to drive a wedge between them, on the one hand, and Prague, on the other, which would help to isolate Czechoslovakia, a country on which Hitler had lethal designs.

“On the economic front, closer ties with Yugoslavia and Romania (and, indeed, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey) would provide Germany with the agricultural and mineral resources it needed for rearmament and, ultimately, a policy of imperial expansion in Europe. In order to succeed, Germany had to combat Mussolini’s policy of encouraging the destruction of Yugoslavi, which the German Foreign Ministry and Chancellery believed was essentially healthy. Aleksandar responded positively to German overtures and in the summer of 1933, Berlin sent a team of agricultural experts to Yugoslavia to discuss the possibility of shifting agricultural production away from crops like wheat, which Germany did not need, to rapeseed, soya and other oil-producing plants. Over the next year, the Yugoslavs agreed to offer Germany exclusive access to key mineral products – primarily copper, lead, zinc and bauxite, all useful in the armaments industry. In exchange, Germany agreed to supply Yugoslavia with finished industrial products on a clearing system, a form of barter. In this way the Yugoslavs (who were encountering tremendous difficulty in raising loans in Britain, France and the United State) would not have to find large amounts of capital in order to revitalize their exports.”<sup>378</sup>

Alexander’s negotiations with the fascists began to alarm some of his allies, notably France and Czechoslovakia. The Parisian newspaper *Le Temps* was furious, as were the Czechs. Already years before, the Czech President Tomas Masaryk had expressed a dislike for King Alexander, whom he found “uncultured and undemocratic, a typical product of military mentality”.<sup>379</sup> Now the Croatian architect and sculptor Meštrović, who was a friend of the king, reported a conversation with Jan Masaryk, the son of the President and his country’s ambassador in London in 1933, in which Masaryk stormed

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<sup>376</sup> Farley, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>377</sup> Graham, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>378</sup> Glenny, op. cit., pp. 435-436.

<sup>379</sup> <http://www.studiacroatica.org/jcs/28/2805.htm>

against Alexander and the Serbs, saying that they would “ruin themselves and us”, and that in the end it came down to a choice: “either *Alexander's head*, or the fall of your and our lands, which are allies”.<sup>380</sup>

Although Alexander never broke with the masonic-democratic camp represented by Masaryk, his feelings against the Masons were becoming more intense. In August, 1934, less than two months before his death, the king expressed his frustration to Milan Banić. Denying that he occupied a mid-point between democracy and authoritarianism, he said that he “had to chase away all the Masons, because they are the root of all evil. No dirty business takes place without them!”<sup>381</sup>

His estrangement from them was deepened by their lurch to the left in 1934. Until that year, the Comintern had refused to enter into any alliance with left-wing socialist parties, which it regarded as “social fascist”. But the rise of Hitler alarmed these parties, who began seeing “no enemies to the left”; and Stalin, sensing an opportunity, decided that these parties were no longer “social fascist”, but simply socialist, and blessed the formation of “Popular Fronts” in union with them. In May an article appeared in *Pravda* commenting favourably on socialist-Communist collaboration. Then, in June, Léon Blum's Socialist Party signed a pact for united action with the French Communist Party, and the Radical Party joined the pact in October...

While lurching to the left, French politicians still wanted to keep King Alexander on side. Thus the French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou thought that Alexander's regime might be a powerful asset for an anti-Hitler alliance in spite of its “dictatorial” nature. Barthou's was to create an anti-Hitler defense ring through what was known as the Eastern Pact, binding the Soviet Union and Poland and the Little Entente, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania, to France... Barthou went to Belgrade at the end of June 1934 and had successful introductory talks regarding a Franco-Yugoslav alliance. It was agreed that King Alexander would pay a two-week state visit to France starting on October 9th to lay the groundwork for an anti-Hitler alliance...<sup>382</sup>

In the midst of these complicated manoeuvres with the western powers, “King Alexander had his own plan for securing peace in the Balkans, and peace in the Balkans concerned him much more than peace in Western Europe. He believed that a solidarity of the nations on the Balkan Peninsula was a first requirement. Let it become unprofitable for a Western Power to start a war there and impossible through diplomatic intrigue to set one Balkan State against another. He received assistance to that end in an unexpected quarter. The King of Bulgaria made a move to reconcile Bulgars and Serbs.”<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Mucic, op. cit., pp. 301-302.

<sup>381</sup> Banić, op. cit.

<sup>382</sup> <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-bloggers/2360302/posts>.

<sup>383</sup> Graham, op. cit., p. 199.

In the end King Boris was unable, for internal political reasons, to join the pact – but relations between the two countries greatly improved. Moreover, Romania, Greece and even Turkey responded well to King Alexander's overtures. In some ways, this must be seen as one of the greatest of Alexander's achievements, and one that might have changed European history but for his own untimely death...

The godfather of King Alexander, Tsar Alexander III, once told his natural son, the future Tsar Nicholas, that Russia had no friends. However, Imperial Russia herself had been a true friend to the Balkan and Middle Eastern Orthodox financially, diplomatically and militarily. It followed that with the fall of the last Russian tsar in 1917, all the other Orthodox states found themselves essentially on their own, friendless and under sentence of death. The most significant of these states was Alexander's Yugoslavia. From every direction, Alexander was surrounded by enemies: by Croats, Slovenes, Muslims, Kosovans, Macedonians and even some Serbs from within the country, and by Italians, Austrians, Hungarians and Albanians from without. The Romanians were allies, and perhaps in King Boris of Bulgaria he had a real friend – but only on a personal level. For the history of bad blood and the territorial claims and counter-claims between the two countries made close cooperation impossible...

Already in 1914, as we know from the testimony of the Sarajevo terrorists, Alexander had been targeted by the Masons. And later he acquired other enemies. For indeed, "many sides wanted his death for many reasons... political mainly... either from [an] international point of view or from [a] national point of view - and he knew it!"<sup>384</sup> By assuming dictatorial powers in 1929 he had given his regime a few more years of life, but it was a temporary expedient – and it created for him yet more enemies. And so during the "dark valley" of the 1930s the wild beasts of communism, fascism and masonic democracy circled closer and closer around the wounded lion until one of them delivered the mortal blow.

King Alexander, whom one Russian called "the last honest man in Europe", was shot and killed on October 9, 1934 while on an official visit to France by "Vlada the Chauffeur", a well-known Bulgarian terrorist working for Pavelić. Thus representatives of two of the illegal nationalist organizations that rejected Alexander's suzerainty – Croatia's *Ustaše* and Macedonia's IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) – combined to wreak revenge on their enemy. This much is clear, and the motivation is clear.

However, from the beginning there have been persistent rumours that International Freemasonry – specifically, the Grand Orient of Paris - was also involved and protected the assassins. Some say that the Masons wanted him killed because he had once been a Mason but had withdrawn from the lodge under the influence of Bishop Nikolai. According to one variant of this theory,

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<sup>384</sup> <http://forum.alexanderpalace.org/index.php?topic=2880.385;wap2>.

Alexander had refused to trample on the Cross in a Masonic rite... Security arrangements before the assassination do appear to have been very weak, and after the assassination, the French appeared to do everything possible to protect the *Ustaša* and their paymaster, Mussolini. No effort was made to extradite Pavelić and his co-conspirators from Italy. At the League of Nations France again protected Italy. And when the trial of the assassins finally got under way, after a great delay, in Aix-en-Provence (not Paris, as might have been expected), the defence counsel, Desbons, acted in such an extraordinarily obstructive manner that it was suspected that he wanted to be expelled from the bar, with the result that the case could not go on, the jury would be dismissed and a new trial called.<sup>385</sup>

All this, however, does not add up to a convincing argument that it was the French Grand Orient that masterminded the assassination. All the evidence points to the truth of the generally accepted theory, that Mussolini and Pavelić planned it. After all, it is established that they were behind another attempt to kill the king only ten months earlier in Zagreb. So they had the motive and intent and will to kill. And in spite of all attempts to muddy the waters, Pavelić's agents were eventually convicted and executed.

The most that we can say about possible masonic involvement is that the French authorities, most of whom were Masons, appeared to have tried to protect Mussolini and Pavelić and save the face of Italy. For the French Masonic politicians were trying to extend their anti-Hitlerite Little Entente to include Italy, which had vowed to protect Austria against Germany. The fact that by protecting the Italians from implication in the assassination (which, let us remember, also included the assassination of the French Foreign Minister!) they offended the Yugoslavs, who were also members of the Little Entente, seems not to have worried them. And so, in fitting recompense for their injustice, they attained none of their aims, neither Italy's adherence to the Little Entente, nor Yugoslavia's remaining in it; for under the regency of Prince Paul Yugoslavia gravitated more and more towards Germany...

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In the last analysis, the Yugoslav kingdom foundered on the religious question, that of the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in the kingdom. Although King Alexander made many ecumenical gestures to his Catholic (Croat and Slovene) subjects, he was not prepared to abandon the

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<sup>385</sup> Graham, op. cit., p. 296. A Serb who was present at the trial in Aix-en-Provence claimed the following: (1) An American cine-journalist who filmed the assassination to the smallest details, died in a hospital two months later, with no visitors allowed to see him; (2) Desbons, the assassin's lawyer, wanted to prove during the trial that it was the Masons, and not the Ustaše who had killed the king. But he was visited by some "influential Belgraders" who paid him five million francs not to defend the Ustaše; (3) There was a big argument between London's Scotland Yard and French Sécurité. The English suspected that the French had sabotaged the king's escort... (*Slobodno Zidarstvo ili Masonerija*, izdan'e radog komiteta antimasonske izlozhje, 1941, pp. 71-72.)

privileged position accorded in the state to the Orthodox Church. Thus early in his reign his brother George put two questions to him. "Can you really combine Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in one person?" and "Can you really deny your Serbian mother and father, your Serbian Orthodox Church?" Alexander replied in the negative...<sup>386</sup>

The importance of the religious differences between the peoples was underestimated by idealists on both sides. Bishop Nikolai Velimirović argued passionately for "love before logic"; he believed that questions of faith, such as the *Filioque*, should be put aside for the sake of national and political unity; they were merely "individual differences" that were far outweighed by what the Southern Slavs had in common. "We Yugoslavs," he said, "sincerely believe that in the future Serbian state harmony and friendship will come between the two faiths, the two Churches."<sup>387</sup>

It did not happen; and when, in 1937, the Serbs rose up against the heavily pro-Catholic Concordat with the Vatican imposed on the Orthodox Church by the prime minister Stoyadinović Bishop Nikolai was among the protestors. He had come to understand that these "individual differences" were not simply a matter of "logic", but constituted a deep difference *in spirit*. Love and religious tolerance between peoples must indeed be practised – but never at the expense of zeal for the truth, never as an expression of ecumenist lukewarmness. That was the truth that the idealists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century would have to learn from the harsh realities of the 20<sup>th</sup>...

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<sup>386</sup> Brigit Farley, "Aleksandar Karadjordjevic and the Royal Dictatorship in Yugoslavia", in Fischer, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>387</sup> Velimirovic, op. cit., pp. 554-555.

## 29. THE GREEK OLD CALENDARIST MOVEMENT

A critical turning-point in the history of the Greek Church was the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the sky over the Old Calendarist monastery of St. John the Theologian near Athens. This greatly strengthened the faith of the people that God was with them in the struggle.

Bishop Lazarus (Puhalo) writes: "In 1925, on the eve of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of our Saviour, September 14 according to the Orthodox Church calendar [27 according to the new], the all-night vigil was served in the church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By 9 o'clock that evening, more than 2000 true Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around eleven p.m. the authorities despatched a battalion of police to the church 'to prevent any disorders which might arise from such a large gathering.' The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they mingled with the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church.

"Then, regardless of the true motives for their presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

"At 11.30 [during the procession of the Litya] there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of the North-East, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky became dim and the church-yard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with an angular cross bar towards the bottom. This heavenly miracle lasted for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to rise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priests does in the ceremony of the Exaltation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

"Human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing hymns, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a childlike faith. The crowd of believers and battalion of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy.

"The vigil continued until four a.m., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping.



“Many of the unbelievers, sophists and renovationists, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine Cross (sometimes called the Russian Cross), with three cross-bars, the bottom one at an angle, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomena.

“The fact that such an apparition of the cross also occurred during the height of the first great heresy<sup>388</sup> must strike the Orthodox with an especial sense of the magnitude of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this question lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Renovationists, like the Arians in 351, are left without extenuation or mitigation.”<sup>389</sup>

There were many eyewitness accounts. Thus John Glymis, a retired police officer, witnesses: “I was one of the men from the Police Institute who were sent to stop the vigil that night, some fifty years ago, at the country Church of St. John the Theologian. The Old Calendarists were keeping vigil there, because it was the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross [according to the Old Calendar]. Since many people had gathered – more than two thousand individuals – we did not attempt to seize the priest as we had been ordered, but we sat down quietly in the nearby court and waited for them to finish. At about 11.30 at night, we heard a loud and strange uproar coming from the shouts of the multitude. Without any delay, we ran to see what was happening – and we saw. The whole multitude of the faithful was in a state of excitement. Some were weeping and others, crying out ‘Lord, have mercy!’, were kneeling and had turned their eyes toward heaven, and yet others were fainting, overwhelmed with great emotion. Then we too looked and beheld the marvel: an enormous radiant Cross, very high above the church, was illumining the whole area. At first, we were seized with fear, but immediately we came to ourselves and, forgetting the purpose for which we had been sent, we fell to our knees and wept like little children. Of course, it is superfluous for me to tell you that, filled with emotion, we attended the rest of the vigil to the end – not as persecutors but as faithful Christians. In the morning when we returned to the Institute, we told everyone about the great marvel we had been deemed worthy to see. Afterwards there was an investigation and all of us swore under oath that we had seen the Precious Cross clearly, high in the sky.”

Another eye-witness, Athanasios Primalis, was driving a tram around Omonoia square. “Immediately I stepped on the brakes and stopped the

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<sup>388</sup> Arianism – the reference is to the appearance of the sign of the Cross over Jerusalem in 351.

<sup>389</sup> *Orthodox Life*, vol. 22, №. 2, March-April, 1972; reprinted in Fr. Basile Sakkas, *The Calendar Question*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1973. For further witnesses and photographs, see Metropolitan Calliopius, *Deinopathimata G.O.Kh.* (The Sufferings of the True Orthodox Christians), Piraeus, 1990, vol. I, pp. 81-92, and Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *Papa-Nicholas Planas*, Boston, 1961, pp. 117-119.

vehicle. I stuck my head out of the tram door and I, the unworthy one, also saw the Precious Cross of our Lord – may His Name be glorified. It was shining over Mount Hymettus. I don't remember how long this lasted. I know only one thing: the Precious Cross which I saw that night turned me into a different man. Since then, everyone in my family has become a faithful child of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians..."<sup>390</sup>

However, on hearing of the miracle, the new calendarist bishops declared: "What appeared before the Old Calendarists, if it really appeared, was God's testimony that they are in great spiritual deception. The sign was telling them: 'Oh, unreasonable ones, do you not know that the Exaltation of the Holy Cross has passed? So many hundreds of thousands of people agree on the fact that today is September 26, and you are still thinking it is September 13 and the eve of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross! Why, unfaithful ones, do you celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the 27th, when it is to be done on September 14?' So, that is what this could mean, if there was any appearance at all."<sup>391</sup> But this was a desperate attempt by the new calendarists - the heavens spoke against them...

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Although the True Orthodox laity of the Church of Greece with their few priests were essentially alone in openly opposing the calendar change, there were still some who had not "bowed the knee to Baal" in "the king's palace" – the hierarchy headed by Chrysostom Papadopoulos. Thus Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina never accepted it, while Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias protested against the introduction of the new calendar and held it in abeyance in his diocese until February 15, 1928.<sup>392</sup> Others accepted it, but continued to agitate for its removal. Thus "on July 2, 1929, in the presence of forty-four metropolitans, [Archbishop] Chrysostom suddenly demanded the immediate signature of the hierarchs present to a report he had prepared approving the calendar change and condemning those who stayed with the old. This satanic plan of Chrysostom's was opposed by the metropolitans of Kassandreia, Maronia, Ioannina, Druinopolis, Florina, Demetrias, Samos and Khalkis. When the archbishop insisted, thirteen hierarchs left, while of the fifty-one who remained twenty-seven against four signed Chrysostom's report."<sup>393</sup>

Indeed, it was the hope that the State Church would eventually return to the Julian Calendar, that persuaded those bishops who later joined the True

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<sup>390</sup> "Miraculous Appearance of Cross over Athens, Greece", [Smyrna1922@aol.com](mailto:Smyrna1922@aol.com), May 20, 2004.

<sup>391</sup> Quoted in "Re[2]: [paradosis] (unknown)", 1 January, 2003, [orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com](mailto:orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com).

<sup>392</sup> George Lardas, "The Old Calendar Movement in the Greek Church: An Historical Survey", B.Th. Thesis, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1983, p. 12.

<sup>393</sup> Monk Anthony Georgantas, *Atheologites "Theologies" Atheologitou "Theologou"* (Atheist 'Theologies' of an Atheist 'Theologian'), Gortynia: Monastery of St. Nikodemos, 1992, pp. 7-8.

Orthodox to stay where they were for the time being. Thus Bishop Ephraim writes that at a "Pre-Council" held at the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos in 1930, "the representatives of the Serbian and Polish Churches (the Churches of Russia, Georgia, and Bulgaria were not represented at the council; Russia and Georgia were not present because, at the time, they were weathering the third wave of persecutions under Stalin, Bulgaria was not present because the 'Bulgarian schism' was still in effect) asked for a separate chapel. When the Greeks insisted that they all celebrate together the Slavs refused, excusing themselves by saying that the language was different, as well as the typicon, and that there would be confusion. The Greeks kept insisting and the Slavs kept refusing, and in fact, to the end of the council, the two did not concelebrate, and it became clear that the Slavs considered the calendar issue important enough at the time to separate themselves from the Greeks. When they said that their typicon was different, the calendar obviously weighed heavily as a part of that difference... In fact the Serbian Church even supported the Old Calendarist movement in Greece by sending them Christm across the border secretly."<sup>394</sup>

In 1929 Metropolitan Innocent of Peking wrote an open letter on the calendar question in which he said: "In the Church of Christ there is nothing of little value, nothing unimportant, for in every custom there is incarnate the Spirit of God, by Whom the Church lives and breathes. Does not everyone who dares to rise up against the customs and laws of the Church, which are based on sacred Tradition and Scripture, rise up against the Spirit of God and thereby show to all who have eyes to see of what spirit he is? Worthily and rightly does the Holy Church consign such people to anathema."<sup>395</sup>

In Greece, the number of True Orthodox parishes multiplied - 800 were founded in the years 1926-30 alone. And, helped by a parliamentary decree of 1931 granting freedom of worship to the Old Calendarists, the numbers of the faithful had swelled to over 200,000 by October, 1934.

On August 8, 1934 the True Orthodox Christians declared the official church to be schismatic. For, as Nicetas Anagnostopoulos wrote, the Greek Church had "infringed on the dogma of the spiritual unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, for which the Divine Founder had prayed, because it separated itself in the simultaneous celebration of the feasts and observance of the fasts from the other Orthodox Churches and the Orthodox world, 8/10ths

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<sup>394</sup> Monk (now Bishop) Ephraim, Letter on the Calendar issue. During this council Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovic) of Ochrid vehemently defended the Orthodox Calendar, declaring that the 1923 Congress which approved the new calendar had created a schism. "Does the present assembly," he said, "have any relation to the Pan-Orthodox Congress of Constantinople, from which the anomalies known to us all proceeded? The Church of Serbia was stunned when she saw the decisions of that Congress put into practice." (Monk Paul, *Neoimerologitismos Oikoumenismos* (Newcalendarism Ecumenism), Athens, 1982, p. 78)

<sup>395</sup> St. Elijah skete, Mount Athos, *Uchenie Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi o Sviashchennom Predanii i otnoshenie ee k novomu stilii* (The Teaching of the Orthodox Church on Holy Tradition and its Relation to the New Calendar), Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1989, p. 25.

of which follows the Old Calendar (the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Holy Mountain, Russia, Serbia and others).

“In Divine worship it has divided the pious Greek people into two worshipping camps, and has divided families and introduced the simultaneous feasts of Orthodox and heretics (Catholics, Protestants and others) as well as confusion and disorder into the divine Orthodox Worship handed down by the Fathers.

“It has transferred the immovable religious feasts and the great fasts, handed down from ages past, of Christmas, the Mother of God and the Holy Apostles, reducing the fast of the Apostles until it disappears when it coincides with the feast of All Saints; and has removed the readings from the Gospel and Apostle from the Sunday cycle.

“From this it becomes evident that the Calendar is not an astronomical question, as the innovators of the Church of Greece claim in their defence, but quite clearly a religious question, given that it is indissolubly bound up with the worshipping, and in general with the religious life of the Orthodox Christian.

“Through the calendar innovation the new calendarist Church has transgressed, not only the perennial Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Patristic and Orthodox Calendar, and not only the above-mentioned Apostolic command [II Thessalonians 2.15; Galatians 1.8-9] and the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council concerning the anathematisation of those who violate the Sacred Tradition [“If anyone violates any ecclesiastical tradition, written or unwritten, let him be anathema”], but also the decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Patriarchal Councils of the years 1583, 1587 and 1593 under the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II and of 1848 under the Ecumenical Patriarch Anthimus, which condemned and anathematized the Gregorian calendar.

“It has also transgressed the Sacred Canons which order the keeping and observance of the Sacred Traditions, which are: a) the Third of the Council of Carthage, b) the Twenty-First of the Council of Gangra, and c) the Ninety-First and Ninety-Second of St. Basil the Great, as well as the Forty-Seventh canon of the Council of Laodicea, which forbids the concelebration with heretics, which is what the Latins and the Protestants are, and the First of the Seventh Ecumenical Council concerning the steadfast observance of the complete array of the divine Canons.”<sup>396</sup>

Nor did the new calendarists lack direct warnings from the Heavenly Church that the path they had embarked on was false. One such warning was given to the new calendarist Bishop Arsenius of Larissa on December 12/25,

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<sup>396</sup> *I Phoni tis Orthodoxias* (The Voice of Orthodoxy), N 844, November-December, 1991, pp. 26-27.

1934, the feast of St. Spyridon according to the Old Calendar, but Christmas according to the new calendar.

“In the morning the bishop went by car to celebrate the Liturgy in his holy church. When he arrived there, he saw a humble, aged, gracious Bishop with a panagia on his breast. Arsenius said to him: ‘Brother, come, let’s proclaim the joyful letters of Christmas and then I will give you hospitality.’

“The humble Bishop replied: ‘You must not proclaim those letters but mine, St. Spyridon’s!’ Then Arsenius got angry and said: ‘I’m inviting you and you’re despising me. Go away then.’

“Arsenius went into the church, venerated the icons and sat in his throne. When the time for the *katavasias* came, he sang the first *katavasia*, and then told the choir to sing the second. Arsenius began to say the third, but suddenly felt anxious and unwell. He motioned to the choir to continue and went into the altar, where they asked him: ‘What’s the matter, master?’ He replied: ‘I don’t feel well.’

“When Arsenius’ indisposition increased, they carried him to his house, where his condition worsened, and the next day he died. He had been punished by God for his impious disobedience to St. Spyridon. This miracle is known by the older Orthodox faithful of Larissa.”<sup>397</sup>

During this early period of the struggle against the new calendar, many people sympathized with the True Orthodox but did not join them because they did not yet have bishops. Others continued to worship according to the Orthodox Calendar without openly breaking communion with the new calendarists. Among the latter was Fr. Nicholas Planas of Athens. Fr. Nicholas was the priest who was called to conduct a service of Holy Water to bless the “Society of the Orthodox”, which effectively marked the beginning of the Old Calendarist struggle. At that service he said: “Whatever has been done uncanonically cannot stand – it will fall.”

Once “he wanted to serve according to the traditional Calendar on the feast of the Prophet Elisseus [Elisha]. But since he feared that obstacles might arise, he agreed with his assistant priest the night before to go and serve at Saint Spyridon’s in Mantouka. In the morning his chantress went to Saint Spyridon’s and waited for him. Time passed and it looked as though the priest was not going to come to serve. She despaired. She supposed that something serious had happened to him, and that was why he hadn’t come. She left and went to Prophet Elisseus’ (because the ‘information center’ was there), to ask what had happened to the priest, and there, she saw him in the church preparing to celebrate the Liturgy! She chided him for breaking the agreement which they had made, and asked furthermore why he was not afraid, but came there in the center, right in the midst of the seething persecution. He said to her, ‘Don’t

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<sup>397</sup> *I Agia Skepe* (The Holy Protection), N 122, October-December, 1991, p. 109.

scold me, because this morning I saw the Prophet and he told me to come here to serve and not to fear anything, because he will watch over me.' His helper was left with her argument unfinished! 'But, how did you see him?' she asked him. He told her, 'I got up this morning and got ready for Saint Spyridon's. I was sitting in an armchair while they brought me a carriage. At that moment I saw Prophet Elisseus before me, and he told me to go to his church to celebrate the Liturgy!' ...

"Another example similar to that of Papa-Nicholas is that of the priestmonk Jerome of Aegina, who followed the same path. Shortly after his ordination to the priesthood, a year or so before the calendar change, Fr. Jerome ceased from serving because of a vision that was granted him during the Liturgy. According to some accounts this occurred within forty days of his ordination. He continued to preach, however, at a hospital chapel where he lived, and which he himself had built there on the island of Aegina. Although this chapel officially was under the new calendar diocese of Aegina, Fr. Jerome always celebrated the feast days according to the traditional ecclesiastical calendar...

"Although he himself did not serve as a priest, nevertheless, because of his saintliness and his popularity among the people and because of the obvious gifts of the Holy Spirit which he possessed, he had great influence among the faithful who looked to him for direction and guidance. This came to the ears of Procopius, the Bishop of Hydra and Aegina. As a result, the bishop sent word to Fr. Jerome that he was going to come and impose on him to concelebrate with him. Up to this time, Fr. Jerome had sought to remain faithful to the Church's tradition and to his conscience without making an issue of it publicly or in street demonstrations. He saw, however, that the bishop was determined to create an issue now and force him into communion with him. As a result, Fr. Jerome sent the bishop a short note and resigned from the diocese, saying among other things: 'I ask you to accept my resignation from the Hospital, because from 1924 and thence, my longing, as well as my zeal, has been for the Orthodox Church and Faith. From my childhood I revered Her, and dedicated all my life to Her, in obedience to the traditions of the Godbearing Fathers. I confess and proclaim the calendar of the Fathers to be the correct one, even as You Yourself acknowledge...'"<sup>398</sup>

An especially active role in the struggle was played by Hieromonk Matthew (Karpathakis), who in 1927, in response to a Divine vision, founded the women's Monastery of the Mother of God at Keratea, Attica, which soon became the largest monastery in Greece.<sup>399</sup>

In 1934 he wrote: "For every Christian there is nothing more honourable in this fleeting life than devout faith in the Master of all things, our Lord Jesus Christ. For what else can save the soul from death, that is, from the condemnation of eternal punishment, than this faultless Orthodox Christian

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<sup>398</sup> Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, *Papa-Nicholas Planas*, pp. 54-55, 108-110.

<sup>399</sup> Bishop Andrew of Patras, *Matthaios* (Matthew), Athens, 1963, pp. 50-66.

Faith of ours, about which the Lord speaks clearly, saying: 'He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned' (Mark 16.16). This Faith was compared by the Lord to a valuable treasure which a man found hidden in a field and to buy which he sold all his possessions (Matthew 13.13).

"Therefore the blessed Apostle Jude exhorts everyone 'to contend for the Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints' (Catholic epistle, v. 3). And the divine Apostle made such an exhortation because there were appearing at that time men of deceit, the vessels of Satan, guileful workers, who sow tares in the field of the Lord, and who attempt to overturn the holy Faith in Christ. Concerning the men of impiety and perdition, the holy Apostle went on to write: 'For admission has been secretly gained by some who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly persons who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.' Because of these innovators and despisers of the Faith in the Holy Church of God which has been handed down to us, the Apostle of the Gentiles and Walker in heavenly places Paul hurled a terrible anathema, saying: 'If any one preaches to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed' (Galatians 1.9).

"Therefore our Lord in the Holy Gospel cries to all His faithful servants: 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits... Take heed that no one leads you astray... And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.' (Matthew 7.15,16, 24.4, 11)

"Against these innovating false-bishops and their followers the synodical decrees of the Church through the Most Holy Patriarchs declare that 'whoever has wished to add or take away one iota - let him be seven times anathema'...

"St. Basil the Great once wrote: 'The one crime that is severely avenged is the strict keeping of the patristic traditions... No white hair is venerable to the judges of injustice, no pious asceticism, no state according to the Gospel from youth to old age... To our grief we see our feasts upturned, our houses of prayer closed, our altars of spiritual worship unused.' All this has now come upon us. Many and clearly to be seen by all are the great evils that the anticanonical renovationists introduced into the menologion and calendar of the Orthodox Church. Schisms, divisions, the overthrow of good order and complete confusion, violation of the most ancient laws of the Church, a great scandal for the conscience of the faithful were the consequences, though anathemas on those who violate 'any ecclesiastical tradition, whether written or unwritten' had been sounded by the Holy Ecumenical Councils. On the basis of the apostolic maxim, 'Obey those who have the rule over you and submit to them' (Hebrews. 13.7), the Shepherds of the Church who support this anticanonical innovation expect absolute obedience from the fullness of the Church. But how can the true children of the Church obey those who at the same moment disobey the holy Fathers, of whom the prophet says: 'The Lord

chose them to love them', and do not venerate the Church's established order that has been handed down and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, while the Lord says concerning them: 'He who hears you hears Me, and he who despises you despises Me. And he who despises Me despises Him Who sent Me'? How can pious Christians shut their ears to the voices and work of such great Saints of God, and so be deprived of the praise and blessing of the Holy Trinity, which we hear in the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself: 'I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you' (I Corinthians 11.2); thereby receiving diverse and strange teachings 'according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ' (Colossians 2.8), inventions of men in which there lurks a special danger for the soul? The faithful children of the Church, with fear of God in regard to the commandment of the Holy Spirit: 'Stand firm and hold to the traditions' (II Thessalonians 2.15), and in conformity with the other commandment: 'Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it' (II Timothy 3.14), have a reverent and God-pleasing answer to give to the unproved claims of today's innovating shepherds with regard to obedience: 'We must obey God rather than men' (Acts 5.29).<sup>400</sup>

Now the True Orthodox Christians both in Greece and in Romania conducted the first phase of their struggle against the innovating State Churches without bishops. This is not to say that there were not bishops who supported them, but they were outside Greece and Romania. Thus Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovič) supported the Greek Old Calendarists from Serbia. Again, Metropolitan Anastasy of Kishinev supported the Romanian Old Calendarists from Jerusalem. In 1925 he wrote to Protopriest Vladimir Polyakov saying that he still considered himself head of the Bessarabian Church and was waiting for the opportunity to return there. And in 1930 he concelebrated with Fr. Glycherie in Jerusalem. But in Greece and Romania there were no bishops of the Old Calendar. This was a severe handicap, for while it is better to have no bishop than a heretical or schismatic one, the absence of bishops endangers the long-term survival of a Church for the simple reason that without a bishop it is impossible to ordain priests. Moreover, those in the camp of the innovators who secretly sympathize with the confessors are less likely to cross over to the latter if they have no bishops.

On October 11, 1934 Geroge Paraschos and Basil Stamatoulis, the President and Secretary General respectively of the Community of Genuine Orthodox Christians, appealed to ROCOR President Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky to consecrate bishops for them and accept them under his omophorion. But nothing came of their appeal.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Hieromonk Matthew (Karpathakes) (later Bishop of Bresthena), preface to the third edition of *Theion Prosevkhytarion* (Divine Prayer Book), Athens, 1934.

<sup>401</sup> Stavros Karamitsos, *I Agonia en to kipo Gethsimani* (The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane), Athens, 1999, pp. 162-164; Lardas, op. cit., p. 17.



But pressure for a return to the Julian Calendar continued to build up within the State Church; and in May, 1935 eleven bishops decided to return to the Julian calendar. However, pressure was exerted on them, and eight withdrew at the last moment. This left three: Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias, the retired Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina (who had already distinguished himself in the early 1920s by refusing to recognize the election of Meletius Metaxakis) and Metropolitan Chrysostom of Zakynthos, who, according to one source, was accepted by the first two by the laying-on of hands, since he had been consecrated after the calendar change.<sup>402</sup> The three bishops were accepted through a public confession of faith.<sup>403</sup>

On May 25, 1935, the Community of the Genuine Orthodox Christians invited the three metropolitans to break communion with the State Church and take up the leadership of the True Church. They agreed, and on Sunday, May 13/26, in the Community's little church of the Dormition at Colonus, Athens, and in the presence of 25,000 faithful, they formally announced their adherence to the True Orthodox Church – that is, the Church that followed the patristic calendar. Metropolitan Germanus was elected president of the new Synod. This joyful event was the people's reward for their steadfast confession of the Faith and the necessary condition for the further success of the sacred struggle of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece.

The three metropolitans then issued an encyclical in which they declared, among other things: "Those who now administer the Church of Greece have divided the unity of Orthodoxy through the calendar innovation, and have split the Greek Orthodox People into two opposing calendar parts. They have not only violated an Ecclesiastical Tradition which was consecrated by the Seven Ecumenical Councils and sanctioned by the age-old practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but have also touched the Dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Therefore those who now administer the Greek Church have, by their unilateral, anticanonical and unthinking introduction of the Gregorian calendar, cut themselves off completely from the trunk of Orthodoxy, and have declared themselves to be in essence schismatics in relation to the Orthodox Churches which stand on the foundation of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the Orthodox laws and Traditions, the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Serbia, Poland, the Holy Mountain and the God-trodden Mountain of Sinai, etc.

"That this is so was confirmed by the Commission made up of the best jurists and theologian-professors of the National University which was appointed to study the calendar question, and one of whose members

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<sup>402</sup> Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *The Struggle against Ecumenism*, Boston, 1998, p. 46. However, it should be emphasised that this cheirothesia is not mentioned in any of the early sources, and is not confirmed by contemporary True Orthodox sources.

<sup>403</sup> Bishop Photius of Marathon, private communication, March 5, 2008.

happened to be his Blessedness the Archbishop of Athens in his then capacity as professor of Church History in the National University.

“Let us see what was the opinion given by this Commission on the new calendar: ‘Although all the Orthodox Churches are autocephalous in their internal administration, nevertheless, in that they are united to each other through the Dogmas and the Synodical decrees and Canons, none of them can separate itself off as an individual Orthodox Church and accept the new Church calendar without being considered Schismatic in relation to the others.’

“Since his Beatitude the Archbishop of Athens has by his own signature declared himself to be a Schismatic, what need have we of witnesses to demonstrate that he and the hierarchs who think like him have become Schismatics, in that they have split the unity of Orthodoxy through the calendar innovation and divided the Ecclesiastical and ethnic soul of the Greek Orthodox People?”<sup>404</sup>

This very important document was confirmed as expressing the Faith of the Church in several subsequent Confessions (notably the “Florinite” Confessions of 1950, 1974 and 1991). It declares that the new calendarists are not only schismatics but also, by clear implication, heretics in that they “have encroached on the Dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”. Equally importantly, it shows that the three metropolitans recognized those Local Orthodox Churches that were still using the Old Calendar but remained in communion with the new calendarists to be still Orthodox.<sup>405</sup>

On May 23, 24, 25 and 26 (old calendar), 1935, the three metropolitans consecrated four new bishops in the monastery of the Mother of God in Keratea: Germanus (Varykopoulos) of the Cyclades, Christopher (Hatzi) of Megara, Polycarp (Liosi) of Diauleia, and Matthew (Karpathakis) of Bresthena. For this, on May 29, all seven bishops were arrested; later they were tried and defrocked by the State Church.

On June 1 the believing people came out *en masse* in front of the cathedral in Athens. A struggle with the police took place, and blood was shed. On June 7, the minister of security warned the Old Calendarist bishops that they would be exiled the next day.

On June 8, as they were being sent into exile, the three metropolitans issued the following encyclical: “We recommend to all those who follow the Orthodox Calendar that they have no spiritual communion with the schismatic church of the schismatic ministers, from whom the grace of the All-Holy Spirit has fled, because they have violated the decisions of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Pan-Orthodox Councils which condemned the

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<sup>404</sup> Metropolitan Calliopius (Giannakoulopoulos) of Pentapolis, *Ta Patria* (Fatherland Matters), volume 7, Piraeus, 1987, p. 43.

<sup>405</sup> <http://www.genuineorthodoxchurch.net/images/GOC1935DiangelmaBgrk.pdf>.

Gregorian calendar. That the schismatic Church does not have Grace and the Holy Spirit is affirmed by St. Basil the Great, who says the following: 'Even if the schismatics have erred about things which are not Dogmas, since the head of the Church is Christ, according to the divine Apostle, from Whom all the members live and receive spiritual increase, they have torn themselves away from the harmony of the members of the Body and no longer are members [of that Body] or have the grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore he who does not have it cannot transfer it to others.'<sup>406</sup>

By a "coincidence" rich in symbolical meaning, it was precisely at this time - June, 1935 - that the Turkish law banning Orthodox clergy from wearing cassocks came into effect. Although this regulation was strongly resented by Patriarch Photius, the lower clergy greeted it with delight, shouting: "Long live Atatürk!" And indeed, deprived now of the inner vestment of grace, and governed by "human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2.8), it was only fitting that the Patriarchate should lose even the outer sign of its former glory.<sup>407</sup>

Metropolitans Germanus and Chrysostom and Bishop Germanus were exiled to distant newcalendarist monasteries, while Bishop Matthew was allowed to stay confined in his monastery in Keratea on account of his poor health. The remaining three bishops repented, and were received back into the State Church in their existing orders.<sup>408</sup>

However, in October the three exiled bishops were freed before time by the government (the new prime-minister, George Kondyles, sympathized with the True Orthodox).

The four Old Calendarist bishops then formed a Sacred Synod of the Greek Old Calendarist Church with Metropolitan Germanus as president.

In December, 1935 Metropolitan Chrysostom set off for Jerusalem and Damascus in order to discuss the possibility of convening a Council to resolve the calendar question. The two Patriarchs received him kindly and promised to help towards this goal. However, as he prepared to return to Greece, the Greek consul in Jerusalem, acting under orders from Athens, refused to stamp a visa into his passport. For several months Metropolitan Chrysostom languished in Jerusalem as a virtual prisoner of the Greek consul. But Divine Providence, through a miracle wrought by "the liberator of captives", St. George, found a way out for him.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 277-278.

<sup>407</sup> A. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918-1974*, Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, p. 200.

<sup>408</sup> Hieromonk Nectarius (Yashunsky), *Kratkaia istoria sviaschennoj bor'by starostil'nikov Gretsii protiv vseeresi ekumenizma* (A Short History of the Sacred Struggle of the Old Calendarists of Greece against the Pan-Heresy of Ecumenism).

<sup>409</sup> Elijah Angelopoulos, Dionysius Batistates, *Chrysostomos Kavourides*, Athens, 1981, pp. 21-25.

The two metropolitans continued to be harassed by the State Church. Thus in 1937 a magistrate's court tried Chrysostom on the charge of having served in the church of the Three Hierarchs in Thessalonica. He was declared innocent. However, further trials followed in 1938 and 1940<sup>410</sup>, and in 1943 Metropolitan Germanus died in exile.

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<sup>410</sup> The Zealots of the Holy Mountain, *Syntomos Istorike Perigraphe*, pp. 23-24.

### 30. DEMOCRACY AND APPEASEMENT

“Hitler’s democratic triumph,” writes Davies, “exposed the true nature of democracy. Democracy has few values of its own: it is as good, or as bad, as the principles of the people who operate it. In the hands of liberal and tolerant people, it will produce a liberal and tolerant government; in the hands of cannibals, a government of cannibals. In Germany in 1933-34 it produced a Nazi government because the prevailing culture of Germany’s voters did not give priority to the exclusion of gangsters...”<sup>411</sup>

Davies’ point about democracy is well taken: the fact that a man has been elected democratically does not make him a good ruler; he may be the worst of men and ready to assume the power of a despot at the first opportunity, in accordance with the hidden desires or deserts of the people. And yet the weaknesses, indeed profound dangers, of democracy go deeper than that.

First, democracy explicitly affirms that the source of its authority is the will of the people, not the will of God. It thereby excludes God’s blessing and grace from the political sphere. The ten toes of the statue in the Prophet Daniel’s vision are interpreted to signify “democracies” by St. Hippolytus of Rome; they are said to be of mixed composition, clay and iron – that is, a mixture of strength and weakness. But the toes are part of an idol – that is, an affront to God...

Secondly, in common with most secular ideologies, democracy tends to make people think that the solution of all major problems, whether material or spiritual, lies in the State. But as President Calvin Coolidge said in his State of the Union Address for 1926, “Unfortunately, human nature can not be changed by an act of the legislature...”

Thirdly, over time the leaders elected by democracy become *worse and worse*. For the fundamental ethos of democracy, in modern as in ancient times, is *secularist, anti-religious and anti-traditional*. So as this ethos becomes more deeply entrenched in the people, they will be more inclined to elect anti-religious and anti-traditionalist, even wholly demonized leaders. The result is that, just as Russian democracy in 1917 elected a vain popinjay, Kerensky, to lead it, who then surrendered democracy into the hands of Lenin and the Bolshevik tyranny, so German democracy in 1933 elected the worst of men, who promptly turned it into a fascist dictatorship...

Fourthly, to the extent that democracy is successful in generating prosperity, it shows itself loath to sacrifice any significant part of that prosperity for the sake of necessary defensive warfare or preparation for war. In other words, it is inclined to *appeasement* in the face of its enemies, putting off a confrontation with them until it is almost or in fact too late. For democracy usually goes with a quite unrealistic view of human nature, a refusal to understand that evil such as Hitler’s or Stalin’s cannot be negotiated away by constant concessions, which

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<sup>411</sup> Davies, op. cit., p. 969.

only increase the predator's fury and appetite, and that original sin makes war between nations, while deeply regrettable and tragic, an unavoidable necessity at times.

Fifthly, democracy assumes that what men want most from life is pleasure and material security. But this is only half of what men really want. As we have seen, many middle-class Germans were revolted by the mindless decadence of 1920s German cultural life, thereby becoming vulnerable to Hitler's puritanism.

For, as George Orwell wrote, in his 1940 review of *Mein Kampf*: "[Hitler] has grasped the falsity of the hedonistic attitude to life. Nearly all western thought since the last war, certainly all 'progressive' thought, has assumed tacitly that human beings desire nothing beyond ease, security and avoidance of pain. In such a view of life there is no room, for instance, for patriotism and the military virtues. The Socialist who finds his children playing with soldiers is usually upset, but he is never able to think of a substitute for the tin soldiers; tin pacifists somehow won't do. Hitler, because in his own joyless mind he feels it with exceptional strength, knows that human beings *don't* only want comfort, safety, short working-hours, hygiene, birth-control and, in general, common sense; they also, at least intermittently, want struggle and self-sacrifice, not to mention drums, flags and loyalty-parades. However they may be as economic theories, Fascism and Nazism are psychologically far sounder than any hedonistic conception of life. The same is probably true of Stalin's militarised version of Socialism.

"All three of the great dictators have enhanced their power by imposing intolerable burdens on their peoples. Whereas Socialism, and even capitalism in a more grudging way, have said to people 'I offer you a good time,' Hitler has said to them 'I offer you struggle, danger and death,' and as a result a whole nation flings itself at his feet. Perhaps later on they will get sick of it and change their minds, as at the end of the last war. After a few years of slaughter and starvation, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' is a good slogan, but at this moment 'Better an end with horror than a horror without end' is a winner. Now that we are fighting against the man who coined it, we ought not to underrate its emotional appeal."

Of course, this critique of democracy, correct though it is, in no way justifies Hitler's despotism by comparison with democracy. Those living in the democracies should have acted in support of their governments in order to give them the moral backbone necessary to resist the despotism. But it was only at the moment of supreme crisis, at the outbreak of war, that the democracies put aside their worst faults and, by suspending parliamentary supervision of the government, acquired some of the strengths of their opponents.

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Let us look more closely at the fourth defect of democracy pointed out above – its tendency to *appease* even the grossest forms of evil.

Now Europe's major democracies – France and Britain – were quite capable, in the 1930s, of creating an alliance that would deter Hitler or any other potential hegemon. After all, France had the world's biggest army, and Britain – the biggest navy. However, the experience of the Great War, and a failure of democratic nerve, undermined the will to resist evil and introduced that phenomenon of non-resistance to evil that goes by the name of *appeasement*.

Even Italy on her own showed that Hitler could be deterred. “On July 24, 1934, advantageously misconstruing a question that had been posed by Mussolini (who had conducted the conversation in his atrocious German), Hitler and his overzealous minions had colluded with Austrian Nazis in a putsch against Mussolini's friend the Austrian authoritarian leader Engelbert Dollfuss. Even as his wife and family were guests of Mussolini's at his seaside villa in Riccione, Italy, the Austrian chancellor – known as the Jockey for his five foot two height – was slowly, agonizingly bleeding to death on his office couch in Vienna. An enraged duce mobilized 100,000 troops on the Brenner Pass to support the Austrian armed forces – and Hitler backed down. ‘If this group of criminals and pederasts should take over Europe,’ the duce fumed, ‘it would mean the end of our civilization.’...”<sup>412</sup>

But by this time Mussolini could hardly be called a democrat, whereas Britain and France were indeed democratic countries. So is there a connection between democracy and appeasement?

Democracy is in general less cruel than despotism. But more hypocritical; for democracy proclaims its adherence to lofty moral ideals which it then fails to live up to, whereas despotism, as often as not, despises the ideals themselves. Thus when the democracies of Britain and France prided themselves on their adherence to the ideals of freedom and equality for all men while holding in subjection hundreds of millions of men in their vast global empires, they were rightly accused of hypocrisy. However, the hypocrisy of democracy was exposed as never before in the 1930s, when Britain, France and even, to a lesser degree, the United States fawned before the despoticisms of Italy, Germany and Japan. Only in relation to Japan did the Europeans have some excuse – resisting her was simply beyond their strength at the time. But in relation to Italy and Germany this was by no means the case, which makes the history of appeasement so tragically illuminating as regards the true nature of democratic power...

How are we to understand appeasement, the acquiescence to the gangsterism of the totalitarian regimes that afflicted the western democracies in the inter-war years? Fear of war was at the root of it. But, as Jean-François Revel, this fear expressed itself in denial: “Sensing that the totalitarian threat

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<sup>412</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 556.

cannot be dispelled by compromise, at least by the kind of compromise standard in classic diplomacy, democrats prefer to deny the danger exists. They are even enraged by those who dare to see and name it. Rightly valuing peace above all possessions, they persuade themselves that all they need do to defend it is to renounce its defense, for this is the only factor they control in the situation, the only merchandise they can offer in quantity for negotiation. It is easier to win concessions from yourself than from an adversary.

“Western diplomats seem to have forgotten long ago that the object of negotiation is to wring concessions from their opponents. In Geneva on March 16, 1933, six weeks before Hitler came to power, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald proposed sharp cuts in French and British armaments. A widely respected left-wing journalist, Albert Bayer, an antifascist intellectual, prolific author, and brilliant teacher, wrote at the time that ‘Mr. MacDonald’s central idea seems to be that we must at all costs prevent the rearmament of the Reich and that, to do this, the nations not disarmed by the Versailles Treaty must agree to substantial reductions.’

“A few days later, after Hitler obtained plenary powers from the Reichstag and revealed the Nazi program to the world, Bayer, while condemning the barbaric oppression foreseeable in Germany, nevertheless declared, ‘On the other hand, the Chancellor’s foreign-policy statements are so conscientiously moderate that it would be unfair not to emphasize this.’...

“Idealists whose judgement was too much a prisoner of their intellectual systems to remain lucid were not the only ones who insisted on thinking that Hitler nursed a secret desire for peace even though all his overt actions denied it. At the time, the mania also infected the political realists. In a report on December 29, 1932, André François-Poncet, France’s ambassador to Berlin, declared that ‘the disintegration of the Hitler movement is proceeding at a rapid pace’ (Hitler would come to power on January 30, 1933, with 44 percent of the popular vote); three years later he detected with pleasure ‘how much the Führer has evolved since the period in which he wrote *Mein Kampf*,’ adding, in a dispatch dated December 21, 1936, that this was an ‘inevitable evolution toward moderation.’ Convinced of the keenness of the insights he gained in his ‘frequent meetings with Hitler’ (Ah, the childish myth of personal contacts!), His Excellency gave his government the benefit of his reliable predictions: ‘The occupation of the Rhineland will probably not take place in the coming weeks,’ he telegraphed at the end of February 1936. Hitler marched into the Rhineland on March 7, 1936...”<sup>413</sup>

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In the famous case-study in appeasement, that of Neville Chamberlain’s appeasement of Hitler at Munich in 1938, Tim Bouviere writes that Chamberlain “and his most trusted civil servant Sir Horace Wilson entered into

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<sup>413</sup> Revel, *How Democracies Perish*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985, pp. 217-218.



negotiations with the Nazi leader with the bright faithfulness of two curates entering a pub for the first time,' declared the government MP and diarist, Harold Nicolson. His colleague, the former First Lord of the Admiralty, Duff Cooper, who resigned in protest over the Munich agreement, concurred.

“'Chamberlain,' he noted wryly, 'had never met anybody in [his home town of] Birmingham who in the least resembled Adolf Hitler.' Yet it was not just naivety. It was also vanity. Most successful politicians are vain. To get to the top, they have to persuade millions of people to support them.

“They reach the political summit by dint of their powers of persuasion. The pitfall is to believe that these powers can translate to foreign leaders who do not always share the same political or ideological goals – and who themselves have bottomless self-belief.

“Chamberlain came to the premiership convinced he could shape international events.

“'As Chancellor of the Exchequer I could hardly have moved a pebble: now I have only to raise a finger and the whole face of Europe is changed!' he exulted in November 1937. Wrongly convinced that he had influenced Mussolini, he began to talk about 'the Chamberlain touc'' and looked forward to its effect on Hitler.

“When Chamberlain met the Fuhrer for the first time on November 15, 1938, he was subjected a well-worn routine. Hitler flew into a rage about the Czechoslovak situation and insisted he would have his way even if it meant a general European war. Chamberlain was shocked, but relief replaced indignation when the dictator suggested there was still some hope negotiation. Chamberlain jumped into the trap. He had no objection, he assured Hitler, to the Sudeten Germans joining the Reich...”<sup>414</sup>

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Appeasement is usually considered to have been a disease of Britain and France, who were on the front line against Germany. But Roosevelt, too, supported appeasement, though he was not immediately threatened by the Nazis. So we must study the three western democracies together as embodying a single mindset that can be called “democratic”.

It must be remembered that for most of the 1930s Britain and France were stronger militarily than Germany. France still had easily the largest army in Europe. If France and Britain had acted together and with determination, they could easily have stopped German aggression.

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<sup>414</sup> Bouverie, “Who do you think you are kidding, Mr Netflix?” *The Daily Mail*, October 9, 2021, pp. 54-55.

But, writes Paul Johnson, “after the departure of Poincare in 1929 there was never much chance of France carrying through a pre-emptive strike. Roosevelt’s policy was bitterly anti-French, not merely in seeking her to force her to disarm unilaterally, but, after Roosevelt took America off the gold standard, in bringing pressure economically to break up France’s pathetic attempt to create a ‘gold bloc’, which occupied her energies in 1933. Meanwhile. Hitler was consolidating himself and speeding up the secret rearmament which had been a feature of the last years of Weimar. The British were also anxious to emasculate the French army. Nothing was more likely to provoke a future war, the Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, told the Commons on 13 May 1932, than a ‘well-armed France’ facing a disarmed Germany. Even after Hitler took over, it remained British policy to bring pressure on France to cut her army. The same afternoon Hitler’s Enabling Bill went through the Reichstag, Anthony Eden, for the government, announced that it was British policy to get the French Army cut from 694,000 to 400,000, and rebuked Churchill for protesting against measures to ‘secure for Europe that period of appeasement [he used the term himself!] that is needed’. ‘The House was enraged and in an ugly mood – against Mr. Churchill’, noted the *Daily Despatch*. While terrified German socialists were being hunted through the streets by Goering’s Gestapo squads, their British comrades sought to howl down Churchill’s warning that Hitler had specifically stated in *Mein Kampf* that he would destroy France by securing British neutrality – but even the Fuhrer had not counted on Britain seeking to prevent the French from defending themselves. In France, Leon Blum’s socialists were equally abject, campaigning desperately to prevent conscription from being extended from one to two years. On the French Right, anti-Semitism was reviving under the Nazi stimulus, and the new slogan was ‘Rather Hitler than Blum’. So far as France was concerned, Hitler was probably through his ‘danger zone’ by the end of 1933; that was the view of the Poles, who the next month wrote off France as an effective ally and signed – for what it was worth – a bilateral non-aggression treaty with Hitler.

“Britain was not as demoralized as France in the 1930s. But there were ominous signs of decadence. Britain’s weight in world affairs depended on her Empire, and the Empire revolved round India. By 1931 the process set in motion by the Montagu reforms and the Amritsar debacle had gathered pace. The British Raj was palpably breaking up. Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, had warned in 1925 that concessions to the Hindus would merely provoke the Muslims to demand separation (he saw the Muslims as the Ulstermen, the Hindus as the Irish Nationalists) and predicted: ‘All the conferences in the world cannot bridge over the unbridgeable, and between those two countries lies a chasm which cannot be crossed by the resources of modern political engineering.’ On 26 January 1931 Churchill told the Commons that there were now ‘60,000 Indians in prison for political agitation’. Two months later, over 1,000 Muslims were massacred by Hindus in Cawnpore, followed by communal riots all over the sub-continent. It was the pattern of the 1930s. With no certain future, good British candidates no longer presented themselves for the Indian civil service, and Indians took the top places in the entrance examinations. British investment was declining, and India’s economic

value to Britain fell steadily. Churchill, who loved India and probably felt more passionately about this issue than any other in his life, feared that weak British policy would lead India into a repetition of China's tragedy: disintegration and dismemberment, with the deaths of countless millions, the scores of millions of 'untouchables' being the first victims. 'Already appetites,' he noted on 18 March 1931, had already been 'excited', and 'many itching fingers were stretching forward and scratching at the vast pillage of a derelict empire'. Britain, too, would be the loser. He thought the world was 'entering a period when the struggle for self-preservation is going to present itself with great intentness to thickly populated industrial countries'. Britain would soon be 'fighting for its life' and it would be essential to retain India (May 1933).

"Churchill conducted the most concentrated and intense political campaign of his life against the 1935 India bill, 'a monstrous monument of shame built by pygmies', which gave India Federal Home Rule, of a type which benefited chiefly the professional Brahmin politicians, and which in practice proved unworkable. But despite his titanic efforts, he could arouse no mass public support in Britain. All his oratory was in vain. Indeed, he could not even arouse the British community in India; they had already written off the Empire. The Conservative backbenchers were apathetic and resigned to a gradual British withdrawal. Churchill was never able to persuade more than eighty-nine of them to vote against the bill, which passed by the huge majority of 264. The truth is, though the British Empire still occupied a quarter of the earth's surface, by 1935 imperialism was dead in Britain, merely awaiting the obsequies. Churchill turned from India in despair to concentrate on rearming Britain for self-survival.

'That, too, looked a lost cause at times. The influence of Bloomsbury had reached upwards and downwards by the 1930s to embrace almost the entire political nation. Among the Left intelligentsia, the patriotism which Strachey had sought so successfully to destroy had been replaced by a primary loyalty to Stalin. In the 1930s the Apostles ceased to be a centre of political scepticism and became an active recruiting-ground for Soviet espionage.<sup>415</sup> While some Apostles like Anthony Blunt, Guy Burgess and Leo Long were encouraged to penetrate British agencies to transmit information to Moscow, the Left as a whole, led by the Communists, sought to keep Britain disarmed, a policy Stalin maintained until Hitler actually attacked him in June 1941. In the 1920s the British Communist Party had been working class, innovatory and independent-minded. Early in the 1930s, the middle-class intellectuals moved in, and the CP rapidly became cringingly servile to Soviet foreign policy interests. British Marxists, who included political thinkers like G.D.H. Cole and Harold Laski, and scientists like Joseph Needham, J.B.S. Haldane and J.D. Bernal, accepted uncritically the crude and wholly mistaken reasoning that 'capitalist Britain' and 'fascist Germany' were ruled by the same international interests and that rearmament was merely designed to perpetuate imperialism

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<sup>415</sup> The "famous five" British spies spying for Stalin, of whom the most famous was Kim Philby, were all recruited in Cambridge University, seat of the Apostles.

and destroy socialism. The Labour Party took the same line in diluted form. In June 1922, at the East Fulham by-election, the Labour candidate received a message from the Labour Party leader, George Lansbury: 'I would close every recruiting station, disband the Army and disarm the Air Force. I would abolish the whole dreadful equipment of war and say to the world 'do your worst'. Clement Attlee, who was to succeed him as leader, told the Commons, 21 December 1933: 'We are unalterably opposed to anything in the nature of rearmament.' Labour consistently voted, spoke and campaigned against rearmament right up to the outbreak of war."<sup>416</sup>

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American leftists were gullible, but less servile. Perhaps the best of them was the Marxist literary critic Edmund Wilson, who in the 1930s supported not only the New Deal but also the Communist Party. In 1930-31 Wilson proposed that *New Republic* should, as Johnson writes, "adopt socialism. In 'An Appeal to Progressives' he argued that up to the Wall Street crash, American liberals and progressives had been betting on capitalism to deliver the goods and create a reasonable life for all. But capitalism had broken down and he hoped that Americans would be willing now for the first time to put their idealism and their genius for organization behind a radical social experiment'. Russia would act as a challenger to the US since the Soviet state had almost all the qualities that Americans glorify – the extreme of efficiency and economy combined with the ideal of a Herculean feat to be accomplished by common action in an atmosphere of enthusiastic boasting – like a Liberty Loan Drive – the idea of putting over something big in five years.'

"Wilson's comparing Stalin's first Five-Year Plan with Liberty Loans showed how innocent, at this stage, the newly fledged radical intellectual was. But he began reading with his customary Stakhanovite energy the entire political works of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. By the end of 1931 he was convinced that the changes must be enormous and that intellectuals had to find specific political and economic solutions and embody them in detailed programmes. In May 1932 he drafted, with John Dos Passos, Lewis Mumford and Sherwood Anderson, a manifesto, couched in the hieratic of political theology, proposing 'a socio-economic revolution'. He followed this in the summer with a personal statement of his own beliefs beginning 'I expect to vote for the Communist candidates in the elections next fall.' He never seems to have contemplated actually joining the Communist Party but he thought its leaders 'authentic American types' who, while insisting on 'that obedience to a central authority without which serious revolutionary work is impossible', had 'not lost their grasp of American conditions'. The CP was right to insist that the impoverished public has no choice but to take over the basic industries and run them for the common benefit' ...

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<sup>416</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 345-348.

“The most remarkable aspect of Wilson’s thirties’ radicalism was the way in which his independence of mind and his real concern for truth prevented him from becoming, like Hemingway, a pliable instrument of the CP. As he told Don Passos, writers ought to form their own independent group precisely ‘so that the comrades can’t play them for suckers’. He had already perceived that the radical middle-class intellectual tended to lack one essential human characteristic, the ability to identify with his own social group. In a note on ‘The Communist Character’ (1933) he put his finger on the weakness of the intellectual: ‘he can only identify his interests with those of an outlawed minority... his human solidarity lies only in his imagination of general human improvement – a motive force, however, the strength of which cannot be overestimated – what he loses in immediate human relationships is compensated by his ability to see beyond them and the persons with whom one has them: one’s family and one’s neighbours.’

“To a man strongly interested in human life and character, as Wilson was, such compensation was not nearly enough. Yet he determined to explore communism not only in its theoretical origins – he was already working on what was to become a major account of Marxist history, *To the Finland Station* [1940] – but in its practical applications in the Soviet Union. In certain ways he made a bigger effort to get at the truth than any other intellectual of the 1930s. He learned to speak and read Russian. He mastered much of its literature in the original. In spring 1935 his application for a Guggenheim scholarship to study in Russia was answered with a \$2000 grant. He went to Leningrad on a Russian ship, then down the Volga by boat to Odessa. The great purges were just beginning but visitors could still move about in some freedom. In Odessa, however, he had a dose of scarlatina, followed by an acute kidney attack. He spent many weeks in a battered, filthy but curiously easy-going quarantine hospital, a mixture of kindness and bedbugs, socialism and squalor. Many of the characters could have come straight from the pages acute kidney attack. He spent many weeks in a battered, filthy but curiously easy-going quarantine hospital, a mixture of kindness and bedbugs, socialism and squalor. Many of the characters could have come straight from the pages of Pushkin; indeed the place had been built when Pushkin was alive. It gave him an entry into Russian society he could not otherwise have found. As a result he left Russia with a growing dislike for Stalin and an uneasy suspicion about the whole system, but with a huge respect for the Russian people and an overwhelming admiration for their literature.

“Clearly it was Wilson’s irrepressible interest in people, his unwillingness to allow them to be effaced by ideas, which prevented him from sustaining the posture of the intellectual for long. By the end of the 1930s all the instincts and ideas of the man of letters were returning. But the process of emancipating himself from the lure of Marxism and the left was not easy. *To the Finland Station* grew and grew. It was not finally published until 1940, and not until the second edition did Wilson denounced Stalinism as ‘one of the most hideous tyrannies the world has ever known’. The book itself is a mixture, containing passages dating from the period when he found the impact of Marx intellectually

overwhelming. Thus he links together Marx's three propaganda diatribes, *The Class Struggles in France* (1848-50), *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) and *The Civil War in France* (1871) as 'one of the great cardinal productions of the modern art-science of history', when they are in fact an unscrupulous blend of falsehood, wishful thinking and invective, and historically quite worthless. He defends or dismisses Marx's anti-semitism - 'If Marx is contemptuous of his race, it is primarily perhaps with the anger of Moses at finding the children of Israel dancing before the golden calf.' He describes Marx's attitude to money as springing from 'almost maniacal idealism', without mentioning his cheating tradespeople, longing for his relatives, including his mother, to die, borrowing without the slightest intention of repaying or speculating on the stock exchange (it is possible Wilson was unaware of this last activity). Wilson is not in the least distressed by the sufferings which Marx, in the cause of his 'art-science', inflicted on his family; he can imagine doing it himself, at any rate in theory..."<sup>417</sup>

So by the eve of the Second World War, some Marxist intellectuals were recovering from their illusions. However, the war itself, with its alliance between the Soviets and the Anglo-Saxons, would provide a further temptation to the intellectuals to backslide... Roosevelt himself was a backslider. On January 6, 1941, in his third inaugural speech, Roosevelt praised democracy's "four freedoms" - freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. And he went on: "This is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

"To that new order we oppose the greater conception - the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

"This destiny has placed its destiny in the hands and hearts of its millions of free men and women, and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights and keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose."

More speeches like this would have been welcome in the 1930s. Nevertheless, while Roosevelt was no socialist of the national Hitlerian or international Stalinist type, Johnson is right in asserting that he "was in tune with the Thirties spirit, which had repudiated the virtues of capitalist enterprise and embraced those of collectivism. The heroes of the 1920s had been businessmen, the sort of titans, led by Thomas Edison, who had endorsed Harding and Coolidge on their front porches. The 1929 crash and its aftermath weakened faith in this pantheon. By 1931 Felix Frankfurter was writing to

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<sup>417</sup> Johnson, *Intellectuals*, London: Harper Perennial, 1988, 2007, pp. 255, 257-258.

Bruce Bliven, editor of the *New Republic*: 'Nothing I believe sustains the present system more than the pervasive worship of success and the touching faith we have in financial and business messiahs... I believe it to be profoundly important to undermine this belief... Undermine confidence in their greatness and you have gone a long way towards removing some basic obstructions to the exploration of economic and social problems.' By 1932 this undermining process was largely complete, helped by revelations that J.P. Morgan, for instance, had paid no income tax for the three previous years, and that Andrew Mellon had been coached by an expert from his own Treasury Department in the art of tax-avoidance.

"Loss of faith in American business leaders coincided with a sudden and overwhelming discovery that the Soviet Union existed and that it offered an astonishing and highly relevant alternative to America's agony. Stuart Chase's *A New Deal* ended with the question: 'Why should the Russians have all the fun of remaking a world' The first Soviet Five-Year Plan had been announced in 1928, but it was only four years later that its importance was grasped by American writers. Then a great spate of books appeared, praising Soviet-style planning and holding it up as a model to America...

"America was and is a millenarian society whose overweening expectations can easily oscillate into catastrophic loss of faith. In the early 1930s there was net emigration. When Amtorg, the Soviet trading agency, advertised for 6,000 skilled workers, more than 100,000 Americans applied. To the comedian Will Rodgers: 'Those rascals in Russia, along with their cuckoo stuff have got some mighty good ideas... Just think of everybody in a country going to work.' 'All roads in our day lead to Moscow,' Steffens proclaimed; and Strachey echoed him: 'To travel from the capitalist world into Soviet territory is to pass from from death to birth...'"<sup>418</sup>

It was characteristic of Roosevelt, continues Johnson, "that one of his principal sources of information about Britain, and on European events generally in the later 1930s was *The Week*, the ultra-Left conspiracy-theory bulletin put out by the *Daily Worker* journalist Claud Cockburn. Some of Roosevelt's ambassadorial appointments were exceptionally ill-judged. He sent the violently anti-British Joseph Kennedy to London, and the corrupt and gullible Joseph Davies to Moscow. The latter move was particularly destructive because the US Moscow embassy was well-staffed and superbly informed, backed by a highly professional division of European Affairs in the State Department. The Soviet Foreign Minister, Litvinov, admitted that this division had better records on Soviet foreign policy than the Soviet government itself. Five months after Davies became ambassador in 1936, with instructions to win Stalin's friendship at all costs, the division was abolished, its library dispersed and its files destroyed. Kennan, in the Moscow embassy, thought this indicated the smell of Soviet influence... somewhere in the higher reaches of the government.' It certainly reflected a bitter power struggle between the

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<sup>418</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 259-260.

Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and the Assistant Secretary, the saturnine homosexual Sumner Welles. Both men were anti-British, Hull believing that Britain's new system of imperial preference, itself a response to the avalanche of trade restriction precipitated by the Smoot-Hawley tariff, was a bigger threat to world peace than any of the dictators.

"As the diplomatic papers abundantly testify, the Roosevelt administration was never prepared to discuss specific military backing for Britain and France against Germany. Roosevelt's condemnatory speeches, such as his 'quarantine' oration of October 1937 or his absurd demand in April 1939 that Hitler give ten-year non-aggression guarantees to thirty-one name countries, were worse than useless. The second convinced Hitler that in no circumstances would Roosevelt actually intervene militarily, and he replied to it on 28 April, in what turned out to be his last public speech in the Reichstag, with unconcealed contempt and derision..."<sup>419</sup>

Of course, Roosevelt did (covertly and cunningly) help Britain in 1940 in spite of his and America's general tendency to isolationism. And in 1941, Hitler declared war on him, which brought the United States into the war decisively on the side of Britain. But if this removed the temptation of "rightist appeasement" it only strengthened the temptation of "leftist appeasement". The acid test of Roosevelt's image as a warrior for freedom would come a few years later, when he found himself sitting next to his ally, "Uncle Joe" Stalin, in Teheran and Yalta. As we shall see, he did not pass the test...

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Returning to Europe: "There was a general tendency (as with Stalin's atrocities) to ignore the actual evidence of Hitler's wickedness, which was plentiful enough, and to dismiss Hitler's ferocious statements as mere 'rhetoric', which was 'intended for home consumption' (*The Times*, 10 July 1934). Against all the evidence, the stage army persisted in believing that Hitler not only wanted peace but was a factor for it. Temple, the portly primate of York, thought he had made 'a great contribution to the secure establishment of peace'. Clifford Allen wrote, 'I am convinced he genuinely desires peace.' Keynes's 'Carthaginian Peace' argument had so captured the minds of both Left and Right that it was felt that for Hitler to smash the Treaty by force was itself a step to peace. Versailles was 'monstrously unjust' (Leonard Wolf), 'that wicked treaty' (Clifford Allen). In remilitarizing the Rhineland, said Lothian, the Germans has 'done no more than walk into their own backyard'. Shaw agreed: 'It was as if the British had reoccupied Portsmouth.'

"Behind all this facile rationalization, however, was simple, old-fashioned fear; a dash of cowardice, indeed. As Harold Nicolson noted during the Rhineland crisis, 'the feeling in the House is terribly pro-German, which means afraid of war'. Until the coming of radar in the later 1930s, even experts

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<sup>419</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 335.



accepted the views of Giulio Douhet in *The Covenant of the Air* (1921), that fighter aircraft could do little to prevent mass bombing. Churchill warned parliament on 28 November 1934 that up to 40,000 Londoners would be killed or injured in the first week of war. Baldwin thought 'the man in the street' ought to 'realize that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell you, the bomber will always get through.' In fact people told him nothing of the sort: quite the contrary. The brilliant H.G. Wells film, *Things to Come* (1936), presented a terrifying scene of total devastation. The same year, Bertrand Russell (currently a pacifist) argued in *Which Way to Peace?* That fifty gas-bombers, using lewisite, could poison all London. General Fuller, another leading expert, predicted that London would become 'one vast, raving Bedlam', with the government swept away in an avalanche of terror.'

"In this highly emotional atmosphere, with an ostensible concern for humanity forming a thin crust over a morass of funk... the real issue of how to organize collective security in Europe was never properly debated. The mood was set by a ridiculous debate in the Oxford Union, immediately after Hitler came to power, which voted 275-153 'That this House refuses in any circumstances to fight for King and Country' - 'that abject, squalid, shameless avowal... a very disquieting and disgusting symptom', as Churchill called it... The clergy, seizing on the peace issue as a remedy for declining congregations and their own flagging faith..., saturated the discussion in a soggy pool of lachrymose spirituality..."<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 349-350.

## 31. THE POPULAR FRONT

Strange as it may seem in view of their later rivalry, Stalin was not at first displeased by the rise of Hitler. One reason was that right-wing Germans, notably the great industrialist Krupp, were willing, following the alliance between the two nations formed in 1922 at the Treaty of Rapallo, to do business with Russia to the mutual advantage of both countries.

“The deal with what the Soviets called the ‘*Russlandsasschuss der deutschen Industrie*’ was signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1928. Gustav Krupp agree to help Stalin create giant farms like his own in the North Caucasus while Stalin undertook to ensure that even if the German Communists were engaged in bloody warfare against the Nazis on the German streets, they would always vote with Hugenberg’s DNVP and Hitler’s National Socialists in the Reichstage.

“... Stalin became a valued customer in the depression years 1929 to 1933, buying not only anti-tank guns, howitzers, firing mechanisms and all kinds of munitions, but also the secret of making the precious steel to protect tanks from attack, and the heavy engineering plants to modernize the Soviet Union’s antiquated industrial infrastructure. Indeed, by 1931 over 50 per cent of all Stalin’s imports came from Germany. German goods continued to flood into the Soviet Union in 1932. By 1933 Krupp and his heavy-industry friends would not only have saved Stalin from bankruptcy but given him the industrial base to survive the Great War.

“In return Stalin maintained his immense hold over the German Communist Party. In June 1929, October 1929 and July 1930 the Communists faithfully voted with Hitler’s NSDAP and Hugenberg’s DNVP. In the September 1930 elections, they alleged that the ‘treacherous, corrupt’ Social Democrats were ‘the conscious agents of French and Polish imperialism’ because they supported paying war reparations. In the spring of 1931, after Stalin’s personal intervention, the Communists reluctantly joined forces with Hugenberg’s DNVP and Hitler’s National Socialists to support the dissolution of the last bastion of democracy in Germany, the Prussian state Lantag (parliament).

“Meanwhile, with Krupp and his friends’ help, Stalin dispensed with the services of his unruly kulak peasants and produced quantities of wheat for export to pay for his goods in hard currency...”<sup>421</sup>

In 1933, with the Great Depression at its height, the Bolsheviks saw new revolutionary opportunities being created, writes Orlando Figes, “as workers in the West moved to the left to fight for jobs and looked towards the Soviet Union as an alternative to the capitalist system.

“Predicting a fresh wave of labour protests..., the Comintern concluded that the time was ripe to turn them into socialist revolutions through more militant

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<sup>421</sup> Moore, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

and subversive policies than it had pursued in the NEP period. In this class war Communists were ordered to mobilise the unemployed and to cut off all links with the socialists, denounced as 'social fascists', who were to be opposed as vehemently as the liberals and the Right because of their moderate parliamentary policies.

"The Comintern's new policy had fateful consequences in Germany, where the refusal of the Communists to cooperate with the SPD was a major factor in Hitler's rise to power. Stalin was particularly mistrustful of the SPD because of its firm commitment to the post-war Versailles settlement and the Western orientation of its policies in government during the 1920s. He thought the Social Democrats had to be crushed before a Communist revolution could succeed in Germany - just as the Mensheviks (with whom he compared them) had been destroyed by the Bolsheviks under Lenin in 1917. On Stalin's instructions, the German Communists issued a new Party programme in which they promised to annul the Versailles Treaty and denounced the SPD as lackeys of the West. On Moscow's orders in 1931, the Communists in Prussia even allied with the Nazis in a plebiscite against the SPD state government..."<sup>422</sup>

Again, in 1932, writes Figes, "the SPD leaders asked the Soviet embassy in Berlin for help to resist the Nazi threat. Explaining the Soviet refusal, an attaché told the German socialists: 'Moscow is convinced that the road to a Soviet Germany leads through Hitler.'

"In Stalin's way of thinking there was no moral distinction between Nazism and democracy (socialist or liberal): they were equally the products of the 'capitalist system' and could both be used - or played off against each other - to advance Moscow's revolutionary goals. Stalin was counting on a lasting conflict between the West and Nazi Germany to give the Soviet Union the breathing spell it needed to build up its industrial economy and arm itself against both sides...

"Like Lenin before him, Stalin saw the revolutionary potential of a long war between the capitalist states. By staying out of the conflict for as long as possible, the Bolsheviks could exploit the military exhaustion of both sides, only entering the war in the final stages to revolutionize the countries liberated by the Red Army. Stalin was planning this scenario from as early as 1925..."<sup>423</sup>

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However, as the power and the threat of Hitler increased, trouncing the German Communists and signing a ten-year non-aggression pact with Poland, Stalin changed his tactics. At the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, which *Pravda* called "the Congress of Victors", he asserted that the Fascists and Nazis "contained not an atom of socialism", and that their success should be seen as a sign of the

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<sup>422</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2018, pp. 291-292.

<sup>423</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991*, London: Pelican, 2018, pp. 291-292.

bourgeoisie's weakness, of the lack of the power to rule by the old parliamentary methods, forcing it to turn internally to terrorist methods of rule". So, changing policy, he allowed the formation of a tactical alliance between Communists and Socialists in France (which had also seen the German-Polish pact as a blow) known as the "Popular Front (French: *Front populaire*).<sup>424</sup>

For, as Figes notes, while "Hitler may have had a place in Stalin's revolutionary plans,... the Nazi domination of Europe certainly did not. Stalin was sufficiently alarmed by German military aggression to join the Western nations in building collective security. Within two years of Hitler's coming to power, the Soviet Union had joined the League of Nations (a creation of the Versailles Treaty previously reviled as a tool of Anglo-French imperialism in Soviet thinking) while the Comintern had made a complete turnaround from its policy of non-cooperation with the socialists to support a United Front with Western socialist and democratic parties to resist the spread of fascism.

"France was the key to the United Front. It was at the heart of non-fascist Europe geographically, and it had in the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) the largest Communist party (outside the Soviet Union itself) after Hitler's crushing of the German Communists in 1933. France also had a powerful grassroots anti-fascist movement, which came on to the streets in the general strike of February 1934. Organized by the PCF and French socialists to defend the Third Republic against fascist riots, the strike was joined by over 1 million workers in Paris alone. It polarized society between Left and Right and stirred the republican middle class to unite behind the anti-fascist movement, eventually leading to the election of the Popular Front Government in May 1936.

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<sup>424</sup> The Popular Front "was an alliance of left-wing movements, including the communist French Section of the Communist International (SFIC, also known as the French Communist Party), the socialist French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO) and the progressive Radical-Socialist Republican Party. Three months after the victory of the Spanish Popular Front, the Popular Front won the May 1936 legislative elections, leading to the formation of a government first headed by SFIO leader Léon Blum and exclusively composed of republican and SFIO ministers.

"Blum's government implemented various social reforms. The workers' movement welcomed this electoral victory by launching a general strike in May-June 1936, resulting in the negotiation of the Matignon agreements, one of the cornerstones of social rights in France. All employees were assured a two-week paid vacation, and the rights of unions were strengthened. The socialist movement's euphoria was apparent in SFIO member Marceau Pivert's "*Tout est possible!*" (Everything is possible). However, the economy continued to stall, with 1938 production still not having recovered to 1929 levels, and higher wages had been neutralized by inflation. Businessmen took their funds overseas. Blum was forced to stop his reforms and devalue the franc. With the French Senate controlled by conservatives, Blum fell out of power in June 1937. The presidency of the cabinet was then taken over by Camille Chautemps, a Radical-Socialist, but Blum came back as President of the Council in March 1938, before being succeeded by Édouard Daladier, another Radical-Socialist, the next month. The Popular Front dissolved itself in autumn 1938, confronted by internal dissensions related to the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), opposition of the right-wing, and the persistent effects of the Great Depression."  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular\\_Front\\_\(France\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_Front_(France))).

“French actions impressed Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian communist and refugee from Nazi Germany [for standing up against both Goring and Goebbels in a Leipzig courtroom], who became the General Secretary of the Comintern Executive in Moscow in June 1934. In the light of the events in France, Dimitrov championed a United Front. The Comintern instructed Communist parties to unite with socialists against the Fascist threat. It even allowed to join Popular Front coalitions with ‘bourgeois’ parties (e.g. liberals and peasant-based popular parties) where this could stop the Fascists. The new policy was a radical departure from the Leninist position, which since 1917 had violently rejected any compromise with parties outside the socialist camp. It made sense only because Stalin’s goal was not to make a revolution but to block a fascist one by reinforcing parliamentary democracy and, if necessary, mobilizing workers to defend it on the streets.

“The immediate upshot of the United Front was a bilateral pact of mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and France in May 1935.<sup>425</sup> The French Communists were now instructed to end their opposition to the government of Pierre Laval and support its military budget, including the proposal to extend compulsory military service from one to two years, a policy that Communists had hitherto opposed. Stalin’s thinking was to strengthen France’s fighting potential so that it would not be overrun by Nazi Germany in the event of war.

“With its anti-fascist front the Soviet Union presented a friendly face towards the West. Maxim Litvinov, an educated European-oriented Jew, was the perfect instrument of Stalin’s foreign policy in this respect. As the People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs in the 1930s, Litvinov worked hard to strengthen collective security by forging closer links between the Soviet Union and the Western States. It was through Litvinov’s initiative that the United States recognized the Soviet Union in 1933, and his doing that the USSR joined the League of Nations the next year.

“Through the United Front the Soviet Union won over many sympathizers in the West. Soviet propaganda portrayed the USSR as the leader of ‘progressive humanity’, as the world’s only socialist state, and as its main hope against the Fascist threat. Western intellectuals were taken in. In June 1935, a Moscow-financed International Writers’ Congress for the Defence of Culture was held in Paris at which famous writers such as André Gide, André Malraux, E.M. Forster and Aldous Huxley declared their solidarity with their Soviet comrades (including Boris Pasternak and Ilya Ehrenburg, who attended as guests) in the struggle against fascism. This was a time when Western intellectuals (the so-called ‘fellow-travellers’) allowed their left-wing sympathies and fears of fascism to cloud their judgement of Soviet political

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<sup>425</sup> Pers Brendon writes: “Gaston Doumergue’s national government viewed Communism with horror but Nazism with terror; so Louis Barthou the cultured, aged Foreign Minister, was able to revive his country’s traditional eastern alliance. Barthou was no Clemenceau... However, Barthou was the last master of the Quai d’Orsay to plan serious resistance to Hitler and he advanced negotiations so far towards a Franco-Soviet Pact that in May 1935 his successor, Pierre Laval felt (reluctantly) bound to sign it.” (*The Dark Valley*, p. 284) (V.M.)

realities. They saw progress in the Soviet Union [!] but were blind to the famine and terror. Many were impressed by the Soviet Constitution of 1936, a bogus declaration which promised social rights and religious and political freedoms unknown to the Soviet people in reality. Not a few believed that the show trials were genuine and necessary. The British socialite Beatrice Webb believed that Stalin had 'cut out the dead wood'. Others turned a blind eye to the trials, or suppressed their doubts, refusing to criticize the Russian revolution, which in their eyes was the great defender of humanity against fascism.

"The Communist parties of Western Europe grew dramatically, partly in reaction to the fascist threat and partly from a sense of solidarity with the Soviet Union. In France the PCI increased from 87,000 members in 1935 to 325,000 in 1937, making it the largest French party. In Spain the Communist Party grew from 40,000 to 250,000 members during the same years. The movement's growing international strength fuelled the Kremlin's ambitions. From the vantage point of Moscow, it seemed as if the whole world were engulfed in the struggle against fascism, and that Communism should emerge stronger from the fight..."<sup>426</sup>

In spite of the Popular Front's major victory in the May 1936 election (376 seats to the Right's 222), "France remained a completely divided country. The hatred of the nationalist Right for the Popular Front went far beyond conventional political opposition. Special vitriol was directed at its leader, Leon Blum, a Jewish intellectual who had been an early supporter of Dreyfus. Blum had been physically assaulted by a nationalist mob in February 1936. And the previous spring, the leader of the far right *Action Francaise*, Charles Maurras, had appallingly denounced Blum as 'a man to be shot - in the back'. The Left's electoral triumph had been far less sweeping than it seemed a first sight. The Left's proportion of the votes, 37.1 per cent, was only marginally higher than the 35.9 per cent won by the Right. The major shift had been within the Left itself - though this only increased the antagonism of the Right. The Radicals, the centrist mainstay of the Republic, had lost ground, down from 157 seats in 1932 to only 106 seats in 1936. The Socialists, the largest party in the Popular Front, had climbed from 131 to 147 seats. Various small left-wing parties had won 51 seats, an increase of 14 compared with 1932. Most worrying for the Right, the communists had been the biggest winners - a leap from 10 to 72 seats...

"Blum, France's first Socialist and first Jewish premier, led a government of ministers - including three women - from the Socialist and Radical parites. The Communists (and a number of minority parties) provided support though they chose to stay out of government. Even before the new government took up office, the biggest wave of strikes France had even known - often spontaneous, and carried out in high spirits, in a carnival-like, festive atmosphere - swept across the country. Nearly 2 million workers, many non-unionized and including large numbers of women on low pay, took part in thousands of

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<sup>426</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 293-296.

strikes, factory occupations and sit-ins, overwhelmingly in the private sector. Restaurants and cafes shut their doors, hotel guests had to manage without room service, there were no shop assistants to attend to customers in the big Paris department stores, and closed petrol stations meant motorists could not refuel their cars. The exhilaration of the strikers and their supporters was one part of the picture. The other was the underground condemnation of social disorder by middle-class adherents of the Right, fearing it was the portal to communism. Political polarization was enhanced...

“The summer euphoria swiftly faded, the carnival atmosphere evaporated, the cares and worries of everyday life returned...”<sup>427</sup>

Blum’s government achieved little. “The common programme amounted to little more than opposition to fascism, but even over this opinion was divided. The Socialists, who had opposed Flandin’s extension of conscription to two years, wanted to see only economic sanctions against Mussolini. The Communists, who at Stalin’s behest had done a volte-face over the question of national defence, believed that ‘Peace may require the eventual application of force.’ There was much talk of planning and, under the goad of economic adversity which did not spare the bourgeoisie, even time-serving Radicals moved to the Left. Everyone thought that France needed some sort of New Deal. But there was little positive agreement after the ritual denunciation of the ‘200 families’ [the bankers] and the ‘merchants of death’ – arms manufacturers. Socialist and Communist trade unions merged. But no one knew how to raise the living standards of the masses without damaging France’s grossly uncompetitive economy as a whole.”<sup>428</sup>

Blum’s first administration lasted 382 days; his second, in 1938 – 26 days. The Right returned to power under Prime Minister Daladier. “He was seen as a ‘safe pair of hands’, the very epitome of small-town provincial France, backed by both small and big business, and lauded by the Right for reversing much of Blum’s social legislation, thus terminating ‘the revolution of June 1936’.”<sup>429</sup>

## 32. MUSSOLINI’S INVASION OF ETHIOPIA

“One of Hitler’s constant themes,” writes Tombs, “had been the iniquity of the Versailles treaty, and many thought this explained his rise. As the *Manchester Guardian* saw it, ‘the Nazi revolution’ was an outcome of ‘brooding over the wrongs of Germany’.”<sup>430</sup>

Hitler first openly violated the Versailles treaty in March, 1935, when Goering announced the existence of a German air force, which was forbidden

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<sup>427</sup> Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1915-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 298, 299-300, 301.

<sup>428</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>429</sup> Kershaw, op. cit., p. 302.

<sup>430</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2014, p. 677) (V.M.)

by the Versailles treaty and restored conscription in Germany, which was also forbidden, creating an army of 500,000 men. In response, there was a meeting at Stresa in Italy between the French, British and Italian leaders (including Mussolini) at which it was agreed to resist jointly "any unilateral repudiation of treaties, which might endanger the peace of Europe", - Versailles and Locarno were obviously meant, - that the independence of Austria "would continue to inspire their common policy".

Diplomatic activity quickened as Hitler's aggressive attentions became generally recognized. A British delegation led by Anthony Eden visited Paris and Berlin, and then Moscow. This would have been the time for Britain and France to form a real bilateral alliance, but the British remained cool. In fact, the Soviets at this stage were more alarmed by Hitler than the Brits. Thus Eden conveyed to Litvinov "that Germany was the bulwark of 'European civilization' and needed to be permitted to rearm. 'We do not have the slightest doubt about German aggression,' Litvinov answered, according to the Soviet notetaker, 'German foreign policy is inspired by two main ideas - *revanche* and domination in Europe.'" Stalin's attitude was slightly different: "I think the situation now is worse than in 1913,... because in 1913 there was only one center of military danger - Germany - and now there are two - Germany and Japan."<sup>431</sup> At the same time, Stalin signed a defensive treaty with France which infuriated Hitler, who complained of the "Bolshevization of France."

But he needn't have worried: neither side seemed to take the treaty too seriously. Thus "barely a week after the treaty with France had been signed, Litvino informed the new German ambassador, Werner von der Schulenburg, that a bilateral pact was urgently needed and would 'lessen the significance of the Franco-Soviet alliance.'<sup>432</sup> And on April 9 Stalin also negotiated a \$200 million loan from Germany, paid for in hard currency and valuable raw materials. As for the French, Prime Minister Laval "assured Goring of France's good intentions..."<sup>433</sup>

As for Hitler: "Playing on pacifist pressures in Britain and the desperate wish of its government to inveigle Germany into some sort of arms limitation framework, he negotiated an Anglo-German naval agreement. Its provisions, restricting German strength to 35 per cent of Britain's surface fleet (but allowing parity on submarines), hampered his programme of naval expansion. Instead the signing of this agreement ended the period of isolation which Germany had suffered following its withdrawal from the League, marked the 'first triumph' of Nazi diplomacy, and provided Hitler with the happiest day of his life. As it happened that day, 18 June 1935, was the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo - a piece of British tactlessness towards the French on a par with their giving General de Gaulle, when he fled to London in 1940, an office in Waterloo Place, off Trafalgar Square. The fact was that France had not been consulted about the

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<sup>431</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 244-245.

<sup>432</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 251.

<sup>433</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 252.



naval agreement and felt betrayed by it. Admittedly France had just embraced its old ally, the Russian bear, now outrageously metamorphosed by what Winston Churchill called 'the baboonery of Bolshevism'. But Britain had jeopardised the security of both democracies by permitting a challenge to its own Maginot Line – the fleet. Britain had sanctioned the violation of Versailles. It had split the 'Stresa front'. And it had attempted to dignify weakness as a policy of appeasement. Mussolini for one was not deceived.

"The Duce was already planning to star in the next act of the global drama, during which Italy would vanquish Ethiopia. As a preliminary he studied the composition of Britain's population, discovering that it contained a predominance of females and that 12 million Britons were more than 50 years old, over 'the age of bellicosity'. This confirmed his view that Albion was inclined to passivity as well as perfidy. Any warnings its decadent diplomats or effete politicians gave about African adventurism – and their silence at Stresa he interpreted as acquiescence – could be ignored. France, too, could be discounted. It was preoccupied with Germany and in return for Italy's support at home Laval had secretly and ambiguously given Mussolini a 'free hand' in Ethiopia. Germany did not yet present a military threat and Mussolini probably wanted to make his grab for Africa before Hitler grew strong enough to make his for Austria... Hitler was a barbarian and his racial theories were pernicious nonsense. By the canons of Nordic purity, Mussolini pointed out, the Lapps would have to be honoured as the highest type of humanity. But as the democracies hardened against Italy's plans for colonial conquest Mussolini had cause to be grateful for Germany's benevolent neutrality. Hitler, for his part, was intent on sustaining the authoritarian system of government. After all, Mussolini was the 'spiritual leader of the Nazi movement' and an alliance between the two systems was perfectly natural. So, as the clouds of war gathered over Ethiopia, the Nazi-Fascist axis was adumbrated in Europe. As one witness to the brutal friendship observed, Hitler had cast Mussolini in the role of 'partner in his own Satanic revolution'."<sup>434</sup>

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Ethiopia was a Christian (Monophysite) kingdom led by Emperor Haile Selassie I, "the Lion of Judah" and "King of Zion", who traced his ancestry back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. A cultured and dignified man, the emperor was trying to drag his ancient, poverty-stricken country into the twentieth century at a steady pace, without endangering its native institutions. Mussolini, barbarian that he was, thought that progress could be brought more quickly to the country by raping it, and killing tens of thousands of virtually unarmed peasants with bombs and mustard gas. The British and the French responded to this threat by trying to buy Mussolini off when they could have stopped the whole venture immediately by simply sealing off the Suez Canal...

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<sup>434</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 260-261.

But the two democracies – and particularly the French – were terrified of turning Mussolini into an ally of Hitler. Moreover, the British worried that fighting a war against the Italians in the Mediterranean would make it impossible for their fleet to defend British colonies in the Far East from possible Japanese assault. So nothing was done... The only good result of this inactivity was that some previous admirers of Mussolini, like Winston Churchill, changed their minds about him. But the pro-Fascists continued to admire him, come what may.

Thus the aristocratic diarist “Chips” Channon wrote on 6 July 1935: “There is something rather classical in Mussolini’s seaplane flying to Rome being struck by lightning. Luckily he was untouched. It would seem as if the Gods themselves jealous of this dynamic man – so like God Himself” ...<sup>435</sup>

“For both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy,” writes Mark Mazower, “empire was crucial to their claims to be great powers as well as to their very survival as dynamic nations. Empire was land, and land means room for settlement, foodstuffs, raw materials and healthy colonists. Never mind the evidence that it was easier to win land than to direct people to it or that in the nineteenth century far more Europeans had preferred to settle in the Americas than in Africa: these were lessons fascist regimes would have to learn the hard way. Fascist empire-building marked the culmination of the process of European imperial expansion that began in the 1870s. Mussolini and Hitler acceded the basic geopolitical tenet of nineteenth-century imperialism, while jettisoning its liberalism.

“Fascist empire came first to Ethiopia, following the Italian invasion late in [October] 1935. The fighting itself was conducted with unprecedented brutality by the Italians, who were desperate for a quick victory: gas and chemical warfare, as well as saturation bombing, killed enormous numbers, as did the detention and concentration camps that the Italians brought with them from the pacification campaigns of a few years earlier against the nomadic Senussi. Around 3,000 Italians died compared with tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians. Neither later nor at the time did this kind of bloodshed occasion much criticism: inside Italy, victory marked the high point of Mussolini’s reign, a ‘golden age’ of ‘Fascist empire’.

“The peace that followed was equally enlightening. Following an assassination attempt on Viceroy Graziani, notorious for his brutality, Fascist squads went on the rampage in Addis Ababa, killing over a thousand people in cold blood. All this offered a foretaste of what Europe – and Italy – would itself experience a few years later at the hands of the Germans. Meanwhile, Ciano [Mussolini’s foreign minister and son-in-law] addressed the General Assembly of the League of Nations, and referred to the ‘sacred mission of civilization’ which Italy was heeding, declaring that his country would

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<sup>435</sup> Channon, in Andrew Marr’s review of his diaries in *New Statesman*, 5-11 March, 2021, p. 43.

'consider it an honour to inform the League of the progress achieved in its work of civilizaing Ethiopia'."<sup>436</sup>

"When the League of Nations, led by Britain, voted by 50 votes to 4 to impose sanctions on Italy on 19 October over her invasion of Abyssinia, an Italian journalist called on his countrymen to desist 'from such pernicious British habits as tea-drinking, snobbery, golf-playing, Puritanism, clean-shaving, pipe-smoking, bridge playing, and inexplicable apathy towards women'. A mere nine months later, on 15 July 1936, the sanctions were raised by the League, leaving the organization as, in Churchill's phrase, 'a cockpit in a Tower of Babel'. With no army, navy or air force, the League of Nations was impotent. 'And covenants, without the sword, are but words', wrote Thomas Hobbes in chapter seventeen of *Leviathan*..."<sup>437</sup>

While his countrymen waged guerrilla warfare against the Italian occupiers, Haile Selassie also addressed the League; the "dark continent's" last European colony tried to enlighten the European colonists, making "an eloquent plea for morality in international affairs. He appealed to the conscience of the League and accused it of failing in its duty: 'You abandoned us to Italy'. Had not its connivance at the rape of Ethiopia set a 'terrible precedent of bowing before force?' What would happen next and what could he tell his people?

"He was questioning a corpse. Damaged by its impotence over Manchuria, the League of Nations, as many had anticipated, was destroyed by its failure over Ethiopia. Like the preserved body of Lenin, it had the appearance of life but its veins were filled with embalming fluid. As [the French socialist leader] Léon Blum noted bitterly, 'The League of Nations no longer condemns the Fascist acts of aggression, the League 'notes', the League 'does this and thus', the League 'deploras' - the League makes a hypocritical show of balancing between the criminal and his victim... Even more intolerable are the lies concealed in these formulae, and what can be read between the lines: the League's confession of impotence, its abject surrender, its acceptance of the fait accompli.'... As he stalked proudly from the platform of Geneva, the Lion of Judah growled, 'It is us today. It will be you tomorrow.'"<sup>438</sup>

The fact was: the League was of some use with small conflicts, but had neither the resources nor the international consensus required in order to intervene effectively in larger conflicts. As Mussolini put it, "the League is very well when sparrows shout, but no good at all when eagles fall out." Nor was this surprising when the American Congress refused to ratify American participation, when the largest European powers, Russia and Germany, were either excluded from the beginning or excluded themselves (although the

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<sup>436</sup> Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 71-72.

<sup>437</sup> Andrew Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples since 1900*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 220.

<sup>438</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 282.

Soviets joined the League in 1934), and when Japan adopted the slogan “Asia for the Asiatics” ...

In view of the League’s weakness, France and Britain were forced to resort to a more conventional form of conflict resolution – “collective security”, which in effect meant building up alliances of nations or “cordons sanitaires” to deter potential aggressors on the model of the pre-war Entente between France, Britain and Russia. But now that Russia – which had supported Abyssinia against Italy in the 1890s – was enslaved to the anti-state of the Soviet Union, and America was retreating into splendid isolation, the aggressors Germany and Italy inevitably felt less than overawed by the nations opposed to their expansion. Besides, the Germans, at any rate, were doing better than the western democracies, which, in order to deter Germany, felt compelled to appease Italy...

The Great Powers’ attempts to counter the Nazi threat were neither united nor whole-hearted ... France was hamstrung not only by the need to appease Italy, but by her desire (as in 1914) to include Britain in a real military alliance. Kotkin well summarizes the Great Powers’ strategies: “For Hitler, the Soviet Union was the principal evil, and Britain his principal wedge. For Stalin, Britain was the principal evil, and Germany the principal wedge. For France, the courting of the Soviet Union, a step that Britain disliked, was a way to woo a hard-to-get Britain. For Britain, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were both evil, but avoiding the costs of direct confrontation with Germany was paramount....”<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 255.

### 33. HITLER'S INVASION OF THE RHINELAND

Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia (Abyssinia) in October 1935 "not only destroyed the Stresa Front but created bitter Anglo-French antagonism and ruled out the possibility of securing joint agreement to a firm counter-move against Hitler. France would not back Britain over Abyssinia; therefore Britain would not back France over the Rhineland. It was the Abyssinia crisis which enabled Hitler to bring forward his plan to remilitarize the Rhine from 1937 to 1936, beautifully timed on 7 March at the height of Anglo-French confusion. Even so it was a risk. Hitler later admitted: 'If the French had marched into the Rhineland we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs.' The French had the physical power to act alone, as they had done in 1923. But the will to use it was lacking..."<sup>440</sup>

The German action began, writes Tombs, "as a cautious dipping of the jackboot toe: a mere 3,000 troops crossed the Rhine, with orders to withdraw if the French reacted. This was the moment at which, legend has it – a legend encouraged by Hitler himself – the Nazi adventure could have been snuffed out: the *Führer* would have been humiliated, and the army might have overthrown him."<sup>441</sup> But Hitler had adroitly accompanied his move with various peace offers, using the usual moral equivalence tactic of demanding that the Belgians and the French demilitarize their frontiers too. No one in Britain or France – public, politicians or generals – wanted to pick up Hitler's gauntlet. Even Churchill hoped for a 'peaceful and friendly solution'. For appeasers, the Rhineland was a hangover from the Versailles treaty and of French 'militarism'. MacDonald hoped that Hitler's bold action had taught the French a 'severe lesson'. The former Labour chancellor Philip Snowden muttered that the 'damned French are at their old game of dragging this country behind them in the policy of encircling Germany.' Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, proclaimed that it was 'the appeasement of Europe as a whole that we have constantly before us,' and that the government was eager to take up Hitler's peace offers – which never actually materialized. A government appraisal of the strategic situation concluded that Britain had too many commitments and could not contemplate going to war with any chance of success before 1939, or even 1942."<sup>442</sup>

Hitler's timing was brilliant. Taking place just before the Blum government took power in April/May, 1936, his invasion of the Rhineland, though in direct violation of the Versailles treaty, could not be immediately opposed by the already weakened Sarraut government. It was the moment of truth when Britain and France *had* to act if the 1919 settlement was to retain any credibility. They did not act, in spite of the fact that at this early stage of German

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<sup>440</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 351-352.

<sup>441</sup> "The 48 hours after the march into the Rhineland were the most nerve-racking in my life. If the French had then marched into the Rhineland we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs, for the military forces at our disposal would have been wholly inadequate for even a moderate resistance" (in Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 588). (V.M.)

<sup>442</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 679.

rearmament they could probably, as Hitler admitted, have expelled the Germans from the Rhineland with some ease. Hitler crowed: "Germany has regained its honor, found belief again, overcome its greatest economic distress, and finally ushered in a new cultural ascent."<sup>443</sup> The western powers, on the other hand, by their acquiescence in their aggression had made the Second World War inevitable...

"France did receive offers of support from Czechoslovakia and, more equivocally, from other members of the eastern entente such as Poland. But its vital British ally, resentful about French softness towards Italy over Ethiopia, could not (as Baldwin told Flandin) 'accept the risk of war'. However, what ultimately paralysed France – its eventual appeal to the League amounted to immobility – was the state of public opinion. Here, as in Britain, the vast bulk of the populace revolted at the prospect of another Armageddon when they were already enduring the rigours of the Depression. This was the most frequent comment heard on the streets of the capital and seen in newspapers that Parisians rushed out to buy. 'Above all, no war,' trumpeted *L'Action française* and youths scattered leaflets with the same message from the balcony of the Comédie Française. At the other end of the political spectrum the Communist *L'Humanité* called only for 'sanctions' while the Socialist *Le Populaire* refused to admit that a 'diplomatic conflict', in which Germany's stand was not unreasonable, could be a *casus belli*. Right and Left had their own motives for wanting to avoid war. Maurras insisted, 'We must not march against Hitler with the Soviets.' Though by no means a complete pacifist, Blum believed that the best defence against fascism was to repudiate the creed of militarism. He advocated disarmament, the alleviation of all economic ills, occupation of the moral high ground..."<sup>444</sup>

David Stevenson writes that "the influence of war memory on French public opinion was to move it in favour of appeasement at precisely the time when Hitler might have been halted at relatively little cost. But other war-related factors were operating in the same way, and probably more powerfully. The manpower available to French planners diminished from 1935 onwards as a result of the 1914-18 decline in birth rate. France had to pay most of its reconstruction costs (only a small proportion of Germany's reparations liability ever being collected), and much of its budget was committed to repaying war loans and supporting the bereaved and disabled. Unlike Germany, it also repaid war debts to the United States, until it defaulted on them. But in any case much of the money available went not on tanks and aircraft but on the steel and concrete of the Maginot Line"<sup>445</sup>, that purely defensive set of fortifications that symbolised the defensive, even defeatist mentality of the French.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Hitler, in Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 288.

<sup>444</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>445</sup> Stevenson, *1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 2004, p. 574.

<sup>446</sup> In spite of Napoleon's well-known dictum that the side which stays within its fortification is lost, the only French offensive in World War Two was the Saar offensive, which penetrated only five kilometres into Germany. It did not penetrate the Germans' Siegfried Line. In any

“Moreover, the nation was not united within itself. In 1934 the threat of a rightist coup pushed into power a leftist coalition of communists and socialists called the Popular Front. This elicited a huge wave of strikes – and the government promptly gave in to all the strikers’ demands. As a result the economy continued to decline, politicians on all sides of the political spectrum were held in contempt, and the famed levity and sensuality of Parisian life came to be combined with a spirit of defeatism and even pacifism.

“When the Berlin-based American correspondent William L. Shirer visited Paris in October, 1938 he found it: ‘a frightful place, completely surrendered to defeatism with no inkling of what has happened to *France*... Even the waiters, taxi-drivers, who used to be sound, are gushing about how wonderful it is that war has been avoided, that it would have been a crime, that they fought in one war and that was enough.’ That, Sheerer thought, ‘would be okay if the Germans, who also fought in one war, felt the same, but they don’t’.”<sup>447</sup>

The defeatism of the general French population was reflected by the chronic instability of the French government. This is illustrated by the fact that on the day Hitler came to power in 1933 there was no French government, and on the day Hitler entered Austria there was again no French government... All this would bring forth bad fruit in the rapid collapse of the French armies in 1940...

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With the Rhineland recovered, the Versailles treaty dead and overwhelming support for his actions attained in a German plebiscite, Hitler could make a new start in his military, political and economic planning.

By the end of August 1936, he “had completed a lengthy memorandum laying down the direction of the German economy over the following four years, stipulating a programme aimed at maximizing domestic production geared towards a rapid acceleration of rearmament. The background was the mounting economic pressure within Germany over previous months. Food imports had temporarily taken priority over imports of raw materials needed for rearmament. Prominent voices were pressing the leadership to curtail rearmament and reorientate the economy. A decision was needed.

“Hitler made it. He chose guns over butter. His reasoning was political, not economic. His memorandum on the ‘Four-Year Plan’ began by asserting that Bolshevism would be at the centre of a new worldwide conflict. Even though it could not be known when it would take place a showdown with the Soviet Union, he declared, was inevitable. He ended the memorandum by setting out two tasks: ‘I. The German armed forces must be operational within four years.

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case, the Maginot Line did not extend beyond the Ardennes, allowing the Germans unopposed penetration through neutral Belgium.

<sup>447</sup> Alistair Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris*, London: Pan Books, 2002, p. 390.

II. The German economy must be fit for war within four years.' It was not a timetable for war. But from now on, Germany could not free itself from the track on which it was travelling. Short of removing Hitler from power, there could be no reversal to a peacetime economy built upon international trade. The choice had been for an intensive programme of economic autarchy to build up armed strength in readiness for conflict. The points were set. The track led towards war. The dictators were starting to shape Europe's destiny..."<sup>448</sup>

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Where were the British in this struggle?

The British, unlike the French, were tormented by the sneaking feeling that perhaps the Germans had been unjustly treated at Versailles, and that perhaps they had a case in demanding, for example, the return of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. Indeed, Stephen Kotkin has argued that British foreign policy between the wars was governed by the desire to change the Versailles Treaty out of considerations of "fair play" to the Germans and in order to accommodate the undeniable fact that Germany, which had been prostrate in 1919, was now back on her feet... Of course, the British were less inclined to apply such notions of "fair play" to their own empire. Thus while it might be "fair" to return the Sudetenland to the Germans (although it had belonged to Austria, not Germany), it was by no means fair to return India to the Indians... The racist attitudes that underlay their own refusal to give up their empire perhaps made the British less sensitive to the evil of Nazi racism. British racism was less hate-filled than Nazi racism, especially against the Jews. But, as they found to their cost in 1941, it meant that their subject peoples did not jump to defend their colonial masters...

Moreover, British racism had a masochistic aspect: anti-Britishness, as expressed in the famous motion passed by the Oxford Union in February 1933: "This House will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country". This attitude, compounded by outright pacifism in some cases, undermined the country's will to defend itself.

As Max Hastings writes, "In 1938, the Armed Forces were in a desperate condition - as the chiefs of staff warned the Government before Munich - because of a comprehensive lack of national will to make them anything better."<sup>449</sup>

This lack of national will assumed almost pathologically self-denigratory dimensions. As George Orwell wrote in 1941: "England is perhaps the only great country whose intellectuals are ashamed of their own nationality.

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<sup>448</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>449</sup> Hastings, "Was Appeasing Hitler Actually a Masterstroke?", *Daily Mail*, September 29, 2017, p. 17.



“In Left-wing circles it is always felt that there is something slightly disgraceful in being an Englishman and that it is a duty to snigger at every English institution, from horse-racing to suet puddings.

“It is a strange fact, but it is unquestionably true that almost any English intellectual would feel more ashamed of standing to attention during God Save the King than of stealing from a poor box.”

The figures for spending on rearmament in the 1930s reveal that the only country matching Germany in spending was the Soviet Union. So, as Norman Davies writes, “the totalitarian powers had suffered from the Depression much less than the Western democracies had. Their military expenditure was twice as great as that of all the Western Powers put together. Their ‘relative war potential’ – which was a calculation based on the ability to translate industrial strength into military power through indices such as machine-tool levels – was roughly equal, and was separately equivalent to that of Britain and France combined.”<sup>450</sup> It was logical, therefore, to expect that the next war might not involve the West at all, but would be between Germany and the Soviet Union. This was the more to be expected in that Hitler in *Mein Kampf* (1925), which was now given as a state gift to all newly married couples in Germany, openly declared his intention to conciliate Britain and acquire *Lebensraum* and raw materials in the East at the expense of the Slavs.<sup>451</sup> So if the western democracies were not prepared for war on the western front, they might be prepared to incite it on the eastern front, playing off their two most dangerous enemies against each other...

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<sup>450</sup> Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 992.

<sup>451</sup> As Mitt Romney, the American Presidential candidate in 2012, wrote: ‘We should study what is said and written by evil men, and take them at their word. Adolf Hitler told the world exactly what his aspirations were in *Mein Kampf* and in his speeches, but at first the world dismissed his claims as political bluster’ (No Apology: The Case for American Greatness).

### 34. STALIN, THE FAMILY AND THE ARTS

In the middle of the 1930s, Stalin began to ease up in his unprecedentedly savage war on the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. There was less need for it now: the God-haters had triumphed, and a new, godless civilization was well on the way to being built to replace the old one of Holy Russia.

Stalin's Five-Year Plan and his furious and murderous assault on the Orthodox Church and its last remaining support, the Russian and Ukrainian peasantry, could not be sustained indefinitely. Physically and psychologically it was literally intolerable. Something had to break...

Even in the Party there were signs of discontent.

Stalin himself began to show signs of strain in 1932, when his wife, Nadya Alliluyeva, appalled at her husband's genocidal politics<sup>452</sup>, committed suicide on 5 November 1932. He wept openly at her funeral, and now his paranoid tendencies, already obvious, became more pronounced. There is a parallel here with Ivan the Terrible, who also began to deteriorate mentally after the death of his first wife, Anastasia....

In the same year of 1932, writes Hosking, "Mikhail Riutin, a district party secretary in Moscow, circulated among colleagues an 'appeal to all Party Members' [entitled "Stalin and the Crisis of the Proletarian Dictatorship"] denouncing the 'adventurist' collectivization and industrialization as a policy which was leading to mass impoverishment, demoralization and depopulation of the countryside. He called Stalin a 'dictator' and his associates 'a band of unprincipled, mendacious and cowardly intriguers who had destroyed Leninism and brought the regime to the brink of disaster. He suggested they could be removed only by force and proposed setting up a Union of Marxist-Leninists within the Communist Party to begin the task.

"Riutin was expelled from the party and arrested. There was no evidence he was preparing to act, but his language was certainly violent. Stalin, furious at his 'appeal', proposed to the Politburo that he be executed as a 'terrorist'. This would have been the first time that such a step had been taken over a polemic within the party, and the other Politburo members, led by Kirov [the Leningrad party boss], resisted Stalin. In the end a ten-year prison sentence was agreed."<sup>453</sup>

Stalin now conducted a massive purge of the Party membership: 18.2% of the 3.2 million members were expelled (but not, in general, killed) in 1933. This enabled the recruitment of a completely new, more submissive generation of

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<sup>452</sup> She once yelled at him: "You are a tormentor, that's what you are! You torment your own son... you torment your wife... you torment the whole Russian people."

<sup>453</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 460-461. Riutin was killed during the Great Terror in 1937.

party members. Nevertheless, during the Seventeenth Congress of the Party in 1934, called the "Congress of the Victors", the Party's self-congratulations were mixed with anxiety and signs of rebellion. Stalin noticed, and by the Great Terror of 1937-38, the membership of this Congress "was virtually destroyed: of the 139 Central Committee members, 102 were shot in the purges, while only one third of the delegates survived to attend the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939. The 'Congress of the Victors' was in fact the 'Congress of Victims'."<sup>454</sup>

On December 1, 1934 Kirov, head of the Leningrad party and perhaps the closest friend of Stalin, was murdered. This act can be seen as the trigger, if not for the Great Terror itself, at any rate for its planning in Stalin's mind. For as he said in November, 1937: "Kirov, with his blood, opened the eyes of us idiots (excuse the blunt expression)."<sup>455</sup> He took Kirov's death as the excuse to root out supposed counter-revolutionary conspiracies and fascist spy-rings within the party... As Evgenia Ginzburg put it in *Into the Whirlwind*: "That year, 1937, really began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1934".<sup>456</sup>

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So Stalin's first reaction to the crisis he had created through collectivization was predictable: persecution of the discontents. His second reaction was less predictable than the first: he halted the modernizing and westernizing trend in cultural life and reintroduced many of those cultural attitudes and habits of pre-revolutionary Russia that the revolution had been trying to stamp out since 1917.

The most paradoxical of these throwbacks – paradoxical considering that the Bolsheviks had been persecuting Orthodoxy with extreme severity for so long – was his restoration of Christian values to family life... Now Stalinist industrialization provided ideal conditions for the fulfilment of one of the main aims of Leninism – the destruction of the family. For the provision of housing was given a relatively low priority, which downgrading was justified "as an aspect of social engineering: breaking down the 'bourgeois family'. As a Magnitogorsk newspaper explained in 1930, 'The family, the basic cell... of capitalist society... loses the economic basis of its existence in the conditions of socialist society. As a result, expedients had to be devised. Families no longer fitted individual apartments...

"As millions of immigrants poured into the towns, they were squeezed into existing accommodation, a whole family to a room, or even to a barricaded corner of a large room, without consideration for social or gender distinctions, everyone sharing a common kitchen, bathroom, toilet and corridor. The wealthy and cultured were exposed to domestic violence, foul language, and lack of elementary hygiene such as they had never experienced before. They

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<sup>454</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 232.

<sup>455</sup> Stalin, in Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 469.

<sup>456</sup> Ginzburg, in Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, London, 1991, p. 516.

were also trapped in a milieu where any neighbour could easily spy on their most private behaviour and report it to the authorities...

“Meanwhile the upper ranks of the nomenklatura began to prepare retreats for themselves: private apartments, where they could live more secluded lives, surrounded by chintz curtains and polka-dotted cups. During the 1930s the accumulation of privileges of this kind became far more significant than monetary rewards, for there was little the latter could buy in a state-controlled economy of scarcity. Instead the calibrations of the nomenklatura hierarchy gave access to meticulously graded benefits: apartments, dachas, holiday homes, superior health care, cars – chauffeur-driven for those at the top – so that officials did not have to struggle with late buses and queues at state shops or rapacious prices in the markets, good-quality produce was provided cheaply in special stores for those who had access to them.”<sup>457</sup>

“Initially,” writes S.A. Smith, “many Bolsheviks believed that the family, as an institution based on private property, would be abolished under Communism, with the state taking responsibility for the education and care of children and for domestic labour. Yet the battering which the family received between 1918 and 1922 came about more as a result of socio-economic disintegration than of ideological attack. Under the assault of war, flight, hunger, and disease, spouses separated, children were cast adrift and casual sexual relationships flourished. Legislation made it easier for men to divorce their spouses and the numerical imbalance between the sexes made it easier still for men to take up with new partners. As a result, the economic position of many women, left to support families without the assistance of menfolk, worsened. For poor, vulnerable single mothers, the stability of the patriarchal family was preferable to abandonment. Moreover, the ideological attack on the family fomented rumours, especially among the elderly and the religious, that the Bolsheviks were out to ‘nationalize’ women, share wives, or snatch children from their cradles.

“Partly in response to the devastation caused by war, the marriage rate recovered rapidly during the 1920s, so that by 1926 it was over a third higher than in 1913. High female unemployment meant that there was a growing need for the husband to be the family breadwinner. At the same time, cuts to state subsidies led to the closure of the public dining halls, crèches, and communal laundries that had been a feature of War Communism, leaving women once again responsible for looking after children, cooking, cleaning, and sewing. A time-budget survey of seventy-six working-class families in 1922 showed that women only managed six hours and forty-four minutes of sleep, compared with eight hours for men. The plight of abandoned women and children, unemployment and women’s family responsibilities shaped responses to the nationwide debate [and] led to the new Family Code promulgated in 1926. This simplified divorce procedure, but introduced stricter rules on alimony, making men rather than the state responsible for the maintenance of children; it also

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<sup>457</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 457, 477-478.

established joint ownership of property acquired during marriage. To some extent, it compromised with popular assumptions about the mutual responsibilities of family members, but it was also in tune with an emerging consensus among legal experts that the family would have to serve as the basic institution of social welfare for the time being since the state lacked resources for a full-blown welfare system. It also chimed with rising concern that glaring social problems such as illegitimacy, abandoned children, hooliganism and juvenile crime were linked to the breakdown of the family.”<sup>458</sup>

As Hosking writes, by the late 1920s and early 1930s “the Soviet leaders were faced with clear evidence that their family policy was having damaging effects. It was creating unstable families, a fall in the birthrate, and a frightening increase in the number of uncared-for children. At a time when social change was in any case undermining law and order and industrial development, these effects were particularly undesirable.

“Consequently, official propaganda began once more to extol the virtues of stable family life. ‘Marriage has a positive value for the Soviet socialist state only if the partners see in it a lifelong union. So-called “free love” is a bourgeois invention.’ In June 1936 abortion was outlawed except in cases of serious health risk, and a crash program of building childcare facilities was launched. Civil registry offices were spruced up and wedding ceremonies made more solemn and elaborate, to underline the importance society ascribed to the occasion. From 1944 divorce was granted only after a court hearing.

“The importance of the family as an economic unit was also strengthened. The right to inherit property was restored. Although in Soviet conditions property itself was limited and so that right was less significant than in bourgeois societies, nevertheless it meant that a child could now inherit an apartment, or a dacha with a small plot of land, from its parent, by no means a triviality in conditions of scarcity. The offspring of unregistered unions had no such inheritance rights, so that de facto the concept of illegitimacy was restored.

“The restoration of the bourgeois family was a tacit admission that the Marxist ideal of family life had proved unworkable in practice. The attempt at emancipation had caused too many social problems, and had threatened to precipitate a population decline. Instead the state offered women what Wendy Goldman has called a ‘tacit bargain’: ‘it broadened both state and male responsibility for the family, but in exchange it demanded that women assume the double burden of work and motherhood.’ As a result, though women were industrial workforce in ever greater numbers, this trend was not generating the emancipation hoped for, since pay, especially that of women, dropped sharply during the first five-year plan. Two incomes were now needed simply to sustain viable family life, and so women willy-nilly had to take on a ‘double burden’ which they coped with by limiting the number of children. In that way

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<sup>458</sup> Smith, *Russia in Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 342-343.

the fruits of female emancipation became building blocks of the Stalinist neopatriarchal social system.”<sup>459</sup>

Trotsky called Stalin’s change of course “the Soviet Thermidor”, recalling the date of the end of the Jacobin Terror in 1794. It was far from the end. And the changes in the State’s attitude to the family were not the result of some kind of real revival of religion and morality. They were necessitated by the simple fact that the State is founded on the family, being the family writ large, and that the destruction of the family finally leads to the destruction of the State... And it goes without saying that the Bolsheviks did not want the destruction of their State...

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Significant changes also took place in non-religious culture. “‘Life has improved, comrades,’ Stalin told a conference of Stakhanovites [over-achievers in industrial production] in November 1935. ‘Life has become more joyous. And when life is joyous, work goes well.’ After the grim and joyless years of the early 1930s, the Stalinist regime placed a new emphasis on material well-being and the pursuit of pleasure in the mid-decade as part of the consolidation of power. The goal of Communism was now said to be ‘the organization of a rich and cultured life for all members of society.’

“This was a far cry from the Spartan culture of the early revolutionary years and the sacrifice demanded by the Five-Year Plan. Since 1917 the Bolsheviks had tried to eradicate the ‘petty bourgeois’ wish for property. But now Stalin argued that this desire was part of human nature which socialism could not change. At a congress for kolkhoz labourers in 1935 he defended the idea of letting workers keep three cows as personal property...”<sup>460</sup>

At the beginning of the most terrible quinquennium in Russian and world history, *Pravda’s* editorial for January 1, 1936 proclaimed: “The country has never lived so full-blooded a life as at present. Vivacity, confidence and optimism are universally dominant. The people are, as it were, taking to wing. The country is in the process of becoming not only the richest but also the most cultured in the entire world...”<sup>461</sup>

“From the middle of the 1930s there was a new emphasis on jolly entertainments, sport and gymnastics to keep the Soviet population fit and occupied. Following the example of Hollywood, the Soviet citizens churned out happy musicals, romantic comedies and war adventures like *Chapaev* (1934), said to be Stalin’s favourite film, which revived the cult of the Civil War hero for a new generation of Soviet youth. After the industrial stories which had dominated Soviet cinema during the first Five Year Plan, these

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<sup>459</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 485-486.

<sup>460</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 245.

<sup>461</sup> Kotkin *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 279.

entertainments were a light relief, allowing people to forget their worries after work. The people did not have much bread, but they had a lot of circuses.

“Dancing, which had been seen by early Bolsheviks as a frivolous pursuit, was officially encouraged during the 1930s. It became the rage, with dance schools opening everywhere. Jazz bands thrived. Classical composers such as Shostakovich incorporated jazz themes in their works [cf. his *Jazz Suite no. 2* (1938)]. They were supposed to compose light and simple music, easily accessible to the masses, with happy optimistic tunes.

“There were carnivals in parks and huge parades to celebrate the Soviet holidays. In contrast to the military style of parades during the first Five Year Plan, those of the later 1930s were joyous occasions. The May Day parade through Red Square in 1935 had 5,000 people dressed in folk costumes. New Year’s Eve was promoted as a national children’s holiday to take the place of Christmas, with the decorating of fir trees (topped by a red star instead of an angel) officially permitted in 1935 for the first time since the revolution. Grandfather Frost (the Russian Santa Claus), an old folklore hero previously denounced as an ‘ally of the kulak and the priest’, was revived in the same year. The Soviet press associated him with the paternal figure of Stalin...”<sup>462</sup>

The violent, expressionist art that had flourished in Moscow (as in Berlin) in the 1920s was banned, perhaps because it mirrored too faithfully the violence and brutality of the Five-Year Plan. Also out of favour was Vladimir Mayakovsky, the leading poet of Russian Futurism, who believed, writes Hosking, “that revolution would be a cleansing force. Steeped in the idiom of contemporary urban life, with its technology, sport, and mass communications, the Futurists agitated to ‘throw Pushkin, Dostoevskii, Tolstoy, and so forth’ from ‘the ship of modernity’ and to renew the language of literature with neologisms drawn from the teeming life of the city. Art would revitalize life and make possible the creation of a ‘new human being’.”<sup>463</sup> Mayakovsky was a Bolshevik and became a kind of pop-star of the new Soviet culture. But his call to throw the classical authors out of the ship of modernity was rejected as the Soviet Union entered the more conservative Stalinist period. From the early 1930s Soviet culture became backward-looking and anti-modernist. In the stead of Soviet Expressionism, Futurism and Modernism came a new canon of beauty: “Socialist Realism”, which was defined as the “truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development”. Mayakovsky and his ilk were harshly criticized, and in 1930 he committed suicide – although Stalin after his death called him “the best and the most talented poet of our Soviet epoch”.

Unfortunately, however, while the style of Socialist Realist art might have been more “realistic” than its avant-garde predecessor, its content was anything but truthful, being subordinate to the glorification of Stalin and his

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<sup>462</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 253-254.

<sup>463</sup> Hosking, *Russia and Russians*, p. 434.

Five-Year Plans. From now on, “Art had to glorify the revolution. Fairy tales were prohibited as unproletarian: children were to be enthralled with books about tractors and coal mines. In what one historian has called a ‘hall of mirrors’, the same motives were endlessly repeated as committees vetted texts and images. Since Stalin was the embodiment of the revolution, he was the most prominent of them all: ‘it was not a rare incident for workers to compose a letter to Stalin during a meeting in the Stalin House of Culture of the Stalin Factory on Stalin Square in the city of Stalinsk.

“Stalinsk was but one of five cities named after the great leader. There were also Stalingrad, Stalinabad, Stalino and Stalinogorsk. Green parks, factories, railways and canals were all named after him. The Stalin Canal, dug all the way from the White Sea to Leningrad on the Baltic Sea by convict labour during the first Five-Year Plan, was opened in 1933. The best steels were christened stalinite. ‘His name is shouted at you through every printed column, every billboard, every radio,’ noted Eugene Lyons: ‘His image is ubiquitous, picked out in flowers on public lawns, in electric lights, on postage stamps; it is for sale in plaster of Paris and bronze busts in nearly every shop, in crude colours on teacups, in lithographs and picture postcards.’”<sup>464</sup>

In 1934, during his expressionist phase, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich wrote an opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which was banned after an anonymous reviewer in *Pravda* calling it “muddle, not music”. Shostakovich himself was condemned as a “formalist”. He responded with his Fifth Symphony, which he called “a composer’s reply to just criticism”. Fortunately for Shostakovich, who always kept a small suitcase packed with essentials in case he was taken off to the Gulag, the symphony’s triumphantly boisterous finale passed the Socialist Realism test to wild applause from public and critics alike.<sup>465</sup> (The best music of the symphony was in the slow movement, which evoked the tragic sorrow of the times with searing intensity.) Others around the composer were less fortunate: “The theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold, who spoke out in defence of Shostakovich [after *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*], was subjected to denunciations of a feverish intensity (he was later arrested, brutally tortured by the NKVD, and then shot; his wife was stabbed to death by unidentified assassins who broke into their Moscow apartment).”<sup>466</sup>

The composer Sergei Prokofiev had similar difficulties in finding the right note. The score he wrote for the first part of Eisenstein’s *Ivan the Terrible* was admired by Stalin and won prizes, but the second part, being more darkly psychological, was not, and the film as a whole was censored. Stalin said that

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<sup>464</sup> Frank Diktötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, pp. 79-80.

<sup>465</sup> At its first performance in Leningrad, “‘Writers, poets, musicians, scientists, and army officers filled every seat.’ Jelagin recalled. ‘The younger people stood in the aisles along the walls... The audience refused to leave, and the applause continued unabated. Shostakovich came out and took dozens of bows.’” (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 472).

<sup>466</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 259-260.



while Ivan was undoubtedly cruel, it was necessary to show why his cruelty was necessary (as that of Stalin himself was supposedly necessary)...<sup>467</sup>

Stalin now embraced Russian imperial nationalism (although he himself was, of course, a Georgian). "Celebration of the expansion of the state from Muscovy allowed restoration of even Ivan the Terrible to a pedestal. Stalin's leftist critics decried what they perceived to be an abandonment of pure Marxism, a perception of retreat that Stalin's rightist critics shared but welcomed. In fact, Stalin's embrace of the imperial Russian inheritance was selective, showing little concern for churches, large numbers of which had been destroyed. (Kaganovich had dynamited Moscow Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the world's largest Orthodox church, built in the nineteenth century to commemorate the victory over Napoleon.) The absence of private property, the leading role of the party, and the red flag with hammer and sickle reinforced the fact that this was a Communist regime. But Stalin's willingness... to [try and] blend imperial Russian *etatisme* with Marxist-Leninist class approaches strengthened the socialist state."<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> Eisenstein had already suffered much from censorship. 25% of the famous film *October* was removed because it described Trotsky's role in the revolution.

<sup>468</sup> Kotkin *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 281.

### 35. THE MASTER AND MARGARITA

The tightening of cultural control that Stalin introduced in the mid-1930s faced its trickiest problem in relation to literature. Here, too, there was “a retreat from the permissive cultural policies that had allowed the avant garde to flourish after 1917. The clampdown had begun in 1929, when institutions such as the RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) started a ‘class war’ against the ‘bourgeois enemies’ of Soviet literature which it claimed were hidden in the left-wing avant garde. The great poet of the revolution, Mayakovsky, was driven to his death (suicide or murder, it is not entirely clear) by the attacks of the RAPP.

“By the beginning of the 1930s, any writer with an individual voice was deemed politically suspicious. The Five Year Plan was not just a programme of redistribution. It was a cultural revolution in which all the arts were called up by the state to build a new society. According to the plan, the duty of the Soviet artist was to raise the workers’ consciousness, to enlist them in the ‘battle’ for ‘socialist construction’ by producing art with a social content which they could understand and relate to as positive ideals. In this way the artist was to create a new type of human being. ‘The production of souls is more important than the production of tanks’, Stalin told a meeting of writers and officials at Gorky’s house in 1932. ‘And so I raise my glass to you, writers, the engineers of the human soul.’”<sup>469</sup>

Already years before the purges of 1937-38, truth had disappeared from the public life of the Soviet nation. Both Trotskyites at the one extreme, and the Orthodox Church at the other, had been silenced and crushed; people hardly dared to speak the truth, or simply touch on certain subjects of names, even in the privacy of their own homes. Probably the only places where some remnants of free speech still existed were the confessional (although priests in the official Sovietized patriarchate often informed on their parishioners) and the camps – if only because the inmates now had nothing but their chains to lose...

Literature was another sphere in which truth was hoped for – but not found. After all, in the tradition of the Russian intelligentsia, the writer was seen as the bastion of truth and justice against tyranny... However, in 1934 the Union of Soviet Writers was founded, which, by a judicious combination of sticks and carrots, aimed to keep the writers in line. As Stalin explained to Kaganovich: “It must be explained to all Communist writers that the Master in literature, as in all other areas, is only the Central Committee and that they are obliged to accommodate themselves unconditionally to the latter.”<sup>470</sup>

So in literature, as in every other sphere, the result was the same: true life, the life of the spirit, the life in Christ, could only be preserved *in the catacombs*, in hiding from the satanic ball taking place above ground...

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<sup>469</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, p. 258.

<sup>470</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II p. 178.

Stalin had called writers “engineers of human souls”, but the French writer Andre Malraux reminded the congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in August, 1934: “If writers are really engineers of human souls, do not forget that an engineer’s highest calling is to invent. Art is not submission: art is conquest...You should know that only really new works can sustain the cultural prestige of the Soviet Union, the way Mayakovsky sustained it, the way Pasternak sustains it.”

Under Stalin, if writers wanted to pass the censor and be published, as Hosking says, they had to write “about ordinary people in a language accessible to them and in a spirit which was ideologically sound and approved by the party”.<sup>471</sup> Writers “could only write freely, Stalin maintained, so long as they reflected reality as defined by the Party; ‘Literature comes from the heart of the people and can be created only in freedom. Free creation, however, is conceivable solely in terms of socialist realism: national in form, socialist in character.’ A competent versifier in his youth, Stalin liked to lay down the law on such matters for, as a student of his *feuilletons* has piquantly suggested, ‘Unacknowledged poets are the legislators of the world.’ But Stalin’s cultural repression, disguised though it was by Communist casuistry, smothered Soviet writers and artists for a generation. Some remained silent, feeling with Alexander Bogdanov that they could only work in a society which did not insist on the promulgation of its faith in fetishes, myths and clichés. Some left, like Yevgeny Zamyatin, who said that he could not write ‘behind bars’. Remaining ‘engineers of human souls’ (to quote the famous phrase which Stalin later denied uttering) manufactured their work on a socialist assembly line. They engaged in ‘Fordizing and Taylorizing art’. Boris Pasternak went so far as to say that ‘Literature ceased to exist’. (But he himself, though a friend of the condemned Mandelstam, was allowed to exist, probably because he wrote a moving letter of condolence to Stalin on the occasion of his wife’s death.) Actually, creative fires continued to burn underground. Literature did exist; but in hermetic form (such as the poems of Anna Akhmatova) or in a pre-Gutenberg state, either in samizdat or in the memories of its authors and devotees. Occasionally, as in the case of some of Mikhail Bulgakov’s writing, it even survived in OGPU files, to emerge 60 years later when the system which had suppressed it collapsed.”<sup>472</sup>

“For writers of real talent or originality, this institutionalization of literature created a troubling, even agonizing situation. It was not just that their work was being supervised by mediocrities, though that was bad enough. Their very calling had been hijacked. Most of them believed that literature had a special, even sacred, role to play in Russian society. Now the Communists claimed to have accomplished that sacralisation, but through politics rather than through art.”<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 479.

<sup>472</sup> Brendon, *The Dark Valley*, p. 218.

<sup>473</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 480.

However, the very prestige that the writer's profession had acquired in pre-revolutionary Russia meant that the authorities could not simply crush them out of existence. Nor was it useful to them to have just hacks churning out communist propaganda or the communist parody of true realism in art that they called "Socialist Realism". For for what was left of the Russian educated classes only real literature and real writers could be expected to have a real influence.

So the authorities began looking around for writers with talent who could serve the communist cause in a truly creative way. Of course, there were dangers in such a search: a talented writer might betray the revolutionary cause as some of the most talented writers of pre-revolutionary Russia had done: instead of a Herzen, they might find themselves with a Gogol; or instead of a Tolstoy - with a Dostoyevsky... But the risk had to be taken...

However, "apparatchiks capable of nurturing talent as well as loyalty were rare. Stories of poorly educated censors forbidding the music of someone called Schubert over the radio because he might be a 'Trotskyite' were the bes of it. The censor (*glavlit*) had obtained power over plays, films, ballets, broadcasts, and even circus acts, as well as literature, but it was often overwhelmed and had the NKVD and party commissions looking over his shoulder. Taking chances (saying yes) carried no upside: prohibition was the safest recourse, leading to round after round of supplications, paperwork and foot-dragging, unless someone with sufficient authority and confidence put an end to the runaround and said yes.<sup>474</sup>

One of the most talented and truthful of Soviet writers was Michael Afanasyevich Bulgakov. His *Heart of a Dog* (1924), for example, was a brilliant satire on the regime's attempts to create a new kind of human being, *Homo Sovieticus*. As a natural result of this truthfulness, however, he suffered repression, and by the end of the 1920s it looked as if his career would end in the way that the careers of other talented writers such as Tsvetaieva, Esenin Babel or Mandelstam ended: in suicide, in death-row, or in the camps. In a letter to the Soviet government in 1930 he requested permission to emigrate in that, as a banned writer he was facing "persecution, desperation and death".<sup>475</sup> But by Divine Providence he had one extremely influential admirer: Stalin, who had seen Bulgakov's play *Days of the Turbans* no less than fifteen times. ("Under duress, Bulgakov had changed the play's title [from *The White Guard*] and provided an ending loosely sympathetic to the communist cause."<sup>476</sup>) A phone call from Stalin was enough to ensure that Bulgakov lived undisturbed in his Moscow flat until his death in 1940. This enabled him to write his masterpiece, *The Master and Margarita*, in relative peace and quiet at the very centre of the 1930s maelstrom. It was not published, however, until 1967, and that only in a

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<sup>474</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II p. 282.

<sup>475</sup> Montefiore, op. cit., p. 508.

<sup>476</sup> Montefiore, op. cit., p. 509.

severely cut edition. For not even the favour of a Stalin could ensure that a true parable on Soviet reality, however heavily disguised, would be allowed to corrupt the minds of Soviet citizens...

*The Master and Margarita* is a novel on two, or even three levels: there is the novel about Pontius Pilate and Yeshua (Jesus), which is set in Yershalaim (Jerusalem) on Great Friday; there is the novel about the Master, who writes the novel, and his mistress, Margarita, who ensures its survival; and there is the novel about the poet Bezdomny, who continues the Master's work, and the Moscow society of writers, theatre agents and government officials in which he lives and works.

The action is precipitated by a visit to Moscow by Satan, posing as the German Professor of Black Magic Woland, and his demonic suite: the dapper ex-choirmaster Korovyev, the black cat Behemoth, the executioner Azazello and the naked witch Hella (not to mention other minor demons such as Abadonna, a figure clearly derived from the demon of the same name in Revelation 9.11).

As one would expect, all hell is set loose: the editor Berlioz loses his head (literally), various people are tricked, robbed or go out of their minds, and the house of the union of writers, Griboyedov, is burned to the ground. However, good comes out of this evil. Not only are many bad writers and officials given their just deserts, and the vices and vanities of Moscow society exposed: the Master is rescued from the asylum into which repression and rejection by his fellow writers had driven him through the good offices of Satan and Margarita, who becomes (temporarily) a witch for his sake; and the bad poet Bezdomny renounces his bad poetry and becomes the faithful disciple of the Master.

The novel must also be interpreted on several levels. Most obviously, it is a satire on the literary world of Moscow in the 1930s, a hilarious exposure of how the writers had betrayed their calling to tell the truth about the society they lived in, and of how the best writers had suffered at the hands of their philistine colleagues. Here there also enters a strong autobiographical element: clearly Bulgakov sees himself, the writer who suffered from other writers, in the figure of the unjustly persecuted Master, and to a lesser extent in the figure of Bezdomny; while his wife, who later published *The Master and Margarita*, is portrayed in the role of Margarita. The way in which Satan-Woland rescues the Master and Margarita also recalls the way in which Stalin rescued the real-life Bulgakov in 1929. And there are many incidents and people in the novel that industrious researchers have traced to real incidents and people in Bulgakov's life.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> For example, the chapter on Satan's ball was inspired by a real-life ball given by the American ambassador in 1935. See J.A.E. Curtis, "Mikhail Bulgakov and the Red Army's Polo Instructor: Political Satire in *The Master and Margarita*", in Laura D. Weeks (ed.), *The Master and Margarita: A Critical Companion*, Northwestern University Press, 1996, pp. 213-226.

But there are also deeper, moral and philosophico-religious strands. Thus Satan-Woland causes the beheading of Berlioz because the latter denies the very existence of Christ and therefore also of himself, Satan, who likes to point out that he was personally present when Pilate gave sentence on Yeshua. It is difficult not to see in this an implicit rebuke to the literary world for its inane atheism... Again, the destruction of the Griboyedov house by fire can be seen as Divine retribution for the sins of the writers – God uses the evil Satan as His instrument in the accomplishing of this good. This latter interpretation is supported by the quotation at the beginning of the whole novel from *Faust*: "... So who are you in the end?" "I am a part of that power which eternally desires evil and eternally does good."

However, we look in vain in Bulgakov's novel for a placing of the *whole* of the revolution in the scheme of Divine Providence. Satan comes to Moscow to carry out God's judgement on the Soviet Union of Writers, and we ask: but is not every Soviet institution, and the whole of Soviet reality, the creation of Satan and therefore subject to God's wrath? And was not the revolution itself a deliverance of Russia to Satan, allowed by God as His punishment for the sins of the Russian people? But Bulgakov does not pose these questions, even indirectly, just as there is only the very slightest hint in the novel at the great fact of the age – the terrible persecution of the Church and faith...

What is portrayed, however, is the age's main failing: *cowardice*. Both Pilate and the Master suffer from guilt at their cowardice – Pilate, because he delivered the innocent Yeshua to death out of fear of being denounced to Caesar, and the Master – because he had cringed before Soviet power. Again, there is an autobiographical element here: Bulgakov survived when many writers perished, and although he was more truthful than most, it was impossible to survive in Soviet conditions without bowing, even if shallowly and stiffly, to the false Soviet god.

The theme of cowardice is confronted more directly in the Pilate novel – Pilate is haunted by the last words of Yeshua, that one of the most important vices was cowardice<sup>478</sup>, and after nearly two thousand years of purgatorial suffering he is redeemed by Yeshua. The Master, on the other hand, does not appear to face this issue directly; and his lapse into mental illness appears to be the result, less of his persecution by others (which was mild, relatively speaking), as of his own inner conflict, his suppressed *guilt* at failing to live up fully to his calling as a writer, who, as Russian tradition affirmed, must tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about his society. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Yeshua does not redeem him as he redeems Pilate, but through his faithful disciple Levi Matthew he pronounces the following sentence: "He has not merited light, he has merited peace".<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, ch. 25, p. 312 in the Hugh Aplin translation, Richmond: Oneworldclassics, 2008.

<sup>479</sup> Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, ch. 29, p. 367.

Is this how Bulgakov judged himself: as worthy of peace because of the good novel he had written, but not of the light because he had done a deal with Satan (Stalin) to keep his career alive? It is impossible to say - there is no reliable path from the characters of a novel to the true nature of a writer or his religious beliefs. What we can say is that there was indeed no place for the true writer, the Christian writer, in Soviet society; and that even the finest products of Soviet literature were poisoned from within by their sin of cowardice, by their schizophrenia, by their serving a master whom they hated while thinking to serve another whom they loved - but not well enough.

“Manuscripts don’t burn”, said Satan-Woland in the most famous line of the novel. However, this was not true of Soviet literature. Without the real conversion of the writer to True Christianity that took place in, for example, Gogol and Dostoyevsky, there could be no true eternity for the Soviet writer’s work, no protection against the flames of the Last Day - or even the penultimate day (we remember that Gogol, Bulgakov’s favourite writer, burned the second part of *Dead Souls*). Even if the writer injected a Christian element into his work, as Bulgakov did in *The Master and Margarita* and Pasternak would later do in *Doctor Zhivago*, that Christian element could not sanctify the rest of the work, but would rather be deformed by the alien context in which it found itself.

And so Yeshua in *The Master and Margarita* is a pitiful shadow of the real Jesus, being shorn of His power and majesty - Satan-Woland is much more interesting. Of course, this is a phenomenon found throughout the history of literature: it is much easier to depict the evil than the good. Perhaps Shakespeare in *King Lear*, and Dostoyevsky in *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, are the only major exceptions to this rule...

## 36. EUGENICS, CONTRACEPTION, ABORTION

In both East and West in this period, one of the most popular applications of science was in the control of man himself, his numbers, his “quality” – his very nature. If the Enlightenment programme aimed to improve humanity by educating it, and by changing its environment, “eugenics” aimed to improve its very nature, its gene pool. Of course, eugenics is most notoriously associated with Hitler’s experiments. But this goal was pursued both before and after Hitler, and the “science” of eugenics has achieved new heights (or depths) since the discovery of DNA in 1953.

The term “eugenics” was coined by George Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton, in 1883. That it should arise in Darwin’s family is logical, for to the Darwinists it was self-evidently good to help along the process of natural selection of those whom they considered the fittest – that is, the people of their own race and class. Galton, as A.N. Wilson writes, “would campaign politically for tax breaks to encourage intelligent people to have large families and to sterilize the ‘unfit’”. Long before this campaign got under way George Darwin, developing the ideas of his father’s *Descent of Man*, had written a proposal ‘on beneficial restrictions to liberty of marriage’ in 1873. The article appeared in the *Contemporary Review* and was a classic exposition of the ‘eugenic’ idea, viz. that those deemed by the Darwins to be defective should be forbidden to breed. In July 1874, an anonymous essay appeared in the *Quarterly Review* discussing works on primitive man by John Lubbock and Edward Burnett Tylor. It included an attack on George Darwin’s paper as ‘speaking to an approving strain... of the encouragement of vice in order to check population’. The anonymous author was St. George Mivart [a major critic of Darwin’s views on the origin of man]. Today, ‘liberal’ opinion in the West deplores eugenics, not least because of the enthusiasm with which it was adopted in Germany in the period 1933-45. It would only be among conservative Christians, however, that you would be likely to find those who believed contraception or medically induced abortion to be immoral. Mivart, it is true, was Roman Catholic, albeit a convert who had been excommunicated for his belief in evolution. In 1873-4, however, he would probably have been in the huge majority of Victorians in believing contraception to be morally questionable and abortion positively criminal. George Darwin had not even ventured into the notion, which was a commonplace in the entourage of Bertrand Russell (heterosexual), Lytton Strachey (gay) and the Bloomsbury Set in the 1920s, that homosexuality was another good way of limiting the population explosion...”<sup>480</sup>

“In his *Autobiography*, published in 1882,” writes John Gray, five years after his death, [Darwin] states: ‘There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course in which the wind blows.’

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<sup>480</sup> Wilson, *Charles Darwin, Victorian Mythmaker*, London: Harper, 2017, pp. 314-315.



“However, at the end of the penultimate paragraph of *The Origin of Species* (1859), he has written: ‘We may be certain that the ordinary succession of generations has never been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection.’

“Denying the logic of his own theory, in which natural selection operates without any concern for human values, Darwin’s canonical text initiated a fatal confusion of evolution with progress. Evolution came to be understood as a movement to every higher forms of life. It was forgotten that natural selection, while producing complex organisms, regularly consigns them to extinction.

“The conflation was particularly harmful when applied to society, as it was in theories of social evolution. Anyone who thinks evolution is ‘progress to perfection’ will be tempted to accelerate the process. Darwin resisted that impulse, but many of his contemporaries and successors succumbed.

“Conceptions of progress come and go. For many in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it meant the supremacy of Europeans throughout the world, a state of affairs that was secured by colonialism but potentially also by ‘artificial selection’. It was not only the Nazis who used pseudoscience as a rationalisation for eugenics. The problem of ‘speeding up evolution’ by reducing the fertility of groups judged to be inferior was a prominent part of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century progressive thinking.”<sup>481</sup>

It was Darwin’s cousin, Sir Francis Galton, who introduced the concept of “eugenics” as a way of giving evolution “a helping hand” by providing through “more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing over the less suitable”.<sup>482</sup>

“In 1901, the statistics department of London’s University College became the headquarters for the Eugenics Education Society. Motivated by Galton’s vision of a future utopia ruled by a genetically engineered elite, the Eugenics Society would grow into a successful political movement. Aldous Huxley’s eugenically regimented ‘scientific dictatorship’ presented in *Brave New World* was drawing closer to realization...”<sup>483</sup>

It was the huge humanitarian crises of the decade after World War One that stimulated the development of eugenicist and other scientific ideas. “The worries about population decline – commonplace in most of Europe since the war, and particularly acute in France and Germany – produced a backlash

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<sup>481</sup> Gray, “Humanity vs the Virus”, *New Statesman*, 5-11 March, 2021, pp. 26-27.

<sup>482</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, London: Macmillan, 1969, p. 24.

<sup>483</sup> Phillip Darrell Collins and Paul David Collins, *The Ascendancy of the Scientific Dictatorship*, New York: iUniverse, 2004, pp. 93-94.

against contraception, which had been increasingly promoted in the 1920s. The reactionary trend was widespread, had much popular support, and was especially strongly backed in Catholic countries by the Church's unceasing and vehement opposition to birth control.<sup>484</sup> Abortion had already been outlawed in most of Europe, but here, too, attitudes hardened. Britain, for example, made abortion a statutory offence in 1929. Any person convicted of 'intent to destroy the life of a child capable of being born alive' (defined as a pregnancy of twenty-eight weeks or more) was to be punished by penal servitude for life. Hundreds of thousands of women in Britain and across the rest of Europe, married as well as unmarried, continued even to have abortions, risking not just severe punishment by the law but serious injury and death through illegal operations..."<sup>485</sup>

It was all part of the cult of science, which was seen as being above politics and morality. "The Rockefeller Foundation sponsored campaigns to eradicate tuberculosis by 'applying the art of advertising the facts of science'. But Europeans, too, liked to see social policy as a non-political matter, a question of 'social hygiene'. In Britain, for instance, members of the British Social Hygiene Council called for the 'institutionalization' of the mentally ill, health and sex education in schools, better housing and sanitation and improvements in child nutrition. In France, the Health Ministry was advised by a Conseil Supérieur d'Hygiène Sociale. Society was seen as an object made in a spirit of rational detachment from political passions.

"Nowhere were the ambiguities of this kind of approach more evident than among the eugenicists – those people, on other words, on both Left and Right who believed that it was indeed possible to produce 'better' human beings through the right kind of social policies..."<sup>486</sup>

We associate the policy of killing and sterilizing the mentally ill with the Fascists. But we find similar attitudes in liberal Britain and America. Thus Margaret Sanger wrote: "Eugenics is ... the most adequate and thorough avenue to the solution of racial, political and social problems."<sup>487</sup>

Again, while "Britain passed laws to bring down infant and maternal mortality, and set up the Ministry of Health in 1919", "its priorities on behalf of child-rearing worried some extreme eugenicists like Sir Robert Hutchinson, President of the Royal College of Physicians, who wondered 'whether the... careful saving of infant lives is really, biologically speaking,... wholesome...'"<sup>488</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> And not only in Catholic countries. The Anglican Archbishop Lang of Canterbury once made a public "bonfire of vanities" – that is, of contraceptives. (V.M.)

<sup>485</sup> Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 205.

<sup>486</sup> Mazower, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>487</sup> Sanger, "The Eugenic Value of Birth Control Propaganda". *Birth Control Review*, October 1921, p. 5.

<sup>488</sup> Mazower, op. cit., p. 89.

“When Marie Stopes, an English botanist, had promoted birth control in the 1920s, it had been in the context of measures to improve the quality of the population. Questions of heredity, genetics, decline of racial stock and the desperate need for superior breeding had become an obsession among Europe’s intellectuals since the war. Eugenics, or its more ominous-sounding equivalent, ‘racial hygiene’ – breeding out ‘defectives’ and improving ‘national efficiency’ through racial improvement – gained support as the Depression crisis intensified doubts about the ‘health of the nation’. The cost of looking after ‘unproductive’ members of society had taken on a sharper edge as states tightened their belts during the slump. In Britain, not just distinguished scientists, psychologists and doctors but also leading intellectuals, such as the economist John Maynard Keynes and the dramatist George Bernard Shaw, were among the supporters of the eugenics movement. Just before publication in 1932 of his dystopian novel *Brave New World* (depicting a society whose stability rests on biological engineering and mental conditioning to achieve maximum social and economic utility), Aldous Huxley spoke of eugenics as a means of political control, indicating his own approval of measures to prevent ‘the rapid deterioration... of the whole West European stock’. Some of the more extreme eugenicists, believing that the British ‘race’ was faced with inevitable degeneration and eventual extinction of its biological quality unless drastic measures for racial cleansing were introduced, even contemplated the painless extermination of ‘undesirables’ or, failing that, compulsory sterilization. Although such ideas were confined to a minority of eugenicists and taken no further in Britain, they showed the way the wind was blowing during the Depression, even in a democracy.

“In Germany draft proposals for *voluntary* sterilization of those suffering from hereditary defects were introduced with the support of doctors in 1932, before the Nazi takeover. Hitler’s government promptly went much further. But it could be certain of much popular support for its law of 14 July 1933 to introduce *compulsory* sterilization for an extensive range of hereditary illnesses, serious physical deformities and chronic alcoholism, which over the following years would produce around 400,000 victims. (‘Lethal chambers’ to exterminate the mentally ill in Germany would have to wait a further six years.) Compulsory sterilization was not, however, confined to the actions of an inhumane dictatorship. All the democratic Scandinavian states passed laws in 1934, with widespread public backing, to introduce compulsory sterilization for certain citizens, resulting in tens of thousands of victims. Nor was statutory sterilization confined to Europe’s ‘dark continent’. By the eve of the Second World War, some 42,000 citizens in thirty American states had been sterilized, mainly compulsorily, on the grounds of ‘feble-mindedness’ or ‘madness’. Throughout Europe (and the wider Western world) state intervention in the lives of citizens was becoming acceptable in ways that would have been inconceivable before 1914...”<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-206.

Eugenics, writes Jonathan Freedland, is “the belief that society's fate rested on its ability to breed more of the strong and fewer of the weak. So-called positive eugenics meant encouraging those of greater intellectual ability and "moral worth" to have more children, while negative eugenics sought to urge, or even force, those deemed inferior to reproduce less often or not at all. The aim was to increase the overall quality of the national herd, multiplying the thoroughbreds and weeding out the runts.

“Such talk repels us now, but in the prewar era it was the common sense of the age. Most alarming, many of its leading advocates were found among the luminaries of the Fabian and socialist left, men and women revered to this day. Thus George Bernard Shaw could insist that ‘the only fundamental and possible socialism is the socialisation of the selective breeding of man’, even suggesting, in a phrase that chills the blood, that defectives be dealt with by means of a ‘lethal chamber’.

“Such thinking was not alien to the great Liberal titan and mastermind of the welfare state, William Beveridge, who argued that those with ‘general defects’ should be denied not only the vote, but ‘civil freedom and fatherhood’. Indeed, a desire to limit the numbers of the inferior was written into modern notions of birth control from the start. That great pioneer of contraception, Marie Stope – honoured with a postage stamp in 2008 – was a hardline eugenicist, determined that the ‘hordes of defectives’ be reduced in number, thereby placing less of a burden on ‘the fit’. Stopes later disinherited her son because he had married a short-sighted woman, thereby risking a less-than-perfect grandchild.

“Yet what looks kooky or sinister in 2012 struck the prewar British left as solid and sensible. Harold Laski, stellar LSE professor, co-founder of the Left Book Club and one-time chairman of the Labour party, cautioned that: ‘The time is surely coming ... when society will look upon the production of a weakling as a crime against itself.’ Meanwhile, JBS Haldane, admired scientist and socialist, warned that: ‘Civilisation stands in real danger from over-production of “undermen”’. That's Untermenschen in German.

“I'm afraid even the *Manchester Guardian* was not immune. When a parliamentary report in 1934 backed voluntary sterilisation of the unfit, a *Guardian* editorial offered warm support, endorsing the sterilisation campaign ‘the eugenicists soundly urge’. If it's any comfort, the *New Statesman* was in the same camp.

“According to Dennis Sewell, whose book *The Political Gene* charts the impact of Darwinian ideas on politics, the eugenics movement's definition of ‘unfit’ was not limited to the physically or mentally impaired. It held, he writes, ‘that most of the behavioural traits that led to poverty were inherited. In short, that the poor were genetically inferior to the educated middle class.’ It was not poverty that had to be reduced or even eliminated: it was the poor.

“Hence the enthusiasm of John Maynard Keynes, director of the Eugenics Society from 1937 to 1944, for contraception, essential because the working class was too ‘drunken and ignorant’ to keep its numbers down.

“We could respond to all this... by saying it was all a long time ago, when different norms applied. That is a common response when today's left-liberals are confronted by the eugenicist record of their forebears, reacting as if it were all an accident of time, a slip-up by creatures of their era who should not be judged by today's standards.

“Except this was no accident. The Fabians, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and their ilk were not attracted to eugenics because they briefly forgot their leftwing principles. The harder truth is that they were drawn to eugenics for what were then good, leftwing reasons.

“They believed in science and progress, and nothing was more cutting edge and modern than social Darwinism. Man now had the ability to intervene in his own evolution. Instead of natural selection and the law of the jungle, there would be planned selection. And what could be more socialist than planning, the Fabian faith that the gentlemen in Whitehall really did know best? If the state was going to plan the production of motor cars in the national interest, why should it not do the same for the production of babies? The aim was to do what was best for society, and society would clearly be better off if there were more of the strong to carry fewer of the weak.

“What was missing was any value placed on individual freedom, even the most basic freedom of a human being to have a child. The middle class and privileged felt quite ready to remove that right from those they deemed unworthy of it.

“Eugenics went into steep decline after 1945. Most recoiled from it once they saw where it led – to the gates of Auschwitz. The infatuation with an idea horribly close to nazism was steadily forgotten...”<sup>490</sup>

But not completely... And how could it be forgotten when the underlying dogma of Darwinism continued to be preached with undiminished zeal, and when the State, in both East and West (albeit to different degrees) continued to be the arbiter, not only of all political issues, but also of faith and morality...

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<sup>490</sup> Freedland, “Eugenics: the skeleton that rattles loudest in the Left’s closet”, *The Manchester Guardian*, February 17, 2012.

## 37. THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The Spanish Civil War prefigured the world war that was to come, with the future antagonists Italy and Germany, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other, supporting the nationalist and republican causes respectively...

Despite Spain's neutralism, writes Kershaw, Spain's economy "had been drastically weakened by the war. Wracked by waves of strikes directed at the authority of the state itself, Spain seemed a country on the verge of revolution. Had it been a belligerent power, perhaps the war would indeed have ripped it into revolution. As it was, the constitutional monarchy, founded in 1876, which had ruled upon an oligarchy of liberal and conservative elites, held on to a grossly unrepresentative parliamentary system. The rapidly growing Socialist movement had more than doubled its membership since the end of the war, but electoral discrimination left it with a mere handful of seats. The control of the dominant elites was nevertheless weakening, their liberal-conservative political base fragmenting. And thirty-four governments between 1902 and 1924 contributed to widespread contempt for the feeble and ineffective parliamentary system. The ruling class saw that the state was too weak to uphold their interests: the opponents of the state, primarily within the working class, were however too weak to overthrow the system. The result was stalemate..."<sup>491</sup>

A moderate dictatorship under General Miguel de Rivera came to power in 1923, backed by the army, the Catholic Church, the landed elite, big business and the middle classes.

But then the Left began to be infected by radicalism. The infection, writes Paul Johnson, "entered through the Socialist Party (PSOE), and then spread. As Salvador de Madariaga put it, 'what made the Spanish Civil War inevitable was the civil war within the Socialist Party.' In the 1920s, the Spanish Socialists had been sensible, pragmatic reformers. Their most important figure, the union leader, Francisco Largo Caballero, worked within the Spanish republican system. If he looked abroad at all, he admired the British Fabians. He thought the formation of the first Labour government in 1924 'the most important event in the entire history of international socialism.' He even worked, on a give-and-take basis, with the dozy, unadventurous dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-30). He argued that regimes and dictators might come and go, but the object of socialism was to improve the material and moral conditions of the workers within capitalism. Socialist moderation made it possible to end the dictatorship without bloodshed and, the following year, to effect a peaceful transition from monarchy to republic.

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<sup>491</sup> Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1915-1949*, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 120.

“To begin with, Caballero served the Republic well. Violence or illegality by the Left, he instated, would provoke the army and lead to another military dictatorship...”<sup>492</sup>

But then he began to be infected by propaganda from the hard Left... Caballero is a prime example of how, in an atmosphere of increasing lawlessness, “soft” socialism can be led by the nose into “hard” socialism. “In November 1933 the Socialists lost the election, moved out of government and embarked on direct action.

“The change of tactics could not succeed and was certain to destroy the republican system. It represented a denial of everything that Caballero had once represented. In May 1934 he encouraged the agricultural workers to strike. It failed: the Interior Ministry deported thousands of peasants at gunpoint and dropped them from lorries hundreds of miles from their homes. In October Caballero pulled out all the stops. In Madrid there was a half-hearted general strike. In Barcelona an ‘Independent Catalan Republic’ lasted precisely ten hours. In the Azurias, a Workers’ Commune, with Socialist backing, survived a fortnight, the miners resisting fiercely with dynamite. But with the workers of Barcelona and Madrid refusing to rise, its suppression was inevitable. It was carried out by Spain’s ablest general, Francisco Franco, using four columns of regular and colonial troops...”<sup>493</sup>

In February 1934 the right-wing Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA) was created under the leadership of José Maria Gil Robles, a republican, who declared: “When the social order is threatened, Catholics should unite to defend it and safeguard the principles of Christian civilization... We are faced with a social revolution. In the political panorama of Europe I can see only the formation of Marxist and non-Marxist groups. That is what is happening in Germany and in Spain also. This is the great battle which we must fight this year...”

“We must reconquer Spain... We must give Spain a true unity, a new spirit, a totalitarian polity... It is necessary now to defeat socialism inexorably. We must found a new state, purge the fatherland of judaizing freemasons... We need full power and that is what we demand... To realize this ideal we are not going to waste time with archaic forms. Democracy is not an end but a means to the conquest of the new state. When the time comes, either parliament submits or we will eliminate it...”<sup>494</sup>

For three years, in an atmosphere of increasing violence, right and left struggled for control of the republican government. In February 1936 the Popular Front won the election – as in France, convincingly in terms of seats, less so in terms of votes.

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<sup>492</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 322.

<sup>493</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 323.

<sup>494</sup> Robles, in Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, London: Harper Perennial, 2006, pp. 62, 64.

“The Popular Front’s unity lasted no longer than the election. The government, composed only of Republicans, was feeble from the outset. The Socialists, themselves disunited, refused to participate. The party was split between the reformist wing, headed by the moderate Indalecio Priero, and the increasingly revolutionary General Workers’ Union, led by Francisco Largo Caballero, who revelled in the appellation ‘the Spanish Lenin’ bestowed upon him by the Soviet press. The Socialist Youth Movement, like the trade union organization, also saw the future in terms of full-scale revolution, not piecemeal reformism. The attractions of the Communist Party, still small but growing fast, were evident.”<sup>495</sup>

Eventually, in July, 1936, the army carried out a *coup d’état* under General Franco. Franco was ruthless, but “the atrocities were not confined to the rebel zone. At the beginning of the war, particularly, there were waves of assassinations of priests and suspected Fascist sympathizers. Militia units set themselves up to purge their towns of known rightists and especially churchmen. Churches and religious monuments were destroyed. More than six thousand priests and religious were estimated to have been murdered...”<sup>496</sup>

Especially opposed to the Church were the anarchists. This, writes Brendon, “was not just a revolutionary movement, it was a rival creed. Since its fortuitous introduction to Spain at the behest of Mikhail Bakunin in 1868, anarchism had spread through the country..., establishing itself particularly strongly in Catalonia and Andalusia. Anarchists believed that, ‘Money and power are the diabolical philtres that turn a man into a wolf’. Anarchists wanted to liberate human beings not only from the baneful sway of the capitalist State but from their own base nature. They aimed to establish a brotherhood of workers on the ruins of civil society. Anarchists were not afraid of ruins according to one of their leaders, Buenaventura Durruti, a swarthy metal-worker from Leon who during one spell of exile had found employment with Renault. ‘We are going to inherit the earth,’ he said. ‘We carry a new world, here, in our hearts.’ To achieve the day of secular salvation, anarchists preached a new puritanism. They frowned on drinking, smoking and bull-fighting; they praised sexual abstinence and condemned prostitution; they proselytised tirelessly for self-improvement. They also espoused terrorism. Echoing Diderot, Bakunin had forecast that the millennium would arrive only when the last king had been strangled with the entrails of the last priest. Catching the mood of chiliastic exaltation, his followers burned convents and churches, which they anathematised as dens of ‘incense and darkness’. They mounted savage strikes, robbed banks and threw bombs. They assassinated politicians, insisting on the righteousness of murder without hate. It is true that moderate anarchism was by no means a contradiction in terms and it was increasingly strong among trade-unionists in Barcelona. But for so-called ‘uncontrollables’ violence was the legitimate tactic of free men: ‘Nothing great

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<sup>495</sup> Kershaw, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>496</sup> Preston, op. cit., p. 124.



has ever been achieved without violence... the sins of the old corrupt system can only be washed away in blood.'

"Such extremism appealed to many of the other sects struggling over the carcass of Spain. But with their powerful support and their unruly tactics the anarchists, above all, made political moderation impossible. Conservative governments could only achieve stability when they were led by an 'iron surgeon' such as General Primo de Rivera, the erratic 1920s dictator whom King Alfonso XIII had boastfully called 'my Mussolini'. Radical governments could only survive by making local concessions (such as granting self-rule to Catalonia) which sapped both their strength and the integrity of the nation. Thus after the peaceful establishment of the Republic in 1931, Spain lurched from Left to Right, falling apart in the process."<sup>497</sup>

"Inexorably," writes Norman Davies, "the strains of civil war boosted the fortunes of the two most violent and radical extremes. The *Falange* was destined to become the main political instrument of the army. The communists were destined to dominate the beleaguered Republic. Franco said, and possibly believed, that he was fighting to forestall Bolshevism..."

"The fighting was long, fragmented, and often confused... Behind the lines, massacres of prisoners and civilians were perpetrated by both sides... In Barcelona, 'the wildest city in Europe', where Catalans and anarchists were opposed to any form of Spanish government, whether Red or White, the tragedy ended [in 1939] with frightful massacres perpetrated by both the defeated communists and their erstwhile anarchist allies. In Madrid, where the rump Council of Defence of the Popular Front eventually renounced the communists, it ended with the rebels' triumphal entry on 29 March. Spain lay firmly in the Fascists' grip for 40 years.

"Franco's victory over 'the Spanish people', as his opponents put it, was frequently attributed to his superior armaments and foreign help [from Mussolini and Hitler]. But the truth was not so simple or so palatable. The 'Spanish people' were not all on one side, and neither were all of Spain's 'anti-democratic' forces. It is hard to say whether the Spanish Republic was more discomfited by its nationalist enemies or by the totalitarian elements within its own ranks. Franco could unite his supporters; the Republic's supporters could not organize a united or effective democracy..."<sup>498</sup>

It was the unity of Franco's fascists by comparison with their opponents, combined with the frequent stories of atrocities by the leftists led by the revolutionary Marxist party (POUM), and the active support of Italy and Germany, that guaranteed his final victory. But it was not a victory that brought internal peace to Spain. For the fascist atrocities, which were greater in number and carried out in a more systematic, cold-blooded way than those of the Left,

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<sup>497</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 309-310.

<sup>498</sup> Davies, op. cit., pp. 982, 984-985.

alienated large parts of the population. Thus the philosopher Unamuno wrote to a friend "about the Nationalist repression that he had witnessed in Salamanca, referring to 'the most bestial persecution and unjustified murders'. Regarding Franco, he wrote: 'He takes no lead in the repression, in the savage terror of the rearguard. He lets others get on with it. The repression in the rearguard is left to a venomous and malicious monster of perversity, General Mola... I said, and Franco repeated it, that what has to be saved in Spain is Western Christian civilization under threat from Bolshevism, but the methods they are using are not civilized, nor Western, but rather African, certainly not Christian. The crude traditionalist Spanish Catholicism has very little that is Christian. What we have here is pagan, imperialist, African militarization. In this way there will never be real peace. They will win but they will not convince; they will conquer but they will not persuade...'"<sup>499</sup>

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A large majority of the western electorate supported the Republic. However, the governments, as opposed to the electorates, sat on the fence, sponsoring a Non-Intervention Agreement whose patchy implementation in fact favoured Franco. For, in sharp contrast, the Italians and Germans were quite uninhibited in ignoring non-intervention and supplying Franco with all the arms he needed together with men on the ground. Stalin also broke the non-intervention agreement; but while his tanks and aircraft held up Franco's advance for a while, they were not supplied in sufficient numbers to turn the tide of war. In effect, only the French and British kept the agreement...

The reason for the western democratic governments' reluctance to support Spain's democratically elected government was partly the fear of civil war within the democracies themselves. Thus "when the leader of the Madrid government, José Giral, appealed for arms [the French Prime Minister] Blum's first instinct was to agree. He was supported outside the government by the Communists and within the administration by left-wing colleagues such as Léo Lagrange and Pierre Cot, the Aviation Minister. However, opposing the move were not only the predictable friends of Franco in France but pacifists, moderates, Catholics, ex-Premiers Herriot and Chautemps, and members of a bourgeoisie petrified by the spectre of Communism. The novelist François Mauriac voiced their views: 'If it were found that our rulers are actively collaborating in the Iberian massacre, we would know that France is governed not by statesmen but by gang bosses acting on the orders of what must be called the International of Hatred.' This message was discreetly but influentially echoed by an 'extremely worried' British government. It had a 'strong pro-rebel feeling' and shrank from what promised to be a dress rehearsal for a second world war - perhaps even its opening night. Blum too feared that aiding Spain might precipitate a general conflict, one in which Britain could remain neutral and 'half of France would not follow me'. There was also, Blum said

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<sup>499</sup> Preston, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218.

subsequently, an associated danger: 'In France we too were on the verge of experiencing a military coup d'état.'..

"Understandable and perhaps inevitable though it was, Blum's wary, legalistic policy towards Spain proved disastrous for France. It allowed Germany and Italy to seize the initiative to exploit Spanish mineral wealth for the purposes of rearmament; to use the peninsula as a military testing-ground and a political distraction; to seal the Rome-Berlin Axis; to demonstrate the invincibility of fascism. Meanwhile democratic France (like Britain) looked feeble as well as hypocritical. Belgium no longer trusted its neighbour, seeking safety in neutrality, King Leopold III withdrew from the Franco-Belgian Pact, leaving an unfortified frontier north of the Maginot Line. The Pyrenees would mark another hostile border. Soviet confidence in France as an ally against Germany was further shaken - a feeling powerfully reciprocated in Paris because of Stalin's purges. Clinging to Britain, a demoralised France lost the power to act alone. By failing to stand aside its Spanish *alter ego* the Popular Front discredited itself. Blum's government prepared France for further capitulations..."<sup>500</sup>

The British were also divided. On the one hand, most of the intelligentsia galvanized by the launch, in February-March 1936, of the Left Book Club, led by the publisher Victor Gollancz, John Strachey and Professor Harold Laski, supported the Spanish socialists. The LBC "was run in the interests of the Communist Party. John Strachey was completely controlled by the CP at this period. Laski was a Labour Party member and had just been elected to its National Executive, but he had been converted to Marxism in 1931 and usually followed the CP line until 1931. Gollancz was also a dependable fellow-traveller until the end of 1938..."<sup>501</sup> On the other hand, "Britain... accounted for 40 percent of total foreign investment in Spain, including the Rio Tinto mining conglomerate."<sup>502</sup> Many Britons "were inclined by their considerable commercial interests in Spain, with substantial investments in mines, sherry, textiles, olive oil and cork, to be anything but sympathetic to the Republic. The business community inevitably tended towards the Nationalist side since it was believed that the anarchists and other Spanish revolutionaries were liable to seize and collectivize British holdings..."

"[Moreover,] like the French, the British government was committed at all costs to diminishing the risks of a European conflagration. In addition, an implicit goal of British appeasement was to persuade the Germans that they should look to the East if they wished to expand. Hence the willing sacrifice of Austria and Czechoslovakia; hence the attempts by Chamberlain to extricate Britain from her agreement to go to Poland's aid in the event of attack. This was the logical concomitant of British policy since 1935, during which a blind eye

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<sup>500</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 299, 300.

<sup>501</sup> Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, London: Harper Perennial, 1988, 2007, p. 280.

<sup>502</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 317.

had been turned to Germany's open rearmament and to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, a member state of the League of Nations."<sup>503</sup>

"Soviet readiness to help the Popular Front [against Franco]," writes Hosking, "contrasted with the official inaction of Britain and France and attracted considerable goodwill among European radicals and socialists, even those of decidedly non-Communist beliefs."<sup>504</sup> "Some 60,000 men from fifty countries, 80 percent of them communists, volunteered for International Brigades to defend the Republic; 2,300 were from Britain, of whom 500 were killed. They were there, said one statement reminiscent of the First World War, 'to defend our own homes, the homes of Britain against 'the aggressors'; and on their return they placed a wreath at the Cenotaph."<sup>505</sup>

Stalin, meanwhile, was in the throes of his anti-Trotskyite passion, which was greater for him than his anti-fascism – indeed, they were closely linked in his mind. Moreover, the leader of the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) was led by Andreu Nin, who had been a Trotskyite for nine years... So Stalin began conducting his own Spanish civil war, attempting to gain control of all the Leftist forces through a campaign of bloody purges in Catalonia. As George Orwell said, "it was the Communists above all others who prevented revolution in Spain." From 25 April 1937, when the leading communist Boldan Cortada was shot (possibly by a Comintern agent), under the direction of Alexander Orlov, Stalin's head of the NKVD in Spain, "many thousands of POUM members, and indeed other Leftists of all descriptions, were executed or tortured to death in Communist prisons".<sup>506</sup>

For "it was one of Spain's many misfortunes at this time that her Civil War coincided with the climax of Stalin's great terror. Many of the Barcelona murders had little to do with Spain's internal politics that were, rather, the backlash of events in Moscow and Leningrad. Thus Robles was executed because, as interpreter of General Jan Antonovich Berzin, head of the Russian military mission in Spain, he knew too much about Berzin's recall and liquidation as part of Stalin's purge of the army. Stalin was having his leading agents killed all over the world in 1937-38. And, as in Russia, virtually all the creatures who helped him to take over the Left in Spain, and then to terrorize it, were murdered in turn. The head of the NKVD's foreign department was cornered in his own office in Paris in February 1938 and forced to take cyanide. Of those who organized arms supplies to Spain, Evhen Konovalek was killed in Rotterdam in May 1938, Rudolf Clement was found, a headless corpse, in the Seine and Walter Krivitsky, boss of Soviet military intelligence in Western Europe, was chased for three years by Stalin's hit-men until they got him in Washington on 10 February 1941. In addition to General Berzin, Stalin murdered Michael Koltzov, the famous *Pravda* Spanish correspondent, Arthur

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<sup>503</sup> Preston, op. cit., 139, 137.

<sup>504</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, London: Penguin, 2012, p. 490.

<sup>505</sup> Tombs, op. cit., p. 681.

<sup>506</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 334.

Stashevky, head of the economic mission in Spain, and Antonov Ovseenko, Consul-General in Barcelona, who was told he was being recalled to Moscow to be made Minister of Justice, a joke characteristic of Stalin's gallows-humour. The only man who escaped Stalin was the arch-killer Orlov himself, who defected, wrote an account of all he knew, informed Stalin that he had arranged to have it published immediately if he died violently, and so was left in peace, publishing his tale after Stalin's death.

"It may be asked: why was it that the atrocities against the Left in Barcelona did not cause a wave of revulsion against Stalinism throughout the world? One factor was luck. On 26 April 1937, the day after Cortada's murder in Barcelona detonated the internal crisis, forty-three aircraft of the Condor Legion bombed the historic Basque town of Guernica, whose famous oak tree had shaded the first Basque parliament. About 1,000 people were killed and 70 per cent of the buildings destroyed... It was decided upon by Colonel Wolfgang von Richthofen, the Legion's Commander, in consultation with Colonel Juan Vigon, [General] Mola's Chief of Staff. There is no evidence Mola knew about it beforehand; Franco certainly did not; and the Germans did not know of the town's historical significance. For the Comintern propagandists – the best in the world – it was a stroke of uncovenanted fortune, and they turned it into the most celebrated episode of the entire war. Picasso, who had already been asked to do a large painting for the Spanish pavilion at the Paris World Fair, leapt at the subject, and the subject was later taken to the New York Metropolitan. Guernica helped to push a whole segment of Western opinion, including the magazines *Time* and *Newsweek*, over to the Republican side. In the subsequent hullabaloo, the echoes of which could still be heard in the 1980s, when the painting was solemnly hung in the Prado, the sounds of mass-slaughter in Barcelona went unheard..."<sup>507</sup>

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Franco's vengeance on his defeated opponents was fierce. "Hundreds of thousands of Republicans fled the country as, between 1939 and 1943, anything between 100,000 and 200,000 non-combatants or surrendering troops were summarily and systematically executed."<sup>508</sup> And yet, although he employed cruel and murderous methods<sup>509</sup>, Spain's fate under Franco was by no means as bad as that of several other nations in the following years.

As A.N. Wilson writes, Franco "held power until his death in 1975. Tens of thousands of republicans, after the civil war, were shot, or given prison-sentences of over twenty years. But estimates for the numbers actually killed in the war 'have dropped and dropped' according to the historian Hugh Thomas,

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<sup>507</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 335-336.

<sup>508</sup> Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 513

<sup>509</sup> For example, in Morocco his troops "engaged in gang rapes of women, marching with panties flying from their bayonets. Some women had their hair shaved off and their mouths force-fed castor oil, a laxative, so that, when paraded through the streets, they would soil themselves. Initially, men were just shot..." (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 316).

who also believes that 'it would be perfectly admissible to argue that Spain lost fewer people dead in acts of violence than any other major European nation in the twentieth century' ...

"[Franco] was prepared to exercise a murderous autocracy for about eight years after his victory, went on to lead a modern European state deep into our own lifetime, and did so peaceably, prosperously and seamlessly. He achieved, without any Marshall Aid or outside help, an economic revolution in the 1960s, and he handed over his regime into the hands of a constitutional monarch, Juan Carlos, who must rank as one of the most enlightened of modern world leaders. Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, which had sent aid to the elected government of Spain throughout the civil war, and which was to become the ally of the Western powers during the Second World War, is now seen to be without any rival as the most murderous, repressive and tyrannous system of human enslavement ever to exercise dominion over the human race..."<sup>510</sup>

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As a result of Franco's victory, "Britain's reputation suffered, France was weakened, and Italy became alienated from France and Britain, which opened the path to Germany's *Anschluss* with Austria. While the Spanish experience had further encouraged Chamberlain in his hopes that Britain could avoid war regardless of what happened on the continent, it had further convinced Hitler that Britain and France were afraid. Stalin had drawn the same conclusion..."<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2005, pp. 349, 350.

<sup>511</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 616.

## 38. THE GREAT TERROR

“In 1936 a new Soviet Constitution was promulgated (replacing the first constitution of 1924). Stalin proclaimed it ‘the most democratic of all the constitutions in the world’. It offered universal electoral franchise, civil rights, freedom of thought, the press, religion organization and assembly, and guarantees of employment – all ‘in accordance with the interests of the working people and for purposes of strengthening the socialist system’. Seldom has a constitution lied so monumentally. In truth, the Soviet Union was by this time an utterly ruthless dictatorship based heavily upon fear, servility and careerist ambition. Freedom – even in the limited way in which it had existed under Lenin’s New Economic Policy – did not exist. Nor did any protection under the law...”<sup>512</sup>

Until 1936, Stalin had simply continued the work of Lenin in his “War Communism” phase on a larger, more thorough and systematic scale. But in 1936 he began to do what Lenin had never done: destroy his own party. 1,108 of the 1,998 delegates at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress were eliminated.<sup>513</sup>

The real beginning of the Great Terror was the “Zinoviev-Kamenev-Trotskyite” show-trial in August, 1936 in which the Old Communists Zinoviev and Kamenev as well as fourteen others (five of whom were German Communists) were found guilty of terrorist conspiracies. All except one were shot. Norman Davies writes that Stalin “killed every single surviving member of Lenin’s original Bolshevik government [except Ordzhonikidze, who had killed himself]. Through endless false accusations, he created a climate of collective paranoia which cast everyone and anyone into the role of suspected spy or traitor or ‘enemy’. Through orchestrated show trials, he forced distinguished Communists to confess to absurd, indecent charges. Through the so-called ‘purges’, he would thin the ranks of the Communist Party, and then, having put the comrades into a mood of zombie-like deference, he would order the exercise to be repeated again and again. Everyone accused would be cajoled or tortured into naming ten or twenty supposed associates in crime. By 1938 he reached the point where he was ordering the shooting of citizens by random quota: 50,000 this month from this province, 30,000 next month from the next province. The OGPU (the latest incarnation of the Cheka) sweated overtime. (They too were regularly purged.) The death pits filled up. The Gulag became the biggest employer of labour in the land. State officials, artists and writers, academics and soldiers were all put through the grinder. Then, in March 1939, it stopped, or at least slowed down. The Census Bureau had just enough time to put an announcement in *Izvestia* saying that 17 million people were missing, before the census-takers themselves were shot...”<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> Kershaw, op. cit., p. 265.

<sup>513</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>514</sup> Davies, op. cit., p. 50.

Thus was fulfilled the prediction of Pierre Vergniaud in 1793: "There is reason to fear that, like Saturn, the Revolution may devour each of its children in turn".<sup>515</sup>

The great purges of 1937-38 wiped out a large proportion of the leaders of Soviet society, and not only the Party. In fact, no section of society was exempt from Stalin's murderous cull of his own supporters, from being called an "enemy of the people". In spite of these horrors, it was precisely in 1937 that Stalin said: "Life has become better, life has become happier"!

With the murder of Trotsky by an ice-pick in Mexico in 1940 the last possible (and only real) threat to Stalin's absolute authority from the Old Guard was gone. For, as Bullock writes, "his suspicion never slept: it was precisely the Bolshevik Old Guard whom he distrusted most. Even men who had been closely associated with him in carrying out the Second Revolution were executed, committed suicide or died in the camps."<sup>516</sup>

One of the few Old Bolsheviks who refused to incriminate themselves was the party's philosopher of revolution, Nicholas Bukharin, whom Lenin had called "the party's favourite". In his "Letter to a Future Generation of Party Leaders", he wrote: "I feel my helplessness before a hellish machine, which has acquired gigantic power, enough to fabricate organised slander... and which uses the Cheka's bygone authority to cater to Stalin's morbid suspiciousness... Any member of the Central Committee, any member of the Party can be rubbed out, turned into a traitor or terrorist."<sup>517</sup>

At the same time, "Bukharin predicted that a still greater age would dawn, with Stalin as the very 'world spirit' Hegel had imagined."<sup>518</sup>

"He was struck by the similarities between Stalinism and Nazism. Both systems dehumanised their own people by suppressing intellectual liberty through force and fraud. In the last article he wrote for *Izvestia*, on 6 July 1936, Bukharin made the identification as explicit as he dared. At a time when every utterance was combed for hidden meaning, it was tantamount to a manifesto: 'A complicated network of decorative deceit in words and actions is a highly essential characteristic of Fascist regimes of all stamps and hues.'"<sup>519</sup>

Thereafter, as he knew, his fate was sealed. He was arrested in February 1937 and brought to trial more than a year later. He wrote to the Politburo from prison that he was innocent of the crimes to which he had confessed under interrogation - and, probably, torture. But he said that "he would submit to the Party because he had concluded that there was some 'great and bold political idea behind the general purge' which overshadowed all else. 'It would be petty

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<sup>515</sup> Bullock, op. cit., p. 511.

<sup>516</sup> Bullock, op. cit., p. 425.

<sup>517</sup> Bukharin, in Bullock, op. cit., p. 541; Brendon, op. cit., p. 568.

<sup>518</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 387.

<sup>519</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 368.



of me to put the fortunes of my own person on the same level as those tasks of world-historical importance, which rest upon all your shoulders'...

"During his final speech from the dock [he] said that he had given in to the prison investigators after having completely re-evaluated his past. 'For when you ask yourself: "If you must die, what are you dying for?" - an absolutely black vacuity suddenly rises before you with startling vividness. And, on the contrary, everything positive that glistens in the Soviet Union acquires new dimensions in a man's mind. This in the end disarmed me completely and led me to bend my knees before the Party and the country... For in reality the whole country stands behind Stalin; he is the hope of the future...'"<sup>520</sup>

But it was Trotsky whom Stalin hated most, and around whom so many of the trials and executions, as well as the interference in the Spanish civil war, revolved. Indeed, Trotskyism preoccupied him far more in his period than the position of the Communist Party in war-torn Spain and China. (Stalin refused to allow the Communists either to overthrow either the Socialist government in Spain or the Nationalist Kuomintang in China, although they were in a good position to do so in both cases.)

"By the mid-1930s," write Christopher Andrews and Vasily Mitrokhin, "Stalin had lost all sense of proportion in his pursuit of Trotskyism in all its forms, both real and imaginary. Trotsky had become an obsession who dominated many of Stalin's waking hours and probably interfered with his sleep at night. As Trotsky's biographer, Isaac Deutscher, concludes: 'The frenzy with which [Stalin] pursued the feud, making it the paramount preoccupation of international communism as well as of the Soviet Union and subordinating to it all political, tactical, intellectual and other interests, beggars description; there is in the whole of history hardly another case in which such immense resources of power and propaganda were employed against a single individual.' The British diplomat R.A. Sykes later wisely described Stalin's world view as 'a curious mixture of shrewdness and nonsense'. Stalin's shrewdness was apparent in the way that he outmanoeuvred his rivals after the death of Lenin, gradually acquired absolute power as general secretary, and later outnegotiated Churchill and Roosevelt during their wartime conferences. Historians have found it difficult to accept that so shrewd a man also believed in so much nonsense. But it is no more possible to understand Stalin without acknowledging his addiction to conspiracy theories about Trotsky (and others) than it is to comprehend Hitler without grasping the passion with which he pursued his even more terrible and absurd conspiracy theories about the Jews."<sup>521</sup>

Most of the German Communist leaders who had fled to the Soviet Union after Hitler's coming to power in 1933 became victims.<sup>522</sup> Trotskyites, real and

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<sup>520</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 569.

<sup>521</sup> Andrews and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, London: The Allen Press, 1999, pp. 93-94.

<sup>522</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., p. 220.

imaginary, were killed all around the world. Even in Spain, the NKVD was as occupied in destroying the Trotskyite organization POUM as in fighting fascists.<sup>523</sup> So Soviet losses in that war (like Hitler's) were few. The Italians lost far more. For Stalin was more interested in Trotskyism than Fascism.

In September, 1936 Stalin appointed Nikolai Ivanovich Yezhov as head of the NKVD in succession to Yagoda, who was executed. As he "supervised the spread of the Terror, arresting ever-larger circles of suspects to be tortured into confessing imaginary crimes, the Soviet press worked the population up into a frenzy of witch-hunting against Trotskyite spies and terrorists. Yezhov claimed that Yagoda had tried to kill him by spraying his curtains with cyanide. He then arrested most of Yagoda's officers and had them shot. Then he arrested Yagoda himself. 'Better that ten innocent men should suffer than one spy get away,' Yezhov announced. 'When you chop wood, chips fly!'"<sup>524</sup>

"The purges, once unleashed, took on their own momentum. In 1937 the NKVD gave the Politburo a target of a quarter of a million to be arrested. Over 70,000 would be shot, the rest sentenced to long spells in prison or a labour camp. By the end of 1938, when the purges subsided (possibly because the enormous disruption was damaging industrial production), the target had been massively exceeded. Arrests had reached close to a million and a half, and nearly 700,000 had been shot. Even the purger-in-chief, Stalin's head of police since 1936, Nikolai Yezhov, nicknamed the 'Iron Hedgehog', was arrested in 1939 and executed the following year. By 1939 the total number of prisoners in gaols and in labour camps and colonies, where conditions were closer to death than life, was almost 3 million. The death rate through starvation, overwork and arbitrary execution was colossal..."<sup>525</sup>

During the Great Terror, a man could be arrested and convicted for anything – or nothing, with the basis of the most improbable of accusations. These were so obviously false that it makes one wonder what its real purpose was. The British psychiatrist Theodore Dalrymple writes: "In my study of communist societies, I came to the conclusion that the purpose of communist propaganda was not to persuade or convince, nor to inform, but to humiliate; and therefore, the less it corresponded to reality the better. When people are forced to remain silent when they are being told the most obvious lies, or even worse when they are forced to repeat the lies themselves, they lose once and for all their sense of probity. To assent to obvious lies is to co-operate with evil, and in some small way to become evil oneself. One's standing to resist anything is thus eroded, and even destroyed. A society of emasculated liars is easy to control."

Some of the cases would be considered farcical if they were not so tragic, such as that of fifty-three members of the Leningrad Society for the Deaf and Dumb. "The charges against this alleged 'fascist organization' were that they

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<sup>523</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, p. 95.

<sup>524</sup> Montefiore, *Titans of History*, pp. 522-523.

<sup>525</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.

had conspired with the German secret service to blow up Stalin and other Politburo members with a home-made bomb during the Revolution Day parade in Red Square. Thirty-four of them were shot, the rest were sent to the camps for ten or more years. What had in fact happened was that the Society had informed on some members who had been selling trinkets on local trains to make ends meet. This denunciation led to the NKVD's involvement. The chairman himself was subsequently implicated in the alleged conspiracy and shot. The following year the NKVD decided that the original investigation itself was suspect. The local police were then arrested..."<sup>526</sup>

But there were big fish as well, especially in the army. One was the famous Marshal Tukhachevsky, the army's most distinguished soldier, whom the German Wehrmacht considered "indispensable" to the Soviets. Accused of being a German spy and a Trotskyite, "on May 26 [1937], a mere four days after his arrest, Tukhachevsky began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him. Zinovy Ushakov, who prided himself on obtaining confessions no other investigator could extract, mercilessly beat Tukhachevsky, whose blood dropped onto the pages of a confession to crimes he did not commit. By some accounts, Tukhachevsky's teenage daughter, Svetlana, was brought to the prison, where the interrogators told him they would rape her...

"Stalin had one of the most exhilarating periods in his life in May-June 1937. He had plotted and carried out a conspiracy to invent a conspiracy, ridding himself of the few plausible alternate leaders, compelled the rest of the upper officer corps to take part, and broken [War Minister] Voroshilov like a dog, while having his handiwork relentlessly acclaimed in newspapers and on radio. But did Stalin understand the price? Unlike Voroshilov, he appreciated Tukhachevsky's exceptional talent. Stalin did not need Machiavelli to understand that a celebrated military man posed the gravest threat to a prince. (The Florentine had advised that such a commander should either be killed or discredited in the eyes of the army and the people.) Molotov said late in life, apropos of Tukhachevsky: 'We were not sure whether he would stay firmly on our side at a difficult moment, because he was a rightist' and, unlike Trotskyites, rightists concealed their views. Molotov added, 'Had he [Tukhachevsky] not been caught, he would have been very dangerous. He was the most authoritative.' True enough, but Stalin could have had the commander quietly exiled or shot. But the despot had deliberately cut a very wide swath. And he had insisted that the men's bodies be lacerated until they confessed to being foreign agents..."<sup>527</sup>

Tukhachevsky was only the beginning. Thus, according to the Soviet press, "the military purge accounted for:

"3 of the 5 Soviet marshals

"11 of the 15 army commanders

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<sup>526</sup> Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 226.

<sup>527</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 414, 428.

- "8 of the 9 fleet admirals and admirals Grade 1
- "50 of the 57 corps commanders
- "154 of the 186 divisional commanders
- "16 of the 16 army political commissars
- "25 of the 28 corps commissars
- "58 of the 64 divisional commanders
- "11 of the 11 vice-commissars of defence
- "98 of the 109 members of the Supreme Military Soviet.

"The effect was not confined to the upper echelons. Between May 1937 and September 1938, 36,761 army officers and over 3000 navy officers were dismissed. Allowing for 13,000 re-enrolled and adding the numbers 'repressed' after September 1938, this gives a total for 1937-41 of 43,000 officers at battalion and company-commander level arrested and either shot or sent to the camps (the great majority) or permanently dismissed. Roy Medvedev sums up an operation without parallel in the striking sentence: 'Never has the officer staff of any army suffered such great losses in any war as the Soviet Army suffered in this time of peace.'"<sup>528</sup>

Clearly, "the Red Army no longer resembled that 'formidable modern force of great weight with advanced equipment and exceptionally tough fighting men' ... which Mackintosh described the 1936 army as being; but how far it had lost ground was not clear. The 1939-40 'Winter War' against Finland appeared to confirm its precipitous decline, yet the less well-known 1939 clashes with Japan at Nomonhan showed a cleverly led, modern force in action. It is also evident that Stalin was aghast at the devastating Blitzkrieg-style victories of the German army in 1940, and more than ever anxious not to provoke Hitler into a war..."<sup>529</sup>

Ironically, Stalin's murderousness almost destroyed his own spy network. Thus "of the 450 secret police officials stationed abroad, at least 275 had been arrested by his regime. In January 1939, the despot was informed that 'the USSR NKVD does not have a single spy coordinator (*rezident*) abroad and not one proven agent. The work of the NKVD foreign department practically is destroyed and in essence needs to be organized from scratch.' Similarly, the acting chief of the key western department of the separate agency for military intelligence reported that 'the Red Army is essentially without an intelligence arm. The agent networks, which are the basis of intelligence, have almost all been liquidated.'..."<sup>530</sup>

We should also not forget the non-Soviet victims of the Terror. Thus "at least 20,000 Mongols would be executed over the course of 1937-38."<sup>531</sup> "Ethnic minorities close to Soviet borders were subjected to mass deportations and

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<sup>528</sup> Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 547-548.

<sup>529</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, London: William Collins, 2008, p. 422.

<sup>530</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 589.

<sup>531</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 482.

executions. Poles (along with many Belorussians and Ukrainians regarded with suspicion) in the western regions of the Soviet Union were particularly endangered. Fearing Poland would side with Hitler's Germany in attacking the Soviet Union, in August 1937 Stalin ordered the round-up of 140,000 Soviet Poles who were either shot or sent to labour camps over the following months."<sup>532</sup>

Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin write: "Comintern representatives in Moscow from around the world lived in constant fear of denunciation and execution. Many were at even greater risk than their Soviet colleagues. By early 1937, following investigations by the NKVD (predecessor of the KGB), Stalin had convinced himself that Comintern was a hotbed of subversion and foreign espionage. He told Georgi Dmitrov, who had become its General Secretary three years earlier, 'All of you there in the Comintern are working in the hands of the enemy.' Nikolai Yezhov, the head of the NKVD whose sadism and diminutive stature combined to give him the nickname 'Poison Dwarf', echoed his master's voice. 'The biggest spies,' he told Dmitrov, 'were working in the Communist International'. Each night, unable to sleep, the foreign Communists and Comintern officials who had been given rooms at the Hotel Lux in the centre of Moscow waited for the sound of a car drawing up at the hotel entrance in the early hour, then heard the heavy footsteps of NKVD men echo along the corridors, praying that they would stop at someone else's door. Those who escaped arrest listened with a mixture of relief and horror as the night's victims were taken from their rooms and driven away, never to return. Some, for whom the nightly suspense became too much, shot themselves or jumped to their deaths in the inner courtyard. Only a minority of the hotel's foreign guests escaped the knock on the door. Many of their death warrants were signed personally by Stalin. Mao's ferocious security chief, Kang Sheng, who had been sent to Moscow to learn his trade, enthusiastically co-operated with the NKVD in the hunt for mostly imaginary traitors among Chinese émigrés..."<sup>533</sup>

The effect of the Terror on the very many fellow-travellers and fifth columnists abroad was devastating, especially on the genuine idealists for the cause of Communism. They either chose not to believe the news of it, or to believe the fantasy explanations in terms of Trotskyism that the Soviets were propagating. Another tactic was to become, in effect, Trotskyites themselves: that is, to believe that Stalin had betrayed Lenin's revolution.

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"Throughout 1937 and 1938 there were on average nearly 2,200 arrests and more than 1,000 executions per day. The NKVD extracted testimony under torture, even those who would not be tried publicly, because that was one way they met quotas - gathering ever more names of accomplices - but also, more

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<sup>532</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>533</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The KGB and the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 3-4.

fundamentally, because Stalin craved this. Even when 'confessions' had been edited by him, he treated them as if they were real, underlining passages, circulating them to the politburo, and referring to 'testimony'. During the two frenzied, gruesome years of 1937 and 1938, Yezhov forwarded to him more than 15,000 written 'special communications', an average of 20 per day, many of which Stalin marked up and returned with further instructions.

"The terror's scale would become crushing. More than 1 million prisoners were convoyed by overloaded rail transport in 1938 alone. The Lubyanka's feared inner prison constituted a mere 110 cells. (The building had been a hotel for visiting insurance executives and retained the parquet in the corridors. Most of the floors were aboveground, but the windows were bricked up; the cellars were reserved for priority prisoners and executions.) But Butyrka, tsarist Russia's former central transit prison... filled with 20,000 inmates, six times capacity. And Butyrka was considered a resort compared with Lefortovo, while the most feared of all, Sukhanovka, located in a former monastery just outside Moscow and known as the dacha, was still more jammed. Some arrest sweeps had to be delayed or put off because of overcrowding. Urgent requests to Moscow for instructions began to sit without response (by summer 1938 more than 100,000 unattended cases would languish). Stalin, for two years running, felt constrained to skip his much beloved annual southern holiday – even the struggle to keep the pace, despite his inhuman capacity for work..."<sup>534</sup>

"On August 25, 1938, the Supreme Soviet presidium met to discuss a proposal to continue allowing early release from the Gulag for exemplary labor performance, but Stalin asked them to consider using rewards instead. 'Would it not be possible to keep people in a camp?' he objected. 'If we free them, they will return to their old ways. In the camp the atmosphere is different; there it is hard to be spoiled. In time a decree would follow: 'Convicts in USSR NKVD camps should serve their sentences in their entirety.'"<sup>535</sup>

On September 12, 1938, the terror reached its peak: just on that one day, Stalin killed 3173 people, more than all the death sentences carried out in the Russian Empire from 1905 to 1913 inclusive. "Bloody Nicholas" was no march for Butcher Stalin... "By 1941, when the purge had ended, there were an estimated 8 million Soviet citizens serving long sentences (ten years on average) in labour camps, under conditions of extraordinary hardship."<sup>536</sup>

Brendon writes: "As the liquidation of top managers took its toll on the economy and the armed forces suffered a further assault, few doubted that Russia's capacity to resist alien aggression was being seriously impaired. So on 24 January 1938 Stalin touched the brakes and changed direction, just as he had done in 1930 when he wrote his article 'Dizzy with Success', condemning the excesses of collectivisation. Now he launched a campaign against false

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<sup>534</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 437-438.

<sup>535</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 543.

<sup>536</sup> Martin Gilbert, *The Dent Atlas of Russian History*, London: Dent, 1993, p. 110.

informers, those who had denounced others in order to save their skins. He turned his withering gaze on the secret police, who had reckoned that their 'personal salvation lay in swimming' with the tide of terror. The purgers themselves should be purged..."<sup>537</sup>

Stalin's terror far exceeded that of Hitler. As Kotkin writes, "In Nazi Germany Hitler went after the Jews (less than 1 percent of the population), Communists and Social Democrats, but in the USSR Stalin savaged his own loyal elites across the board. To be sure, the greater number of victims were ordinary Soviet people, but what regime liquidates colossal numbers of loyal officials? Could Hitler - had he been so inclined - have compelled the imprisonment or execution of huge swaths of Nazi factory and farm hands, as well as almost all Nazi provincial Gauleiters and their staffs, several times over? Could he have executed the personnel of Nazi central ministries, thousands of his Wehrmacht officers - including almost his entire high command - as well as the Reich's diplomatic corps and its espionage agents, its celebrated cultural figures, and the leadership of Nazi parties throughout the world (had such parties existed)? Could Hitler also have decimated the Gestapo even while it was carrying out a mass bloodletting? And could the German people have been told, and would the German people have found plausible, that almost everyone who had come to power with the Nazi revolution turned out to be a foreign agent and saboteur? Even among ideological dictatorships, Communism stands out.

"Special features in the Soviet system made a mass and participatory terror between 1936 and 1938 possible. The existence of an extensive police apparatus equipped to arrest and sentence in assembly-line fashion was necessary but not sufficient. Still more important was the existence of shadowy Communist party, which had cells in all the country's institutions, making heresy-hunting possible, and an ideology, a class-war practice and a conspiratorial modus operandi that proved readily conducive to mass murder in the name of reasserting the people's special mission and purity. All this was buttressed by the adversarial nature of Soviet non-capitalist industrialization and collectivization, which was linked to an increase in the ranks of enemies, the regime's censorship (strict control over information and assiduous promotion of certain ways of thinking); widespread resentment of the new elite, which under socialism was not supposed to exist; and widespread belief in a great crusade, building socialism, in whose name the terror was conducted. The masses became complicit as a result of cell, farm and factory meetings, and especially their written denunciations; informing and extracting confessions. That said, the slaughter was neither self-generating nor self-sustaining. Soviet power was enacted by millions of people - not just those within the formal administrative machinery - but guided by a single individual."<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

<sup>538</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 307-308.

So those who had sent almost 1.5 million people either to the Gulag or to execution were themselves put on trial. In 1939, nearly a thousand of them were arrested; many were subjected to torture – the very crime for which a lot of them were being tried. They were either sent to the Gulag, or executed, or sent to serve at the front in World War Two.<sup>539</sup> In spite of that, the NKVD never wavered in their loyalty to Stalin...

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What did the public think of the terror? “Public receptiveness to the charges... was facilitated by the widely shared tenet that building socialism constituted an adversarial crusade against myriad ‘enemies’ at home and abroad, and by the circumstance that the system was not supposed to have a new elite, but did. The new elite’s apartments, cars, servants, concubines, and imported luxuries were often visible, while workers and farmers lived in hovels and went hungry. This did not mean that every ordinary Soviet citizen was eager for the blood of bigwigs, but few tears were shed.

“The terror, like every aspect of Soviet reality, also depended upon isolation. Foreigners were kept from Soviet inhabitants, and the number permitted to go abroad, even on official business, shrank to the point that Stalin could examine delegation lists for approval (or not). But the key to it all lay in the nature of Communism as a conspiracy to seize and hold power. Everywhere the mechanism for the terror was the same: a secret party circular from Stalin ordering a still more vigilant hunt for ‘enemies’, a local party meeting, a summons to Bolshevik ‘criticism’, further denunciations, pandemonium. Just a handful of ‘activists’, who understood the vocabulary of invective or insinuation to tear down rivals and protect themselves, could precipitate chain reactions of annihilation in which millions became complicit in additional meetings in factories, farms, schools. This was intentional, to achieve scale. The frenzy never escaped Stalin’s ability to shape and ultimately stop it. Still, often the denouncers were denounced right back by those they had aimed at, in a circular firing squad. And if a person *defended* someone accused of being an enemy of the people, well then, that was proof that he or she, too, was an enemy. Even if one merely inquired about a coworker who had suddenly stopped showing up one could be accused of harboring ‘ties’ or ‘sympathies’. Party and state officials, in other words, became trapped in the twisted logic of the system they had helped create. They accepted that foreign capitalist powers would never accept the success of the Soviet Union, that ‘dying classes’ could not be expected to go quietly, that socialism had myriad enemies, but now these loyal Soviet officials were themselves the enemy.”<sup>540</sup>

However, as in Diocletian’s time, Divine wrath pursued the persecutors. Thus “the NKVD’s Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB), which directly

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<sup>539</sup> Viola, *Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine*, Oxford University Press, 2017; reviewed in *Foreign Affairs*, May/June, 2018, p. 203.

<sup>540</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 439-440.



perpetrated the wholesale bloodletting, was decimated: around 2,300 of the 22,000 state security operatives were arrested – 269 in the center and 2,064 in the locales – of whom the great bulk (1,862) were charged with ‘counterrevolution’. All eighteen ‘commissars of state security’ (the top ranks) who served under Yagoda would be shot, with a single exception (who would be poisoned).<sup>541</sup> Yezhov, Yagoda’s successor, was succeeded by Stalin’s fellow-Georgian, Lavrenty Beria, who was killed only after Stalin’s death in 1953... Nevertheless, there was perplexity among the NKVD’s ranks. “Stalin read an anonymous letter sent to him that claimed that many operatives in the NKVD feared arrest and could not comprehend how the entire NKVD leadership had consisted of thieves and traitors, imploring Stalin to check into the situation and stop the extermination of people...”<sup>542</sup>

In March, 2014 an inter-departmental Commission for the Defence of State Secrets lengthened the period of secrecy for Cheka-KGB documents in the period 1917-1991 to the following thirty years (that is, until 2044). Under the scope of this decision fell the whole mass of archival documents touching on the Great Terror of 1937-38.<sup>543</sup> There is a great mystery here: what has already been revealed about the Great Terror is already so appalling that it is difficult to imagine that further revelations from closed archives could add anything significant to the horror of what we already know...

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<sup>541</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 376.

<sup>542</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 405.

<sup>543</sup> Fr. Alexander Prapertov, *Facebook* communication, June 8, 2018.

### 39. THE CAUSES OF THE GREAT TERROR

Psychoanalysis attributes a cardinal importance to childhood conflicts and traumas in the explanation of behaviour. Thus according to Erich Fromm, Stalin, like Hitler, was a narcissist; their psychopathy went back to problems with their domineering fathers.

As Alan Bullock writes: “‘Narcissism’ is a concept originally formulated by Freud in relation to early infancy, but one which is now accepted more broadly to describe a personality disorder in which the natural development of relationships to the external world has failed to take place. In such a state only the person himself, *his* needs, feelings and thoughts, everything and everybody pertaining to *him* are experienced as fully real, while everybody and everything else lacks reality or interest.

“Fromm argues that some degree of narcissism can be considered an occupational illness among political leaders in proportion to their conviction of a providential mission and their claim to infallibility of judgement and a monopoly of power. When such claims are raised to the level demanded by a Hitler or a Stalin at the height of their power, any challenge will be perceived as a threat to their private image of themselves as much as to their public image, and they will react by going to any lengths to suppress it.

“So far psychiatrists have paid much less attention to Stalin than to Hitler. Lack of evidence is part of the reason. There has been no parallel in the case of the Soviet Union to the capture of documents and interrogation of witnesses that followed the defeat of Germany. But more important is the striking contrast in temperament and style between the two men: the flamboyant Hitler, displaying a lack of restraint and extravagance of speech which for long made it difficult for many to take him seriously, in contrast to the reserved Stalin, who owed his rise to power to his success, not in exploiting, but in concealing his personality, and was underestimated for the opposite reason – because many failed to recognize his ambition and ruthlessness. Nor surprisingly, it is the first rather than the second who has caught the psychiatrists’ attention. All the more interesting then is the suggestion that underlying the contrast there was a common narcissistic obsession with themselves.

“There is one other insight, which Stalin’s American biographer, Robert Tucker, has adopted from Karen Horney’s work on neurosis. He suggests that his father’s brutal treatment of Stalin, particularly the beatings which he inflicted on the boy, and on the boy’s mother in his presence, produced the basic anxiety, the sense of being isolated in a hostile world, which can lead a child to develop a neurotic personality. Searching for firm ground on which to build an inner security, someone who in his childhood had experienced such anxiety might naturally search for inner security by forming an idealistic image of himself and then adopting this as his true identity. ‘From then on his energies are invested in the increasing effort to prove the ideal self in action and gain others’ affirmation of it.’ In Stalin’s case, this fits his identification

with the Caucasian outlaw-hero, whose name he assumed, and later with Lenin, the revolutionary hero, on whom he fashioned his own 'revolutionary persona', with the name of Stalin, 'man of steel', which echoed Lenin's own pseudonym...

"The earliest recorded diagnosis of Stalin as paranoid appears to have been made in December 1927, during an international scientific conference in Moscow. A leading Russian neuropathologist, Professor Vladimir Bekhterev from Leningrad, made a great impression on the foreign delegates and attracted the attention of Stalin, who asked Bekhterev to pay him a visit. After the interview (22 December 1927) Bekhterev told his assistant Mnukhin that Stalin was a typical case of severe paranoia [more precisely: "a paranoiac with a withered arm"] and that a dangerous man was now at the head of the Soviet Union. The fact that Bekhterev was suddenly taken ill and died while still in his hotel has inevitably led to the suspicion that Stalin had him poisoned. Whether this is true or not, when the report of Bekhterev's diagnosis was repeated in *Liternaturnaia Gazeta* in September 1988, it was accepted as correct by a leading Soviet psychiatrist, Professor E.A. Lichko."<sup>544</sup>

"Khrushchev's verdict, which echoed that of Bukharin and was subsequently echoed by Molotov, is convincing: Stalin had a 'sickly suspicious' mind. Plainly a man who said that he trusted nobody, not even himself, exhibited signs of paranoia. Pathologists may refine that diagnosis. Historians are more likely to conclude that Stalin's motives lie hidden in the black hole where madness and evil meet..."<sup>545</sup>

"A psychoanalytic memoir by a Gori and Tiflis classmate [of Stalin] (who had emigrated) alleged that Stalin's father had beaten him, so that 'from childhood on, the realization of his thoughts of revenge became the aim to which everything was subordinated.'"<sup>546</sup>

However, the writer of these words, the most recent biographer of Stalin, Stephen Kotkin, doubts that Stalin's childhood traumas (whatever they were) can explain his behaviour better than the political struggles of his adult life. "His intense relationship with the daring Lado Ketskhoveli, and the latter's early death at the hands of tsarist jailers, made a lasting impression on him, helping to solidify his lifelong Marxist convictions. And Stalin's prolonged struggle as a Bolshevik and Lenin loyalist against the overwhelming Menshevik majority of Georgia's Social Democrats made a lasting impact, too, sowing or eliciting some of his inner demons. In other words, Stalin's marked personal traits, which coloured his momentous political decisions, emerged as a result of politics. This suggestion to explain Stalin's person through politics amounts to more than expediency (in the absence of plentiful, reliable sources on his early life and inner mind). Even though he had inherited the possibility

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<sup>544</sup> Bullock, *Stalin and Hitler*, London: HarperCollins, 1991, pp. 10-12, 401.

<sup>545</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

<sup>546</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 154.

of a personal dictatorship from Lenin, Stalin went through significant psychological ordeals in the struggle to be acclaimed as Lenin's successor..."<sup>547</sup>

Stalin's paranoia is said to have been set off by the deaths of his wife Nadya in 1932 and/or his friend Kirov in 1934. However, writes Kotkin "*direct evidence of the evolution of Stalin's psychology remains extremely thin. Moreover, much of the core terror scenario in Stalin's mind predated 1932 [the year of the death of Nadya], while the mass murders did not follow closely after the 1932 or 1934 events [the death of Kirov]. So, although the assertion that he snapped in 1932 or 1934 might well be true, it does not solve the riddle of why he launched and saw through such a mass killing several years later.*

"By far the simplest of all explanations would be to attribute the terror to paranoia: a kind of hallucinatory aria. Stalin expected the worst of people, and he received an endless stream of reports confirming the suspicions. Never mind that he was the arch-plotter. *They* were lying to *him*, sabotaging his directives, covering up their mistakes. He suspected that the effusive affirmations of his leadership were two-faced, and that officials were privately thinking critical thoughts. Yezhov, like Yagoda before him, dutifully assembled overheard remarks (real or invented), and the despot read them. The prisons, too, were eavesdropped on, and the transcripts delivered to Stalin. Stalin was compulsively eager for denunciations (and therefore susceptible to people's efforts to annihilate rivals) and once he had read a denunciation about someone, he found it difficult to put it out of his mind: *suspicions* had been raised. When informed that someone had badmouthed him behind his back, Stalin would undergo a 'psychological metamorphosis', according to Svetlana. 'At this point - and this was where his cruel, implacable nature showed itself - the past ceased to exist for him. Years of friendship and fighting side by side in a common cause might as well never have been... 'So you've betrayed me,' some inner demon would whisper. 'I don't even know you anymore.'

"Distrust is the disease of the tyrant. Stalin's 'maniacal suspiciousness' was extreme even by those standards, something he himself would occasionally acknowledge. And yet, even beyond the fact that none of the psychological diagnoses of him have been based on direct medical evidence, the emphasis on his paranoia can be overdone. He whose tremendous self-control, rarely raised his voice, rarely displayed anger (and if so, usually with his eyes). At the parades on Red Square, he did not wear a bulletproof vest under his overcoat. He did not employ a double. His chief bodyguard would recall not only that 'Stalin did not like when he was accompanied by security', but that he would walk the streets of Sochi and greet the crowds, shaking hands. (We have already noted similar behavior in his joyride on the metro.) Stalin's obsession over poison and assassination ran deep. But if he was paranoid, he was also lucidly strategic. The evidence for an extremely high degree of calculation behind the terror is overwhelming."<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. I, p. 735.

<sup>548</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 492-493.

Brendon tends to agree with Kotkin: “retrospective psychoanalysis is little more than guesswork.”<sup>549</sup> And Donald Rayfield may be right that “psychopaths of Stalin’s order arise so rarely in history that forensic psychiatry has few insights to offer”.<sup>550</sup> In such cases, “where madness and evil meet”, psychiatry needs to be supplemented with *demonology*, - a study not just of a man’s “inner demons”, to use the hackneyed phrase, but real demons existing independent of the human mind - and in the essentially religious idea that a nation that has abandoned its faith and given in to the most primitive passions of envy, disloyalty, lust and hatred will be easily invaded and taken over by Satan.

We will come to demonology later...

If we exclude the not unreasonable hypothesis that he was simply mad, or the less reasonable one that he did not know what was happening - that was what the poet Boris Pasternak thought: “If only someone told all this to Stalin!”<sup>551</sup> - then perhaps the best rational or half-rational explanation comes from Hannah Arendt, who defined the true role of Stalin’s party purges (like that of Mao’s cultural revolution) as “an instrument of permanent instability.” “The state of permanent instability, in turn” writes Masha Gessen, “was the ultimate instrument of control, which sapped the energies and attention of all. The best way to insure being able to strike when it is least expected is to scramble all expectations.”<sup>552</sup>

Another semi-rational line of thinking is presented by Kotkin: “Stalin presumed that the socialist systems survival depended on him and that his former comrades desperately wanted to get rid of him. If, additionally, one assumed - as he did - that a foreign military attack was inevitable, and that in the event of war his former comrades could become eager collaborators with the fascists and other foreign enemies - not just out of spite, revenge, or ambition but because only his removal could undo collectization - then all these people, and anyone who sympathized with or thought like them, had to be eliminated before war broke out. Did critics not understand that all opposition was objectively serving foreign enemies? Who could deny that the Soviet Union faced enemies? Who could deny that the capitalists had intervened against the USSR in the civil war, and would do so again? Who could deny that imperialism was aggressive and would stop at nothing? In Spain ‘fascists’ had risen up in a putsch, and they were being assisted by the foreign fascist powers, and not opposed by the ‘democratic’ ones. What more did anyone need to know? If counterrevolution supported by aggressive

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<sup>549</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

<sup>550</sup> Rayfield, “A Georgian Caliban”, *Review of Stalin, vol. I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* by Stephen Kotkin, *Literary Review*, November, 2014, p. 25.

<sup>551</sup> Kotkin *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 481.

<sup>552</sup> Masha Gessen, “The Very Strange Writings of Putin’s New Chief of Staff”, *The New Yorker*, August 15, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-very-strange-writings-of-putins-new-chief-of-staff>.

foreign intervention could take place in Spain, was it not still more likely to be attempted against the Soviet Union, a strategic country with a fully socialist system? His critics either failed elementary logic or had 'lost their minds'."<sup>553</sup>

However, more important than the question of Stalin's purpose is that of God... It is impossible for a believer not to see in the Great Terror God's revenge on the Sovietized peoples of the former Russian empire for their apostasy from God. After all, the majority of the population that betrayed the Tsar, Orthodoxy and the Church, and then worshipped Lenin and Stalin and their atheist doctrines, were baptized Orthodox Christians. And, as we shall see, the punishment would continue on an even greater scale during the coming world war.

But the "Christian West" did not see it that way. Churchmen said nothing (except the "Red Dean" of Canterbury, Hewlitt Johnson, who, as we have seen, was among the most egregious admirers of Stalin). Many Western intellectuals made "excuse for excuses in sin" for the greatest murderer in history, accepting the absurd charges against his victims. The manifest absurdity of the trials, and of the idea that so many of Lenin's and Stalin's most loyal collaborators were in fact spies, did not stop the "useful idiots" of the West from justifying the charade.

Thus, as Tony Judt writes, in 1936 the French Ligue des Droits de l'Homme established a commission to investigate the great Moscow trials of that year. The conclusion to its report states: "It would be a denial of the French Revolution... to refuse [the Russian] people the right to strike down the fomenters of civil war, or conspirators in liaison with foreigners."<sup>554</sup>

Again, the US ambassador Joseph Davies wrote to Washington that "the indictments of the defendants in the Moscow show trials had been proved 'beyond a reasonable doubt and that 'the adjudication of the punishment' had been entirely justified'"<sup>555</sup> To suggest the evidence was faked, he said, "would be to suppose the creative genius of Shakespeare."

Paul Johnson writes: "The attempt by Western intellectuals to defend Stalinism involved them in a process of self-corruption which transferred to them, and so to their countries, which their writings helped to shape, some of the moral decay inherent in totalitarianism itself, especially its denial of individual responsibility for good or ill. [The literary critic] Lionel Trilling shrewdly observed of the Stalinists of the West that they repudiated politics, or at least the politics of 'vigilance and effort'. 'In an imposed monolithic government they saw the promise of rest from the particular acts of will which are needed to meet the many, often clashing requirements of democratic society... they cherished the idea of revolution as the final, all-embracing act of

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<sup>553</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 484.

<sup>554</sup> Judt, "Francois Furet (1927-1997)", in *When the Facts Change*, London: Vintage, 2015, p. 352.

<sup>555</sup> Service, *Comrades*, p. 208.

will which would forever end the exertions of our individual will.' For America, the development was particularly serious because the Stalinists then formed the salient part of the new radical movement; and as Trilling also noted: 'In my view of the American cultural situation, the importance of the radical movement of the Thirties cannot be overestimated. It may be said to have created the American intellectual class as we now know it in its great size and influence. It fixed the character of the class as being, through all mutations of opinion, predominantly of the Left.' This was the class which shaped the thinking of the liberal-Democratic political establishment, which was to hold power in the most powerful nation on earth until virtually the end of the 1970s..."<sup>556</sup>

Indeed, western appeasement of Communism (not just of Nazism) continued unabated until, to save their own skins and that of the worst mass-murderer in history, the leaders of the western world, took "Uncle Joe" as their honoured ally during the Second World War, a no less shameful surrender of truth and dignity than Chamberlain's...

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<sup>556</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 307-308.

## 40. THE MASS MARTYRDOM OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

The category of the population that suffered most during Stalin's great purges – a fact woefully neglected by secular historians – was neither the party, nor the army, but *the Russian Orthodox clergy*, followed by *the Orthodox laity*. If Metropolitan Sergei, deputy leader of the Russian Church (patriarch in 1944), thought that by his "Declaration" of loyalty to the Communist state in 1927 he would "save the Church", – the ecclesiastical equivalent of political appeasement, – the next few years would prove him terribly wrong. From 1935 the Bolsheviks, having repressed most of the True Orthodox clergy, began to repress the sergianists – i.e. those who accepted Sergei's leadership and justified his Declaration. In fact, the sergianists often received longer sentences than their True Orthodox brothers whom they had betrayed. This only went to show how futile their Judas-like collaboration with the Antichrist, and betrayal of their brothers in Christ, had been. Even a recent biography of Sergei by a sergianist author accepts this fact: "If Metropolitan Sergei, in agreeing in his name to publish the Declaration of 1927 composed by the authorities, hoping to buy some relief for the Church and the clergy, then his hopes not only were not fulfilled, but the persecutions after 1927 became still fiercer, reaching truly hurricane-force in 1937-38."<sup>557</sup>

It is sometimes forgotten that for the Russian Church the persecution began immediately after the revolution. Thus in the nineteen years *before* the Great Terror of 1937-38, Soviet power killed: 128 bishops; 26,777 clergy; 7,500 professors; about 9,000 doctors; 94,800 officers; 1,000,000 soldiers; 200,000 policemen; 45,000 teachers; 2,200,000 workers and peasants. Besides that, 16 million Orthodox Russians died from hunger and three million from forced labour in the camps.<sup>558</sup> As for the years of the Great Terror, according to Russian government figures, in 1937 alone 136,900 clergy were arrested, of whom 106,800 were killed (there were 180,000 clergy in Russia before the revolution). Again, between 1917 and 1980, 200,000 clergy were executed and 500,000 others were imprisoned or sent to the camps.<sup>559</sup> The numbers of functioning Orthodox churches declined from 54,692 in 1914 to 39,000 at the

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<sup>557</sup> Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia* (Guardian of the House of the Lord), Moscow, 2003, p. 262.

<sup>558</sup> *Kharbinskoe Vremia*, February, 1937, N 28, in Protopriest John Stukach, "Vyskomerie kak prepona k uiedineniu" (Haughtiness as an obstacle to union), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1357>

<sup>559</sup> A document of the Commission attached to the President of the Russian Federation on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repressions, January 5, 1996; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), N 204, January, 1996, p. 15. The rate of killing slowed down considerably in the following years. In 1939 900 clergy were killed, in 1940 – 1100, in 1941 – 1900, in 1943 – 500. In the period 1917 to 1940 205 Russian hierarchs "disappeared without trace"; 59 disappeared in 1937 alone. According to another source, from October, 1917 to June, 1941 inclusive, 134,000 clergy were killed, of whom the majority (80,000) were killed between 1928 and 1940 (Cyril Mikhailovich Alexandrov, in V. Lyulechnik, "Tserkov' i KGB" (The Church and the KGB), in <http://elmager.livejournal.com/217784.html>).



beginning of 1929 to 15, 835 on April 1, 1936.<sup>560</sup> By the beginning of the Second World War, there were none at all in Belorussia (Kolarz), “less than a dozen” in Ukraine (Bociurkiw), and a total of 150-200 in the whole of Russia.<sup>561</sup>

This was the greatest persecution of Christianity in history. But it did not wipe out the faith: the census of 1937 established that one-third of city-dwellers and two-thirds of country-dwellers still believed in God. Stalin’s plan that the Name of God should not be named in Russia by the year 1937 had failed...

Nevertheless, the immediate outlook for believers was bleak indeed. Thus E.L. writes about Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene (+1937): “He warmed the hearts of many, but the masses remained... passive and inert, moving in any direction in accordance with an external push, and not their inner convictions... The long isolation of Bishop Damascene from Soviet life, his remoteness from the gradual process of sovietization led him to an unrealistic assessment of the real relations of forces in the reality that surrounded him. Although he remained unshaken himself, he did not see... the desolation of the human soul in the masses. This soul had been diverted onto another path – a slippery, opportunistic path which led people where the leaders of Soviet power – bold men who stopped at nothing in their attacks on all moral and material values – wanted them to go... Between the hierarchs and priests who had languished in the concentration camps and prisons, and the mass of the believers, however firmly they tried to stand in the faith, there grew an abyss of mutual incomprehension. The confessors strove to raise the believers onto a higher plane and bring their spiritual level closer to their own. The mass of believers, weighed down by the cares of life and family, blinded by propaganda, involuntarily went in the opposite direction, downwards. Visions of a future golden age of satiety, of complete liberty from all external and internal restrictions, of the submission of the forces of nature to man, deceitful perspectives in which fantasy passed for science... were used by the Bolsheviki to draw the overwhelming majority of the people into their nets. Only a few individuals were able to preserve a loftiness of spirit. This situation was exploited very well by Metropolitan Sergei...”<sup>562</sup>

Sergei has had many apologists. Some, especially the leaders of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate, have claimed that he “saved the Church” for the future. This claim cannot be justified. First, it is God that saves the Church, not man. Secondly, Sergei saved only Judas-traitors like himself; he “saved” a false church that had been morally crushed by surrendering to the Antichrist.

It was rather the Catacomb Church, which “in a sense saved the official Church from complete destruction because the Soviet authorities were afraid

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<sup>560</sup> Nicholas Werth, “A State against its People”, in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172, 173.

<sup>561</sup> Nathanael Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>562</sup> E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki* (Bishop Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, pp. 65-66.

to force the entire Russian Church underground through ruthless suppression and so to lose control over it.”<sup>563</sup>

As St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco wrote: “The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergei brought no benefit to the Church. The persecutions not only did not cease, but also sharply increased. To the number of other accusations brought by the Soviet regime against clergy and laymen, one more was added – non-recognition of the Declaration. At the same time, a wave of church closings rolled over all Russia... Concentration camps and places of forced labor held thousands of clergymen, a significant part of whom never saw freedom again, being executed there or dying from excessive labors and deprivations.”<sup>564</sup>

Others have tried to justify Sergei by claiming that there are two paths to salvation, one through open confession of the truth, which necessitated the descent into the catacombs, and the other through compromise. Sergei, according to this view, was no less a martyr than the Catacomb martyrs, only he suffered the “martyrdom” of losing his good name.<sup>565</sup> However, this view comes close to the “Rasputinite” heresy that there can be salvation through sin – in this case, lying, the sacrifice of the freedom and dignity of the Church, and the betrayal to torments and death of one’s fellow Christians! For example, Hieromartyr Sergei Mechev was betrayed by Bishop Manuel Lemeshevsky.<sup>566</sup> And more generally, Metropolitan Sergei's charge that all the catacomb clergy were “counter-revolutionaries” was sufficient to send them tens of thousands to their deaths.<sup>567</sup>

This fact demonstrates that “sergianism” can best be defined as, quite simply, the sin of Judas...

Meanwhile, deep in the underground, the Catacomb, True Orthodox Church delivered its verdict. In July, 1937, four bishops, two priests and six laymen met in Ust-Kut, Siberia, convened a council, and declared:-

“1. The Sacred Council forbids the faithful to receive communion from the clergy legalized by the anti-Christian State.

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<sup>563</sup> W. Alexeyev, “The Russian Orthodox Church 1927-1945: Repression and Revival”, *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 7, N 1, Spring, 1979, p. 30.

<sup>564</sup> St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29.

<sup>565</sup> E.S. Polishchuk, “Patriarkh Sergei i ego deklaratsia: kapitulatsia ili kompromiss?” (Patriarch Sergius and his Declaration: Capitulation or Compromise?), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), Paris, N 161, 1991-I, pp. 233-250.

<sup>566</sup> Alla D. “Svidetel'stvo” (Witness), in *Nadezhda* (Hope), vol. 16, Basel-Moscow, 1993, 228-230. See also N.V. Urusova, *Materinskij Plach Sviatoj Rusi* (The Maternal Lament of Holy Russia), Moscow, 2006, pp. 285-287.

<sup>567</sup> I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 30.

“2. It has been revealed to the Sacred Council by the Spirit that the anathema-curse hurled by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon is valid, and all priests and Church-servers who have dared to consider it as an ecclesiastical mistake or political tactic are placed under its power and bound by it.

“3. To all those who discredit and separate themselves from the Sacred Council of 1917-18 – **Anathema!**

“4. All branches of the Church which are on the common trunk – the trunk is our pre-revolutionary Church – are living branches of the Church of Christ. We give our blessing to common prayer and the serving of the Divine Liturgy to all priests of these branches. The Sacred Council forbids all those who do not consider themselves to be branches, but independent from the tree of the Church, to serve the Divine Liturgy. The Sacred Council does not consider it necessary to have administrative unity of the branches of the Church, but unity of mind concerning the Church is binding on all.”<sup>568</sup>

This completed the de-centralization of the Church, which Patriarch Tikhon had already begun through his famous *ukaz* no. 362 of 1920. It was elicited by the fact that the organization of the Church was now destroyed, and all its leaders dead or in prison or so deep underground that they could not rule their dioceses. This process was sealed in the autumn of 1937, when the patriarchal *locum tenens* Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and his only possible successors, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Joseph of Petrograd, were all shot.

And so by the end of 1937, the Church’s descent into the catacombs, which had begun in the early 20s, was completed. From now on, with the external administrative machinery of the Church destroyed, it was up to each bishop – sometimes each believer – individually to preserve the fire of faith, being linked with his fellow Christians only through the inner, mystical bonds of the life in Christ. Thus was the premonition of Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene fulfilled: “Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer for himself as it was with the forefathers!”<sup>569</sup>

Even sergianist sources have spoken about the falsity of Sergei’s declaration, the true confession of those who opposed him, and the invalidity of the measures he took to punish them. Thus: “Amidst the opponents of Metropolitan Sergei were a multitude of remarkable martyrs and confessors,

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<sup>568</sup> Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov), personal communication; B. Zakharov, *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), September 7, 1949; "Vazhnoe postanovlenie katakombnoj tserkvi" (An Important Decree of the Catacomb Church), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 18, 1949. According to one version, there is a fifth canon: "To all those who support the renovationist and sergianist heresy – Anathema". See Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Ust'-Kutskij Sobor 1937g." (The Catacomb Church: the Ust-Kut Council of 1937), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 4 (8), 1997, pp. 20-24.

<sup>569</sup> E.L., *op. cit.*, p. 92.

bishops, monks, priests... The 'canonical' bans of Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky) and his Synod were taken seriously by no one, neither at that time [the 1930s] nor later by dint of the uncanonicity of the situation of Metropolitan Sergei himself..."<sup>570</sup>

And again: "The particular tragedy of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergei consists in its principled rejection of the *podvig* of martyrdom and confession, without which witnessing to the truth is inconceivable. In this way Metropolitan Sergei took as his foundation, not hope on the Providence of God, but a purely human approach to the resolution of church problems... The courage of the 'catacombniks' and their firmness of faith cannot be doubted, and it is our duty to preserve the memory of those whose names we shall probably learn only in eternity..."<sup>571</sup>

Sergei forgot that it is God, not man, Who saves the Church. The faith that saves is the faith that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19.26). "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God" (Psalms 19.7). This is the faith that, being founded on "the Rock, which is Christ" (I Corinthians 10.7), the Church will prevail against the gates of hell. But Sergei's "faith" was of a different, more "supple" kind, the kind of which the Prophet spoke: "Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter'; therefore thus says the Lord God,... hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter. Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with hell will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it..." (Isaiah 28.15, 17-19)

A Catacomb Appeal of the period wrote: "May this article drop a word that will be as a burning spark in the heart of every person who has Divinity in himself and faith in our One Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Beloved brethren! Orthodox Christians, peace-makers! Do not forget your brothers who are suffering in cells and prisons for the word of God and for the faith, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, for they are in terrible dark bonds which have been built as tombs for all innocent people. Thousands and thousands of peace-loving brothers are languishing, buried alive in these tombs, these cemeteries; their bodies are wasting away and their souls are in pain every day and every hour, nor is there one minute of consolation, they are doomed to death and a hopeless life. These are the little brothers of Christ, they bear that cross which the Lord bore. Jesus Christ received suffering and death and was buried in the tomb, sealed by a stone and guarded by a watch. The hour came when death could not hold in its bonds the body of Christ that had suffered,

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<sup>570</sup> M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatejshago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 809, 810.

<sup>571</sup> M.V. Danilushkin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 297, 520.

for an Angel of the Lord coming down from the heavens rolled away the stone from the tomb and the soldiers who had been on guard fled in great fear. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. But the thunder will also strike these castles where the brothers languish for the word of God, and will smash the bolts where death threatens men..."<sup>572</sup>

Another member of the Catacomb Church, Ivan Mikhailovich Andreyev, wrote: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." (Romans 13:1)

"This same was claimed by Plato in pre-Christian antiquity, understanding authority as a hierarchy rising toward God. In other words, only a God-established authority is a genuine authority. But an authority which does not recognize the higher authority of God over it, is not an authority, but despotism.

"The Soviet authority in the USSR is not a true authority, but a denial of the essence itself, of the principle itself, of the idea of authority itself, and an affirmation of despotism. Atheism is a horrible evil. It is generated by either the greatest sin of pride, or is conditioned by a total indifference toward the question of religion and morality (i.e. toward Truth and Love), or it is the result of criminal misconjuncture. 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.' (Psalm 14:1)

"The state authority in the USSR, showing itself as an open and cynical despotism, sets as the main task of its ideological politics the spreading of atheism, helped by the principle of extreme spiritual and physical state force. A system of universal propaganda, bought to perfection, built on state-organized falsehood, deception, temptations and terror, together with the diabolically cruel, perfected system of torture and torments, being systematically and by principle used by the Soviet state for the glory of atheism is a phenomenon, which is absolutely new, and by nature, profoundly different from all known aspects of cruelty and force in world history.

"The main aggression of the Bolshevik state is directed toward Christianity, as the most perfect form of religion, and especially towards Orthodoxy, the most perfect form of Christianity. Bolshevism, the highest phenomenon of anti-Christianity, is the idea of antichrist.

"If the Orthodox Christian Church is mystically the 'Body of Christ,' then the Bolshevik Communist party is mystically the body of antichrist.

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<sup>572</sup> M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo: techenie v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Josephism: a tendency in the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: Memorial, 1999, p. 236.

“The personal, historical, apocalyptic phenomenon of antichrist does not principally add anything new to this idea of antichrist. He is only giving it a final shape, centralizing and universalizing this idea throughout the whole world, creating an absolutely hopeless situation for all humanity. For before every man then arises the question, which one cannot avoid answering (not only verbally, but also in one’s deeds): Does he submit to the ‘authority’ of antichrist, in order to receive the stamp of antichrist on ‘his forehead’ or ‘the hand’? (According to [New Hieromartyr] Bishop Damaskin, ‘on the forehead’ means ‘voluntary, full spiritual enslavement’, and ‘on the hand’ – association ‘because of fear.’) Those not receiving the stamp will be tortured and tormented so that ‘even the elect will be tempted,’ (Mark 13:22) and if time would not be curtailed ‘no flesh would endure.’(Mark 13:20)

“The final goal of Bolshevism is, to establish its ‘authority’ throughout the world with the help of world revolution. If this happens, the Bolshevik communist world government, in the person of ‘the leader of the nation of the world,’ will stand as head of the whole world – and this surely will be the place for the personification of the historical, apocalyptic antichrist.

“One must clearly, distinctly and firmly understand, that the Soviet authority is the first in the history of the world, an original cynically-open antichristian authority, that is - a theomachistic [God-fighting] absolute power. Without the acknowledgement of this profoundly and innately, unique evaluation of the ‘Soviet authority’ – there is no ‘problem with communism.’

“If Bolshevik communism is only one out of many systems of government, in quality not a new occurrence in the history of the world, if the ‘Soviet authority’ is only one out of the worst and most cruel systems (let her even be the worst of the worst and the most cruel), then there is no special ‘spiritual crisis of humanity’ and there is altogether no new spiritual problem. Then one must consider the phenomenon of communism only from a political, economical, military or ‘utilitarian-moral’ point of view, just as at the present time the majority of political leaders of the whole world do. We see the results of such interpretation: bolshevism slowly, unimpeded is conquering the world.

“Few people understand the mystical force of bolshevism. Let us remember the tremendous scene in the book *Tales about Antichrist* by Vladimir Soloviev, when the first hierarch of the Orthodox Church, the holy elder John, suddenly understanding who stood before him, exclaimed loudly, clearly, firmly, resolutely, and convincingly: ‘Children, but this is Antichrist!’

“The Russian Orthodox Catacomb Church in the USSR, a church of confessors of faith and martyrs, considers the Soviet state authority to be the authority of the antichrist.”<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> Andreyev, “On Authorities and Anti-Authorities”.



## 41. HITLER'S INVASION OF AUSTRIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In spite of the fact that Hitler and Stalin were already fighting a proxy war in Spain, the liberal West continued to stick its ostrich-like head in the sand and believe in peace. "When Churchill organised a cross-party public meeting in October 1936 to back rearmament, it flopped... Labour politicians and newspapers adamantly opposed increased defence spending until 1937: 'Not a single penny for the government's rearmament programme. The new party leader, Clement Attlee [who became Prime Minister in 1945], attacked the government for putting the country 'permanently on a war basis' and having 'absolutely no policy for peace'. He declared: 'Do not compete with the fascists in arms and they will not rearm.' The *Manchester Guardian* attacked the government programme as '£400 million for death'...

"The wealthy Labour MP Stafford Cripps financed an anti-rearmament film in 1936, seen by over 2 million people, reiterating, with a stressful musical score by the young pacifist Benjamin Britten, that 'there is no defence against air attack', and urging people to write to their MPs to demand that 'the governments of the world should get together to make war impossible'. The British government's Joint Planning Committee warned in 1936 of an immediate knock-out blow from the air in case of war with Germany, with 20,000 casualties within hours. Daylight bombing, mainly by German aircraft, of the undefended Basque town of Guernica in April 1937, which killed several hundred people, showed these horrors in action and seemed to justify the most pessimistic assumptions.

"Despite the vehemence of the peace movement, the mainly Conservative National Government, nominally headed by MacDonald, announced expansion of the RAF in 1934, and his successor Baldwin began major rearmament in 1936; war, he said, was not 'inevitable', but it was 'a ghastly possibility and it is our duty to fight it in every way we can.'"<sup>574</sup>

It was Baldwin who had had to deal with the man who was in many ways the symbol of western appeasement in the 1930s, the popular young King Edward VIII, who succeeded his father in 1936, and was determined to marry the twice-divorced American Mrs. Simpson and make her his queen. This "seemed to Baldwin, and much of the public, [and, importantly, the Anglican Church], to undermine the modern justification of monarchy: as a dignified symbol of unity and duty, and a 'moral force' serving as a 'guarantee', as Baldwin put it in the Commons, 'against many evils that have afflicted other countries'. Contrary to myth, the king's supposed political beliefs, whether left or right wing, seem not to have been an issue for the government, though one Labour MP warned of a 'fascist monarchy'... Baldwin soon formed a dim view of his new monarch, told him firmly that he could not marry Mrs. Simpson and keep the throne, and steered an Abdication Bill swiftly through Parliament. The

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<sup>574</sup> Tombs, op. cit., pp. 682, 683.



crisis evaporated when the uncharismatic, dutiful and suitably married Duke of York succeeded as George VI in December 1936. Baldwin thereupon retired."<sup>575</sup>

Baldwin certainly earned his retirement, and the change of monarch was welcome. Edward was a king of dubious morality and strongly anti-war and pro-German views (he is even shown on one newsreel beamingly shaking the hand of Hitler); he would have served the country badly as king in the coming years. Indeed, even in retirement as the Duke of Windsor in Paris, he dabbled sufficiently in politics to force the government to "exile" him to the governorship of Bermuda, where he could be watched and kept out of harm's way...

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The British Prime Minister from May, 1937 was Neville Chamberlain, brother of the Foreign Secretary who signed the Locarno Treaty in 1925, which, it could be argued, began the appeasement process. A convinced opponent of any alliance with Soviet Communism, he was "convinced that he must and could do business with Hitler and Mussolini. What was needed was to obtain a list of Germany's real demands - rabble-rousing aside - 'run through their complaints and claims with a pencil,' and strike a deal for a 'general settlement' of Europe, including disarmament. [Foreign Minister Lord] Halifax was sent in November 1937 to sound the Nazis out. He met Hitler, who advised him to sort out India by shooting Gandhi and a few hundred nationalists, and made it perfectly plain that he was not interested in anything Britain could offer. Halifax noted that 'we are not talking the same language'. But he - like Chamberlain - was incapable of drawing the unpalatable conclusion: Hitler inhabited an alien mental and moral universe in which it was possible to want war, not peace. Halifax decided that a policy of 'reassurance' was needed. Chamberlain wrote to his sister (his principal confidant) that we should say to Germany: "Give us satisfactory assurances that you won't use force to deal with the Austrians and Czecho-Slovakians and we will give you similar assurances that we won't use for to prevent the changes you want.'"<sup>576</sup>

On November 5, 1937, having sized up his opponents, "Hitler told his top military and foreign policy advisers that a period of active expansion could now begin, with Austria and Czechoslovakia the first targets. Von Blomberg, the War Minister, and the Army Commander, von Fritsch, protested: the French would still be too strong. That was the end of them. Until this point Hitler had left the army alone, other than tell it to get on with rearmament as fast as possible. Now he decided the time had come to take it over, to clear the way for the dynamic phase of his programme. On 26 January 1938 Blomberg was dismissed: police files showed his new wife had been a prostitute and porn-model. Nine days later Fritsch went, charged with homosexuality on the

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<sup>575</sup> Tombs, op. cit., pp. 670.

<sup>576</sup> Tombs, op. cit., pp. 685.

evidence of a Himmler file. They were, in a sense, lucky: Stalin would have murdered them for less – he killed 200 generals in 1937-8 – or indeed for nothing at all. Some sixteen other German generals were retired, forty-three more transferred. Hitler himself took over as War Minister and head of the armed forces; the weak von Brauchitsch was made head of the army; a pliable Nazi general, Wilhelm Keitel, was told to create a new operational high command. Thus the last bastion of the old order fell to Hitler, without a murmur from anyone. He threw out Schacht from the Economics Ministry and von Neurath from the Foreign Ministry at the same time. From now on the Nazis were in total control and all was on a war footing.

“A week after Fritsch was sacked, Hitler summoned the Austrian Chancellor, Kurt von Schusnigg, to his mountain villa in Berchtesgaden. No saloon-keeper dragged to a gangster’s lair could have been treated more brutally. Following the tirade, the terrified man signed a series of concessions, including the appointment of a Nazi as his Interior Minister. Afterwards, driving back to Salzburg with von Papen, the latter remarked: ‘Yes – that’s the way the Fuhrer can be. Now you’ve seen it for yourself. But next time you’ll find a meeting with him a good deal easier. The Fuhrer can be distinctly charming.’ In fact the ‘next time’ for Schusnigg was a summons to Dachau. Hitler’s troops entered Austria thirty days after the meeting.

“Hitler’s treatment of his Austrian opponents was brutal and bestial in the extreme. University professors were made to scrub the streets with their bare hands (a form of ‘re-education’ imitated by Mao Tse-tung in the 1960s). The invading Nazis stole anything they could lay their hands on. When they broke into Freud’s flat in Vienna, his wife put her housekeeping money on the table. ‘Won’t the gentlemen help themselves’ It required intervention by Roosevelt and Mussolini – and a ransom of 250,000 Austrian schillings – to get the old man permission to leave. He had to sign a statement testifying he had been well treated, to which he appended the words: ‘I can heartily recommend the Gestapo to anyone.’ The Germans were delighted. The bitter joke was beyond them. So was pity. Freud’s four aged sisters chose not to move: all died in the gas ovens later...”<sup>577</sup>

“... Much of the Austrian population greeted Hitler’s show of force with euphoria: Nazi banner, Hitler salutes, flowers. By March 13, Austria was already officially a province of Germany, and the Austrian army had sworn an oath to Hitler personally. The Fuhrer issued a decree banning all parties save the National Socialists on what had been Austrian territory. Many Jews were rounded up in Vienna, whose 176,000 citizens of that extraction (10 percent of the urban population) made it the largest Jewish city in the German-speaking world...”<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 352-353.

<sup>578</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 560.

The democrats' justification for inaction in relation to Hitler's invasion of Austria was that (i) the Austrians were Germans anyway, (ii) since they seemed to want the *Anschluss* (the few exceptions such as the Jews and some aristocratic families could be discounted), there was no point in stopping them, and (iii) the Versailles treaty was a dead letter and could be ignored. In fact, there were many who thought that Versailles *should* be ignored, and that the treaty was to blame for Hitler's bad behaviour.

By his annexation of Austria, writes Mann, "Hitler had made 'greater' Germany a reality. The dream of the men of 1848 had at last become a fact. In three days he had done what Bismarck had not attempted in thirty years."<sup>579</sup>

Indeed, if he had stopped there, he might have gone down in German history books as greater than Bismarck, and with his earlier sins forgiven. For, as Admiral Doenitz, Hitler's successor in 1945, who signed the capitulation, wrote: "The idea of a national community, in the proper, social sense of this word, and the cohesion of the German people upon this base, fired me with enthusiasm. Hitler's reunion of all the branches of the German race under one Reich seemed to me the achievement of one of the oldest dreams of our nation. Our dispersion can be traced back to the Thirty Years War. Our adversaries, who had achieved their own unity at the beginning of the modern era, wanted to keep us weak and to prevent us achieving our unity for a very long time. Only National Socialism has been able to overcome all these obstacles..."<sup>580</sup>

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Next on Hitler's list was Czechoslovakia, a very different proposition from Austria: not German, and a stable, prosperous country at the centre of Europe whose conquest would radically alter the European balance of power, especially in view of its advanced industrial capacity...

"The Treaty of Versailles, mainly to give it defensible frontiers, had included the largely German-speaking Sudetenland, whose ethnic nationality had been a pernicious nuisance since Habsburg days. They were happy to provide Hitler with a pretext to rescue them from Czech oppression by 'always demand[ing] so much that we cannot be satisfied'. The British, including Churchill, were taken in, thinking that ethnic grievances were the cause of the crisis and that the Germans had an arguable case. But the real reason, Hitler told his generals, was to 'clear the rear for advancing against... Britain and France,' as the Czechs, who had a large and well-equipped army, were France's allies. He envisaged taking the Low Countries, knocking out France, and expelling Britain from the Continent. In the meantime he was accelerating military, naval and air preparations. The French prime minister, Édouard Daladier, came to warn

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<sup>579</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 452-453.

<sup>580</sup> Doenitz, "Ten Years and Twenty Days", translated in Comte Léon de Poncins, *State Secrets: A Documentation of the Secret Revolutionary Mainspring Governing Anglo-American Politics*, Chulmleigh: Britons Publishing Company, 1975, p. 65.

Whitehall that Hitler was far more dangerous than Napoleon – ‘awful rubbish’, thought the Foreign Office.”<sup>581</sup>

“Pan-Germanism,” writes A.N. Wilson, “had begun to show the violence which had been inherent in Hitler’s schemes from the beginning. It was not like self-determination for the Welsh, or even for the Irish. Hitler in the Sudetenland had the perfect launch-pad for the fulfilment of these dreams which he spelled out in such lurid details in *Mein Kampf*: vengeance upon his Slavic neighbours for the brutality they had meted out to the East Prussians at the end of the First World War; the destruction of the Eastern Barbarian...”<sup>582</sup>

Mann writes: “As envisaged by the men of the *Paulskirche* [the German parliament of 1848] ‘greater’ Germany included Bohemia. Now Bohemia was the heart of a post-war state clumsily called Czechoslovakia in which there lived about four million German-speaking people. They enjoyed complete equality of civic status, were fully protected by the law and free to pursue their economic, cultural and political interests; but not in a state which satisfied them emotionally. The old game of disliking each other which the Czechs and the Germans had inherited from the Habsburg Empire found enthusiastic supporters in Czechoslovakia. But after 1918 the Czechs had the advantage. They were the rulers and they were in the majority; where they could hurt the Germans a little without actually breaking the law they did so. Now they were to pay for this attitude. Many ‘Sudeten Germans’ followed a leader who, having started on his own, quickly became a tool of Hitler and of the policy of the Reich. What his followers really wanted cannot be said with certainty because they were never asked; probably they did not want to become part of Germany but to have an autonomous existence within a Bohemian-Moravian state. However, it must not be thought that the individual citizen knows exactly what he wants in such a crisis; in the end he is inclined to want what a vociferous leadership tells him to want. When Eduard Beneš, President of the Czechoslovak Republic, summoned the Sudeten German leaders to his castle in order to grant any and every wish they might have, they extricated themselves from the discussions and broke them off under a flimsy excuse. They were now more anxious to break away than to obtain advantages within the Czech state.

“The German dictator did not particularly want the Sudeten Germans to break away from Czechoslovakia. The great philanthropist cared little about the happiness of the Sudeten Germans or about the ideal of the pan-German state. The real or alleged emotions of the Germans in Bohemia, their real or alleged plight, were an opportunity for him, nothing more. Nationalism was an instrument which he would employ as long as it was useful, in this case to smash and then to swallow the whole Czech state. This was his next aim. Meanwhile let Europe’s and America’s star journalists rush to northern Bohemia in order to study the living conditions and demands of the Sudeten

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<sup>581</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 685-686.

<sup>582</sup> Wilson, *After the Victorians*, p. 362.

Germans on the spot; let those duped people enjoy the limelight and let them feel that they were at the centre of history, just as a few months previously the Austrians, now swallowed up by the grey everyday life of the Nazi Reich had felt that they had occupied the centre of the world stage. A glance at the map, moreover, showed that to take away the Germans in practice meant the end of the Czechoslovak state. Without the industries of northern and eastern Bohemia, the fortifications and the lines of communications, the Prague republic ceased anyway to be a state; it could only have lived out an impotent satellite existence in the shadow of the Reich, almost completely encircled by it. The Western powers had accepted the annexation of Austria as an internal German affair. They could not do the same in the case of Czechoslovakia.

“For that the republic had after all played too important an international role for twenty years. Here was a people which even in the most generously interpreted sense of the word could not be called ‘German’, a people which had an alliance with France, a similar form of association with Russia, an ‘Entente’ with the Balkan states, which enjoyed considerable popularity in America, possessed an up-to-date Army and occupied a strategic position of classical importance – on this occasion the world could not pretend to be unconcerned. In May therefore French diplomacy began to spread the word that an attack on Czechoslovakia would spark off a European war. The Russians supported this attitude and even Britain, uncommitted by any treaty, made warning representations in Berlin. Confronted with what seemed to be a defensive front Hitler drew back on 23 May and announced that no one planned to attack the Czechs. Exactly a week later he issued a directive to his generals: ‘It is my irrevocable determination to smash Czechoslovakia by military action in the foreseeable future. To await or to create a suitable opportunity from the political and military point of view is a matter for the political leadership.’

“The method was always the same: to create disorder, if necessary to use terror in order to produce counter-terror and then to intervene, allegedly with the aim of preventing civil war and chaos and of helping one’s friends. The method was used first in Germany and then in Austria; now it was used, not for the last time either, on the Czechs and, as always, it was adapted to the local peculiarities of the case. As planned the crisis reached boiling point in the late summer. At the Nuremberg Party rally Hitler screamed threats against Beneš: he would not tolerate a second Palestine ‘in the heart of Germany’, he would come to the aid of his German brothers in distress whatever the cost. Disturbances in Eger and Carlsbad were suppressed by the Czechs. The Sudeten German leaders expected German intervention, and rightly; the German attack on Czechoslovakia was planned to start on 28 September. Hitler for his part was right in maintaining that the Czechs were asserting themselves because they were relying on their Western allies...

“They were mistaken in their hopes. The French had helped to found the Czechoslovak state because it seemed to bring them political and military advantages, and as long as it did this it was a genuine, a necessary state. Now it brought no more advantages. Because of the sheer necessity of having to

defend it, Czechoslovakia threatened to draw France into a second world war for which the French had little inclination. As a result Czechoslovakia now seemed to them to be a pretty unnatural state. France was anxious, if it could be done, to extricate itself honourably or at least not discreditably. The mood in Britain was similar, except that here the public spirit was stronger and juster, less corrupted by monetary influences. If Hitler wanted to conquer Europe the British were morally prepared to oppose him by force as they had, by tradition, opposed Napoleon and William II. However, let Hitler first prove that this was really his intention. If his aim was merely, as he maintained, to gather together in one nation-state all these Germans who *wanted* to belong to it, that was a different matter. Then there was nothing to be done, however tiresome effects such an action might have on the European balance of power. If the Sudeten Germans really wanted 'to return to the Reich' it was wrong to prevent them by means of a world war and it was better to let nature, which in this instance was probably identical with right anyway, take its course. The best, said *The Times* on 7 September, would be if the Sudetenland were taken from Czechoslovakia and made part of Germany.

When Neville Chamberlain made his surprise flight to Berchtesgaden two weeks later he carried the same proposal in his pocket"<sup>583</sup> – in other words, that he could have the Sudetenland in return for a four-power guarantee of the new Czech borders. "Hitler proceeded to dupe Chamberlain. He flattered the Prime Minister's vanity, letting it be known that he considered him 'a man'. The Führer persuaded Chamberlain of his good faith. Above all, at Berchtesgaden he convinced his guest that he was willing to precipitate a world war over the Sudetenland but that the cession of ethnic German areas to the Reich would bring a general peace. So Chamberlain flew back to England where he persuaded his cabinet colleagues and the French leaders that Czechoslovakia's German fringe must be trimmed. Benes was bullied into accepting what he rightly considered a bad bargain: an international guarantee of the new frontiers to compensate for the loss of vital territory."<sup>584</sup>

But this offer – to get the Sudetenland for free, without having to fight for it – was not what the war-loving Hitler wanted. He was even angry about his diplomatic triumph. So on September 23 he rejected it. As a result, "France and Czechoslovakia partially mobilized. The Soviet envoy in Paris briefed the French on intensified Soviet troop movements."<sup>585</sup> But the Soviets were never likely to intervene, not only because they were geographically far from the action, with hostile states (Poland and Romania) in between, but also because, although they had alliances with both France and Czechoslovakia, they had always made it clear that they would help Czechoslovakia only if the French intervened first...

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<sup>583</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 453-455.

<sup>584</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 463.

<sup>585</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 565.

“Chamberlain again took the lead to defuse the bellicosity. ‘However much we may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbour, we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in was simply on her account,’ the PM stated on the radio on September 27. ‘If we have to fight, it must be on larger issues than that.’ That same day, the German general staff moved its troops to forward positions on the frontier with Czechoslovakia. The French and British governments reluctantly felt that they would be compelled to fight if the Wehrmacht forcibly seized Czechoslovakia. The Royal Navy was on full alert. Britain’s populace was digging trenches and air raid shelters and filling sandbags; the authorities were distributing gas masks. The mood was grim. Hitler, in fact, was hours from ordering an invasion. But on September 28 Mussolini accepted a British entreaty to coordinate a disorganized four-power summit with Chamberlain (Britain), Edouard Daladier (France), and Hitler (Germany), with the duce (Italy) acting as dishonest broker.

“Hitler chose the site of the Fuhrer building in the Nazi movement’s capital, Munich. The British and French governments consented to consigning the Czechoslovaks to an adjacent room, apart from the negotiations. The Soviet Union, despite its treaties with France and Czechoslovakia, was not even invited. Chamberlain, along with Daladier, agreed not only that Czechoslovakia would cede the Sudetenland but also that all fortifications and weapons there would be left intact. Hitler acceded to this granting of his original demands rather than unleash the war he had been promising, and the infamous Munich Pact was signed in the small hours on September 30 (it was dated the day before). Wehrmacht troops marched into western Czechoslovakia with international authorization. Nazi Germany absorbed, gratis, industrial plants, coal and other natural resources, and 11,000 square miles of territory, on which lived 3 million Sudeten Germans and 800,000 Czechs. Non-German Sudeten inhabitants were given fewer than ten days to evacuate, and forced to relinquish everything – homes, household possessions, livestock. The German government was absolved from paying compensation.”<sup>586</sup>

250,000 Sudeten Germans were left behind as a fifth column.<sup>587</sup> Not that they were consulted about any part of the Pact (there was no plebiscite, although the Pact had promised it). “Many of them did not really know what was happening to them; they were surprised and confused when German troops moved in with the consent of Europe to liberate them from Czechoslovakia.”<sup>588</sup>

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“Chamberlain’s arrival back at Heston airport, waving a paper ‘symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war one another again’ was greeted

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<sup>586</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 565-566.

<sup>587</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>588</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

with wild enthusiasm. He told a crowd that he had brought 'peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time.' Speaking on the radio, he added that it was 'horrible, fantastic and incredible... that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel between people of whom we know nothing.' Churchill, now on the backbenches, was a relatively lone voice for openly opposing Germany, later calling these 'the years that the locust hath eaten'. But when he described Munich to the Commons as 'a total and unmitigated defeat', he was howled down. Whatever hindsight may suggest, British public opinion was massively relieved by Munich..."<sup>589</sup>

"'Munich' and 'appeasement'," writes Tombs, "are now potent insults in our political vocabulary, synonyms for myopia, betrayal and cowardice. At the time, Munich seemed the only chance of saving the world from catastrophe, and 'appeasement' was a very positive term in diplomatic vocabulary. People cheered, from the benches of the House of Commons to the streets of Munich, where they threw flowers and shouted 'Heil Chamberlain!' Even Churchill wished him well, as did the Labour and Liberal leaders. Mussolini produced a 'compromise' plan (drafted by the Germans), which was accepted after a few cosmetic concessions by Hitler - notably that he would take over the Sudetenland in stages under international supervision. Chamberlain ignored Daladier throughout. After the deal was done, he asked for a private meeting with Hitler and produced a declaration of 'the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again,' and promising 'consultation... to remove possible sources of differences [and] ensure the peace of Europe.' This was the longed for 'general settlement'. A surprised Hitler signed. He was later ashamed at having flinched at the threat of war and angry at having been deprived, as he saw it, of the prestige of a military victory - 'that fellow Chamberlain has spoiled my entry into Prague'. Ironically, his popularity and prestige benefited enormously, for he had triumphed without the war the German people and the German army feared. Thereafter he would act without constraint: 'Our enemies are small worms. I saw them in Munich...'"<sup>590</sup>

"Benes could not resist the dismemberment of his country, though he lamented Czechoslovakia's base betrayal by the democracies and forecast that it would produce its own punishment."<sup>591</sup> Nor did the democracies betray his country only at the last minute: as a British White paper (in its uncensored version) revealed, "strong and continuous pressure" had been put upon the Czech government by French and British representatives.<sup>592</sup>

But, though unable to resist, the Czechs did protest: "The Government of the Czechoslovak Republic," went the official communique, "protests to the whole world against the decisions of Munich, which were raked one-sidedly and without Czechoslovak participation."

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<sup>589</sup> Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of England*, London: Profile, 2011, p. 141.

<sup>590</sup> Tombs, op. cit., pp. 686-687.

<sup>591</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 463.

<sup>592</sup> Mark Arnold-Forster, *The World at War*, London: Collins, 1973, p. 22.



The premonition of the Czech ambassador in London, Jan Masaryk, had been fulfilled: "I am very much afraid that the senile ambition of Chamberlain to be the peacemaker of Europe will drive him to success at any price, and that will be possible only at our expense."

Neither did the Americans consider protesting, still less intervening. "Across the Atlantic," writes Simon Jenkins, "America had reverted to isolationism following Versailles. It had already helped end one war in Europe's behalf, and it was disinclined to do so again. The president, Franklin Roosevelt (1933-45), was aware of the risk from Hitler to the Wilsonian settlement of Europe, but he was constrained by Congress. When he heard news of Munich, Roosevelt cabled Chamberlain: 'Good man.' Hitler responded [in November] with *Kristallnacht*, a destruction of Jewish properties across Germany and Austria."<sup>593</sup>

"... In one night all synagogues were destroyed, thousands of Jews were dragged into camps and torture and finally a 'fine' of one milliard marks was imposed on the German Jews. Chamberlain had said tolerantly at Munich, that like Britain, Germany had the political system which appeared to suit it and which it should certainly keep. Could one say this of a government which of its own free will indulged in such activities while the mass of the people watched, indifferently or bitterly, without taking part in these crimes? Only a few weeks after Munich even the most confirmed British supporters of appeasement began to wonder whether they were on the right road and whether they could follow it much longer..."<sup>594</sup>

On October 5, 1938 Winston Churchill said in the House of Commons: "The British should know the truth. They should know that we have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel far with us along the road; they should know that we have passed an awful milestone in our history, when the whole equilibrium of Europe has been deranged, and that the terrible words have for the time being been pronounced against the Western democracies: 'Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.' And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigour, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the older time." The word "equilibrium" was apt. Britain's foreign policy for centuries had been to keep the equilibrium, the balance of power, in Europe intact against the designs of powerful despots who would seek to upset it, such as Louis XIV, Napoleon and Kaiser Wilhelm. In 1938 she abandoned this honourable policy, which had served both her and Europe well - and she and Europe would suffer greatly in consequence.

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<sup>593</sup> Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 257.

<sup>594</sup> Mann, *op. cit.*, pp. 455-456.

Chamberlain insisted to his dying day (in 1940) “that to have fought in 1938 would have been far worse than postponing if not averting war. Britain was not ready, he insisted: he had to gain time.”<sup>595</sup> But military experts did not agree with Chamberlain. “At the height of the crisis, on 26 September, the French commander-in-chief, General Maurice Gamelin, informed French and British leaders that, taken together their military forces, added to those of the Czechs, were greater than those of the Germans. On the French border with Germany, should an offensive be required to draw the Germans away from Czechoslovakia, France had twenty-three divisions compared with only eight for Germany...”<sup>596</sup>

The surrender at Munich, as Churchill noted, “also meant the end of France’s system of alliances in the east and brought about a moral collapse in the Danube basin. Seeing the Czechs abandoned by the democracies, the small states scuttled for cover or joined, like jackals, in the feast. Poland was allowed to tear off Teschen, which she had coveted since 1919. Hungary, too, got a slice of the Czech carcass. Throughout East-Central Europe and the Balkans, the friendships and favour of the Nazis was not eagerly courted by governments, and fascist parties swelled in influence and pride. German trade was everywhere triumphant. The German economy boomed. In the closing weeks of 1938 Hitler, without firing a shot, appeared to have restored all the splendour of Wilhelmine Germany. Was he not the most successful German statesman since Bismarck? So it appeared...”<sup>597</sup>

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As a result of the Pact, the Czechs were deprived of any possibility of defending themselves militarily.

For, as Wilson writes, the Munich Pact “neutered 36 Czech divisions, fully equipped, trained and armed, waiting on the German border. Such an army could not have fought Germany unaided, but with the help of France’s 80 divisions, and with British aircraft now rolling off the production lines at 240 a month, a formidable opposition could have been offered to Hitler – especially when we remember that this was before the Russians signed their pact with him; they could easily have been persuaded, as they later were, to fight on the side of Britain...”<sup>598</sup>

Again, Tombs writes: “The Czechs had a powerful modern army and the Russians were willing to give them at least some help. The Czechs could have done serious damage to the German army and air force, making it impossible

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<sup>595</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 333. Niall Ferguson mischievously suggests that he may have been influenced by sci-fi literature: “The policy of appeasement... was based partly on an exaggerated fear that the Luftwaffe could match Wells’s Martians when it came to the destruction of London...” (*Doom. The Politics of Catastrophe*, London: Allen Lane, 2021, p. 389)

<sup>596</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

<sup>597</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 355.

<sup>598</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 362-363.

to launch a rapid attack on the west. The French Army was still by far the largest in Europe, backed by the financial and material resources of the British Empire protected by the world's most powerful navy. The German army in 1938 was not capable of inflicting a decisive defeat on the French. Despite fears of a devastating knock out blow from the air, the Luftwaffe was outnumbered by the combined forces of Britain, France and Czechoslovakia, and its aircraft could not even reach England from German bases. In short, Nazi Germany was risking a long unwinnable war without allies against a coalition with access to the world economy. Hitler accepted the 'extraordinarily generous settlement' offered at Munich and 'almost certainly saved his regime from disaster'. The Allies were better armed by 1940. But so were the Germans: much better..."<sup>599</sup>

In March 1939, "there was a disagreement between Czechs and Slovaks, a repetition of the Austrian and the Sudeten-German crisis, only that this time it was not Germans among themselves, or Germans and Slavs but Slavs among themselves who irritated each other with German encouragement. Again it was necessary to restore order. The weak old President of Czechoslovakia was told to come to Berlin and confronted with choosing between a German invasion, the destruction of Prague by bomber squadrons, and entrusting his people to German protection. The President signed; the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was proclaimed; German tanks entered Prague and Brunn without encountering any resistance and Hitler enjoyed a night in the castle of the ancient kings of Bohemia.

"... After a brief moment of hesitation Britain's long-standing policy of appeasement collapsed, amid the sound of furious indignation..."<sup>600</sup>

Public opinion now changed dramatically. Chamberlain went from being a hero to being a villain overnight. However, to do him justice, we must recognize that he saw one thing clearly: that Hitler acted as a buffer to the main and most brutal long-term victor in 1945: the Soviet Union... And yet: if France and Britain had fought and defeated Germany in 1938, would there have been any world war at all?

This leads us to perhaps the most important consequence of Munich: with Czechoslovakia out of the game, Germany and the Soviet Union were now closer to war with each other. Only the Red Army had been drastically crippled by Stalin's own hand. So to whom could he look for support? He was always been open to some kind of deal with Germany. But would Hitler side for long with his principal enemy, "Judeo-Bolshevism"?

## 42. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND TOTALITARIANISM

In our discussion of the Great Terror we considered the possibility that Stalin was a paranoiac. Hitler (a fine one to judge!) judged that Stalin was

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<sup>599</sup> Tombs, op. cit., p. 688.

<sup>600</sup> Mann, op. cit., p. 457.

“likely diseased in the brain. Otherwise one cannot explain his bloody rule.”<sup>601</sup> But was he right? Is insanity a possible explanation of the bloodlust not only of Stalin, but also of Hitler?

The theories of the psychoanalysts have been dismissed by most succeeding generations of psychologists as either unverifiable or, in those rare situations in which they have been found capable of testing – simply false. Certainly, from a Christian perspective they are unacceptable. Nevertheless, there is one sphere and one period – the extreme criminality and unprecedented bloodshed of the years 1914-45 – where such theories have remained in vogue as possibly having some partial explanatory value. Let us examine some of these explanations.

Niall Ferguson writes that in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud “suggested that ‘beside the instinct preserving the organic substance and binding it into ever larger units, there must exist another in antithesis to this, which would seek to dissolve these units and reinstate their antecedent inorganic state; that is to say, the death instinct as well as Eros.’ It was the interaction of the death instinct and the erotic instinct which he now saw as the key to the human psyche: ‘The tendency to aggression is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition in man, and ... constitutes the most powerful obstacle to culture... Eros... aims at binding together single human individuals, then families, then tribes, races, nations into one great unity, that of humanity. Why this has to be done we do not know; it is simply the work of Eros. These masses of men must be bound to one another libidinally; necessity alone, the advantages of common work, would not hold them together.

“The natural instinct of aggressiveness in man, the hostility of each against us all of all against each one, opposes this programme of civilization. The instinct of aggression is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct we have found alongside Eros, sharing his rule over the earth. And now, it seems to me, the meaning of the evolution of culture is no longer a riddle to us. It must present to us the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instincts of destruction.’

“Though it is now fashionable to sneer at Freud, there is something to be said for this interpretation – at least with respect to the behaviour of men at war. Today’s neo-Darwinian genetic determinism may be more scientifically respectable than Freud’s mixture of psychoanalysis and amateur anthropology, but the latter seems better able to explain the readiness of millions of men to spend four and a quarter years killing and being killed. (It is certainly hard to see how the deaths of so many men who had not yet married and fathered children could possibly have served the purpose of Dawkins’s ‘selfish genes’.) In particular, there is a need to take seriously Freud’s elision of the desire to kill – ‘the destructive instinct’ – and the lack of desire not to be

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<sup>601</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 432.

killed – the striving of ‘every living being... to work its ruin and reduce life to its primal state of inert matter.’

“There is some evidence to support Freud’s thesis. In June 1914 – before the war in which he would fight had even begun – the ‘Vorticist’ artist Wyndham Lewis wrote: ‘Killing somebody must be the greatest pleasure in existence: either like killing yourself without being interfered with by the instinct of self-preservation – or exterminating the instinct of self-preservation itself.’”<sup>602</sup>

Igor Shafarevich has argued that something like the Freudian death-instinct is at the root of revolutionary socialism: “the term ‘death instinct’ suggested by Freud reflects many traits of that striving of mankind for self-annihilation that... is the moving power of socialism.”<sup>603</sup>

The neo-Freudian Erich Fromm modified Freud’s metapsychology: “The drive for life and the drive for destruction are not mutually independent factors but are in a reversed interdependence. The more the drive towards life is thwarted, the stronger is the drive towards destruction; the more life is realized, the less is the strength of destructiveness. *Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life.*” This duality... is not one of two biologically instincts, relatively constant and always battling with each other, but it is one between the primary and most fundamental tendency of life – to persevere in life – and its contradiction, which comes into being when fails in this goal.”<sup>604</sup>

But there is a problem in seeing Thanatos as an integral part of human nature. Orthodox Christian anthropology sees them all the faculties of human nature as positive in their original creation. Even aggression is good if it is turned to its original object – evil and the evil one. Only when, as a result of original sin, it is turned to hatred of man and a suicidal urge to destroy oneself, can we say that it has become evil. But in the beginning these forces were “very good”. Moreover, as St. Maximus the Confessor says, what is now perverted and evil can be turned back to the good: “For him whose mind is continually with God, even his concupiscence is increased above measure into a divinely burning love; and the entire irascible element is changed into divine charity.”<sup>605</sup>

Another psychological attempt to understand totalitarianism in general (as opposed to the psychology of individual totalitarian dictators) was a work of sociology called *The Authoritarian Personality* by Theodore Adorno and other researchers at the University of California (1950). It “invented a set of criteria by which to define personality traits, ranked these traits and their intensity in any given person on what it called the ‘F scale’ (F for “fascist”)...

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<sup>602</sup> Ferguson, *The Pity of War, 1914-1918*, London: Penguin, 1999, pp. 358-359.

<sup>603</sup> Shafarevich, *Sotsializm kak Iavlenie Mirovoj Istorii* (Socialism as a Phenomenon of World History), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977, p. 378.

<sup>604</sup> Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom and The Heart of Man*, quoted in Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, London: University of California Press, 1996, p. 112.

<sup>605</sup> St. Maximus the Confessor, *Second Century on Charity*, 48.

“A central idea of *The Authoritarian Personality* is that authoritarianism is the result of a Freudian developmental model. Excessively harsh and punitive parenting was posited to cause children to feel immense anger towards their parents; yet fear of parental disapproval or punishment caused people to not directly confront their parents, but rather to identify with and idolize authority figures. Moreover, the book suggested that authoritarianism was rooted in suppressed homosexuality, which was redirected into outward hostility towards the father, which was, in turn, suppressed for fear of being infantilized and castrated by the father.”<sup>606</sup>

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How do we explain the mass-worship of the most evil of men by populations previously deemed to be among the most civilized? Moderns refer to a nebulous something called “charisma”. Thus Laurence Rees writes: “Emil Klein, who heard Hitler speak at a beer hall in Munich in the 1920s,.. believes that Hitler ‘gave off such a charisma that people believed whatever he said’.

“What we learn from eye-witnesses like... Klein is that charisma is first and foremost about making a connection between people. No one can be charismatic alone on a desert island. Charisma is formed in a relationship. As Sir Neville Henderson, British ambassador to Berlin in the 1930s, wrote, Hitler ‘owed his success in the struggle for power to the fact that he was the reflection of their [i.e. his supporters’] subconscious mind, and his ability to express in words what that subconscious mind felt that it wanted.’

“It’s a view confirmed by Konrad Heiden, who heard Hitler speak many times in the 1920s: ‘His speeches begin always with deep pessimism and end in overjoyed redemption, a triumphant happy ending; often they can be refuted by reason, but they follow the far mightier logic of the subconscious, which no refutation can touch... Hitler has given speech to the speechless terror of the modern masses...’”<sup>607</sup>

Hitler, according to Otto Strasser, “touches each private wound on the raw, liberating the unconscious, exposing its innermost aspirations, telling it what it most wants to hear”.<sup>608</sup>

However, this is too simple. The fact is that for most of their careers both Stalin and Hitler were considered singularly lacking in charisma. Stalin spoke with a heavy Georgian accent and was pockmarked. As for the “Bavarian corporal”, as Hindenburg called him, he was widely despised.

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<sup>606</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Authoritarian\\_Personality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Authoritarian_Personality).

<sup>607</sup> Rees, “The Dark Charisma of Adolf Hitler”, *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 13, N 10, October, 2012, pp. 20-21.

<sup>608</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 29.

As late as 1928 the Nazis polled just 2.6 per cent of the German electorate. "It took the Wall Street Crash and the dire economic crisis of the early 1930s to make millions of Germans responsive to Hitler's appeal. Suddenly, to people like student Jutta Ruediger, Hitler's call for a national resurgence made him seem like 'the bringer of salvation'. So much so that by 1932 the Nazis were suddenly the biggest political party in Germany... Hitler was dismissed as a peripheral figure in 1928, yet lauded by millions in 1933. What changed was not Hitler, but the situation. Economic catastrophe made huge numbers of Germans seek a charismatic 'saviour'..."<sup>609</sup>

"... But then Hitler and the Nazis seemed to hit a brick wall - in the shape of President Hindenburg. State Secretary Otto Meissner reported that Hindenburg said to Hitler on 13 August 1932: 'He [i.e. Hindenburg] could not justify before God, before his conscience or before the Fatherland, the transfer of the whole authority of government to a single party, especially to a party that was biased against people who had different views from their own.'

"In this crucial period between Hindenburg's rejection of Hitler's bid for the chancellorship of Germany, and his final appointment as chancellor in January 1933, two different perceptions of Hitler's charisma came together... Hitler, during these months, had never been more impressive to devoted followers like Joseph Goebbels. On 13 August 1932, Hitler discussed the consequences of Hindenburg's rejection with his Nazi colleagues. 'Hitler holds his nerve,' recorded Goebbels in his diary. 'He stands above the machinations. So I love him.' Hitler exuded confidence that all would come right..."<sup>610</sup>

And it did - for a time... So it was not simply dire economic circumstances, and the need for a saviour from them, but also overweening self-confidence, that went into the making of Hitler's "charisma".

And yet this is still not enough to explain his rise. Freud considered it too simple to explain the worship of the masses for their totalitarian leaders simply as the consequence of fear of persecution, or because of political or economic motives. That would be to treat the matter in "far too rational a manner... *Libidinal* ties are what characterize a group".<sup>611</sup> It is the love of the people for their leader that creates the group and the relationships within the group, which disappear "at the same time as the leader".<sup>612</sup> (This was true of Nazism, but less so of Stalinism.) "The credulity of love," said Freud, "is the most fundamental source of *authority*".<sup>613</sup>

Hitler himself came to a similar conclusion about his powers, emphasizing that the masses should *stop thinking* and surrender themselves to the power of

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<sup>609</sup> Rees, op. cit., pp. 21-22, 24.

<sup>610</sup> Rees, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>611</sup> Freud, *Group Psychology*, p. 103; in Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*, University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 233.

<sup>612</sup> Freud, *Group Psychology*, p. 94; in Rieff, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>613</sup> Freud, *Three Essays*, p. 150; in Rieff, op. cit., p. 237.

instinct: "The masses are like an animal that obeys its instincts. They do not reach conclusions by reasoning... At a mass meeting, thought is eliminated... Mastery always means the transmission of a stronger will to a weaker one, [which follows] something in the nature of a physical or biological law."<sup>614</sup>

Hitler certainly believed in such a law. He refused to marry his mistress, Eva Braun, because he considered that a married man, like a married movie star, exercised less of a libidinal power over his worshippers. Thus when Hitler entered Vienna in 1938, "the whole city behaved like an aroused woman, vibrating, writhing, moaning and sighing lustfully for orgasm", wrote one witness, George Clare, who stated that this was no purple passage but an 'exact description'.<sup>615</sup> Opponents might call it "the rape of Austria". But, as Ward Price remarked, "If this was rape never have I seen a more willing victim".<sup>616</sup>

"On a more sinister level," writes Piers Brendon, "the *Anschluss* was welcomed because it liberated monsters from the Austrian id.

"Many Austrians, who (as the writer Alfred Polgar sardonically observed) made bad Nazis but good anti-Semites, burned to unleash their hostility on the country's 400,000 Jews. There was a massive attack, the ferocity of which embarrassed even the Gestapo. As the German playwright Carl Zuckmayer wrote, 'The city was transformed into a nightmare painting by Hieronymus Bosch... [the] air was filled with an incessant, savage, hysterical screeching from male and female throats... [in an] uprising of envy, of malevolence, of bitterness, of blind vicious lust for revenge.'<sup>617</sup>

It seems impossible to explain the passionate love of the Nazi Germans or Soviet Russians for their leaders - and hatred for their leaders' enemies - without invoking some deep psychological motives - stirred up and exploited by the demonic powers of the spirit world. Let us consider, for example, the quasi-hypnotic effect that Hitler had on the German masses.

The 1934 Nuremberg rally, writes Martin Gilbert, "had seemed to Hitler the ideal vehicle for nationwide propaganda, using documentary film with artistic presentation. He entrusted this task to a former actress and fiction film-maker, Leni Riefenstahl, who worked to turn the 1934 rally into an epic paean of praise for the 'Leader'. Her film *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) was finished in 1935, and gave German audiences an almost mystical view of Hitler's charismatic appeal: the film opens with Hitler in an aeroplane flying to Nuremberg, and descending through the clouds to the city and the rally, where the Nazi Party officials proclaim repeatedly: 'Hitler is Germany, the Party is Germany, thus Germany is Hitler and the Party is Germany'. The film historian Charles Musser writes: 'The exchange of looks and salutes creates a bond of

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<sup>614</sup> Richard Overy, *The Dictators*, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 19.

<sup>615</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 459.

<sup>616</sup> Brendon, op. cit., p. 460.

<sup>617</sup> Brendon, op. cit., pp. 460-461.



obedience between these different levels, one in which the identity of the self is only found through identifying with the nation and the Party. In the process, Hitler and the various troops are *eroticized* by Riefestahl's adoring vision."<sup>618</sup>

We see a similar process taking place in Stalinist Russia. Thus a Lithuanian writer wrote: "I approached Stalin's portrait, took it off the wall, placed it on the table and, resting my head in my hands, I gazed and meditated. What should I do? The Leader's face, as always so serene, his eyes so clear-sighted, they penetrated into the distance. It seems that his penetrating look pierces my little room and goes out to embrace the entire globe... With my every fibre, every nerve, every drop of blood I feel that, at this moment, nothing exists in this entire world but this dear and beloved face."<sup>619</sup>

Again, the children's writer Kornei Chukovsky described seeing Stalin at a Komsomol Congress in 1936: "And HE stood, a little weary, pensive and stately. One could feel the tremendous habit of power, the force of it, and at the same time something feminine and soft. Something extraordinary had happened to the audience! I looked round... every face was full of love and tenderness, inspired... For all of us, to see him, simply to see him made us so happy... We reacted to every movement with reverence; I had never supposed myself capable of such feelings... [The poet Boris] Pasternak kept whispering rapturous words in my ear. Pasternak and I went home together, both revelling in our own happiness..."<sup>620</sup>

What was this? Something purely psychological? Or demon possession?

If we go down the psychological route of explanation, then we can say that the masses' *eroticization* of their leaders went together with their own *brutalization*, insofar as the same people who adored Stalin also connived at his brutalities.

For, writes Pipes, "perhaps the most fundamental affinity among the three totalitarian movements lay in the realm of psychology: Communism, Fascism and National Socialism exacerbated and exploited popular resentments – class, racial, and ethnic – to win mass support and to reinforce the claim that they, not the democratically elected governments, expressed the true will of the people. All three appealed to the emotion of *hate*."<sup>621</sup>

Thus anti-war films, such as Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, were mocked in Germany, and violence and hardness were exalted over tenderness and compassion. "Hitler rejected 'the loathsome humanitarian morality', which he followed Nietzsche in seeing as a mask for people's defects: 'In the end, only

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<sup>618</sup> Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2: 1933-1951, London: HarperCollins, 1998, p. 83. Italics mine (V.M.).

<sup>619</sup> Quoted in Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1999, p. 253.

<sup>620</sup> Chukovsky, in Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

<sup>621</sup> Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 262. My italics (V.M.).

the urge for self-preservation can conquer. Beneath it is so-called humanity, the expression of a mixture of stupidity, cowardice, and know-it-all conceit, will melt like snow in the March sun. Mankind has grown great in eternal struggle, and only in eternal peace does it perish.'..."<sup>622</sup>

The same moral revaluation, the same emphasis on violence and steely hardness (Stalin comes from the Russian word for "steel") was taking place in Stalinist Russia. Thus "Nadezhda Mandelstam described how 'Thou shalt not kill' was identified with 'bourgeois' morality: 'A number of terms such as 'honour' and 'conscience' went out of use at this time - concepts like these were easily discredited, now the right formula had been found.' She noticed that people were going through a metamorphosis: 'a process of turning into wood - that is what comes over those who lose their sense of values'."<sup>623</sup>

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However we understand Eros and Thanatos, they undoubtedly played their part. But we must not forget the more humdrum motives, which included: (i) fear, (ii) guilt, and (iii) genuine belief in socialism, and in Stalin as the only man able to bring it about.

1. Fear. This is the easiest to understand. People submitted to the regime because they feared it. But, as we have seen, the fear could turn to a perverted kind of love, like the love a prisoner has for his jailer in the Stockholm Syndrome...

2. Guilt. There were massive feelings of guilt because while tens of thousands of peasants had rebelled against the forced collectivization of 1929-33 (where openly anti-Soviet True Orthodox Christians took the lead), there were no such rebellions in 1937-38. "'We all took the easy way out,' Nadezhda Mandelstam, a writer and the wife of the poet, would observe, 'by keeping silent in the hope that not we but our neighbours would be killed.'

"In fact, many people took an active part, cynically or earnestly. A Soviet worker needed to labor for sixty-two hours to purchase a loaf of bread, versus about seventeen minutes for an American - date that Soviet workers did not have, of course, but they all knew their bosses helped themselves to the best supplies and apartments and escaped prosecution for embezzlement or tyrannical comportment. Until now. 'You're a wrecker yourself,' workers jeered at higher-ups during the terror. 'Tomorrow they'll come and arrest you. All you engineers and technicians are wreckers.' To be sure, many ordinary people were disgusted by the arrests and executions, and some felt the victims were targeted precisely because they wanted to help workers and peasants. But

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<sup>622</sup> Glover, op. cit., p. 326.

<sup>623</sup> Glover, op. cit., pp. 260-261.

not a few reasoned that officials, whether or not they were foreign agents, deserved their comeuppance..."<sup>624</sup>

So some felt guilt at their feelings of envy and vengefulness. And some felt guilt that they had survived, while others, no worse than themselves, had died. And others felt guilt at having denounced neighbours or friends or bosses. And others felt guilt at simply professing to believe in propositions that they knew to be false. (This especially afflicted churchmen of the Moscow Patriarchate – those whose conscience was still alive.)

3. Belief in Socialism and Stalin. It is difficult to know how many still believed in spite of the massive evidence against such belief that had accumulated since 1917. But undoubtedly there were many, especially from the younger generations who had grown up under socialism and were brainwashed by it. And this faith motivated them to stay loyal to the regime and keep their mouths shut even if they saw that it was making disastrous mistakes.

Some believed in Lenin but not in Stalin. "A woman wrote to pillory [Alexei] Tolstoy's story 'Grain' for its mendacities and glorification of Stalin. 'The best people, who are devoted to Lenin's ideas, honest and unbought, are sitting behind bars, arrested by the thousands, being executed,' she told him, withholding her name. 'They cannot bear the grandiose baseness triumphing throughout the land... And you, an engineer of the human soul, are cowardly turned inside out, and we saw the unseemly inside of a purchasable hack... Fear: that's the dominant feeling that has seized citizens of the USSR. And you do not see that?... Where is the majestic pathos that in October [1917] moved millions to fight to the death? Overcome by the fetid breath of Stalin and of yes-men like you.'"<sup>625</sup>

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Let us now turn, finally, to the demonic hypothesis.

The demonic nature of the Russian revolution – in the literal, and not merely the metaphorical, materialist sense – hardly needs demonstrating. Many reported that at the coming of Soviet power it was as if the country had been invaded by demons, and there were many incidents in which demonic activity was almost palpable.

The holy elders predicted this, and it really happened.

Thus the Catacomb Christian P.M. writes: "I want to tell about the miracles of God of which I was a witness. In our village they closed the church and made it into a club. And then they declared that they would be showing a film – this

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<sup>624</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 544.

<sup>625</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 546.

was the first opening of the club. In the church everything was as it had been before, even the iconostasis was standing with its icons. They put in benches, hung up a screen and began to show the film. About half an hour passed, and then suddenly the people began to shout. Those who were at the back jumped up and rushed towards the exit, while those in front fell on the floor or crawled under the benches. What had happened? As many people later recounted, the holy Great Martyr George came out of an icon that was on the iconostasis on a horse, and taking a spear, galloped at the people, who began to flee in fear. But that was not the end of it. Somehow they got at any rate some of the people together again and continued to show the film. It was being shown by a mechanic and his assistant. And suddenly up in the choir they began to sing the Cherubic hymn – and so loudly that the film was scarcely audible. At that point they decided that some believers had climbed up and wanted to interrupt the showing of the film. So about seven members of the Komsomol and the assistant climbed up in order to catch them all and bring them down. But then they said that when they had climbed up the stairs the singing stopped, and they rejoiced – the believers had got frightened and fallen silent. But when they climbed up into the choir they saw that it was empty. They stood in bewilderment and could not understand how the singers could have run away. And then suddenly in the midst of them unseen singers began to sing the Cherubic hymn. Pursued by an unknown fear, they rushed to get out, not knowing the way, pushing and shoving each other. The assistant mechanic, who was running in front, suddenly fell down, and everyone ran over him since there was no other way because of the narrowness of the place. Having run down, they rushed out into the street. Now the showing was finally abandoned. The assistant mechanic was ill for a month and died, while the mechanic left, and nobody wanted to go to work in the club as a mechanic for any money. So from that time they stopped having a cinema in it.”<sup>626</sup>

Similar incidents were reported in Nazi Germany. Thus “two British guests at a Hitler rally in Berlin in 1934, seated in a stadium just feet behind him, watched him captivate his listeners with the familiar rising passion and jarring voice. ‘Then an amazing thing happened,’ continued the account: ‘[we] both saw a blue flash of lightning come out of Hitler’s back... We were surprised that those of us close behind Hitler had not all been struck dead.’ The two men afterwards discussed whether Hitler was actually possessed at certain moments by the Devil: ‘We came to the conclusion that he was.’”<sup>627</sup>

Freud’s former disciple Karl Jung declared in 1945 that the cause of the German people’s surrender to Nazism was demon-possession: “Germany has always been a country of psychological catastrophes: the Reformation, the peasant and religious [30-year] wars. Under the National Socialists the pressure of the demons increased to such an extent that human beings that fell under their power were turned into sleep-walking super-men, the first of whom was

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<sup>626</sup> *Tserkovnie Vedomosti Russkia Istinno-Pravoslavnia Tserkve*, [http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print\\_page&pid=1221](http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1221).  
<sup>627</sup> Overy, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

Hitler, who infected all the others with the same. All the Nazi leaders were possessed in the literal sense of the word... Ten percent of the German population today is hopelessly psychopathic..."<sup>628</sup>

This psychopathology had deep roots in history. Already in the 1840s the German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine wrote: "A drama will be enacted in Germany compared with which the French Revolution will seem like a harmless idyll. Christianity may have restrained the martial ardour of the Teutons for a time, but it did not destroy it. Now that the restraining talisman, the cross, has rotted away, the old frenzied madness will break out again."

Ultimately, therefore, it was the decay of Christianity – the one force capable of truly extirpating evil and exorcising the demons that have returned to Christian civilization after its falling away from God – that made possible the totalitarian catastrophes of the twentieth century.

And one of the ways in which the decay of Christianity made possible totalitarianism was in introducing the anti-Christian teaching of psychoanalysis. For the theory suggested that man is a beast who is ruled, not by his God-given reason and conscience, but at all times by subconscious forces – sex and aggression – that drive out reason (if it ever really existed). And this theory, once implanted in men's minds, became a self-fulfilling prophecy, by God's permission...

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<sup>628</sup> Jung, "The Post-War Psychological Problems of Germany", <http://gestaltterapija.lv/karl-gustav-yung-poslevoennye-psixicheskie-problemy-germanii/#more-466>.

### 43. THE SERBS AND THE CONCORDAT

The most important event of the inter-war years in Yugoslavia was the signing of a Concordat between the government of Prime Minister Stoyadinovič and the Vatican. This was done in order to solve the problem of the integration of the Catholic Croats into the united kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Hieroschemamonk (now Bishop) Akakije (Stankevič) writes: "Drafts of the text were prepared in 1923, in 1925 and 1931. The final text of the Concordat was signed in Rome on July 25, 1935. Stoyadinovič was brought to the helm of the king's government by the Duke-Regent Pavle Karageorgevič. This solution Duke Pavle chose with the consent of the British ruling circles. It was believed that Stoyadinovič would be able to come to an understanding with Maček's Croatian peasants' party, and also that he would lead the policy of rapprochement with Germany and Italy, since British policy in Europe at that time was strictly anti-communist and anti-Soviet. As assumed by some, Stoyadinovič, as a trader and a risk-taker, immediately calculated that, by the acceptance of the Concordat, he would achieve two of his goals: to gain the Catholic Church's support, as the leader of five million Croatian Catholics, and to improve relations with Fascist Italy in order to become closer to the Triple Pact. In addition to this, he was convinced that the contract with the Vatican would be concluded without any problems. As he writes in his memoirs, published after the war in Argentina, his self-confidence was based on a very broad preparation, in which he included the whole state apparatus. In the first place, he thought that a considerable number of newsmen and newspapers were under his control. He even thought that among those preparing the documents were a number of his own men. His informants were constantly telling him what was being said about the Concordat in the Serbian Orthodox Church. In the struggle for the Concordat nothing was to be left to chance. He seemed to have been convinced about a positive outcome, but Stoyadinovič could not have imagined what a storm the Concordat would arouse.

"In the beginning nobody rejected it, even Patriarch Barnabas was convinced that everything would be alright with the Concordat, because it was based on an idea of King Alexander, and as such it could not have been in conflict with the interests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. But analysis later revealed that a number of articles in the Concordat compromised the religious equality guaranteed by the Constitution. So the patriarch changed his position, and became an ardent opponent of the Concordat. By signing the Concordat, the Catholic Church was to receive from the State larger privileges than the Orthodox Church already had. In the evaluation of Professor Sergije Troitsky, who in a special brochure analysed the project of the Concordat, article number 7 and some others obliged the Yugoslav State to accept the Catholic Code Juris Canonici, which would, if accepted, become a parallel constitution. The sharpest argument related to the article by which the Catholic Church would have 'full rights to freely and publicly execute its mission in the kingdom of Yugoslavia'. In formulating this article, the term 'mission' was used, which was unacceptable to the Orthodox Church. In the Concordats accepted in other

European countries, this problem was resolved by the statement that the Catholic faith would be freely and publicly confessed... By the term 'mission' the kingdom of Yugoslavia was being characterised as a pagan country... The project of the Concordat gave the Catholic Church a missionary character as if Yugoslavia were an unenlightened, pagan country. The approval of the special status of the Catholic Church was discovered in many other articles of the Concordat. For example, the article about marriage in the Catholic Church said that... for all citizens being married in the Catholic Church the obligation to register as a civil marriage was removed. In the same article there was another questionable position, which obliged the civil powers that in the case of mixed marriages, at the request of an insulted Catholic side, they should take care that the other side had to fulfil the promise that all the sons and the daughters without exception should be educated in the Catholic faith. With such and similar articles the Catholic Church was given a major advantage over all other confessions in the State, as Patriarch Barnabas said: 'Giving the Catholic Church the position of the main and dominant State Church, the Concordat puts all other confessions, and especially the Church of the majority of citizens in the State, the Orthodox Church, in the position of being tolerated', which destroyed the rule of religious equality that was guaranteed by the State Constitution.

"All publications critical of the Concordat were prohibited or censored. The little things that were missed by the State censors were not enough to explain to the public the seriousness of the Concordat crisis and the sharpness of the conflict that began between the highest ranks in the Orthodox Church and State. The Hierarchical Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church held an extraordinary meeting on November 24, 1936, and discussed the position of the Serbian Church after the acceptance of the laws about the State-recognized confessions. The Serbian Orthodox Church could no longer peacefully watch how the Catholic Church in the kingdom of Yugoslavia was receiving rights and privileges that it had nowhere else in Europe, and which even the Serbian Church did not have as the State Church of Serbia.

"On January 19, 1937, before the Orthodox New Year, Patriarch Barnabas finally delivered his judgement on the Concordat. The censors saw it, the public did not receive the message that the leader of the Serbian Church delivered in his traditional New Year message to the faithful. The censored text published in the newspaper *Politika* could have been understood to mean that the patriarch looked forward to the Concordat without much excitement. What Patriarch Barnabas really said in his New Year message, a part of the public found out from the illegal leaflet entitled 'What the Newspapermen were Forbidden to Publish', in which the whole message for the new year of 1937 was printed. Whoever read at least one passage from the leaflet understood why Stoyadinovič had forbidden the publication of the patriarch's New Year message: '... For completely unknown reasons, and incomprehensible causes, they have made a contract with the black leader of the Black International (the Patriarch was thinking of the Pope). By this contract they want to bring that leader to triumph in the Balkans, where he has been trying to triumph for a

thousand years. The Byzantine patriarchs and emperors were the first to fight against this black leader and his Jesuit army. When their arms lost strength, our glorious Nemanja dynasty headed by St. Sava accepted the struggle. When the Serbian kingdom fell at Kosovo, even the Turks fought against the Latin attacks on the Balkans. The Turks knew the false character of that International, so they did not give it the Balkans. The Turks knew the destructive impact of this international within the State. They knew that this International uses all means, intrigues and cunning strategems, so they made no compromise with it. The Orthodox Faith was sometimes persecuted by the Ottomans, but they considered it to be a faith and respected it as a faith. But they did not look on that Black International as a faith, but as politics. And so, my brothers, to that unscrupulous political organization our rulers today have widely opened the gates, and allowed it to stand firmly in the Balkans. And who, and when? Not some strangers, but baptized sons of the Church of St. Sava... Honour to the Turks, and shame to such Orthodox and such Serbs.' Explaining why he hadn't raised his voice earlier against this situation, Patriarch Barnabas continued to pour out his soul's anger: '... They complain that we introduce politics into the Church! We are not bringing politics into the Church, but they are introducing poison into the whole national organism. Those who have lost their wisdom, their patriotism and their sincerity... Who is going to tell people the truth if not the people's Holy Church? From where shall the voice of God and the voice of the nation's conscience be heard if not from the Church of St. Sava? I am not afraid to say this. I hope that I'm not too late in saying this. Maybe I should have said this earlier. I'm afraid I'm going to give an answer for this before God's judgement. But all the time I expected, like all conscientious people in this country, that the evil would be stopped...' After seeing that this message of the patriarch did not reach the broad public, Stoyadinovich made an effort to soften the position of the Church's hierarchy, trying to convince them that there was absolutely nothing in the Concordat that could in any way harm the Serbian Church and the Orthodox Faith. From his discussion with the hierarchs, he soon realized, as he later wrote in his memoirs, that all his effort was in vain. No arguments helped. The Concordat had already been 'condemned'. Since then, the struggle over the Concordat became a war between the Orthodox Church and her spiritual army, on the one hand, and the State and its powerful apparatus, on the other. Using different religious gatherings and festal meetings, the priests and bishops from the ambon pronounced, with a cross in their hands, the fiercest condemnation of those who were in favour of the Concordat. The State used very powerful censorship to ban all the literature against the Concordat. The department of state security with the ministry of internal affairs sent instructions to all local government and police authorities to stop local people signing petitions and sending representatives to Belgrade to demand the repeal of the Concordat. In the parliament, the main debate over the ratification of the Concordat was about to start. On the same day an extraordinary session of the Hierarchical Council, the highest institution in the Serbian Orthodox Church, began. The tense atmosphere became even tenser when information was received on the health of Patriarch Barnabas, signed every day by three specialists. The patriarch became ill at the beginning of June, during a regular session of the Hierarchical



Council. As it was known that the patriarch was opposed to the Concordat, rumours started that the leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church had been poisoned. One group of national deputies in the parliament demanded from the minister of internal affairs that he conduct an investigation to find out whether the patriarch had been poisoned by his servant, and whether the servant had been put up to it by some people outside the patriarchate. In the patriarchate the belief was that his personal servant had poisoned him, so he was dismissed from his post for a while, and until he disappeared without trace he was under observation. The patriarchate itself made its own investigation into this. So on July 8, at almost the same time, two bodies were in session, the Council for the Concordat and the extraordinary Hierarchical Council. At the same time, in all the churches of Belgrade, prayers were organized for the patriarch's health, and many of the faithful attended. These gatherings added to the tension, and passions were ready to explode. Police control over all religious activity was strengthened. The voting on the Concordat within the Council passed it with a very small majority. But the final battle was just ahead.

“The government used all means against the opponents of the Concordat. The conflicts between the representatives of the government and the citizens became serious. Opponents of the Concordat were said to be religious fanatics, and... it looked as if civil war would break out. In conflict with the police, some even gave their lives, as Vladyka Nikolai of Žiča confirmed in his famous message in Valjevo: ‘... Here are the names of those who we know were killed. They are: Milovan Zhivanovič from the village of Yanilo, Lyubomir Spassovič from the village of Koračitsa, George Todorovič from Bielina, Dragitsa Bostanovič from Sarajevo. And how many others were wounded, how many others reported to hospital, and how many ran into the cornfields and woods, afraid to report to the hospital, fearing to be arrested and interrogated. And how many others were dismissed from their posts, how many were forced to retire, and how many were humiliated and insulted? Thousands and thousands of sons in these sixty days suffered and are suffering for our holy national faith and holy Orthodox Church.’ As a result of all these events, and the displeasure of the people, which was growing from day to day, Stoyadinovič's government was in a hurry to complete the job of accepting the Concordat. That was the main reason why the meeting of the national parliament was scheduled for July 19. It is interesting that the session started with a question from Deputy Dušan Ivančević: ‘Are the security measures around the national parliament well enforced?’ This question illustrates the atmosphere in which the main debate on the Concordat began. To understand better why such excitement existed in the national parliament, it is necessary to remember that in the newspaper *Politika* dated July 18, the day before the parliament session, the patriarchate had published the information that the next day, in accordance with the will of the people, there would be a litia and prayers for the health of the patriarch. Neglecting the prohibition from the city government, at about four o'clock in the afternoon on the day of the parliament session, from the Saborna Church a multitude of people burning with almost-forgotten religious passion and holding church banners and gonfalons began

a litia led by seventy priests and four bishops. At about six o'clock in the evening when they reached Knez Mikhailova Street, they met a line of policemen. This is how events unfurled.... The gendarmes stopped the litia, asking the people to disperse because the litia was forbidden. Bishop Simeon of Šabats shouted: 'Move away, blasphemers! Do not defile the sacred cross, but let us go on our way in peace! We are not interfering with anyone, we are carrying out a normal church rite in our own country.' And holding the cross more firmly, he began to chant: 'Save, O Lord, Thy people'. He wanted to go on. But there was no way through, the litia faced another line of policemen, who started to hit whomever they could. They seized and tore up church banners, they broke crosses, they pulled the priests by their beards, they tried to strangle them, and they tore their vestments. The most dramatic scene was when a policeman ran out of the line and attacked Bishop Simeon with a heavy rubber truncheon, hitting him and saying: 'Son of a Serbian bitch, move away or I shall pull your beard out!' The bishop continued singing, 'Save, O Lord, Thy people' and went on. Another policeman said: 'I will save you by hitting you'. And two more ran up to accompany him. All three of them attacked the bishop. They hit him everywhere, his mitre fell to the ground, and blood spurted from the bishop's face. Covered with blood and his hair akimbo, he picked up his mitre from the ground, put it on his head and continued. He went on like that, defending himself with the cross, until the policemen hit him with a rifle-butt. He fell unconscious on the ground covered with blood. The people raised him on their hands and took him to the building of the patriarchate. And then a full-scale fight broke out. The priests used gonfalons to protect themselves, and finally started hitting the policemen with them. Eyewitnesses claim that the police had never been as ruthless and merciless towards the citizens. After these incidents black flags were raised over the patriarchate and all the churches in Belgrade, and all the bells were rung. It is not clear whether all the policemen who took part in this incident were Catholics, since the minister of internal affairs Korošets was a Catholic priest. The situation was at boiling point, and this simply added fuel to the fire. The leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church imposed punishments on those who voted for the Concordat. The Holy Hierarchical Council, at its session of July 19, 1937, the same day on which the police brutally broke up the litia, decided to excommunicate all the ministers and representatives of the Orthodox Church who voted for the Concordat, explaining that none of the clergy under any pretext can enter the home of those persons. In addition, it was ordered that the decision had to be proclaimed publicly in all the churches after the first liturgy. It was advised in this document that not only the clergy, but also all other faithful, should not communicate with those who had been punished. In the days following the incidents were repeated. The police hit the citizens with rubber truncheons, even fire-arms were used. One policeman and two citizens were killed in these street riots. In the streets the police were everywhere, they stood guard in front of every church and nobody could enter. Every hour church bells were rung from the church towers.

“The struggle against the Concordat was not restricted to Belgrade. By the end it had spread to most of the country and the people. Kraguyevats, Šabats,

Užitse and Malednovats are only some of the cities that supported the struggle against the Concordat. In Malednovats one of the sharpest conflicts took place, in which three people were killed and fifty were seriously wounded. In these conflicts between the spiritual and secular power, many different political parties and groups saw their chance. They joined one or the other side according to their programmes. As a result, in the litia for the health of the patriarch, members of the forbidden communist party of Yugoslavia found their place together with bishops and priests, even though they had nothing in common with the Church and the priesthood. In the meantime, at midnight between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of July, Patriarch Barnabas reposed. Censors could not prohibit writing that more than 350,000 people took part in the funeral from all the different parts of the country. Belgrade has never known such a majestic gathering. The day before the parliament had accepted the Concordat, but that didn't mean its final acceptance. The parliament agreed on the text, but it still had to pass through the Senate. The public believed that Patriarch Barnabas, as the main opponent of the Concordat, had been poisoned, and that it was done with the knowledge of Stoyadinovič and his closest co-workers. The peak of national discontent was reached on the day when the press revealed that the patriarch had died on the same night that the parliament majority voted for the Concordat. The government of Stoyadinovič found itself in a very unpleasant situation. The national discontent was augmented by words from the church ambon, and it threatened to become an unstoppable flood. The government tried, with police help, to gather statements from the doctors who were looking after the patriarch's health in order to prove that the stories about his poisoning were false. They hoped in this way to stop the dangerous situation. But the manoeuvre was so obvious that nobody believed it. Professor Igniatovsky, the doctor who had been with the patriarch from the beginning to his death, claimed that it was forcible poisoning. So did Professor Xenophon Šakhovič. After many years, he publicly said: 'I'm declaring this now, because before the war I was not allowed, that Patriarch Barnabas was poisoned! I know because I with my assistants did a post-mortem on the late Patriarch Barnabas, and definitely established that Patriarch Barnabas was poisoned.' The senior medical technician, Miroslav Božovič, witnessed on the contrary that this statement of Professor Šakhovič was not true as regards the post-mortem, because the post-mortem was not carried out, since the government would not allow it. Instead of a post-mortem, from 'the highest place' it was ordered that the patriarch's body be embalmed. The embalming was done during the night, 'in an urgent procedure and in the presence of the police'. Those who initiated it wanted to stop the real truth from being revealed in this way. The results of the judicial enquiry were never revealed, nor was the case of Barnabas' death ever judicially completed. The investigation itself was stopped in April, 1938. One thing was certain: the city government that led the investigation succeeded in proving that the patriarch was not poisoned and that the government was not involved in the poisoning, and gave this finding great publicity. In October the Concordat was officially withdrawn.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> Although the Prime Minister did not send the project of the Concordat to the Senate from ratification, he did, in 1939, establish the autonomous province of Croatia with its capital in

The government of Stoyadinovič decided that there should be no Concordat – no old one, no new one, no Concordat at all. In addition to this, Stoyadinovič was forced to the wall from one side by the firm position of the Serbian Orthodox Church and on the other side by the firm requests of the Duke's authority to restore good relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church as soon as possible, and in that way he practically accepted all that the persistent hierarchs requested from his government: for example, to punish all those responsible for the terrible events in front of the Sabarna church in Belgrade and other places, without reference to their positions, whether they were ministers or state officials, and other such things. In exchange, in one of the last sessions the Hierarchical Council decided that they would remove the sanctions against the ministers and deputies that voted for the Concordat. Through these decisions both sides put an end to the dispute, which for more than a year had put more wood on the fire of political and religious passions.

“The rejection of the Concordat with the Vatican caused the displeasure and rage of Pope Pius XI, who declared in December, 1937: ‘... I am convinced that there will not be a small number of souls who will regret not accepting wholeheartedly and with an open mind such a great good as the one which the representative of Jesus Christ offered the country, and not only for the Church and the religious harmony of the nation, but also for the social and political harmony, though we strongly resent the idea that politics should be our business.’ This pope's threat very shortly, during the Second World War, came true in the most monstrous way. The pope's revenge for the non-acceptance of the ‘great good’ of the Concordat, carried out at the hands of the Ustasha, was really horrible.

“The thirties in the twentieth century on the historical road of the Serbian Church were marked by a firm position of non-acceptance of the new calendar. This didn't mean that they completely broke communion with the new calendarists. [However,] that wasn't the case with the Soviet church of Metropolitan Sergei, who was not acknowledged as the canonical ruler of the Russian Orthodox Church. The patriarch-martyr Barnabas offered hospitality to the confessing Russian Church Abroad, and had a very close relationship with her; besides, the Serbian Church in this period had a lot of sympathy and support for the Greek confessors of the Old Calendar, sending them holy chrism almost until the end of the 1950s. If we add to all this the firm and uncompromising struggle against the Concordat, we have to realize how high was the level of the clergy and the people before the war, and how high their awareness and readiness to sacrifice in order to defend the position of the Orthodox Church.”<sup>630</sup>

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Zagreb. (V.M.)

<sup>630</sup> Hieroschemamonk Akakije, in V. Moss, *Letopis Velike Bitke* (Chronicle of a Great Battle), Belgrade, 2008, pp. 323-33. However, one problem about the Serbian Church before the war was its failure to administer the sacrament of baptism in the canonical manner, through threefold immersion.

## 44. THE RUSSIAN DIASPORA

The Russian diaspora numbered in the millions and was scattered all round the world, with major concentrations in Western Europe, Serbia and China. It contributed mightily to the culture of their host nations in Europe and America in such fields as philosophy, painting, music and ballet.

In 1936 General Vladimir Voeikov wrote: "Although our emigration is divided by personal disagreements and we are at odds both in political and in moral-religious questions, there are practically no people who are not dreaming of the day when we shall all return to our homeland.

"Understanding this, both individual persons, and whole organizations, are striving, by means of various deceptions, to enrol as many as possible adherents. Not a little effort in this direction has been contributed by the Masons, who have instilled the conviction that in the re-establishment of Russia the leading role will belong to them, as being now the only united and well organized union. However, even now the leading role belongs to them in certain states, where all the appointments, elections, reception of orders, etc., depend exclusively on that organization, which (according to information provided by the press and literature) number 4,252,910 members and have 556 billion francs at their disposal.

"Their brothers, the leaders of leftist society, who openly supported the revolution, are applying all their efforts to instil liberal ideas into the masses and to root out patriotism from the growing generation...

"Our émigré press, with few exceptions, instead of stirring up the feeling of patriotism, sings in unison with the Russophobe circles; they instil the thought that the re-establishment of a patriotic, national and, perhaps, also monarchical Russia is dangerous, and they do much to support quarrels in the emigration that have been strengthened as a consequence of the family disagreements that have arisen even among the members of our royal dynasty. Being exposed to publicity, these quarrels have been far from helping to raise their prestige."<sup>631</sup>

The political make-up of the Russian Diaspora was complex; every part of the political spectrum from monarchists to communists was represented. The monarchists continued the struggle against Bolshevism, but with very little success. At the end of 1921 a Monarchical Union of Central Russia (MUCR), known by the Cheka as "The Trust", was established in Moscow, with close links with the Diaspora. However, it was infiltrated by the Cheka, and its leaders inside the Soviet Union executed.

In September, 1923, in Sremsky Karlovtsy in Serbia, General Wrangel established ROVS (the Russian Inter-Forces Union) - 25,000 veterans of the

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<sup>631</sup> Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, pp. 331, 332.

Civil War who recognized the Romanov Grand Duke Kyril Vladimirovich as heir to the Throne of Russia.<sup>632</sup>

After the death of General Wrangel, the leader of ROVS became General Eugene Karlovich Miller. He wrote: "For every victory it is necessary to strive for a single goal with maximum effort. For victory over Soviet power the Russian emigration must recognize that not one émigré can have the right to do or say anything that could harm another émigré, that is, a man who in one way or another fights Bolshevism, and not one émigré can have the right not to do what is in his power and he can do in one way or another to harm communism. With this thought in mind must he get up in the morning and go to sleep in the evening. From this point of view he must evaluate every step he makes, every work, sacrificing everything personal, secondary and factional to the main and only important thing. He must never do what could give joy to the common enemy. All his efforts must be directed against communism, the communists and the communist authorities in Moscow. Discipline and self-limitation will lead to victory."

On September 22, 1937 this noble warrior was kidnapped by NKVD agents from Paris to Moscow. He was sentenced by the Supreme Court of the USSR and shot in the inner prison of the NKVD on May 11, 1939.<sup>633</sup>

The Russian Diaspora was as divided ecclesiastically as it was politically. The Russian Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) brought the light of patristic Orthodoxy to both Russians and foreigners and remained strongly opposed to the Moscow Patriarchate. Another jurisdiction was the Russian Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whose centre was the church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Rue Daru, Paris. The Paris theologians, such as Berdiaev and Bulgakov, had a strong influence on western, especially Catholic theologians, although their teaching was not always strictly Orthodox.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> Roland Gaucher, *Opposition in the USSR 1917-1967*, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969.

<sup>633</sup> <http://pereklichka.livejournal.com/67964.html>). St. Philaret of New York wrote in 1975 to Protopresbyter George Grabbe: "When [Ivan] Solonevich published his famous work "Russia in the Concentration Camp", the affair ended with his being murdered by a bomb. Kutepov, and Miller were liquidated. The Communists do not fear anyone..."

<sup>634</sup> Bulgakov, for example, proclaimed the heresy of Sophiology, or Sophianism, which centred on the mythological, quasi-divine figure of Sophia, and was based, according to Archbishop Theophan of Poltava in a letter he wrote in 1930, "on the book of Fr. [Paul] Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. But Florensky borrowed the idea of Sophia from V.S. Soloviev. And V.S. Soloviev borrowed it from the medieval mystics.

"In V.S. Soloviev Sophia is the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. Florensky tries to prove that Sophia, as the feminine principle of God, is a special substance. He tries to find this teaching in St. Athanasius the Great and in Russian iconography. Protopriest Bulgakov accepts on faith the basic conclusions of Florensky, but partly changes the form of this teaching, and partly gives it a new foundation. In Bulgakov this teaching has two variants: a) originally it is a special Hypostasis, although not of one essence with the Holy Trinity (in the book *The Unwaning Light*), b) later it is not a Hypostasis but 'hypostasisness'. In this latter form it is an energy of God coming from the essence of God through the Hypostases of the Divinity into the world and finding for itself its highest 'created union' in the Mother of God. Consequently, according to this variant, Sophia is not a special substance, but the Mother of God.

Nevertheless, as the apostle said, "in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and in this I rejoice" (Philippians 1.18).

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On August 14, 1938 the Second All-Diaspora Council of ROCOR consisting of 13 bishops, 26 priests and 58 laymen was convened in Belgrade. The main question discussed was what attitude ROCOR should take to other Orthodox Churches.

Bishop John (Maximovich) of Shanghai in one report was sharply critical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In another, entitled "The Situation of the Orthodox Church after the War", he said: "We (the faithful of the Russian Church Abroad) must firmly stand on the ground of the Church canons and not be with those who depart from them. Formerly, in order to reproach canonical irregularities in a Local Church, canonical communion with her was broken. The Russian Church Abroad cannot act in this way since her position has not been completely determined. For that reason she must not break communion with other Churches if they do not take this step first. But, while maintaining communion, she must not be silent about violations of Church truth..."<sup>635</sup>

This relatively "liberal" position was followed by a still more liberal declaration, Protocol number 8 for August 16, which stated: "Judgement was made concerning concelebrations with clergy belonging to the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod. Metropolitan Anastasy pointed out that clergy coming from Russia from the named jurisdiction were immediately admitted to communion in prayer, and cited the opinion of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan in his epistle published in *Church Life* to the effect that the sin of Metropolitan Sergei did not extend to the clergy subject to him. It was decreed: to recognize that there is no obstacle to communion in prayer and concelebration with the clergy of Metropolitan Sergei."<sup>636</sup>

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"According to the Church teaching, which is especially clearly revealed in St. Athanasius the Great, the Sophia-Wisdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Here, in the most general terms, is the essence of Protopriest Bulgakov's teaching on Sophia! To expound any philosophical teaching shortly is very difficult, and so it is difficult to expound shortly the teaching of the 'sophianists' on Sophia. This teaching of theirs becomes clear only in connection the whole of their philosophical system. But to expound the latter shortly is also impossible. One can say only: their philosophy is the philosophy of 'panentheism', that is, a moderate form of 'pantheism'. The originator of this 'panentheism' in Russia is V.S. Soloviev."

In 1935 both the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR condemned Sophianism as heretical. (V.M.)

<sup>635</sup> Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (A Chronicle of Church Events of the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>, part 2, p. 75.

<sup>636</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 75.

This was a dangerous declaration that threatened to put ROCOR at odds with the Catacomb Church, whose position in relation to Metropolitan Sergius was much stricter than ROCOR's. Moreover, it was not accurate in its assertions. First, Metropolitan Cyril never expressed the view that "there are no obstacles to prayerful communion and concelebration with clergymen of Metropolitan Sergei". On the contrary, in his epistle of 1929, he wrote: "I acknowledge it as a fulfillment of our archpastoral duty for those Archpastors and all who consider the establishment of the so-called 'Temporary Patriarchal Synod' as wrong, to refrain from communion with Metropolitan Sergei and those Archpastors who are of one mind with him."

Nor did he ever declare that while it was wrong to have communion with the Sergianist bishops, it was alright to have communion with their priests – which would have been canonical nonsense in any case. True, he refrained – at that time – from declaring the Sergianists to be graceless. However, he *did* say, in his epistle of 1934, that Christians who partook of the Sergianist sacraments knowing of Sergei's usurpation of power and the illegality of his pro-Soviet Synod would receive them *to their condemnation* – a point for all those contemplating union with the MP today to consider very carefully...

Moreover, we now know (as Metropolitan Anastasy did not know) that by 1937 Metropolitan Cyril's position had hardened considerably: "The expectations that Metropolitan Sergei would correct himself have not been justified, but there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incentive and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened; and very many have both investigated and understood that Metropolitan Sergei is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox. The recent events have finally made clear the renovationist [that is, heretical] nature of Sergianism..."<sup>637</sup>

The 1938 Council also discussed the Church's participation in the ecumenical movement. As early as 1920 the Ecumenical Patriarchate had declared the Catholics and Protestants to be "fellow heirs" of the promises of Christ together with the Orthodox; and the main purpose of the introduction of the new calendar into the Greek and Romanian Churches had been to facilitate union in prayer with the western heretics. In the inter-war years progress towards union with the heretics had been slow but steady. ROCOR had said little against this, and had sent representatives to ecumenical conferences in Lausanne, Edinburgh and Oxford. In his report, Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) of Berlin defended this position, saying that the Orthodox had always expounded and defended the sacred dogmas. "Therefore the Orthodox delegates both in Lausanne and in Edinburgh considered it their duty to give and publish special declarations; in this way they clearly marked the Orthodox Church off from other confessions calling themselves

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<sup>637</sup> Letter of Metropolitan Cyril to Hieromonk Leonid, February 23 / March 8, 1937, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 16, August 15/28, 1997, p. 7. Italics mine (V.M.).



'churches' ... We must disperse all perplexities and ideas about Orthodoxy that are often simply caricatures... To be reconciled with the existing situation of alienation of the larger part of the Christian world from the Orthodox Church, and an indifferent attitude towards the ecumenical seeking of the unity of the Church, would be an unforgiveable sin, for we must bear responsibility for the destiny of those who still remain beyond the boundaries of the Church and for the future destiny of the whole of the Christian world... But while participating in the ecumenical movement, we must beware of concessions and condescension, for this is extremely harmful and dangerous, and confirms the heterodox in the conviction that they are members of the true Church. In the sphere of dogmatics and other essential and basic questions we cannot diminish our demands..."

Bishop Seraphim's position was supported by Metropolitan Anastasy and Protopresbyter George Grabbe, chancellor of the ROCOR Synod. However, others took a more "rightist" position. Thus N.F. Stefanov read a report on the influence of Masonry on the Oxford conference. And Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) said: "Extra-ecclesiastical unity brings nothing but harm. Orthodox Truth is expressed in the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is precisely what the ecumenical movement does not want to know... Unity can take place only on the ground of grace-filled life. The aims of the ecumenical movement are unattainable. 'Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the council of the ungodly.'"

Metropolitan Anastasy said: "We have to choose between two dangers - a temptation or a refusal to engage in missionary work in the confession of Orthodoxy. Which danger is greater? We shall proceed from our premises. The grace-filled Church must carry out missionary work, for in this way it is possible to save some of those who waver. Beside the leaders who want to disfigure Orthodoxy, there are others, for example the young, who come to conferences with true seeking. Comparing that which they see and hear from their own pastors and from the Orthodox pastor, they will understand the truth. Otherwise they will remain alone. I have heard positive reviews from heterodox of Bishop Seraphim's speeches at conferences. We must also take into account that the Anglo-Saxon world is in crisis, and is seeking the truth. Protestantism is also seeking support for itself. Moreover, we have a tradition of participating in such conferences that was established by the reposed Metropolitan Anthony. To avoid temptation we must clarify the essence of the matter."

A resolution was passed that ROCOR members should not take part in the ecumenical movement. However, for the sake of missionary aims, bishops could instruct their representatives to attend conferences and explain without compromise the teaching of the Orthodox Church, without allowing the slightest deviation from the Orthodox point of view.<sup>638</sup> The lack of clarity in the definition of ROCOR's relationship to the Moscow Patriarchate, to the rest of

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<sup>638</sup> Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 75-77.

World Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and to the ecumenical movement in general, continued to plague ROCOR in the post-war period, causing complications in her relations with other True Orthodox Churches. This problem was not really resolved until Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) became first-hierarch in 1964; he firmly established that the only True Church inside the Soviet Union was the Catacomb Church, wrote a series of "sorrowful epistles" to the leaders of World Orthodoxy condemning their heresy, and finally, in 1983 secured the anathema against ecumenism – probably the most important ecclesiastical document of the second half of the twentieth century. The incorrupt body and many miracles of Metropolitan Philaret made it clear to all those with eyes to see that his position was the correct one, truly expressing the mind of Christ...

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Bishop John Maximovich provided an assessment of the spiritual condition of the Diaspora as a whole that was not encouraging: "A significant portion of the Russians that have gone abroad belong to that intellectual class which in recent times lived according to the ideas of the West. While belonging to the Orthodox Church and confessing themselves to be Orthodox, the people of that class had strayed far from Orthodoxy in their world view. The principal sin of these people was that their beliefs and way of life were not founded on the teachings of the Orthodox faith; they tried to reconcile the rules and teachings of the Church with their own habits and desires. For this reason they had, on the one hand, very little interest in the essence of Orthodox teaching, often even considering the Church's dogmatic teaching completely unessential, and, on the other hand, they fulfilled the requirements and rites of the Orthodox Church but only insofar as this did not interfere with their more European than Russian way of life. This gave rise to their disdain for the fasts, to their going to church for only a short time (and then only to satisfy a more aesthetic than religious feeling) and to a thorough lack of understanding of religion as the principal foundation of man's spiritual life. Many, of course, were inwardly otherwise disposed, but few possessed sufficient strength of spirit and the ability to manifest it outwardly in their way of life.

"In the social sphere this class also lived by the ideas of the West. Without giving any room at all to the influence of the Church, they strove to rebuild the whole life of Russia, especially in the realm of government, according to Western models. This is why in recent times an especially bitter struggle was waged against the government. Liberal reforms and the democratic structuring of Russia became, as it were, a new faith. Not to confess this idea meant that one was behind the times. Seized with a thirst for power and utilizing for their struggle with the monarchy widespread slander against the Royal Family, the intelligentsia brought Imperial Russia to its downfall and prepared the way for the Communist regime. Then, unreconciled to the thought of losing the power for which they had waited for so long, they declared war on the Communists, in the beginning mainly out of their unwillingness to cede them power. The struggle against Soviet power subsequently involved broad sectors of the

populace, especially drawing in the youth to an outburst of enthusiasm to reconstruct a 'United, indivisible Russia', at the cost of their lives. There were many exploits which manifested the valor of the Christ-loved Russian army, but the Russian nation proved itself still unprepared for liberation, and the Communists turned out to be the victors.

"The intelligentsia was partially annihilated and partially it fled abroad to save itself. Meanwhile, the Communists showed their true colors and, together with the intelligentsia, large sections of the population left Russia, in part to save their lives and in part because of ideology: they did not want to serve the Communists. Finding themselves abroad, the Russian people experienced great spiritual shocks. A significant crisis occurred in the souls of a majority, which was marked by a mass return of the intelligentsia to the Church. Many churches abroad are filled primarily by these people. The intelligentsia took an interest in questions of spiritual life and began to take an active part in church affairs. Numerous circles and societies were formed for the purpose of religious enlightenment. Members study the Holy Scriptures, the works of the Holy Fathers, general spiritual life and theological questions, and many of them have become clergy.

"However, all these gratifying manifestations also had a negative aspect. Far from all of those who returned to the faith adopted the Orthodox teaching in its entirety. The proud mind could not be reconciled to the fact that, until then, it had stood on a false path. Many began to attempt to reconcile Christian teaching with their previous views and ideas. This resulted in the appearance of a whole series of new religious-philosophical trends, some completely alien to Church teaching. Among them Sophiology was especially widespread. It is based on the recognition of man's worth in and of himself and expresses the psychology of the intelligentsia.

"As a teaching, Sophiology is known to a comparatively small group of people and very few openly espouse it. Nonetheless, a significant part of the immigrant intelligentsia is spiritually related to it because the psychology of Sophiology is based on the worship of man, not as a humble servant of God, but rather as a little god himself, who has no need for being blindly obedient to the Lord God. The feeling of keen pride, joined with faith in the possibility of man living by his own wisdom, is quite characteristic of many people considered to be cultured by today's standards, who place their own reasonings above all else and do not wish to be obedient in everything to the teaching of the Church, which they regard favourably but with condescension. Because of this, the Church Abroad has been rocked by a series of schisms which have harmed her up till now and have drawn away even a part of the hierarchy. This consciousness of a feeling of personal worthiness is manifested also in social affairs, where each person who has advanced a little among the ranks, or thinks he has, puts his own opinion higher than everyone's and tries to be a leader. As a result, Russian society is split into countless parties and groups irreconcilably at odds with each other, each trying to put forwards its

own program, which is sometimes a thoroughly developed system and sometimes simply an appeal to follow this or that personality.

“With the hope of saving and resurrecting Russia through the realization of their programs, these social activists almost always lose sight of the fact that besides human activity making history, there moves the hand of God. The Russian people as a whole has committed great sins, which are the reasons for the present misfortunes; namely, oath-breaking and regicide. Civic and military leaders renounced their obedience and loyalty to the Tsar, even before his abdication, forcing the latter upon him, who did not want internal bloodshed. The people openly and noisily greeted this act, without any loud protest anywhere. This renunciation of obedience was a breach of the oath taken to the Emperor and his lawful heirs. On the heads of those who committed this crime fell the curses of their forefathers, the Zemsky Sobor of 1613, which imposed a curse on those who disobeyed its resolutions. The ones guilty of the sin of regicide are not only those who physically performed the deed but the people as a whole, who rejoiced when the Tsar was overthrown and allowed his degradation, his arrest and exile, leaving him defenceless in the hands of criminals, which itself spelled out the end.

“Thus, the calamity which befell Russia is the direct result of terrible sins, and her rebirth is possible only after she has been cleansed from them. However, until now there has been no real repentance; the crimes that were committed have not been openly condemned, and many active participants in the Revolution continue even now to assert that at the time it was impossible to act otherwise.

“By not voicing an outright condemnation of the February Revolution, of the uprising against the Anointed One of God, the Russian people continues to participate in the sin, especially when they defend the fruits of the Revolution, for in the words of the Apostle Paul, those men are especially sinful who, ‘knowing... that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them’ (Romans 1.32).

“While punishing the Russian people, the Lord at the same time is pointing out the way to salvation by making them teachers of Orthodoxy throughout the world. The Russian Diaspora has acquainted the four corners of the earth with Orthodoxy, for a significant part of the Russian immigration unconsciously preaches Orthodoxy. Everywhere, wherever Russians live, they build little refugee churches or even majestic cathedrals, or simply serve in premises adapted for this purpose.

“The majority of Russian refugees are not familiar with the religious tendencies of their intelligentsia, and they are nourished by those spiritual reserves which they accumulated in the homeland. Large masses of refugees attend Divine services, some of them actively participate in them, helping with the singing and reading on cliros and serving in the altar. Affiliated organizations have been established which take upon themselves the

responsibility of maintaining the churches, often performing charitable work as well.

“Looking at the faithful who pack the churches on feast days, one might think that in fact the Russian people have turned to the Church and are repenting of their sins. However, if you compare the number who go to church with the number of Russians who live in a given place, it turns out that about one-tenth of the Russian population regularly goes to church. Approximately the same number attend Divine services on major feasts, and the rest either very rarely – on some particular occasions – go to church and occasionally pray at home, or have left the Church altogether. The latter sometimes is a conscious choice under sectarian or anti-religious influences, but in most cases it is simply because people do not live in a spiritual manner; they grow hard, their souls become crude, and sometimes they become outright nihilists.

“The great majority of Russians have a hard life full of personal difficulties and material deprivation. Despite the hospitable attitude towards us in some countries, especially in our fraternal Yugoslavia, whose government and people are doing everything possible to show their love for Russia and to ease the grief of the Russian exiles, still, Russians everywhere feel the bitterness of being deprived of their homeland. Their surrounding environment reminds them that they are strangers and must adapt to customs that are often foreign to them, feeding of the crumbs that fall from the table of their hosts. Even in those countries which are very well disposed towards us, it is natural that in hiring practices preference should be given to the country’s citizens; and with the current difficult situations of most countries, Russians often cannot find work. Even those who are relatively well provided for are constantly made to feel their lack of rights in the absence of organizations which could protect them from injustices. Although only a comparatively insignificant number have been completely absorbed into local society, it quite often happens in such cases that they become totally alienated from their own people and their own country.

“In such a difficult situation in all respects, the Russian people abroad have shown a remarkable degree of patient endurance and self-sacrifice. It is as if they have forgotten about their formerly wonderful (for many) conditions of life, their service to their homeland and its allies in the Great War, their education and everything else that might prompt them to strive for a comfortable life. In their exile they have taken up every kind of work and occupation to make a living for themselves abroad. Former nobles and generals have become simple workmen, artisans and petty merchants, not disdaining any type of work and remembering that no work is degrading, provided it is not bound up with any immoral activity. The Russian intelligentsia in this respect has manifested an ability, whatever the situation, to preserve its vitality and to overcome everything that stands in the way of its existence and development. It has also shown that it had lofty spiritual qualities, that it is capable of being humble and long-suffering.

“The school of refugee life has morally regenerated and elevated many people. One has to give honor and credit to those who bear their refugee cross doing difficult work to which they are unaccustomed, living in conditions which previously they did not know or even think of. Remaining firm in spirit, they have maintained a nobility of soul and ardent love for their homeland, and, repenting over their former sins, they endure their trial without complaints. Truly, many of them, men and women, are now more glorious in their dishonour than in the years of their glory. The spiritual wealth which they have now acquired is better than the material wealth they left in the homeland, and their souls, like gold purified by fire, have been cleansed in the fire of suffering and burn like brightly glowing lamps...”<sup>639</sup>

Although the Serbs had invited the Russians to Serbia, by the beginning of the Second World War it became clear that the ROCOR Synod would have to move to another country sooner or later. Nevertheless, ROCOR always remained grateful to the Serbs for the protection they had been offered. Patriarch Barnabas defended ROCOR even in its split with the Moscow Patriarchate.<sup>640</sup>

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In 1935 ROCOR’s Hierarchical Council approved a “Statute on the Orthodox Diocese of Berlin and Germany” which had been worked out in the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs of the Third Reich. This Statute envisaged the following demands: the agreement of the government on appointing the head of the diocese of Berlin and Germany; the agreement of the local State organs in the appointment to a parish of a priest “who is a foreigner or without citizenship”, which affected almost all the clergy of ROCOR in Germany; and in the appointment by a bishop of members of the diocesan council and when forming new parishes or accepting old ones into the diocese.<sup>641</sup>

On February 14, 1936 the German government began to help ROCOR, seeing it was now a State-recognized institution: the German clergy of ROCOR began to receive regular salaries; subsidies were granted for various needs of the German diocese and its parishes; and the clergy and the diocese received various privileges.<sup>642</sup> On February 25, 1938 Hitler signed a law “On the land-ownership of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany”, according to which “the State in the person of the minister of ecclesiastical affairs received the right

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<sup>639</sup> St. John Maximovich, “The Spiritual Condition of the Russian People in the Diaspora”, in *Man of God*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1994, pp. 204-210.

<sup>640</sup> A.A. Kostriukov, “K istorii vzaimootnoshenij mezhdru Serbskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkoviu i Arkhierejskim Sinodom v Sremskikh Karlovtsakh” (Towards a History of the Mutual Relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Hierarchical Synod in Sremsky Karlovtsy), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, N 2 (682), February, 2009, pp. 1-13.

<sup>641</sup> A.K. Nikitin, *Polozhenie russkoj pravoslavnoj obschiny v Germanii v period natsistskogo rezhima (1933- 1945)* (The Position of the Russian Orthodox Community in Germany in the Nazi Period (1933-1945)), annual theological conference PSTBI, Moscow, 1998, pp. 321-322; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 52-53.

<sup>642</sup> Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 55.

to dispose of the Russian ecclesiastical property in the country and in the territories joined to it." On the basis of this law the German State handed over all the pre-revolutionary property of the Russian Church in Germany into the possession of ROCOR, besides the church in Dresden.<sup>643</sup> However, it did not do this immediately. As Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris writes in his *Memoirs* (p. 648), for some time the government still retained parishes in Berlin, in Eastern Prussia and in Dresden. But on May 5, 1939 the law was extended to Dresden and the Sudetenland.

Why was the German government so favourably disposed to ROCOR? Part of the answer may lie in the fact that the authorities had a negative opinion of the Paris jurisdiction of Metropolitan Evlogy because of its links with the YMCA and other internationalist and Masonic organizations, and were therefore more favourably disposed to ROCOR, which had broken links with the Evlogians. Also, some of the churches in their possession had been built with the participation of German royalty who had family links with the House of the Romanovs, and ROCOR was, of course, the Orthodox jurisdiction with the closest links with the Romanovs. Perhaps also they were hoping in this way to elicit the sympathy of the Balkan Slavic peoples towards Germany.<sup>644</sup>

In 1938 Hitler gave ROCOR a plot of land in Berlin to build a church, for which Metropolitan Anastasy thanked him. This formed the basis for "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow to accuse him of sympathy for fascism, an accusation which has been repeated many times since then.

The truth of the matter was explained by Metropolitan Anastasy himself in October, 1945 as follows: "Soon after his coming to power Hitler learned that the Russian Orthodox people in Berlin did not have a church of their own after the church built by them had been removed from the parish because they could not pay the debts they had incurred for it. This led immediately to order the release of considerable sums of money for the building of a new Orthodox church on a beautiful plot of land set aside for this in the German capital. We should note that Hitler took this step without any deliberate request on the part of the Russian Orthodox community and did not attach any conditions to his offering that might have been compensation for it. The Hierarchical Synod as well as the whole of Russia Abroad could not fail to value this magnanimous act, which came at a time when Orthodox churches and monasteries were being mercilessly closed, destroyed or used for completely unsuitable purposes (they were being turned into clubs, cinemas, atheist museums, food warehouses, etc.), and other holy things in Russia were being mocked or defiled. This fact was noted in the address [given by the metropolitan], but the Synod of course gave no 'blessing to destroy and conquer Russia'."<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>643</sup> A.K. Nikitin, *op. cit.*; Monk Benjamin, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, part 2, p.71.

<sup>644</sup> G.M. Soldatov, personal communication, March 19, 2006.

<sup>645</sup> Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnyim liudiam po povodu 'Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastyriam i kliru tak nazyvaemoj Karlovatskoj orientatsii' (Epistle to the Russian Orthodox people on the 'Address of Patriarch Alexis to the archpastors and clergy of the so-called Karlovtsy orientation), in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhiejskij Sobor Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi*

In fact, according to Bishop Gregory Grabbe, the address sent to Hitler was not composed by Metropolitan Anastasy, but by the president of the Russian colony in Berlin, General Biskupsky. When it was shown to the metropolitan, he found it too “flowery”. But it had already been sent to the ministry of the interior, and it was too late to compose a new, more moderate variant.<sup>646</sup>

As regards Metropolitan Anastasy’s attitude towards Fascism, he displayed, as Shkarovsky writes, “a negative attitude towards how some Russian émigré figures were toying with fascist ideas. Vladyka Anastasy said that ‘fascism is incompatible with Christianity because it suppresses personal spiritual freedom, without which the spiritual life of Christianity is not possible.

“Again, on July 15, 1936, the Metropolitan clearly stated his stance against fascism at the Saint Vladimir Festival in Belgrade: ‘Fascism as a type of state-political structure can never be our ideal. It is founded upon principles of compulsion which extend to a person’s very ideology. Yet without freedom, there can be no moral heroism nor moral responsibility. Without either of the latter a Russian Orthodox state is also unthinkable for us.’ In his 1939 Christmas encyclical, Vladyka Anastasy outlined, as a counterweight to the race theory of Nazism, the Church’s understanding of love for one’s people and for one’s native country: ‘The very concept of our native country has, in our consciousness, never been crudely materialistic, and our national image has never been defined by purely outward zoological racial markers. What we call our Fatherland is not the physical air that we breathe, nor the vast expanses of forests, rivers and seas... but rather first and foremost our native spiritual atmosphere engendered by Holy Orthodoxy, the incorruptible moral values passed down to us by the past millennium of history.’”<sup>647</sup>

After the German annexation of Czechia and Moravia in March, 1939, the Germans tried to put all the Orthodox there in the jurisdiction of ROCOR’s Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade), a German national. On November 3, Seraphim concluded an agreement with the Eulogian Bishop Sergius of Prague whereby his parishes were transferred, from a purely juridical point of view, into the jurisdiction of Archbishop Seraphim, but retained their real independence and submission to Metropolitan Evlogy.<sup>648</sup>

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*Zagranitsej, Miunkhen (Germania) 1946 g.* (The Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Munich in 1946), Minneapolis, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>646</sup> Soldatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>647</sup> Shkarovsky, “The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Holocaust”, translated in *ROCOR Studies*, December 7, 2019, [http://www.rocorstudies.org/2019/12/22/the-russian-orthodox-church-outside-of-russia-and-the-holocaust/?fbclid=IwAR0vPWCrV\\_SZi9dWGVVvkYFAk9sbDw6CUWd9VQWskS0\\_VxNY\\_8TXBMwxJBY](http://www.rocorstudies.org/2019/12/22/the-russian-orthodox-church-outside-of-russia-and-the-holocaust/?fbclid=IwAR0vPWCrV_SZi9dWGVVvkYFAk9sbDw6CUWd9VQWskS0_VxNY_8TXBMwxJBY).

<sup>648</sup> M. Nazarov, *Missia russoj emigratsii* (The Mission of the Russian Emigration), Moscow, 1994, vol. 1, p. 266; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 5; M.V. Shkarovsky, *Istoria Russoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration), St. Petersburg, 2009.

The parishes of the Serbian Bishop Vladimir (Raich) in Transcarpathia and Slovakia also



The influence of Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Seraphim in the German government was to prove useful again. On November 4, 1940 the Eulogian Archbishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) of Brussels was arrested after the liturgy and imprisoned as “enemy № 2” in Aachen. From there he was transferred to a prison in Berlin. It was Archbishop Seraphim who rescued Archbishop Alexander from prison and settled him at the Russian church in Tegel, where he remained until the end of the war.<sup>649</sup>

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passed into Seraphim’s jurisdiction after Vladimir was detained by the Hungarian authorities (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 1).

<sup>649</sup> M.V. Shkarovsky, in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 14-15.

## 45. ROMANIA: JEWS, IRON GUARDISTS AND OLD CALENDARISTS

The only real obstacle to Hitler's expansion in the late 1930s was France's system of alliances with the smaller states of Central and Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania. However, as Golo Mann writes, "no dramatic blows were needed to break up the French alliance system; it gradually rotted away. Economic factors entered. Germany, not France, had always been the big buyer and seller on the central European markets. Under Hjalmar Schacht's so-called 'New Plan' this relationship assumed curious forms; in order to avoid spending foreign exchange Germany concluded a number of bi-lateral agreements, barter arrangements in effect, as a result of which the states of central and south-east Europe became increasingly dependent on Germany. As long as Germany paid with useful finished goods and not with loot there was little objection to this method. Britain, for example, regarded this development as fundamentally natural. Neville Chamberlain thought good-naturedly that there was no cause for anxiety if Germany wanted to revive its economy and that of the south-eastern states by intensive bilateral trade; sooner or later the British economy would also somehow benefit.

"This was the direction in which events seemed to be moving in the period of appeasement. The problems and conflicts of the war were out of date because Germany had long ceased to be the vanquished nation of 1918. It was as feared and powerful as under the Hohenzollerns, even more powerful because France was weaker than before, because the whole European system was weaker, and because in central Europe there was no longer the Habsburg monarchy but a collection of artificial, small states distrustful and envious of each other..."<sup>650</sup>

So the multi-national empires of the past, for all their faults, had served a good purpose, in preventing the rise of nationalist empires like Germany's! But self-determination, the principle promoted by the democratic statesmen at Versailles, had destroyed the multi-nationalism of the Romanov and Habsburg empires; and the Germans wanted to be self-determined like everybody else. The result was Nazism, which tried to reconstitute the old empires into one Reich and under a far harsher regime...

Romania, though defeated in World War One, was well rewarded for its late adherence to the western democracies: it was given greatly increased territories at the expense of Austria-Hungary in Transylvania and Bukovina and of Bulgaria in Dobrudja. However, the problem for the Romanians, as for the Yugoslavs, was that these new territories came with large non-Romanian populations who were not easily assimilated. "In any case," as Ernest Latham writes, "many of the minorities did not want to assimilate and deeply regretted the stroke of a pen that alienated them from their heritages and converted them into Romanian subjects. In addition to the significant number of Jews already living in the old Romania, Jews were present in considerable numbers in most

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<sup>650</sup> Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 443.

of the new provinces. They were in customs, dress, language and of course, religion highly visible and had no neighbouring polity to support them and to ventilate their grievances. Anti-semitism with roots in the Romanian lands dating back to the first half of the nineteenth century took wing in a virulent and all too often violent incarnation, first under Prof. A.D. Cuza and his League of Christian Defense and later with the Legion of the Archangel Michael (Iron Guard) under its charismatic leader, Capitanul Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

“There was also the issue of governance. What passes for corruption in many states had long been a hallmark of the Romanian government. Elections were rigged, voters disenfranchised, contracts contingent on kickbacks, bureaucrats multiplied in number and uselessness. The Škoda scandal of the early 1930s was remarkable only because of its extent, its penetration of the Ministry of Defence, its international implications and its long reach into the palace of Carol II.”<sup>651</sup>

In 1920, Carol, the heir to the Romanian throne, having been obliged to leave his first wife, Zisi Lambrino, was married to Princess Helen of Greece, who bore him the future King Mihail.<sup>652</sup> In 1922, however, he took as his mistress the Jewess Elena (Magda) Lupescu. This was a public scandal, and in 1925 he was obliged both to abdicate in favour of his son Mihail and leave the country. From 1927 until 1930, as King Mihail was still a small boy, the country was ruled by a regency council that included Patriarch Miron as Prime Minister<sup>653</sup> and Carol’s younger brother Nicolae. Carol was recalled in 1930, and his former wife was forced into exile, while the king lived openly with Lupescu (he only married her after his exile from Romania in 1940).

In the 1930s Carol was associated with all kinds of corruption. This was dangerous for Romania at a time when the country was in a particularly vulnerable international position in that she shared a frontier with the Soviets, across which, in the event of a Soviet-German war, the Soviets would undoubtedly want to send their troops.

The question was: should Romania allow it?

As is revealed in the *Memoirs* of Prince Michael Sturdza<sup>654</sup>, on October 22, 1934 Göring, speaking in the name of Hitler, set forth the following proposal to the Romanian Ambassador in Berlin, Petrescu-Comnen: a guarantee of all

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<sup>651</sup> Latham, *Romanian Nationalism during the Reign of Mihai II*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2010, pp. 8-9.

<sup>652</sup> Since King George of Greece, Helen’s brother, wished to marry Carol’s sister Elizabeth, and this is forbidden by the canons, it was arranged that the two marriages took place exactly simultaneously in Bucharest and Athens, so that the one should not be an impediment to the other!

<sup>653</sup> He was also a Freemason. See [https://www.mlmar.ro/en/famous-masons/miron-cristea?fbclid=IwAR3T8LRQ-FIUqG0QEpy4xjDXTIU22AluJCMJIn2oSigwSgi2PoTHe\\_mpEsk](https://www.mlmar.ro/en/famous-masons/miron-cristea?fbclid=IwAR3T8LRQ-FIUqG0QEpy4xjDXTIU22AluJCMJIn2oSigwSgi2PoTHe_mpEsk).

<sup>654</sup> Sturdza, *The Suicide of Europe: Memoirs of Prince Michel Sturdza*, Former Foreign Minister of Rumania, Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1968.

Romania's frontiers, including those with Soviet Russia and Hungary and the complete rearmament with the most modern weapons of Romania's military forces. Germany did not ask Romania to abandon any of her alliances. The only thing she asked in exchange was a pledge to oppose any attempt of the Soviet troops to cross Romania's territory. Titulescu, Romania's pro-western Foreign Minister at the time, concealed Petrescu-Comnen's report, and the German proposals, though repeated several times before the outbreak of World War Two, continued to be rejected by Romanian statesman.

However, there was a strong movement in favour of a rapprochement with Germany within Romania. This was the Legionary movement founded by Corneliu Codreanu in 1927. As Thomas Haas writes, "The beginning of what was to be his career and mission can be dated from January 1918. After the Bolshevik takeover in Petrograd, the Russian troops which had been fighting alongside their Rumanian allies degenerated into no more than a collection of drinking, looting, raping rabble. During that fateful January, Codreanu organized a group of high school students to fight the Russian marauders, who were menacing the Moldavian city of Iasi. Shortly thereafter he organized the Guard of National Conscience from among the students and workers of Iasi.

"Codreanu reached what can be considered a point of no return in his tragic life... in 1922 when he organized the Association of Christian Students. He and twenty-six students took a pledge of honor, in a religious ceremony, to continue for the rest of their lives the nationalist fight – a pledge to which many of them remained faithful even unto their deaths. In 1923 he founded the League of National Christian Defense (LANC, which polled 120,000 votes in the election of 1926). When Codreanu returned to Rumania in 1927 after a period of study at Grenoble University, LANC had disintegrated into a collection of feuding splinter groups. From the best of the earlier league, he organized the Legion of the Archangel Michael which came to be called the Legionary Movement. In 1930 a group of hard-core members formed an elite section within the Legion, called the Iron Guard. In time the Legion came to be known by the name of this elite group. Although the two are almost synonymous, the reader should keep in mind that they represent two different aspects of the Movement.

"The purpose of the Legionary Movement was the defense of the endangered nation and of all the spiritual and historic values which formed the texture of Rumania's national existence...

"We think it is fitting to quote the basic rules of the organization. These are contained in the Manual of Legionary Laws, written for the use of the head of each Legionary group.

"The Law of Discipline: [The] Legionary [must] be obedient; without discipline we will not win. Follow your chief for better or worse.

“The Law of Work: Do your daily work. Work with joy. Let the reward of your work be not any material profit, but the satisfaction that you have contributed something to the glory of the Legion and the greatness of your country.

“The Law of Silence: Talk little. Talk only when you must. Your eloquence is in deeds. Let others talk; you do.

“The Law of Education: You must become another man. A hero.

“The Law of Assistance: Help your brother in distress. Do not abandon him.

“The Law of Honor: Follow only the ways shown by honor. Fight. Never be a coward. Leave to others the ways of infamy. Better fall fighting the way of honor, than to conquer by infamy.”<sup>655</sup>

However, there was a sinister side to Codreanu’s spirituality: his anti-Semitism. As Misha Glenny writes, “Two figures defined Codreanu’s Manichean perception of the world – the Romanian peasant and the Jew. The one embodied all natural wisdom and held the key to salvation; the other was the agent of Satan. ‘The Jews, the Jews, they are our curse,’ Codreanu told a British journalist. ‘They poison our state, our life, our people. They demoralize our nation. They destroy our youth. They are the arch enemies... The Jews scheme and plot and plan to ruin our national life. We shall not allow this to happen. We, the Iron Guard, will stand in the way of such devilry. We shall destroy the Jews before they can destroy us.’

“Interwar Romania was home to Europe’s most diverse Jewish population. While never accepted as Romanians, the Sephardic Jews of Wallachia were relatively well integrated, by dint of their concentration in towns and their established positions among the urban elite. They held pre-eminent positions in banking and heavy industry and made up a significant part of the proletariat, especially in textiles. They were traditionally well connected with the Jews of Germany, Austria and France – countries which together with Great Britain used international treaties in an attempt to compel Romania to guarantee equality for Jews. Although anti-Semitism was a peripheral phenomenon in Bucharest compared to other parts of the country, the Romanian state systematically denied citizenship to Jews on racial grounds, classifying them as ‘foreigners’. Regardless of how long Jews had lived in Romania, they were denied certain basic rights and often had to battle for years to gain entrance to higher education.

“The situation in Moldavia was very different. In the second half of the nineteenth century, tens of thousands of Ashkenazi peasants had fled there to escape Russian persecution. They were joined by a second massive influx when Bessarabia was incorporated at the end of the First World War. These

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<sup>655</sup> Haas, introduction to Sturdza, op. cit., pp. xvii-xix.

Jews were triply disadvantaged. They lived in closed communities, many of them were Hasidic, and they spoke either Russian or Yiddish. They rarely learned Romanian. In this region, they also regularly filled the class gap, in their capacity as estate managers, between the landowners and the peasantry. For the peasants they were the symbols of injustice; for the landowners, they were indispensable tools. These Russophone Bessarabian Jews were suspected of sympathy for the Soviet Union and Romanian nationalists looked darkly on the high incidence of Jews in the Romanian Communist Party.

“Romanians rightly suspected that the Jews of Transylvania were pro-Hungarian. Until the interwar period, the Hungarian Jews were usually well-assimilated, obeying the logic of Hungarian nationalism which accepted most nationalities into its ranks as long as they recognized the superiority of Hungarian language and culture. The Jews of Transylvania, together with the Hungarian elite, were discriminated against after the area was transferred to Romania under the Treaty of Trianon at the end of the Great War.

“Over 30 per cent of Iași’s population was Jewish. In this city one of Europe’s most virulent strains of anti-Semitism found a fertile culture in which to develop. The leading anti-Semite was Professor Alexander Cuza, whose lectures inspired Codreanu as a young law student. Codreanu specialized in dramatic gestures, challenging authority over symbolic issues and organizing peasants and workers to engage communists and Jews in street fights. Early in his political career, Codreanu convinced himself that violence was a legitimate political instrument.

“In 1930, Codreanu announced that the Legion of Archangel Michael was to give birth to a new mass movement – the Garda de Fier or Iron Guard. In contrast to the Legion, which remained a conspiratorial cell-based network, the Iron Guard was to be a mass movement. To symbolize their peasant roots, members wore green shirts with a leather belt slashed diagonally across the front and embossed with a white cross on a black background. In the Great Depression, unemployed students and desperate peasants flocked to the ranks of the Iron Guard. Codreanu organized work brigades throughout Romania to build bridges and roads and help peasants to bring in the harvest. As Bucharest’s politicians enriched themselves, the Iron Guard had by 1933 accumulated considerable support in the countryside of Moldavia and Transylvania, less for its anti-Semitism (although this was very important) than for the practical assistance it offered peasant communities.

“Carol was rather attracted to the Iron Guard, although jealous of Codreanu’s popularity. The King shared Codreanu’s belief that Romanian democracy was rotten to the core. From 1932, however, his Foreign Minister, Nicolae Titulescu, and other leading Liberals urged him to see the Iron Guard as a mortal enemy...”<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.* pp. 448-450.

“Concerning the great powers, Titulescu most controversially established diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union. Hostility to both Russia and communism ran deep in Romania but, to feel secure, it needed to remain on good terms with Moscow (which refused to recognize Romanian sovereignty over Bessarabi and which also coveted Bukovina). At the same time, Titulescu also had to reassure Germany (which was vigilant against the emergence of a Franco-Russian-Little Entente alliance and sympathized with the revisionist dreams of Hungary and Bulgaria) as well as remind France that it had vital security interests in south-eastern Europe, centred on Romania. Between 1932 and 1936, when Titulescu enjoyed the full support of Carol and his cabinets, Romania succeeded in balancing these difficult options.”<sup>657</sup>

In opposition to Titulescu’s balancing-act between Fascism and Communism, Codreanu’s Iron Guard weighed unambiguously on the side of Fascism. Thus documentary films show the Legionnaires making the fascist salute, and Codreanu, declared on November 30, 1937: "Forty-eight hours after the victory of the Legionary Movement, Rumania will be allied to Rome and Berlin, thus entering the line of its historical world-mission: the defense of the Cross, of Christian Culture and Civilization."

Michael Burleigh writes: “Few European Fascist movements went so far as to proclaim that ‘God is a Fascist!’ or that ‘the ultimate goal of the Nation must be resurrection in Christ!’ Romania was the exception. Romanian Fascists wanted ‘a Romania in delirium’ and they largely got one... One of the Legion’s intellectual luminaries, the world-renowned anthropologist Mircea Eliade, described the legionary ideal as ‘a harsh Christian spirituality’. Its four commandments were ‘belief in God; faith in our mission; love for one another; song’. The goal of a ‘new moral man’ may have been a totalitarian commonplace, but the ‘resurrection of the [Romanian] people in front of God’s throne’ was not routine in such circles.”<sup>658</sup>

Codreanu began to concentrate his attacks on the king and the Jews. “King Carol was, in Codreanu’s eyes, the lowest form of humanity: he had violated the vows of his Orthodox marriage to Princess Helen by committing adultery with a Jew. He was also close friends with Jews like Blank and Aușnit, and held up to 30 per cent of the shares in some of the largest Romanian companies. According to one contemporary, ‘four of the largest sugar mills were in Carol’s hand, as well as a beer factory. He had important shares in the gold mine and the telephone company and a large control of Banca de Credit Român.’ Carol was more than just a dissolute adulterer, Codreanu believed, he was the very instrument of ‘foreign’, i.e. Jewish, interests, which were enslaving the Romanian peasant through forced industrialization.

“In 1936, the Guard began to focus its verbal attacks on the camarilla. Jews and Hungarians fell victims to Codreanu’s mobs. In the same year, at the

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<sup>657</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 4520543.

<sup>658</sup> Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 270

Guard's Youth Conference in Târgu Mureș, the leadership announced the formation of a new elite detachment, the Death Commandos (*Echipa Morții*). After a group of these Commandos murdered their most prominent victim, the renegade Nicolae Stelescu, 'they chopped his body with an axe, danced around the pieces of flesh, prayed, kissed each other and cried with joy'. (All this, incidentally, at a hospital where Stelescu was recovering from appendectomy.) If Carol needed any further warning about the danger posed by the Iron Guard, it came in the elections of November 1937. [Codreanu's Party] TPȚ [Totul pentru Țara - 'All for the Country'] won 16.5 per cent of the vote, becoming the third largest parliamentary force in Romania with sixty-six seats. Some 9 per cent voted for the Goga-Cuza alliance, meaning that a quarter of the electorate had voted for rabidly anti-Semitic parties. The Liberals, through whom Carol had been ruling, had sunk below the 40 per cent mark, and so were unable to form a government. Instead, Carol turned to Goga and Cuza. Carol convinced himself that an extreme reactionary government would take the sting out of Codreanu's tail.

"Yet as soon as the two racist geriatrics felt the reins of power in their hands, they chose to realize the fantasies which they had been nurturing in institutions of learning for several decades. Far from discouraging the Iron Guard, as Carol had planned, Codreanu and his accomplices - the Death Commandos, the Lancieri and the Green Shirts - indulged in a bacchanalia of murder, rape and looting...

"The Goga-Cuza government was in power for less than two months. They were the most shameful two months in Romania's modern history up to that time, and a foretaste of what was to come when the Iron Guard was finally permitted to transform the country into the Legionary State in 1940. Carol's wish for discord between the anti-Semites and the fascists eventually came true at the beginning of 1938 when the rival mobs turned on each other during the election campaign occasioned by the fall of the Goga-Cuza Cabinet. The country was sinking into bloody anarchy and Carol took the opportunity to seize control. On 12 February, he announced a blanket ban on political activity, and the promulgation of a new, authoritarian constitution. Faced with a choice of a revolutionary fascist Iron Guard future, or a conservative Caroline autocracy, the grandees of the Liberals and the National Peasant Party chose the latter and bowed out of the political process with a minimum of fuss. The King celebrated his dictatorship by arresting the entire leadership of the Iron Guard, accusing them of being in the pay of the Nazis (a public accusation to which Hitler did not take kindly). In November 1938. Codreanu and thirteen other Iron Guard leaders were garroted and acid was poured over their bodies. It was announced that they had been shot 'while trying to escape'..."<sup>659</sup>

Now the king, writes Mark Mazower, "created his own new Party of the Nation which struck observers as 'a complete flop', and presided over a Government of National Union.

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<sup>659</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 455-457.



“Thus despite the region’s early experience of democratic politics, mass parties of left and right failed to survive. By the end of the 1930s, the parliamentary system and political parties had disappointed the hopes invested in them by liberal intellectuals. Few mourned their passing...”<sup>660</sup>

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“The first and foremost problem” for the True Orthodox (Old Calendarists) of Romania, writes Constantin Bujor, “was the lack of Priests. Religious persecution against the clergy and Faithful was in full swing, especially in Moldavia. Great sacrifice and an unwavering will were needed in order to uphold the True Faith...”

“In later 1930, Hieromonk Glicherie and Hierodeacon David went to Jerusalem to discuss with Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem (1848-1931) the situation of the Romanian Orthodox Christians who wished to continue observing the Julian Calendar. The Patriarch blessed them to continue their struggle and to build and Consecrate new Churches, for which purpose he provided them with Holy Chrism. To this day, in the home of Father Nicholae Onofrei there is a photograph of Father Glicherie serving with Patriarch Damianos. On returning to Romania, Father Glicherie continued the struggle with greater zeal and invigorated the Old Calendar Church by building over thirty new Churches. He went to many places in the country, including Basarabia, accompanied by a group of monks from both Romania and Mount Athos, who helped him in convincing the Faithful to keep alive love, hope, and confidence in the power of the traditional Faith...”<sup>661</sup>

In 1935, Fr. Glycherie, the leader of the Romanian Old Calendarists, heard of the return of the three bishops to the Old Calendar in Greece. And so late in the autumn he “travelled again to Mount Athos, accompanied by Monk Ghimnazie, who knew Greek... Their purpose was to bring an Old Calendarist Hierarch to Romania to perform Ordinations, or to have Father Ghimnazie or any other Romanian living on Mount Athos Consecrated to serve the Church back home.”<sup>662</sup>

However, when they “asked the Old Calendar Greek bishops to consecrate Fr. Ghimnazie to the episcopate, the bishops could do nothing without their first-hierarch, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, who, at the insistence of the newcalendarist Metropolitan of Athens, had been detained by the English authorities in Palestine...”

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<sup>660</sup> Mazower, *The Balkans*, London: Phoenix Books, 2001, p. 130.

<sup>661</sup> Bujor, *Resisting unto Blood: Sixty-Five Years of Persecution of the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Romania* (October 1924 – December 1989), Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2003, pp. 55-60.

<sup>662</sup> Bujor, op. cit., p. 98.

“St. Glycherie set off for Yugoslavia. He visited the church of the Russian Church Abroad in Belgrade, where Metropolitan Anastasy was serving. Metropolitan Anastasy advised Fr. Glycherie to turn to Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) of the Russian Church Abroad, and ask him to go to Romania to order Old Calendar priests. Bishop Seraphim at that time was in Vienna. St. Glycherie set off there, but Vladyka Seraphim did not decide to go to Romania, knowing how dangerous it was.”<sup>663</sup>

After returning to Romania, on September 1, 1936 Fr. Glycherie came to the consecration of a church in the village of Bukhalniya-Neamts. He was accompanied by 4000 peasants on 500 waggons. When the procession was passing through the town of Piatra Neamts, the road was blocked by soldiers with machine guns. St. Glycherie and many other monks and laypeople were arrested. Many were killed. Glycherie was savagely beaten on the head with various clubs. Deacon David Bidascu was also beaten, and suffered from his wounds for the rest of his days.<sup>664</sup>

Metropolitan Cyprian writes: “Hieromonk Glycherie... was taken under guard to Bucharest and there condemned to death. He was, however, miraculously saved, in that the Theotokos appeared to the wife of the Minister of Justice and gave her an order to intercede with her husband on Father Glycherie’ behalf. Her husband did not react in the manner of Pilate, but rather commuted Father Glycherie’s death sentence and ordered him imprisoned in a distant monastery...

“[Patriarch Miron, who was also Prime Minister] ordered all of the churches of the True Orthodox Christians razed, and imprisoned any cleric or monastic who refused to submit to his authority. The monks and nuns were incarcerated in two monasteries, where they were treated with unheard of barbarity. Some of them, such as Hieromonk Pambo, founder of the Monastery of Dobru (which was demolished and rebuilt three times), met with a martyr’s end. During the destruction of the Monastery of Cucova, five lay people were thrown into the monastery well and drowned. By such tactics the Patriarch wished to rid himself of the Old Calendarist problem!”<sup>665</sup>

Although the Romanian True Orthodox Church, unlike the Legionnaire movement, was a purely spiritual organization, it is not surprising that its leaders should have been put into the same category as the Legionnaires. Thus

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<sup>663</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 52.

<sup>664</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 57.

<sup>665</sup> Metropolitan Cyprian, "The True Orthodox Christians of Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, N 1 (102). Over ten priests were killed or died in prison, including Fathers Pambo, Gideon and Theophanes. See Victor Boldewskul, "The Old Calendar Church of Romania", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, N 5, October-November, 1992, pp. 11-17. Metropolitan Blaise writes: "Take, for example, Fr. Euthymius - he was in a concentration camp for 3 years with Fr. Pambo, and he told us how they tortured him: they threw him into a stream and forced other prisoners to walk over him as over a bridge: he was at that time about 27 years old." (*Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 2 (1479), 15/28 January, 1993)

in 1938 the authorities decided to accuse Fr. Glycherie of being an Iron Guard. "After Father Glicherie was arrested in 1936," writes Constantin Bujor, "all means of intimidation were employed to shatter his nervous system. He was incarcerated for more than two years in a variety of prisons, being transferred from one jail to another; Bucharest, Iezeru, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Iezeru, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Craiova, Bucharest, Iași, Iezeru, and Piatra Niamț. The accusation of being an Old Calendarist could not carry too long a sentence, and Father Glicherie was thus finally set at liberty in 1938 – much to the chagrin of those who had gone to such great lengths to have him arrested. So, once again, they fabricated false charges, this time accusing him of more serious infractions in order to have him decisively condemned. Thus, Hieromonk Glicherie was falsely accused of being active in the Legionary Movement. Although Legionnaires were highly regarded and visible in Romanian political life at this time, the Monarch had dictatorially abolished all political parties. Ironically, Father Glicherie was also falsely accused at the same time of Communist or Bolshevik activity, because the Russian Orthodox Church followed the Julian Calendar. This, too, was a serious charge: the Communists were mortal enemies of Romania, and therefore, through guilt by association, the Old Calendarists were enemies of the State. Accusations of these kinds provoked a variety of reactions and even frightened many people, who came to believe that the Old Calendarists posed a danger to society. To discourage supporters of the Old Calendar Church, appropriate punishments were levied. Plenty of 'witnesses', denunciations, and contrived 'facts' could easily be produced; the elimination of inconvenient opponents by such methods was the order of the day. Thus, in 1938, Father Glicherie was arrested and sent to Miercurea Ciuc to a death camp for political prisoners. After nine months' imprisonment, he was scheduled for execution with a group of Legionnaires. Miraculously, at the very moment that he was to face the firing squad, he was saved by the government's unexpected amnesty of the camp's remaining detainees..."<sup>666</sup>

K.V. Glazkov writes that while Fr. Glycherie was in this camp "there came an order to divide all the prisoners into two parts and shoot one part and then the other. When the first group had been shot, Fr. Glycherie and several legionnaires in the second group prayed a thanksgiving moleben to the Lord God and the Mother of God for counting them worthy of death in the Orthodox faith. The Lord worked a miracle – suddenly there arrived a governmental order decreeing clemency."<sup>667</sup>

"With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Father Glycherie was set free and, along with his beloved co-struggler, Deacon David Bidasu, fled into the forest. There the two lived in indescribable deprivation and hardship, especially during the winter. In the midst of heavy snows, when their few secret supporters could not get frugal provisions to them, the Fathers were obliged to

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<sup>666</sup> Bujor, op. cit., pp. 99-101

<sup>667</sup> Glazkov, "Istoricheskie prichiny nekotorykh sobitij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II Mirovoj vojny" (The Historical Reasons for some Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church before the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), NN 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 57-58.

eat worms! However, Divine Providence protected them from their persecutors and, directed by that same Providence, the birds of the sky would erase traces of the Fathers' footprints in the snow by flying about and flapping their wings in the snow. And despite the harsh cold, not once did they light a fire, lest the smoke might betray their refuge. (The cold often approaches thirty degrees below zero during the winter in Romania.) Other ascetics were also hidden in the deserts, among them Father Damascene, Father Paisius, et al."<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>668</sup> Metropolitan Cyprian, "The True Orthodox Christians of Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, N 1 (102). Cf. <https://www.imoph.org/pdfs/2014/06/28/E20140628aNeaFasisAgonon-14%20Folder/E20140628aNeaFasisAgonon-14.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3t1EmGIGIbSwSq7JJwPfiYB9UYwV5NmgEvnTGcZ4Z23kfQUtoBMWJA OXk>.

## 46. THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT

As a result of Munich, writes Orlando Figes, “Stalin lost any belief in the alliance with the British and the French as a means of guaranteeing collective security. He began sending signals to the Germans with a view to offering a deal of Soviet neutrality in the event of a European war. The first sign came in his speech to the Eighteenth Party Congress in March 1939 in which he underlined that the Soviet Union would not get involved in conflicts between the capitalist states. Then, in May, Litvinov was replaced as Foreign Minister by Molotov, who in July gave a speech in which he clearly signaled Soviet disenchantment with the British and the French. He called them ‘crooks and cheats’ for delaying talks with the Soviet Union over a tripartite military alliance, the only guarantee the Soviets would accept to join the Western powers against Germany.”<sup>669</sup>

Let us remember, as Brendon writes, that Stalin “had been excluded from the [Munich] conference – Lord Halifax claimed that there was no time to issue an invitation to Moscow<sup>670</sup> – and he now feared that the USSR would become the next item on Hitler’s menu. The Czechoslovak sop, Stalin said, had done nothing but ‘whet the aggressor’s appetite’. Moreover, the famous declaration of 30 September, in which Chamberlain and Hitler expressed the desire of their two peoples never to go to war with each other again, sounded ominously like a non-aggression pact directed against Russia. *Mein Kampf* was closely studied in the Kremlin, where the Führer’s expressed ambitions to carve *Lebensraum* out of Soviet territory were taken with utmost seriousness.<sup>671</sup>”<sup>672</sup>

In fact, Stalin’s fear that Britain, France and Germany might unite against him, though understandable, was unfounded, especially because as 1938 turned into 1939 public opinion in Britain began to turn against appeasement. And the government too: “Chamberlain told the Commons... that ‘we must arm ourselves to the teeth’, and the government doubled defence spending from 1938 to 1939, further fuelling economic recovery. Although weakened by the Depression, and by earlier defence cuts, the aircraft, engineering and shipbuilding industries were among the strongest in the world. Production for exports was slashed. Air defences took shape, with a chain of radar stations being built covering the southern and eastern coasts, and by the summer of 1939 nearly all biplanes had been replaced by monoplanes, mostly Hawker Hunters. The navy was outbuilding every other in the world, and by 1939 it had more battleships, aircraft carriers and cruisers than any other country...

“... The Prime Minister surprised the Commons on 6 February with a sudden pledge of support to France – ‘Really Chamberlain is an astonishing and perplexing old boy,’ sighed the MP Harold Nicolson. ‘We have at last got on top

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<sup>669</sup> Figes, *Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 297-298.

<sup>670</sup> In fact Halifax, a fervent Anglican, considered the Soviet Union to be “the Antichrist” (Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 576). (V.M.)

<sup>671</sup> “The Reich,” wrote Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, “must again set itself on the march of the Teutonic knights of old, to obtain by the German sword sod for the German plough.” (V.M.)

<sup>672</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 577. (V.M.)

of the dictators,' wrote Chamberlain to his sister on 19 February. 'Of course, that doesn't mean I want to bully them.' Joint military planning belatedly began, and it was decided to expand the army's Field Force from two to nineteen divisions. Offers of support were showered on eastern Europe, especially Romania (important for its oil) and Poland. Poland was the crux, as the Nazis repeated their Sudetenland tactic, using as a pretext for aggression Danzig (an international city) and the corridor through German territory connecting Poland with the sea."

Nine days after entering Prague in March, Hitler seized Memel in Lithuania. Then, on March 28, he "denounced his 1934 pact with Poland, and preparations went ahead for its dismemberment. Poland was to him an unfortunate geographical anomaly. It contained large subject German populations and territories he believed ought to belong to him. But more important was that it barred his invasion route to Russia and so inhibited his plans to deal with the home of 'bacillus'. It had to submit to him or be destroyed, He saw no reason why the British and the French should resist his plans. If they were not prepared to fight over Czechoslovakia, which made some kind of military sense for them, why should they fight over Poland, which made no sense at all? In any case, why should not these capitalist countries welcome his decision to move Eastwards, ultimately against the heartland of Bolshevism?"<sup>673</sup>

"Instead, only three days later, the British gave Poland a guarantee that if 'action was taken which clearly threatened the independence of Poland so that Poland felt bound to resist with her national forces, His Majesty's Government would at once lend them all the support in their power.' Chamberlain made this move without consulting the French government, although they were more or less bound to endorse it..."<sup>674</sup> He told the Commons that he still hoped to maintain peace through a combination of deterrence (rearmament) and appeasement.

On April 17 Stalin proposed an alliance with France and Britain that was obviously aimed defensively against Hitler. However, the British were never sceptical about the benefits of such an alliance and did not make a formal reply. The French followed the British line (as usual since Munich).

Stalin then changed course, sacking his Foreign Minister Litvinov, a man of European culture who had supported the concept of "collective security" against Hitler, and replacing him with the more "Asiatic" Molotov. The way was being prepared for an alliance with Hitler rather than the western democracies...

"On April 29 - two days after the British government had informed Berlin that it would not accept Soviet proposals for an alliance, the Fuhrer denounced

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<sup>673</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 689-690.

<sup>674</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 357.

his non-aggression declaration with Poland as well as the Anglo-German naval accord, blaming the two countries in a blistering two-hour speech at one of the fewere than a dozen Reichstag sessions since he had claimed power.<sup>675</sup>

Poland was clearly under threat. But would Hitler invade it without any allies? Could Hitler enter into an alliance with the Soviet devil in order to protect himself from attack by it in the case of a German-Polish war?

Anti-Soviet propaganda suddenly tailed off, and “on May 3, 1939, General Karl Bodenschatz, Goring’s assistant, warned the French military attache in Berlin that ‘something is up in the East’. He repeated his warning to the Polish military attache. (The next day was Litvinov’s dismissal.) Four days later, Bodenschatz informed the French ambassador in Berlin, Robert Conlondre, that Hitler wanted an agreement with the Soviet Union...”<sup>676</sup>

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The summer was occupied with desultory preparations for the sending of a Franco-British delegation to Moscow. But Chamberlain, while never really abandoning his attitude of appeasement towards Germany, remained a steadfast enemy of Soviet power. Similarly, both Stalin and Molotov were Germanophiles and Anglophobes.<sup>677</sup>

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In August, after long delays the British and French sent a delegation to Moscow headed by a little-known diplomat with the unlikely name of Admiral Sir Reginald Ranfurly-Plunkett-Ernie-Erle-Drax, in order, writes Tombs, “to explore alliance with the Soviet Union, even today a controversial issue. The left had long been keen to cooperate with what it considered ‘the most peaceful Great Power’, and so was Churchill. Neither Chamberlain nor Stalin had any reason to trust the other. It was not clear – and is still not – what the crafty and paranoid Stalin really wanted and whether he would or could have provided effective aid in case of war, having recently slaughtered his senior military commanders. Moreover, for obvious reasons neither Poland nor Romania wanted the Red Army on their soil.”<sup>678</sup>

It emerged that Drax, a very low-level official, was not entitled to sign any major agreement with the Soviets, and that the British delegation was very ill prepared. Was their heart really in it, or were they just trying to forestall the Soviet-German negotiations which were taking place *at the very same time*? Certainly, the Soviets were not interested, and poured scorn on the western

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<sup>675</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 630.

<sup>676</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 630.

<sup>677</sup> Stalin observed to Ribbentop that “the Soviet government never had sympathy for England. It is only necessary to glance at the works of Lenin and his pupils to understand that the Bolsheviks always curse and hated England above all” (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 693).

<sup>678</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 689-690.

democracies' feeble attempts. So the British envoy could do nothing except return home empty-handed. And the very next day, August 23, the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union and Germany, Molotov and von Ribbentrop, signed a very wide-ranging non-aggression pact, which astonished the world, turning diplomatic relations and popular conceptions upside-down. For it united two opposing poles of world politics in a way that caused consternation to the true believers on both sides.

According to Richard Overy, the pact was signed "because, in 1939, neither wanted a war with the other. Hitler hoped that the pact would weaken the resolve of Britain and France to confront him over the German-Polish war, launched on 1 September 1939; when it did not, the pact helped to secure the German rear and supplied the German war economy with a large list of essential supplies. Stalin approved the pact, despite the shock it represented to the many thousands of communists worldwide who took Soviet anti-fascism for granted, because it allowed the Soviet Union to consolidate its security position in eastern Europe, acquire vanguard technologies from German industry, and, above all, to avoid war at the side of two capitalist empires, Britain and France, against another capitalist state, Germany."<sup>679</sup>

As Professor Andrei Zubov writes, in spite of the Soviet Union's huge advantage over Germany in tanks, airplanes and artillery, "he would still not be able to conquer all the other countries. So Stalin's calculation was that he should push the Western Axis powers into conflict with the Atlantic democracies, which would lead to their mutual extermination in the fire of war."<sup>680</sup>

Professor David Reynolds agrees with this assessment: "Stalin, for all his skill in wartime diplomacy, had an even greater capacity for self-deception. He entered into the Nazi-Soviet pact in the hope of gaining time for Soviet rearmament and of turning Germany west into another long war with France and Britain, akin to 1914-18. Instead, Hitler rolled over the French in five weeks in 1940 and was then free to turn east against Soviet communism years earlier than expected. Yet right up to 22 June 1941, Stalin refused to mobilise for fear this might provoke Hitler. What the Great Patriotic War myth still commemorates as Germany's 'surprise attack' was a surprise only to Stalin."<sup>681</sup>

This argument justifying the pact on the grounds that it would turn the imperialist powers against each other was also useful in convincing the various national communist parties to remain faithful to Stalin in spite of his change of course. Thus on September 7, 1939 Stalin said to the Bulgarian Communist and

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<sup>679</sup> Overy, *The Dictators*, London: Penguin Books, 2005, pp. 484-485.

<sup>680</sup> Zubov, quoted on *Facebook* by Tatiana Spektor, May 8, 2017.

<sup>681</sup> Reynolds, "Confidence and Curve Balls", *New Statesman*, 7 December, 2018, p. 57. Kotkin, agrees with this assessment.



Comintern leader Giorgi Dmitrov: “We would like them to have a really bad fight and weaken each other.”<sup>682</sup>

As regards Hitler’s motivation for the pact, ultimately it was, as he put it, “a pact with Satan to drive out the devil” – the Jewish bacillus nesting in the Soviet Union. Moreover, as Timothy Snyder points out, it made the Holocaust attainable. For the large Jewish population of Western Poland now fell under Nazi control. Plans were made almost immediately for the final solution of the Jewish problem, with the main extermination camps being situated in German Poland...Before that, however as Brendon writes, the pact “ensured that he would not have to fight a war on two fronts by coming to terms with Stalin. He thus outmanoeuvred the Western democracies, who were making their own overtures to the Soviet Union. But whereas they hesitated to ally with the Bolshevik Bear, Hitler had no scruples about doing an ideological volte-face in the interests of Realpolitik. It could easily be reversed. The Führer confessed privately that he was ‘in no wise altering his fundamental anti-bolshevik policies: one had to use Beelzebub to drive out Satan’ ...”<sup>683</sup>

Hitler had another, economic motive: oil. He was about to attack Poland, and shortly after that Western Europe. His *blitzkrieg* tactics combining tank and air offensives required a great deal of oil. Stalin gave him that in exchange for German machinery, with the result that the Nazi conquest of Western Europe in 1940 was largely fuelled by Soviet oil – as was the invasion of the Soviet Union itself! For when Hitler came to launch Operation Barbarossa against Stalin in 1941, his armies were again running on Soviet oil. But since the two men were now enemies, not allies, he soon began to run out of it, which necessitated his conquering the region – the North Caucasus (Maikop and Grozny) and Azerbaijan (Baku) – that supplied it as soon as possible. He did conquer the North Caucasus, but failed to win the no less strategic region of the Lower Volga, suffering his worst defeat at Stalingrad in 1942.

Not only oil, but also grain and various metals were exported in large quantities from the Soviet Union to Germany. And of course it was the Russian people who suffered, as they suffered from all the acts of Stalin. Thus “on May 7, 1940 Victor Savinykh and nine of his pupils aged between 14 and 17 were arrested for writing a letter to Stalin about “the inadmissibility of sending grain to Germany when Soviet people are starving. The sentence of the court was 10 years in Kolyma for a counter-revolutionary conspiracy.”<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>682</sup> “He resisted the contrast between fascist and democratic states, and said that it would not be bad if Britain was undermined by Germany.” (Jonathan Glover, *Humanity. A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1999, p. 268).

<sup>683</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 467.

<sup>684</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Historicanaru-исторические-фотографии-764285363598390/>

Max Hastings writes: "The secret protocols of the Nazi-Soviet pact, delineating the parties' territorial ambitions, were unknown in Western capitals until German archives were captured in 1945. But in September 1939, many citizens of the democracies perceived Russia and Germany alike as their foes. The novelist Evelyn Waugh's fictional alter ego, Guy Crouchback, adopted a view shared by many European conservatives: Stalin's deal with Hitler, 'news that shook the politicians and young poets of a dozen capital cities, brought deep peace to our English heart... The enemy at last was plain in view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms.' A few politicians aspired to separate Russia and Germany, to seek the support of Stalin to defeat the greater evil of Hitler. Until June 1941, however, such a prospect seemed remote: the two dictatorships were viewed as common enemies of the democracies."<sup>685</sup>

Although the two dictatorships were indeed the common enemies of the democracies, still some further explanation is required why, after so many years of hating and fighting each other, they should now have formed an alliance that left so many of their supporters speechless in surprise and incomprehension – even despair...

Apart from the geopolitical and economic factors already discussed, an important psychological factor lies in the fact that "birds of a feather flock together": the Nazis and the communists were more similar than many realized. For however much Hitler denounced Bolshevism to western diplomats, in private he freely acknowledged the debt of National Socialism to Marx, while Stalin only criticised Hitler publicly for the first time as late as March, 1936, declaring, relatively mildly, that while speaking about peace Hitler could not "avoid issuing threats" ...<sup>686</sup> At the same time, Soviet-German talks never ceased... In fact, Stalin seems to have admired Germany, reserving his greatest contempt and mistrust for Britain...

The pact had the good effect of bringing many former Communists to their senses. *Betrayal of the Left* (full title: *Betrayal of the Left: an Examination & Refutation of Communist Policy from October 1939 to January 1941: with Suggestions for an Alternative and an Epilogue on Political Morality*) was a book of essays published on 3 March 1941 by the Left Book Club, edited and largely written by Victor Gollancz. The book had a preface by Harold Laski. Other contributions included two essays by George Orwell, "Fascism and Democracy" and "Patriots and Revolutionaries", that condemned the Communist Party of Great Britain for backing the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Orwell described the pact as an "eye-opener" because it revealed that "National Socialism is a form of socialism, is emphatically revolutionary."

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<sup>685</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, London: HarperPress, 2011, p. 8.

<sup>686</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 287.

Again, Karl Albrecht, a disillusioned communist, now called Hitler “the greatest socialist of our times”.<sup>687</sup>

“At the conscious level,” writes Norman Davies, “communists and fascists were schooled to stress their differences. On the other hand, when pressed to summarize their convictions, they often gave strikingly similar answers. One said, ‘For us Soviet patriots, the homeland and communism became fused into one inseparable whole.’ Another put it thus: ‘Our movement took a grip on cowardly Marxism, and extracted the [real] meaning of socialism from it. It also took Nationalism from the cowardly bourgeois parties. Throwing them together into the cauldron of our way of life, the synthesis emerged as clear as crystal – German National Socialism.’ It is not for nothing that people treated to such oratory were apt to think of communists as ‘red fascists’ and of fascists as ‘brown communists’.”<sup>688</sup>

In fact, there was a deep similarity in the aims and outlooks of the two totalitarian regimes (if we except Hitler’s anti-semitism). It is therefore not surprising that the leaders of the two movements should have respected each other. “For the best part of a decade Stalin and Hitler had observed each other with a mixture of growing wariness and grudging admiration. ‘Hitler, what a great fellow!’ Stalin exclaimed after the Night of the Long Knives. Hitler, for his part, found the Great Terror deeply impressive. But Stalin had read *Mein Kampf* carefully, including those passages where its author promised to erase Russia from the map. ‘Never forget’, Hitler had written. ‘that the rulers of present-day Russia are bloodstained common criminals. We are dealing with the scum of humanity.’”<sup>689</sup>

And so, as the Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has pointed out, the pact was much more than a non-aggression treaty between the two powers. Only five days after the Soviets had invaded Poland on September 17, “a great military parade was held in Brest-Litovsk – a celebration of Nazi Germany’s and Soviet Russia’s joint defeat of independent Poland. Such parades are not organised by parties to non-aggression pacts – they are organised by allies and friends...”<sup>690</sup>

Each tyrant was more complimentary of the other than either was of the Western democrats. Thus “Hitler called Stalin ‘one of the greatest living human beings’. The Soviet leader, he said, ‘towered above the democratic figures of the Anglo-Saxon powers’.”<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>687</sup> George Watson, “The Eye-Opener of 1939, or How the World Saw the Nazi-Soviet Pact”, *History Today*, August 2004, p. 48.

<sup>688</sup> Davies, *Europe*, p. 945.

<sup>689</sup> Frank Diktötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 83.

<sup>690</sup> “Statement by the Prime Minister of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki”, December 29, 2019, <https://premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/statement-by-the-prime-minister-of-poland-mateusz-morawiecki.html>.

<sup>691</sup> Jonathan Fenby, *Alliance*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 16.

Towards the end, Hitler expressed the wish that he had purged his generals as Stalin had so wisely purged his! Stalin for his part considered Hitler to be “a very able man but not basically intelligent, lacking in culture and with a primitive approach to political matters”<sup>692</sup> – which was mild criticism by comparison with what he said of the great majority of his fellow men. Moreover, as Daniel Pipes points out, “Stalin facilitated the Nazi ascent to power in 1933 by refusing to let the German Communist party ally with the Social Democrats. Already in April 1936 the two sides signed an economic agreement; thereafter, Stalin worked hard to reach a political accord with Hitler. ‘We must come to terms with a superior power like Nazi Germany,’ an aide quotes him saying. In early 1938 Stalin initiated diplomatic contact with Hitler and did him more favors, completely staying out of the Czechoslovak crisis and letting collapse the Republican forces in Spain.”<sup>693</sup>

Stalin had donned the mantle of appeasement, although *his* Munich gained for him much more than the Western powers ever gained from *their* Munich: not only a temporary peace, but also the ability to send more troops to Siberia to fight the Japanese (a major concern of his at the time that is sometimes forgotten<sup>694</sup>), and vast territories in the Baltic, Poland, Bukovina and Bessarabia, together with time to prepare for war with the aid of German advanced technology. But there is an important difference between appeasement by a despotic dictator and appeasement by a democratic president or prime minister. The despot is not burdened by the need to please public opinion, or the need to cover his actions with a figleaf of morality (even if, for the sake of diplomacy, some such cover is usually provided); his motivation is pure *Realpolitik* – considerations of brute power, nothing but power...

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<sup>692</sup> Fenby, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>693</sup> Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy*, New York: The Free Press, pp. 102-103.

<sup>694</sup> In late August, at the Halha River on the border between the Soviet satellite of Mongolia and the Japanese satellite of Manchukuo, the Soviets under Zhukov defeated the Japanese. “The Japanese suffered 18,000 casualties (8,000 killed, 8,800 wounded, 1,500 sick), but the Red Army, in victory, lost even more – 9,700 killed and 15,952 wounded, nearly 40 percent of its deployment. Still, the entire Halha River had been cleared of Japanese by industrialized brute force applied with no regard to cost.” (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 669). It was a bitter pill for the Japanese to swallow, made more bitter by the knowledge that their German partners in the Anti-Comintern Pact not only did not help them but were even forming a Pact with their Soviet enemies *at the very same time*.

## 47. THE PACT OF STEEL

Mussolini had been present at Munich in 1938, and one of the important consequences of the meeting was the consolidation of his relationship with Hitler.

As Alan Bullock writes, "Hitler's feeling of comradeship for Mussolini was unfeigned. Like himself - and like Stalin, for whom Hitler also expressed admiration on occasion - Mussolini was a man of the people, with whom Hitler felt at ease as he never felt at ease with members of the traditional ruling classes, least of all the Italian royal family. Despite Hitler's later disappointment with the Italian performance in the war, he never betrayed or abandoned Mussolini even when he had been overthrown - more than could be said of Stalin and any man."<sup>695</sup>

However, Hitler's very special attitude to Jews as the root of all evil was not shared by Mussolini, for he was the head of a state with an ancient and well-integrated community of Jews. And in general, until Mussolini was very wary of the "uncivilized" Hitler - until Hitler backed his own very uncivilized conquest of Abyssinia. For, as Brendon writes, Mussolini "worshipped strength. His velleities about Germany dissolved before the one great fact of Nazi might. He had no doubt that the Third Reich represented a 'revolution of the old Germanic tribes of the primeval forest against the Latin civilisation of Rome.' But, like decadent emperors of old, he reckoned that his best chance of survival lay not in beating the barbarians but in joining them."<sup>696</sup>

This vassalage was strengthened when Hitler gave him a spectacular welcome to Berlin in September, 1937 - which Mussolini tried, with less success, to emulate when Hitler visited Rome in May, 1938. Hitler disliked King Victor Emmanuel and was overheard urging Mussolini "to abolish the monarchy, to lance the royal abscess on the Fascist body politic."<sup>697</sup> But Mussolini would never have abolished the institution as opposed to taking the king's place - but as an absolute, not a constitutional monarch; for Italian Fascism, for all its similarities to German Nazism, was much less secularist - and more dependent on traditionalist Italian opinion.

"In fact, inside Italy popular feeling was more hostile to the Fascist regime than at any time since the murder of [the socialist deputy] Matteotti, almost 15 years previously. This could be inferred from the enthusiasm with which Romans greeted Chamberlain and Halifax in January, 1939. Mussolini privately damned his visitors as possessing nothing of the stuff of splendid adventurers such as Sir Francis Drake, who had won the empire which they would lose. But the crowds, for once not marshalled by the authorities but massing spontaneously, cheered the British Prime Minister so loudly that conversation

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<sup>695</sup> Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 601-602.

<sup>696</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 482.

<sup>697</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 485.

inside the Palazzo Venezia became difficult and they were silenced by the touch of a bell on the Duce's desk. Characteristically, Mussolini was still arranging a *rapprochement* with Britain, which had recognised the conquest of Ethiopia in return for the removal of 10,000 Italian troops from Spain, at a time when he had just decided to conclude a military alliance with Germany and Japan in order to re-draw the map of the world. Diplomatic schizophrenia matched personal megalomania, best enunciated in the Duce's telephoned instruction to a bemused surveyor: 'The course of the Tiber winds too much – prepare a plan to straighten it.' But the zigzag course of foreign policy was apparently a matter of fascist pride. [Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister] Ciano boasted to the German ambassador, 'The Italian programme is to have no programme.'

“Actually the Italian programme was to respond to the German *faits accomplis*. Mussolini was more shocked by Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia than he had been by the *Anschluss*... However, in his bosom admiration for Hitler's brutal coup struggled with apprehension. The Führer was establishing a hegemony of Europe and he must be conciliated. This was also, incidentally, the view of the new Pope, Pius XII, who refused to join the democracies in protesting against the occupation of Prague. Most Italians, however, resented the current subservience to Hitler, jesting that 'Things were much better under Mussolini'. In the Chamber of Fasces and Corporation, recently appointed to replace the elected Chamber of Deputies, Italo Balbo, defying the order not to wear royal decorations, accused the Duce of licking the Germans' boots. Determined to assert the continuing virility of Fascism and to present Hitler as *fait accompli* of his own in a region where he feared German incursions, Mussolini approved a scheme long hatched by Ciano. On 7 April 1939 – Good Friday – Italy invaded Albania.

“It was a move calculated to make headlines rather than to make real gains for Italy. Albania was so poor that, according to a wartime British officer, people would murder you for the lice in your shirt. The country was already an Italian protectorate – annexing it, Mussolini's critics said, was like raping your wife. King Zog, actually a tribal chieftain who had climbed over many corpses to mount a throne of his own creation, was a Fascist in all but name. Concealed by propaganda worthy of Baron Munchausen, the invasion itself was conducted with astounding incompetence. Radio communication was so ineffective that a senior officer had to fly back and forth to Albania to report on the situation. As Ciano's Chief of Staff Filippo Anfuso memorably remarked, 'If only the Albanians had possessed a well-armed fire brigade; they could have driven us back into the Adriatic.' Zog, whom Italians called the 'White Negus', escaped with buckets full of rubies and emeralds as well as a substantial part of the country's gold reserves. Ciano himself might have succeeded to his crown. But in the event King Victor Emmanuel received it from burly, surly Albanians in dress suits, whose progress in open State carriages conducted by bewigged coachmen and attended by liveried flunkeys was watched by the Roman crowd in absolute silence. The spiritless little Sovereign believed in accepting crowns, even crowns of Ethiopia and Albania. But while loyal

Fascists enthused about the acquisition of an Italian 'fifth shore', Victor Emmanuel reckoned that Mussolini had merely grabbed a few rocks.

"Albania was in one sense a victim of the democracies' appeasement policy; and so, in due course, was Italy. The protests of the Western powers against this fresh act of Fascist aggression were muted for fear of driving Mussolini more surely into the arms of Hitler. The attitude of leaders such as Chamberlain was indeed hardening; he privately condemned the Balkan 'smash and grab raid', which Mussolini had carried out with 'complete cynicism'. But the tone of the democracies remained soft and their very moderation provoked the Duce's extremism - he dismissed Roosevelt's plea for a ten-year truce as the product of spreading paralysis. Hitler, by contrast, congratulated him on a Fascist triumph and on the consequent strengthening of the Axis. He drew the Duce inexorably into his thrall, daring him to be bold. Observing the process, Bernardo Artolico, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, described Mussolini's attitude towards the Reich as 'that of a person who when asked to jump into the street from the ground floor, insists on jumping from the roof.' So, in May 1939, the Duce plunged into what he wanted to call the 'Pact of Blood', though it was finally dubbed the 'Pact of Steel' [between "the German Reich Chancellor and His Majesty the King of Italy and Albania, Emperor of Ethiopia"]. The name mattered less than the content, which Ribbentrop drew up and which Ciano, in a singular act of Fascist dynamism, accepted without proper scrutiny. He thus committed Italy to come to Germany's aid in the event of war. He failed to stipulate that Italy should be consulted about such a conflict and simply took Hitler's word for it that he would keep the peace for at least three years. Ciano already knew that Poland was Hitler's next target and that plans were being made to ensure that Soviet Russia did not interfere. Yet throughout the early summer of 1939, preoccupied with parties, flirtations and trips to Capri, he maintained that there was no danger of an immediate conflict. Ciano dismissed Artolico's admonitions to the contrary as the vapourings of a neurotic who was frightened of his own shadow.

"By early August, however, as Nazi antagonism towards Poland sharpened, Ciano grew alarmed. He arranged to meet Ribbentrop at the luxurious Schloss Fuschl, near Salzburg, which the German Foreign Minister had confiscated from an Austrian Jew murdered by the Gestapo. Talking in English, Ciano asked, 'Do you want Danzig?' 'More than that,' Ribbentrop replied, 'We want war!' Shocked and disillusioned, Ciano tried for ten hours to convince Ribbentrop that an attack on Poland would lead to a general conflict. His arguments made no impression and at Berchtesgaden, over the next two days, Hitler proved yet more implacable. The Führer worked himself into a rage over Polish brutalities - castrations, killings, rapes - inflicted on German minorities. As Ciano sardonically observed, he seemed to believe his own atrocity stories. In fact there was ample reason to disbelieve everything Hitler said, especially after the volte-face over Bolshevism. Mussolini endorsed the Nazi-Soviet agreement even though it cleared the decks for war. Ciano and other senior Fascists urged him to remain neutral, to break the Pact of Steel. The Duce swung to and fro like a weathercock in a storm. He yearned to march with

Hitler. He lusted for triumphs and spoils. He ached to turn his warlike rhetoric into reality. But, as Dino Grandi wrote, his Nietzschean warmongering had always been a game, 'a bluff, a fraud'.

"Mussolini wanted war as St. Augustine wanted chastity – not yet. He knew that Italians were unwilling to fight beside Germans and that the nation was unprepared for a major conflict.<sup>698</sup> His troops were short of basic necessities, such as uniforms. His ships lacked fuel and nobody seemed to know how many aeroplanes he had – Ciano suggested that someone should be sent round the airfields to count them. Italy was desperately short of raw materials and, running such a large trade deficit that it resorted to selling munitions to the democracies, its capacity for imports was only 'about one-half of what it had been in 1913'. So the Duce told the Führer that he could not fight unless Germany supplied Italy with millions of tons of coal, oil, steel, arms and other *materiel*. The demand could not be met and Mussolini therefore espoused 'non-belligerence' – a less shameful term, in his view, than neutrality. This was a wise course for, when Hitler's victories did finally tempt him to fight, Italian forces made little progress during the 'hundred hours' war' against France. But in September 1939 Mussolini was mortified by his inglorious stance. Europe was going up in flames, he remarked to Ciano, and after 18 years of bellicose propaganda the Duce of Italy, had become the champion of peace. The dogs of war were unleashed but the Fascist lion lay down like a lamb. At a time when there was 'Darkness Over the Earth' – to quote the title of Pius XII's first encyclical, issued shortly after Hitler invaded Poland – Mussolini stayed safely at home..."<sup>699</sup>

The weaknesses of Italy's armed forces were mercilessly exposed during the world war. But it was Mussolini himself who turned out to be, as Paul Kennedy, "a strategic liability of the first order. He was not, it has been argued, the all-powerful leader on the lines of Hitler which he projected himself as being. King Victor Emmanuel III strove to preserve his prerogatives, and succeeded in keeping the loyalties of much of the bureaucracy and the officer corps. The papacy was also an independent, and rival, focus of authority for many Italians. Neither the great industrialists nor the recalcitrant peasantry were enthusiastic about the regime by the 1930s; and the National Fascist Party itself, or at least its regional bosses, seemed more concerned with the distribution of jobs than the pursuit of national glory. But even had Mussolini's rule been absolute, Italy's position would be no better, given Il Duce's penchant for self-delusion, resort to bombast and bluster, congenital lying, inability to act and think effectively, and government incompetence.

"In 1939 and 1940, the western Allies frequently considered the pros and cons of having Italy fighting on Germany's side rather than remaining neutral.

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<sup>698</sup> Hitler had planned to invade Poland on August 26. "He was forced to cancel the attack a few hours later after Mussolini had informed his Axis partner that Italy was currently in no position to enter the war alongside Germany" (Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 342). So it was Mussolini's unpreparedness that delayed the invasion of Poland until September 1. (V.M.)

<sup>699</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, pp. 488-491.



On the whole, the British chiefs of staff preferred Italy to be kept out of the war, so as to preserve peace in the Mediterranean and Near East; but there were powerful counterarguments, which seem in retrospect to have been correct. Rarely in the history of human conflict has it been agreed that the entry of an additional foe would hurt one's enemy more than oneself; but Mussolini's Italy was, in that way at least, unique...<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>700</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.

### *III. STALIN VERSUS HITLER (1939-1945)*

## 48. THE INVASIONS OF POLAND AND FINLAND

The Second World War was the completion of unfinished business. God wished to punish Germany for destroying Holy Russia. Her defeat in the First World War was only partial justice; and in any case the Germans did not repent of their sins at that time, but instead complained, putting the blame for their defeat on the Socialists and the Jews. In the Second World War, by God's just judgement, when the measure of her sins was filled up, Germany was punished much more thoroughly. And the instrument of her punishment was the virus she had exported in the sealed train, like a laboratory capsule, into Russia in 1917 - Bolshevism, although by now the isolated virus had grown into a monstrous pandemic. And together with the Germans many other nations suffered because many nations had participated in the original sin of the twentieth century - the destruction of Holy Russia...

Having swallowed up his neighbours, established a pact of steel with Mussolini, and a pact of blood with Stalin, Hitler was ready to launch his dream of world conquest. This was to begin with Poland.

Writing in April, 1939, Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič predicted the outcome: "In the West there is a desire for a western kingdom, for a great Reich. The first Reich was founded by Napoleon. The Reich (western kingdom) lasted for eight years and then collapsed and fell into ruins. The French created this first Reich. The second Reich (second western kingdom) was established under the leadership of Prussia and Austria and their ally, Italy, in the hope of gaining the title deed to this kingdom in World War I, which already bore its new name. This kingdom was supposed to be called 'Middle Europe'. However, to our relief and to their misfortune it remained only an idea, a utopia. The first Reich provoked a world war and its instigators perished. The second Reich provoked a world war and once again its instigators perished. Currently, a third Reich under the leadership of Germany, Italy and Japan is being established. This one, too, will provoke a world war. However, the fate which awaits this third Reich has already been demonstrated by the first two. It is like those who have great plans but are unaware of their impending death..."<sup>701</sup>

"The Second World War," writes Kirill Alexandrov, "which was largely the result, not only of the ambitions of Hitler, but also of the policies of Stalin, turned out to be the most terrible national woe. In 1939-40, Stalin not only established a common state boundary with Nazi Germany, but, according to the open acknowledgement of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Molotov, guaranteed 'peaceful confidence in the East' for Hitler's Reich, so that it could carry on a successful war in Europe. Hitler thereby obtained time and opportunity to prepare an attack on the USSR in the summer of 1941.

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<sup>701</sup> Velimirovič, "Three Reichs", *Žički Blagovesnik*, 1939, translated by Hieromonk Atanasije Jevtič.

“The war, in which according to the vivid expression of the writer and front-line soldier Victor Astafiev, Stalin and Zhukov [Stalin’s leading general] ‘burned the Russian people and Russia in the fire of war’, took the woes of the people to their extreme. ‘Russia simply ceased to exist. It is terrible to say it, *but the country-victor disappeared, annihilated itself*, wrote Astafyev... The victims among our people in the Second World War, including the Soviet-Polish war of 1939 and the Soviet-Finnish war of 1939-40, are estimated at roughly 27 million people, including more than 17 million men between the ages of 15 and 59.”<sup>702</sup>

“Entire cities were starved into submission, with a million lives claimed just in the twenty-eight month siege of Leningrad. More than seven million civilians were killed in occupied areas, not counting a further four million who died of hunger or disease. Some twenty-five million people were made homeless, with 70,000 villages erased from the map...”<sup>703</sup>

These figures, whether accurate or not, reflect the undoubted fact that Russia suffered, in both absolute and relative terms, far more than any other belligerent. Although other nations played important roles and also suffered much (particularly the Chinese), the Second World War was in the first place a German-Russian or Fascist-Communist war with this peculiarity, that for the first two years of the war the Fascists and Communists were allies and brothers-in-arms.

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“Firmly believing,” writes Nigel Jones, “that both the US and the USSR were controlled by an international Jewish cabal, and knowing that Germany did not have the natural or human resources to wage a long war, [Hitler] gambled on a frenzied rearmament programme to fight a short *Blitzkrieg* before this enemies could bring their superior strength to bear against him... At first the gamble paid off. Hitler’s lightning destruction of Poland in 1939 and his conquest of western Europe in 1940 made him master of the continent...”<sup>704</sup>

It began on September 1, 1939, when the Germans invaded Poland; the Soviets invaded from the East two weeks later. Although the British and French declared war on Germany, they were not able to help their hapless ally. (The French could have done something by invading across the weakly defended German-French border in the West, but did nothing, exhibiting signs of that spiritual paralysis that was to lead to the fall of France herself.) Within a few weeks the Polish army had been crushed and half of Poland occupied by the Nazis. On September 1 Molotov, addressing the Supreme Soviet, expressed his

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<sup>702</sup> Alexandrov, “Stalin i sovremennaia Rossia: vybor istoricheskikh otsenik ili vybor buduschego?” (Stalin and contemporary Russia: a choice of historical estimates or a choice of the future?), report read at the Russian Centre, San Francisco, February 3, 2017. However, as we shall see, a very recent estimate by a Duma deputy is much higher.

<sup>703</sup> Frank Diktötter, *Dictators*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020, p. 87.

<sup>704</sup> Jones, “It’s that man again”, *The Spectator*, January 9, 2021, p. 37.

“extreme satisfaction that the Soviet Union is isolated from the European conflict”.<sup>705</sup> Two weeks later, the Soviets invaded Poland from the East...

In conquering Eastern Poland, while the Germans took the brunt of the task of defeating the Polish army in the west, “Stalin had managed to undo the Soviet defeat in the 1920 Polish-Soviet War, reclaiming imperial Russian lands at the cost of just 700-odd lives. (Not that he cared about Soviet casualties.) The Germans in Poland, by contrast, had lost between 11,000 and 13,000 killed. At least 70,000 Poles were killed and nearly 700,000 taken prisoner by the aggressors on both sides...”<sup>706</sup>

Hitler’s excuse for invading Poland was, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, national self-determination, the ideal of pan-German unity, of the unification of all Germans under one Reich – although, unlike the case of Czechoslovakia, he was also motivated by a desire for revenge, revenge for Poland’s being granted so much German land in 1919. This ideal required just two further changes: the incorporation of the free city of Danzig, whose population was German, and the creation of a land corridor with East Prussia. When Hitler had demanded these concessions from the Poles, they refused.

Now the Poles were both more numerous and bolder than the Czechs. But they were also proud – and their pride concealed weaknesses that made them vulnerable. First, as Golo Mann points out, “their state occupied former Russian and former German or Habsburg territory, and it was a Prussian-German tradition to regard the whole Polish state, not just as a monstrosity like Danzig, but as intolerable in the long run. In 1919 Poland had spread further to the West and to the East than it should have done; in its ambitions it had been as intoxicated by victory and as blind as the other small nations.”<sup>707</sup>

Secondly, in the inter-war period the Poles had alienated two important minorities: the traditionally Orthodox Christian Ukrainians and Belorussians

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<sup>705</sup> Gavin Mortimer, “Countdown to Conflict”, *BBC History Magazine*, September, 2019, p. 35.

<sup>706</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 687.

<sup>707</sup> Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 460.

in the East, most of whose churches they had closed down and given to the Catholics<sup>708</sup>, and the Jews, whom they continued to discriminate against.<sup>709</sup>

Thirdly, when the Germans had occupied the Sudetenland in 1938, the Poles had occupied the Czechoslovak province of Teschen, which they claimed was ethnically Polish. They thereby lost the moral high ground.<sup>710</sup>

But of course these weaknesses did not justify Hitler's bullying. Moreover, if the Poles had given Hitler Danzig and the corridor to East Prussia, as he demanded, there was absolutely no guarantee that these would be his last demands. Indeed, Hitler told his generals in May, 1939: "Danzig is not the object at stake. For us it is a matter of expansion in the East... Therefore the question of sparing Poland does not arise and the decision remains to attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity."

There was another reason why Hitler did not spare the Poles (and later, the Russians and Ukrainians) while he did spare other enemies, such as the French: race-hatred, his belief that the Slavs, unlike the French, were subhuman. Thus of 5.7 million Soviet prisoners of war in German hands, 3.3 million died a terrible death from starvation or related disease from lack of food or the freezing conditions."<sup>711</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> "Before the beginning of the Second World War," write V.I. Alexeyev and F. Stavrou, "the Poles had closed hundreds of Orthodox churches on their territory on the grounds that the Tsarist government had in 1875 returned these churches from the unia to Orthodoxy. The Polish government considered the return of the uniates to Orthodoxy an act of violence, and they in their own way restored justice by means of violence, which, needless to say, elicited protests even from the Catholic and Uniate churches.

"The results of these measures of the Polish government were such that, for example, in the region of Kholm out of 393 Orthodox churches existing in 1914, by 1938 there remained 227, by 1939 - 176, and by the beginning of the war - 53 in all." ("Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Okkupirovannoj Nemtsami Territorii" (The Russian Orthodox Church on German-Occupied Territory), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1980 (IV), N 12, pp. 122-124)

According to Monk Benjamin (*Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (A Chronicle of Church Events of the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>, part 2, p. 73), in June and July of 1938 150 village churches visited by Ukrainian Orthodox were demolished. On July 16 the Polish Church issued a memorandum on the event, as did the MP on the same day. For further details of the persecution, see Danilushkin, M.B (ed.) *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovleniia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our days), St. Petersburg: "Voskresenie", 1997, vol. I, p. 588; K.N. Nikolaiev, "'Unia' i vostochnij obriad" (The 'Unia' and the Eastern Rite), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 6 (1411), March 15/28, 1990. Among the buildings destroyed was the cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky (in 1927), and the Orthodox cathedrals in Liublin, Kalisha, Vlotslavka, Plotsk and Koltsy (Monk Benjamin, part 1, op. cit., p. 175).

<sup>709</sup> In 1931 there were 8,228,000 Ukrainians and Belorussians in Poland (nearly 36% of the total population), and nearly two million Jews (6%) (David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 763).

<sup>710</sup> Antony Beevor, *The Second World War*, London: Phoenix, 2014, p. 19.

<sup>711</sup> Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back*, London: Penguin, 2014, pp. 358-359.

As Daniel Goldhagen writes, “unlike the Germans’ conventional, if exploitative and brutal, occupation of France, the Germans articulated and practiced thoroughgoing eliminationist politics against the Polish people and were turning Poland into a giant concentration camp. They slaughtered segments of the Polish elite and many other Poles (in addition to the newly completed extermination of Poland’s three million Jews) and were reducing those Poles they could not kill or expel into helots, beings toiling in abject servitude and slavery. Martin Bormann, Adolf Hitler’s chief of staff, in ‘Eight Principles for the Government of the Eastern Territories,’ summarized Hitler’s views on the Poles and other Slav peoples’ futures the Germans were creating: ‘The Slavs are to work for us. Insofar as we don’t need them, they may die. Therefore compulsory vaccination and German health services are superfluous. The fertility of the Slavs is undesirable. They may use contraceptives and practice abortion, the more the better. Education is dangerous. At best an education is admissible which produces useful servants for us. Every educated person is a future enemy. Religion we leave to them as a means of diversion. As to food, they are not to get more than necessary. We are the masters, we come first.’”<sup>712</sup>

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The Soviets invaded Poland on September 18. The Poles were even less likely to surrender to the Soviets without a fight; they trusted the Soviets even less than the Germans. When, in the summer, Stalin, during negotiations with the English and French for an alliance against Germany, demanded access across Polish and Romanian territory, the Poles refused. (The Romanians allowed them to cross their territory by air only.) The Polish commander-in-chief, Marshal Smigly-Ridz, put it well: “With the Germans we risk the loss of our liberty, but with the Russians we lose our soul”.<sup>713</sup>

Two days after the invasion, “the British and the French, rather than declare war on the USSR for invading Poland, as they had on Germany, requested an ‘explanation’ of Soviet actions. The Soviets remonstrated in public, as they had in private, that the Polish state had ‘ceased to exist’ and that the ‘vacuum’ threatened the USSR, justifying the dispatch of the Red Army. At the same time, the Soviets portrayed their military action as a class and national rescue operation. The Polish state had, in fact, mistreated not just its Jews but also its large Ukrainian and Belorussian minorities. Molotov privately admitted to the Germans that the Soviet regime had heretofore not bothered much about the Ukrainians and Belorussians. But now Soviet propaganda efficaciously cast the invasion and landgrab as Ukrainian and Belorussian ‘liberation’.

“Censorship precluded public mention of the fact that perhaps 40 percent of the population in the territories seized by the USSR was ethnic Polish, or that

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<sup>712</sup> Goldhagen, *Worse than War. Genocide, Eliminationism and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*, London: Abacus, 2012, p. 365.

<sup>713</sup> Beevor, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

hundreds of thousands of ethnic Poles were being displaced, deported, or pressed into forced labor; that at least 30,000 ethnic Ukrainians sought refuge in the German-occupied zone; and that even some Jews, who mostly tended to flee toward the Soviet zone, preferred to return to their homes under Nazi occupation to a life under Soviet rule..."<sup>714</sup>

Ian Kershaw writes: "Over 100,000 Polish citizens were seized, most sentenced to years of penal servitude in the Gulag, over 8,500 sentenced to death. Poles settled close to the former Soviet border were in special danger. In some places local Ukrainians and Belorussians were incited to plunder the property of Poles and even murder Polish neighbours. Local militias spearheaded the violence. Those Poles seen, usually in a mere figment of the imagination as a particular threat to the Soviet Union, were rounded up for deportation. The vast deportations were carried out with utmost brutality. Almost 400,000 Poles – by some estimates far more – were sent to concentration camps in the wilds of Siberia or Kazakhstan in sealed, unheated, windowless wagons on winter train journeys of up to 6,000 miles. Around 5,000 died during the transports; another 11,000 were dead of hunger and disease by the following summer.

"... Unsurprisingly, given their intense persecution by the Germans, many Jews welcomed the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland. They had also often experienced discrimination in pre-war Poland.<sup>715</sup> The arrival of the Red Army seemed to promise liberation. Jews sometimes greeted their presumed liberators by displaying red flags. They not infrequently took up administrative positions with the Soviet occupiers, the readiness to collaborate prompting much resentment among Catholic Poles. When the Germans came to occupy the region after their invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 and discovered the corpses of thousands of victims of NKVD atrocities in jails in eastern Poland, they had no difficulty in whipping up hatred not just for the Bolsheviks but also for the Jews who had been widely viewed as acting in their service. In fact, most Jews had soon come to realize what a Soviet occupation meant – and it was not liberation. More had been robbed of their property, while intellectuals and professionals had been arrested in great numbers. A third of the deportees had been Jewish..."<sup>716</sup>

The most egregious crime of Stalin in Poland was the murder of 50,000 of Poland's elite in Katyn forest near Smolensk. The Soviets at first claimed that this was the work of the Nazis. But Gorbachev later admitted the truth...

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<sup>714</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 689.

<sup>715</sup> "Poland's immense Jewish population of nearly 3.5 million had experienced trying times under the Polish government. Between 1935 and 1937, 79 Polish Jews had been killed, and significant incidents of anti-Jewish violence had been recorded in 97 towns; quotas introduced in 1937 had halved the number of Jewish university students. Indeed, Jews could be discriminated against within the framework of Polish law, including by exclusion from chartered professional associations. In 1937 alone, '7,000 trials took place of Jews accused of 'insulting the Polish nation'..." (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 687).

<sup>716</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 362-363.



In December, 1939, Stalin wrote to Ribbentrop, declaring that “the friendship of the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union, *being sealed in blood*, has every grounds for being long and firm...”<sup>717</sup> That the friendship was sealed in blood – Polish blood – was true. That it would last long turned out to be an illusion...

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The Orthodox Church also suffered greatly from the Soviet invasion. As Nathanael Davis writes, it “allowed the Soviets to occupy eastern Poland, and 1,200 Orthodox parishes [with a theological seminary in Kremenets] were incorporated into the Soviet Union as a result. Then, in June of 1940, the Soviets occupied Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, among whose 6 million people were almost half a million traditionally Orthodox persons who worshipped in about 300 Orthodox churches. Later in the same month the Soviets compelled the Romanians to cede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina with their 4 million people, 3 million of them traditionally Orthodox. There were between 2,000 and 2,500 parishes in these formerly Romanian lands. These annexations brought the Russian Orthodox Church more than 6 million traditionally Orthodox people and 3,500-4,000 churches with active priests, as well as many monasteries and nunneries, some bishops and seminaries, and other resources. The institutional strength of the church must have increased fifteenfold.”<sup>718</sup>

Further north, the Bolsheviks, although repulsed by the Finns in the Winter War of 1939-40 with the loss of 250,000 lives, took control of the Baltic States without any trouble. This conquest was ecclesiastical as well as political. Thus in 1939 the MP sent Archbishop Sergei (Voskresensky) of Dmitrov to Riga as the patriarchal exarch in the occupied Baltic States. In December, 1940 he received the Churches of Latvia and Estonia, which had been granted autocephaly by Constantinople, into the MP. Metropolitan Augustine (Peterson) of Riga went into retirement. Then, in March, 1941, after the death of Metropolitan Eleutherius on December 31, he took control of the see of Vilnius and Lithuania. In December, 1941 Metropolitans Alexander of Tallin and Augustine of Riga travelled to Moscow, repented publicly of the sin of schism and were received into communion.<sup>719</sup>

The NKVD wasted no time in gaining control over the Orthodox hierarchs in the region. Thus on September 20, 1940 Beria wrote to Stalin and Molotov on establishing control over the territories of Western Ukraine and Belarus annexed to the USSR through the agent of the NKVD, Archbishop V. Yarushevich.

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<sup>717</sup> *Pravda*, December 25, 1939, N 355 (8040), quoted by Sergei Shumilo.

<sup>718</sup> Davis, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>719</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 19.

“In the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR and BSSR,” wrote Beria, “there are currently three dioceses out of the five dioceses of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in the territory of former Poland:

- 1) Grodno-Novogrudok (356 parishes), headed by Panteleimon Rozhnovsky for 18 years, a supporter of the Moscow Patriarchate.
- 2) The Polesie diocese (320 parishes), headed by Alexander Inozemtsev ...
- 3) The Volyn diocese, headed by Alexei Gromadsky, also an autocephalist and supporter of polonization. In connection with the liquidation of the Synod of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, headed by Dionisy Waledinsky, the leadership of these dioceses appealed to Metropolitan Sergei Stragorodsky, the head of the old Church in the USSR, with a request to accept these dioceses in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.
- 4) Taking advantage of this, the NKVD of the USSR, in order to identify the intentions of the leaders of church dioceses in the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus, organized their calls to the Moscow Patriarchate with reports on the status of these dioceses through agents for the old clergy. The leaders of the churchmen in the western regions were wary of the proposal to come to Moscow. Fear was expressed that upon arrival in Moscow, the heads of the dioceses would be arrested. In this regard, there were attempts to deviate from a trip to Moscow.

“On the other hand, reinsuring themselves, the leaders of the church dioceses of the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR and BSSR, formally recognizing the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate over themselves, at the same time seek to informally preserve their independence, freedom of action, believing that if the Soviet government begins to "persecute" against churches and its worshipers in the western regions, the Moscow Patriarchate, "submissive to the authorities," will not be able to protect their interests...

“From the intercepted correspondence between the leaders of the dioceses, it is established that they are preparing an organized counteraction to the tax policy pursued against the clergy, and intend, in the case of applying measures of repressive nature to them, to provoke mass protests in their defense by the believing population.

“In order to establish control over the activities of the leaders of the Orthodox Church in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR and BSSR and to prevent enemy actions on their part, as well as to counteract the Germans' aspirations to use this church for anti-Soviet purposes, the NKVD of the USSR considers it necessary to conduct, first of all, the following measures:

“Through the agents of the NKVD of the USSR in the Moscow Patriarchate of Old Churchmen, carry out the decision of the patriarchate on the appointment of their exarch (representative) to the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR and BSSR with administrative subordination of the diocese of Grodno-Novogrudok, Poleskaya and Volyn.

“The agent of the NKVD V. D. Yarushevich, the archbishop of the Leningrad diocese, under the cover of which it is advisable to create an illegal residence of the NKVD of the USSR to organize undercover work among churchmen, both in the western regions and on the territory of the German governor general, can be appointed as such a representative...”<sup>720</sup>

Again, in March, 1941 Stalin received the following report from B. Merkulov, People’s Commissar for State Security of the USSR: “There are at present in the territories of the Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian republics autocephalous Orthodox churches, headed by local metropolitans who are placemen of the bourgeois governments.

“In the Latvian SSR there are 175,000 Orthodox parishioners. Anti-Soviet elements, former members of the Fascist organization ‘Perkanirust’, are grouped around the head of the Synod, Augustin.

“In the Estonian SSR there are 40,000 Orthodox. The head of the eparchy has died. Archbishop Fedosi Fedoseev, who heads an anti-Soviet group of churchmen, is trying to grab the job.

“The NKVD has prepared the following measures:

“1) Through an NKVD agency we will get the Moscow patriarchate to issue a resolution on the subordination of the Orthodox churches of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to itself, using a declaration from local rank and file clergy and believers for the purpose.

“2) By a decision of the Moscow patriarchate we shall appoint as eparch Archbishop Dmitri [*recte*: Sergei] Nikolayevich Voskresensky (an agent of the NKGB of the USSR), using for the purpose appropriate requests from the local clergy, which are to be found in the Moscow patriarchate.”<sup>721</sup>

The fact that Sergei (Voskresensky) was an agent of the NKGB makes it highly probable that his three fellow metropolitans - Sergei (Stragorodsky), Nicholas and Alexis - were also agents. Indeed, according to the apostate professor-priest A. Osipov, Alexis, when patriarch, feared that Nicholas was an agent of the Bolsheviks.<sup>722</sup> He was right to be afraid: Nicholas *was* an agent. This was confirmed by a secret letter from Beria to Stalin, in which it was proposed “under the cover of NKVD agent B.D. Yarushevich, Archbishop of the Leningrad diocese, to create an illegal residency for the NKVD of the USSR

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<sup>720</sup> Beria, “On church dioceses in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR and BSSR” in I. Kurlandsky, *Stalin, power, religion (religious and church factors in the internal politics of the Soviet state in 1922–1953)*, Moscow: “Kuchkovo Field”, 2011.

<sup>721</sup> Volkogonov, *Lenin*, London: Harper Collins, 1994, pp. 385-386.

<sup>722</sup> M.E. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Re-establishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 922.

so as to organize the work of agents amidst churchmen".<sup>723</sup> Nicholas denied that he "had never collaborated with the communists".<sup>724</sup> However, KGB defector Major Deriabin testified before the U.S. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee on May 5, 1959 that under instructions from the KGB, he himself had collaborated with Agent Nicholas, and that when a Soviet delegation to the Vienna Conference for Peace was to arrive in Vienna, Colonel Kovalev referred to him a telegram with the order "to take care of the delegation", and that "Metropolitan Nicholas is an agent of State Security".

This demonstrates, continues Volkogonov, "the reasons behind Lenin's confident assertion that 'our victory over the clergy is fully assured'. So complete indeed was that victory that even Stalin and his associates were at times at a loss to know whether someone was a priest or an NKGB agent in a cassock. While boasting loudly of freedom of conscience and quoting copiously from Lenin's hypocritical statements on how humanely socialism treated religion, the Bolshevik regime, through the widespread use of violence, had turned the dwelling-place of the spirit and faith into a den of the thought-police..."<sup>725</sup>

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Now that the Germans, in accordance with the secret protocols of the Pact, had surrendered the whole of the Baltic to the Soviet sphere of influence, Stalin was quick to blackmail Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into submission to him. With Finland the matter was a little different. Perhaps because Finland had had special privileges and freedoms even under the tsarist empire, Stalin did not immediately invade it. Moreover, the Finns under Mannerheim had successfully suppressed Bolshevik attempts to take over the country in 1918. Instead, Stalin negotiated for a long time with the Finns, trying to obtain some islands and a stretch of land close to Leningrad in exchange for part of Soviet Karelia. But the Finns stubbornly refused. So the Red Army invaded in the so-called Winter War of 1939-40.

The Finns defended well, and Stalin began to lose prestige in some quarters. Hitler cordially congratulated him on his birthday in December, but "there were no birthday greetings from the leaders of Britain or France. But *Time* magazine named Stalin Man of the Year for 1939, comparing him favorably with the warmongers Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco, as well as with Roosevelt. (*Time* had named Hitler Man of the Year in 1938.) 'Stalin's actions in 1939,' the magazine wrote, 'were positive, surprising, world-shattering.'

"Back in Finland, as Finnish reservists, often boys barely old enough to shave, starved and froze but fought on against vastly superior Red Army

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<sup>723</sup> *Moskovskaia Pravda* (Moscow Truth) (12 March, 1996. See also Protopriest Michael Ardov, "Russkij Intelligent v Arkhierejskom Sane" (A Russian Intellectual in the Rank of a Bishop), *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), N 1 (77), January-February, 1999, p. 8.

<sup>724</sup> *Associated Press* report of June 6, 1956.

<sup>725</sup> Volkogonov, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

numbers, Soviet corpses piled up. 'The Russians,' a photographer for American *Life* magazine observed, 'lay lonely and twisted in their heavy trench coats and formless felt boots, their faces yellowed, eyelashes white with a fringe of frost. Across the ice, the forest was strewn with weapons and picture and letters... Here were the bodies of dead tanks with blown treads, dead carts, dead horses and dead men, blocking the road and defiling the snow.'"<sup>726</sup>

Not content with sending young recruits to die in a pointless war, Stalin in his frustration unleashed a last spasm of his Great Terror. Among the cultural figures and NKVD operatives who were killed was Yezhov, whose last words were: "I purged 14,000 Chekists. My enormous guilt lies in the fact that I purged so few of them... Let Stalin know that I shall die with his name on my lips." Stalin commented: "He destroyed many innocents. We shot him for that." But everyone knew that Yezhov's mass murders were ordered by Stalin...<sup>727</sup>

Under a new leader in Timoshenko, the Red Army finally crushed the Finns' resistance and in March they surrendered. Stalin did not annex the whole of Finland but took a large chunk out of it - much larger than his pre-war demands. But the cost of the 105-day war was massive: the Soviets lost 131,476 men killed and missing and 264,908 wounded, as opposed to the Finns' 26,662 killed and missing, 43,357 wounded and 847 captured.<sup>728</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 735.

<sup>727</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 742.

<sup>728</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 748.

## 49. THE FALL OF FRANCE AND THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Meanwhile, the “phoney war” (at first called the “Bore War”, or *drôle de guerre* in France) was taking place in Western Europe. The spirit of appeasement took some time to melt away, and the Western allies hesitated to take the battle to the Germans, in spite of the golden opportunity presented by Germany’s preoccupation with the invasion and absorption of Poland. Thus the French, writes Robert Tombs, “had no intention of attacking Germany’s western frontier, which was defended only by middle-aged reservists with three days’ ammunition and no air cover: the Allies had a superiority of 3:1 in men and 5:1 in artillery, and all the German tanks were in Poland. But the Allies sat tight. They had digested the bloody lessons of 1916-17: the Maginot Line, the West Wall (or Siegfried Line) and strong Belgian fortifications ruled out breakthroughs...

“Scandinavia seemed crucial: about a third of Germany’s total iron ore supply came from Sweden, via the Norwegian port of Narvik, which the allies were preparing to block. So on 9 April 1940 the Germans, to everyone’s surprise, invaded Norway by sea and air. Allied counter-attacks started badly on land, though a large part of the German navy was sunk and 200 of their aircraft destroyed. After parliamentary criticism on 7-8 May Chamberlain decided to form a National Government; but the Labour Party refused to serve under him. The situation was transformed overnight by a sudden German attack on Holland, Belgium and France beginning at 5.35 a.m. on 10 May. Churchill (ironically, largely responsible for the Norwegian operation) became Prime Minister at the age of sixty-five.”<sup>729</sup>

But things went badly for Churchill and the British at first. The Germans swept through Belgium and into France, crushing all resistance and pinning the small British Expeditionary Force into Dunkirk. The Nazi master-stroke was Guderian’s surprise attack through the weakly-defended Ardennes, followed by his (insubordinate) dash for the Channel coast. “On 19 May the Germans reached the coast, cutting communications with Calais and Boulogne. A small force held out at Calais with what their German besiegers called ‘unheard of obstinacy’ and won several days’ respite. But by 23 May another divisional commander, General Alan Brooke, thought that ‘nothing but a miracle can save the BEF now and the end cannot be very far off...’ [B]eginning to be short of ammunition, supplies still all right for three days but after that scanty.’ The BEF’s survival depended not only on its own resolve, but on the actions of the Germans and the French. The German troops, tired and short of ammunition, were ordered on 24 May to halt their advance. This was confirmed by Hitler, still alarmed at the risks being taken. Soldiers and tanks needed rest and repair before moving south to complete the conquest of France. German caution was confirmed by a French counter-attack on 25 May, and French troops fought desperately from 23 to 29 May to hold the Germans away from Dunkirk. Hitler probably did not believe the BEF could escape, and he

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<sup>729</sup> Tombs, *The English and their History*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 2015, pp. 695, 696.

might have considered it a bargaining counter in future armistice negotiations, which now seemed likely.

“The last week in May was the low point: the only moment at which the government seriously contemplated giving up the struggle... Hitler was dropping hints of a deal. Voices inside and outside the government urged negotiation and muttered criticism of Churchill. Halifax thought Germany had won and that the government must ‘safeguard the security of our Empire’. He told the Italian ambassador on 25 May that they would ‘consider any proposals... provided our liberty and independence was [sic] assured.’ On 26 May Reynaud flew to London to suggest either a joint request for an armistice or British consent to a French request. He urged making concessions to Italy (still at peace) in the hope that Mussolini might mediate. The inner War Cabinet – Churchill, Chamberlain, Halifax and two Labour ministers, Clement Attlee, the party leader, and his deputy, Arthur Greenwood – met secretly the same day. Churchill argued that Britain, unlike France, could still resist and should not be dragged by France into accepting ‘intolerable terms’. Halifax replied that it was not ‘in Herr Hitler’s interest to insist on outrageous terms’. For the time being, of course, this was true. That evening, Churchill felt ‘physically sick’. He was an imperialist, who stressed that he was fighting for the empire; and, logically, preservation of the empire required a deal with Hitler. But he knew there was more at stake even than the empire, and for several years had been trying to rally anti-Nazi opinion, including Jews and trade unionists. His position in the Cabinet was fragile. Halifax was supported by Chamberlain. Attlee and Greenwood, understandably hesitant in the face of the disaster, nevertheless backed Churchill’s refusal to negotiate. Now a forgotten figure, Greenwood, MP for Wakefield and a former economics lecturer at Leeds, thus helped to make history...<sup>730</sup>

Although the French had fought better than is often thought in the Battle for France, the Fall of France late in June, 1940, and the creation of the quisling government of Vichy under the former patriot Marshal Petain, showed up a tragic lack of morale and fight. It demonstrated, as did the whole history of the democracies in the 1930s, that, in the words of Fritz Kraemer, the German-American monarchist who became Henry Kissinger’s mentor in 1940: “Thousands of the most modern tanks will be of no use for the defense of a country, if the men in these tanks are unwilling to fight for their country to the end. The best laws, the most progressive legislation, are not worth the paper on which they are written, if the moral qualities of the judges who have to apply them are doubted.”<sup>731</sup>

This very important conclusion is valid for all kinds of government. A democratic government cannot save a people if its leaders are morally corrupt. The question, then, is: from where - outside the political system, it goes without saying - are the necessary moral qualities to come?

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<sup>730</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, pp. 699-700.

<sup>731</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, p. 129.

The evacuation of the British army and some French units from Dunkirk – Operation Dynamo – began on May 26, the feast of St. Augustine of Canterbury, the Apostle of the English, according to the Anglican calendar, on which King George VI had called for a National Day of Prayer to be held.

As Gary DeMar writes: “In a national broadcast he instructed the people of the UK to turn back to God in a spirit of repentance and plead for Divine help. Millions of people across the British Isles flocked into churches praying for deliverance...

“Two events immediately followed. Firstly, a violent storm arose over the Dunkirk region grounding the Luftwaffe which had been killing thousands on the beaches. And then secondly, a great calm descended on the Channel, the like of which hadn’t been seen for a generation, which allowed hundreds of tiny boats to sail across and rescue 335,000 soldiers, rather than the estimated 20-30,000. From then on people referred to what happened as ‘the miracle of Dunkirk.’ Sunday June 9<sup>th</sup> was officially appointed as a Day of National Thanksgiving.”<sup>732</sup>

“On 7 June,” continues Tombs, “the Panzers began to pierce the rapidly improvised and over-stretched French defensive line. On the tenth Mussolini declared war. On the twelfth the French army began a general retreat... The Germans marched into Paris on the fourteenth, and that same day the last British troops left France. The French increasingly felt abandoned. On 16 June they again asked British consent to an exploration of armistice terms. The British reply, as before, was that France should fight on, with a government in exile in England or North Africa. Hoping to encourage French resolve, Churchill made the famous offer ‘that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two nations, but one Franco-British Union.’ This, however, precipitated the collapse by splitting the French cabinet. Marshal Philippe Pétain, the Anglophobe deputy prime minister, dismissed it as an invitation to ‘marry a corpse’. Reynaud resigned, and Pétain became prime minister on 17 June. He at once broadcast to the nation that ‘the fighting must cease’ and asked for an armistice. Over a million soldiers began to lay down their arms. Against all expectations, Britain found itself without European allies, with all its strategic assumptions overturned, facing for the first time since Napoleon the peril the English had fought to prevent for centuries: an enemy dominating the Continent and poised on the Channel and South Sea coasts. Yet talk of negotiation had ended: by 16 June the Cabinet had accepted Churchill’s view that ‘in no circumstances whatever would the British Government participate in any negotiations for armistice or peace... We were fighting for our lives and it was vital that we would allow no chink to appear in our armour.’”<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> DeMar, Review of the film *Dunkirk*.

<sup>733</sup> Tombs, op. cit., pp. 702-703.



Two weeks after Dunkirk, about 190,000 were evacuated in Operation Aerial from Cherbourg, Saint-Nazaire and other West French ports. The two operations were a great achievements and morale-boosters. But they could not hide the fact that the British had suffered a major defeat, and Churchill, for all his oratory celebrating the courage of Dunkirk, was at pains to emphasize that wars are not won through evacuations...

Nor even with "blood, sweat and tears" ... God's help is essential...

After the Fall of France, the Germans retained control of the Channel and Atlantic coastlines, but allowed a pro-Nazi quisling government to rule the rest of the country from the southern town of Vichy. The continued resistance of 2000 Free French, based in London under General de Gaulle, did something to salvage French honour and pride. But de Gaulle's attitude caused severe problems. He refused to meet General Giraud, who had escaped from German captivity, under Anglo-American auspices in Casablanca in 1942, and "only undertook the journey after the Prime Minister [Churchill] had threatened to throw him over if he did not. When there his behaviour was arrogant and irascible, contrasting badly with that of Giraud, and serious progress towards an agreement was rendered impossible. The President [Roosevelt] and the Prime Minister were much incensed by his conduct, and after his return the Prime Minister gave him to understand that he did not wish to have any more personal dealings with him, although HM Government would continue as before to treat with his National Committee.

"During the protracted negotiations between de Gaulle and Giraud, which occupied March, April and May [1943], [British] relations with de Gaulle were again disturbed by the persistence of Free French propaganda against the French leaders in North and West Africa and against the policy of the United States. This caused protests to [the British] from the United States Government, and it was difficult to convince the Americans that [the British] were really unable to stop it, since de Gaulle depended on [the British] financially. Massagli (the French ambassador in London) to whom [the British] made strong representations, deplored the propaganda but was powerless to stop it, and there is little doubt that those responsible acted with de Gaulle's approval..."<sup>734</sup>

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God's favour continued to shine on the British during the Battle of Britain, the biggest air battle in history, which took place over southern England between July and October, 1940. In spite of being outnumbered by three to one at the beginning, the British and allied pilots, - by dint of courageous flying, fine aircraft (especially the Spitfire, which came into full deployment for the first time at Dunkirk), furious over-production of aircraft and skilful use of radar, - retained control of the skies.

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<sup>734</sup> Mark Arnold-Forster, *The World at War*, London: William Collins, 1973, pp. 205-206.

A major tactical blunder made by Hitler was his decision, on September 7, to divert the main target of the Luftwaffe from airfields to cities like London; in the opinion of some, this blunder gave the RAF time to recover and eventually win the battle. It is said that Hitler made this major tactical blunder out of fury at RAF bombings on Berlin. In any case, RAF Fighter Command's leader, Sir Hugh Dowding, was granted the miracle he asked for.

“On 15 September – ‘Battle of Britain Day’ – attacks on London were met by massed fighters. The RAF claimed to have shot down 185 planes. The real number was about 60 – a still considerable figure which brought German losses in a week to some 175, an unsustainable rate of loss and a blow to their belief that they were on the verge of victory. Operation Sealion, the invasion of Britain, was postponed. The great daylight battles of 15 August and 15 September showed that German fighter strength was inadequate to gain air superiority. In the view of one historian of Germany, it was ‘an extremely one-sided affair’ for the RAF. Between July and October the RAF lost about 790 planes and the Luftwaffe about 1,300. Britain was producing more aircraft than Germany (15,000 during 1940 to Germany’s 10,800), including twice the number of fighters; it had also ordered another 10,000 planes and 13,000 aero engines from the United States. The success boosted public confidence. ‘At any rate, we have won the first round.’”<sup>735</sup>

“Hitler decided he could not risk an opposed Channel crossing, and aborted Operation Sealion, much as Napoleon had aborted his invasion after Trafalgar.”<sup>736</sup>

The pilots who won the battle numbered only 3,000, including a large contingent of Czechs and Poles. Churchill called them the Few: “Never in the field of human combat have so many owed so much to so few.” And he was not far wrong; for, apart from guaranteeing the survival of Britain, it was essential to the later entry of the United States into the war on Britain’s side, to the arming of the Soviet Union and to the successful invasion of German-occupied Europe from Britain in June, 1944...

“If the Battle of Britain had been lost,” writes Daniel Johnson, “the threat to America would have been immediate. The British could prevent the French fleet from being seized by the Nazis or Fascists, but if Britain had been defeated, the Americans could not have prevented the Royal Navy falling into German hands, which would have left the US Navy outnumbered by the combined naval forces of the Axis. Roosevelt knew this, because Churchill had warned him; that is why Churchill unhesitatingly ordered the destruction of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kéhir...”<sup>737</sup>

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<sup>735</sup> Tombs, *op. cit.*, p. 711.

<sup>736</sup> Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of England*, London: Profile, 2011, p. 245.

<sup>737</sup> Johnson, “The Righteous and the Right: Thoughts on the Survival of Western Civilisation”, *Standpoint*, May, 2018, p. 48.

“Hitler’s air assault on Britain,” writes Max Hastings, “ranks second only to the invasion of Russia among his great blunders of the war. After June 1940 many of Churchill’s people, especially in high places, recognized their country’s inability to challenge Nazi mastery of the Continent. If they had merely been left to contemplate British impotence, political agitation for a negotiation with Germany might well have been renewed, and gained support from the old appeasers still holding high government offices. The unfulfilled threat of air attack, on an annihilatory scale widely anticipated and feared in 1939, could have influenced British policy more strongly than the reality of an inconclusive one.

“The prime principle of employing force in pursuit of national objectives is to ensure that it is effective. The Germans failed to achieve this against Britain in 1940-41, a first earnest of one of the great truths of the conflict: while the Wehrmacht often fought its battles brilliantly, the Nazis made war with startling ineptitude. The Luftwaffe, instead of terrorizing Churchill’s people into bowing to Hitler’s will, merely roused them to acquiesce in defiance...”<sup>738</sup>

The truly heroic feats of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain cannot hide the fact that Britain in 1940 had been defeated on land and very nearly defeated in the air. And she would suffer more defeats in 1941 until the turning of the tide that began with the victory over the Germans at El-Alamein in 1942.

Peter Hitchens is right in declaring: “Britain lost the first part of the Second World War, which ended in the autumn of 1940. But, having been beaten back into her own territory, she was able to fight off the final humiliation of seeing a victorious foe parade through her cities... She came frighteningly close to suing for peace in 1940, but avoided this mainly because she had a Prime Minister who was a living embodiment of the national history, and who refused to accept the ‘inevitable’ surrender pressed on him by ‘moderate’ and ‘reasonable’ politicians.

“There then came a second half of the war, in which Britain fought as the involuntary ally of one former rival and one potential foe, the USA and the USSR, and in which she sustained terrible national defeats – in Hong Kong, Singapore and Tobruk. Those defeats would make it morally impossible for Britain to keep her Empire once the war was over, even if she had been rich enough to do so, and even if the USA had not actively sought to wind up the Empire as a political and trading association. They prepared the way for the humiliation at Suez fifteen years later, the last time a British government attempted to ignore the reality of this country’s weakened position. The Japanese triumph in Singapore ended the British Indian and Far Eastern Empire, though there would be a half-hearted attempt to hold on to some of it once the war was over. It was also during this stage of the war that Britain fell under foreign occupation [by 1.6 million American soldiers] for the first time

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<sup>738</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, London: Harper Press, 2011, p. 97.

in her modern history, an occupation which was welcome and unavoidable, but which permanently affected the national state of mind."<sup>739</sup>

1940 demonstrated the importance in history of individual human leaders. We are thinking here not only of Churchill, but also of King Haakon VII of Norway, who, although a constitutional monarch, decisively refused to recognize the Nazi Quisling as prime minister, thereby giving strength to his wavering cabinet and inspiring his people to resist the Germans.<sup>740</sup>

Most of all, 1940 demonstrated the overriding Providence of Almighty God. How different it would have been if Churchill had not chosen to fight on after the defeat of France against the counsel of so many of his colleagues! And how clearly did God intervene in the historical process in 1940-41, "proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61.2). First vengeance fell on the appeasers, Britain and France. It was worse for France than for Britain, perhaps because France had been the formal ally of Czechoslovakia and, with the largest army in Western Europe, was well able to defend her ally, while the British, though hardly less foolish, had at least turned to God in prayer and had at least preserved her independence and will to fight. The Soviet Union was a third appeaser - or rather, accomplice of Germany in its vile deeds of conquest and repression in Poland, the Baltic States and Finland. And on June 22, 1941 it would receive the most terrible recompense for its sins in the most terrible war in history...

But in another way Britain fell, at least temporarily, into another kind of servitude - financial servitude. "Unlike Nazi Germany, the UK was not de facto bankrupt and had been buying American supplies and war material under a program known as cash and carry (paying up front and assuming responsibility for transportation). But Britain had begun to run low on cash, and Roosevelt introduced the idea of Lend-Lease ('An Act to Promote the Defence of the United States') which allowed him to 'sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of, to any such government [whose defence the President deems vital to the defense of the United States] any such defense article.' The law soon would be applied to China too."<sup>741</sup>

On March 11, 1941 Lend-Lease was signed into law. The war effort in both Britain and the Soviet Union was largely financed by it. "By the end of the war, the total value of American Lend-Lease exports had reached over \$32 billion, of which nearly \$14 billion went to Britain and an invaluable \$9 billion to the Soviet Union (which was provided with foodstuffs, machine tools, lorries, tanks, aircraft, railway track and locomotives). America was the paymaster of the war. It would soon become the paymaster of the peace..."<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> Hitchens, *The Abolition of Britain*, pp. 274-275.

<sup>740</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haakon\\_VII\\_of\\_Norway#The\\_German\\_invasion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haakon_VII_of_Norway#The_German_invasion).

<sup>741</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 843.

<sup>742</sup> Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-1949*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 427. Britain would not repay all her debts to the United States until 2006...

## 50. HITLER, STALIN AND SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

By the beginning of the Second World War, the Orthodox Church, having suffered the most terrible and sustained onslaught in her history in the 1920s and 30s, had lost most of her pre-revolutionary glory. The Moscow Patriarchate, on the one hand, and the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, Greece and Romania, on the other, could no longer be counted as truly Orthodox. The Churches of Serbia, Bulgaria and Jerusalem were still Orthodox – but they had not broken communion with the heretics even while they continued to be protectors of ROCOR, so the prospects of their remaining free from the quicksands of “World Orthodoxy” for long were not good. The situation of the ROCOR herself was only a little better – she was not in communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, but had not broken decisively with the other heretical Churches, and even her attitude to Moscow was not entirely unambiguous. The Greek Old Calendarist Church was strong in the faith, but tragically divided. The Romanian Old Calendarists were also strong, but as yet had no bishops. The Catacomb Church of Russia was bathed in the glory of a vast multitude of new martyrs and confessors; but the whole apparatus of the most evil and most powerful state in history was directed towards her complete annihilation...

Could the outbreak of world war bring relief to the Orthodox Church? Or would it consolidate the power of the antichristian powers ranged against her? Could any Orthodox state remain independent?

There was no relief for the Orthodox Christians of Central Europe as Stalin used the war in the West in 1940, when the other Great Powers were preoccupied with other things, to consolidate his conquest of Eastern Poland and the Baltic states. He deported many thousands of the inhabitants of those lands to the Gulag, and then “began inciting Hungarian irredentism over their conationals in Romanian-controlled Transylvania.”<sup>743</sup> Then, as Ernest Latham writes, on June 26, 1940, Molotov, “acting on the secret annex to the Nazi-Soviet Pact, handed the Romanian minister in Moscow, Gh. Davidescu, a note with a map demanding the return forthwith of Bessarabia and the cession of the northern half of Bucovina, which Russia had never before ruled. On the advice of Germany and Italy, with Hungary and Bulgaria clamoring for their own irredentae, Romania submitted to the Soviet demands and endured the loss of 50,762 sq. km. and 3,776,000 people, more than half of whom, some 2,020,000, were ethnic Romanians. The following August 19 negotiations with Bulgaria began to determine the fate of the Quadrilateral [Southern Dobruja], which was returned to Bulgaria on September 7 with the Treaty of Craiova at a cost to Romania of 7412 sq. km. An exchange of populations ensued with 103,711 Romanians transferred north and 62,272 Bulgarians moved south. The most painful and humiliating loss, however, had occurred a week before in Vienna when Hitler determined that northern Transylvania should be ceded to Hungary. The Vienna *Diktat* cost Romania 42,243 sq. km and 2,600,000 people

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<sup>743</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 787.

about half of whom were ethnic Romanians. 110,000 Romanian refugees fled from Transylvania to the kingdom adding their care to the other responsibilities of the Romanian social services already buckling under the weight of the 45,000 Polish refugees who had fled from war-torn Poland the previous year. The total Romanian losses in the summer of 1940 were awesome: one-third of her territory, 6.600,000 of her population including 3,000,000 ethnic Romanians, 37% of the arable land, 44% of the forests, 27% of the orchards, 37% of the vineyards, 37% of wheat acreage, 30% of corn acreage, 75% of sunflower acreage, 43% of hemp acreage and 86% of soya acreage.

“September 1940 was arguably the nadir of Romania’s history... [However,] on September 5, 1940, there stepped in General Ion Antonescu, called by Carol II from house arrest in the face of widespread rioting and a pending total breakdown of law and orderly governance. The following day he demanded and got the abdication of Carol in all but name, and Mihail for the second time became king of Romania...”<sup>744</sup>

In addition to losing so many territories, Romania lost thousands of lives to Soviet border guard shooting when they tried to cross the border from Soviet-occupied Bukovina into Romania.<sup>745</sup>

However, while Hitler went along with Stalin’s annexations for the sake of the Pact, he was not happy with them. And some of the territorial changes in Romania during the summer had been dictated by him rather than Stalin. Thus on August 9, at a conference in Salzburg monitored by Soviet intelligence, Hitler proposed “to Romania joint regulation of all disputed issues with Hungary and Bulgaria; stated that all territorial changes in Eastern Europe up to that point were temporary; and ‘declared that current actions were the first stage in preparation for a war against the USSR, which would begin immediately after the end of the war with England.’ Five days later, Hitler handed out diamond-studded batons to the field marshals in the Reich Chancellery. ‘Russia has once shown an inclination to overstep the agreements made with us,’ he remarked privately. ‘But she remains loyal at present. But should she reveal the intention of conquering Finland or attacking Romania, we shall be forced to strike. Russia should not be allowed to be the sole master of the eastern Baltic. Furthermore, we need Romania’s oil.’”<sup>746</sup>

Then, on August 30, under pressure from Hitler, Romania handed northern Transylvania over to Hungary in what is called the Second Vienna Award. Stalin protested, but to no avail.

Romania was in effect being divided up between Hitler and Stalin... Consequently, having lost “the last of the territories [Romania] had gained as

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<sup>744</sup> Latham, *Romanian Nationalism during the Reign of King Mihai I*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2010, pp. 10-11.

<sup>745</sup> [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A2nt%C3%A2na\\_Alb%C4%83\\_massacre](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A2nt%C3%A2na_Alb%C4%83_massacre).

<sup>746</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 786.

a result of the Great War [sank] the popularity of the Bucharest government and the monarch. 'I was not an enemy of Your Majesty,' General Ion Antonescu (b. 1882), the former war minister and the leader of the pro-Nazi Iron Guard, wrote in protest to King Carol II. 'I was a fanatic servant of this nation. I was removed through intrigue and calumny by those who have led this nation to where it is now.' Carol promptly had him arrested. Mass public demonstrations and Iron Guard shock troops known as Legionnaires got Antonescu released. In a quick coup, he would force the beleaguered king to step down in favour of his nineteen-year-old son, Mihai I (a great-great-grandson of Queen Victoria). But most of the monarchy's dictatorial powers would be transferred on September 5 to Antonescu,"<sup>747</sup> who called himself "Conducător Statului," "Leader of the State", a title used by the murdered Legionnaire leader Codreanu.

Constantin Bujor writes that "Horia Sima (1907-1993), Commander of the Iron Guard, became Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, and the National Legionary State of Romania was formally established. Antonescu's alliance with the Iron Guard was one of political expediency, however, not one of ideological conviction; its draconian methods and goals often clashed with his own personal authoritarian agenda. The Legionnaires thus betrayed Antonescu, staging a coup d'état in January of 1941, which, lacking support from the Third Reich of Germany, proved abortive. This enabled Antonescu, with the blessing of Hitler, to suppress the Iron Guard, thereby consolidating his power as military dictator of Romania."<sup>748</sup>

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Hitler was angry about Stalin's annexations and conquests since they had not been agreed in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. But neither had they been forbidden... In any case, there was nothing he could do about it for the time being, for the USSR, while having the largest army in the world (4.2 million men), now embraced 200 million inhabitants, most of whom (outside the newly-annexed regions) were fanatically devoted to the despot. Moreover, the Germans' war in the West had been fuelled to a significant degree by Soviet shipments of oil, grain and other resources, which Hitler desperately needed, while German shipments of high-tech and military equipment were desperately needed by Stalin (and were being held up, to Stalin's great annoyance). So for the time being, while problems existed, the Pact still suited both sides. But could the two monsters really be "friends" for long, with increasing numbers of German troops massing near the Soviet border? And if they clashed militarily, who would win?

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<sup>747</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 788.

<sup>748</sup> Constantin Bujor, *Resisting unto Blood: Sixty-Five Years of Persecution of the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Romania* (October 1924 - December 1989), Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2003, p. 101, translator's note.

Besides massive troop build-ups in the East, Hitler now tried to check the increasingly aggressive Stalin by diplomatic means...

Misha Glenny writes: "Hitler wished to invite the Soviet Union to join Germany, Italy and Japan in the Tripartite Pact. Were Stalin to accept the offer to join the Axis, this would create the mightiest political alliance in history, stretching from the Atlantic and Mediterranean to the Pacific. Hitler had hit upon the idea of incorporating the Soviet Union into his scheme partly to preempt a future alliance of the Soviet Union, Britain and, possibly, the United States, and partly because he had become anxious about the gradual westward expansion of the Soviet Union through Finland, the Baltics, Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. In the Molotov-Ribbentrop accord of August, 1939, Hitler had effectively recognized the Balkans as a Russian sphere of interest. Meanwhile, however, Germany's interest in the region had become more urgent. By persuading the Soviet Union to sign up to the Tripartite Pact, Hitler hoped, among other things, to extinguish Soviet influence in the Balkans. Berlin offered to compensate Moscow by supporting Soviet expansion in what Hitler termed the '*Großasiatischer Raum*' (greater Asian space). When Molotov asked what '*Großasiatischer Raum*' actually meant, the Germans were unable to give him a concrete answer; it has been assumed that it meant India, Central Asia and Iran.

"As Hitler unveiled his vision of the new order, covering half the globe, Molotov sat impassively and, having heard the Führer out, stated he agreed 'in principle' to the idea. He then proceeded to raise difficulties about all the individual issues that Hitler had hoped to resolve in Germany's favour. The Foreign Minister mentioned Finland, Poland and Romania but he also raised for the first time the question of Bulgaria. Molotov claimed that Britain was threatening the security of the Black Sea Straits, which had prompted the Soviet Union to consider an offer 'of a Russian guarantee to Bulgaria'.

"Molotov's intervention threatened Wehrmacht plans to invade Greece, which included sending its divisions through Bulgaria. Stalin's response to the Tripartite proposal arrived by letter two weeks after Molotov's visit. The Soviet leader was adamant on the issue of Bulgaria: '2. Provided that within the next few months the security of the Soviet Union in the Straits is assured by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria... and by the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the USSR within range of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles by means of a long-term lease.'

"Hitler needed the Balkans for economic reasons. He could not tolerate Soviet interference in the region, and certainly not a Soviet military presence there. Persuaded that Stalin was becoming too conceited and dangerous as an ally, Hitler decided to destroy the Soviet Union once and for all..."<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, pp. 469-470.



Hitler's Directive No. 18, issued on the very day of Molotov's arrival in Berlin, "read like a warning to himself not to fall into temptation to strike a bargain with Moscow again. 'Political discussions have been initiated with the aim of clarifying Russia's attitude for the time being,' the November 12, 1940, directive explained. 'Irrespective of the results of these discussions, all preparations for the East [war] which have already been verbally ordered will be continued.' Molotov's ostentatious lack of deference in the Nazi capital afforded the Fuhrer a sense of release. 'He is vastly relieved, this won't even have to remain a marriage of convenience,' Engel wrote of the Fuhrer's daily noontime military conference on the day of Molotov's departure. 'Letting the Russians into Europe would mean the end of central Europe. The Balkans and Finland are also dangerous flanks.'"<sup>750</sup>

"After two days of negotiations from 12 to 14 November 1940, Germany presented the Soviets with a draft written Axis pact agreement defining the world spheres of influence of the four proposed Axis powers (Japan, Germany, Soviet Union, Italy). Hitler, Ribbentrop and Molotov tried to set German and Soviet spheres of influence; Hitler encouraged Molotov to look south to Iran and eventually India while preserving German access to Finland's resources, and to remove Soviet influence in the Balkans. Molotov remained firm, seeking to remove German troops from Finland and gain a warm water port in the Baltic. Soviet foreign policy calculations were predicated by the idea that the war would be a long-term struggle and therefore German claims that Britain would be defeated swiftly were treated with skepticism [especially since British bombs were raining on Berlin even while the two sides negotiated]. In addition, Stalin sought to remain influential in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. These factors resulted in Molotov taking a firm line. According to a study by Alexander Nekrich, on 25 November 1940, the Soviets presented a Stalin-drafted written counterproposal where they would accept the four power pact, but it included Soviet rights to Bulgaria and a world sphere of influence centered on the area around Iraq and Iran. Germany did not respond, leaving the negotiations unresolved."<sup>751</sup>

"Regarding the counterproposal, Hitler remarked to his top military chiefs that Stalin 'demands more and more', 'he's a cold-blooded blackmailer' and that 'a German victory has become unbearable for Russia' so that 'she must be brought to her knees as soon as possible.'..."<sup>752</sup>

## [51. THE USTASHI AND THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX](#)

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<sup>750</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 815.

<sup>751</sup> "In other words, facing the threat of ever more German troops arriving on the borders, Stalin sought *everything*, not just Persia, which Hitler was offering, but Finland, the Baltics, and the Straits" (Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 813).

<sup>752</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German%E2%80%93Soviet\\_Axis\\_talks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German%E2%80%93Soviet_Axis_talks)

In 1941 Hitler was preparing Operation Marita, the invasion of Greece, for which he needed Bulgarian and Yugoslav support... The Bulgarians procrastinated, but eventually agreed to join the Tripartite Alliance on the very first day of the invasion, March 1. As for the Yugoslavs, they were negotiating a treaty with the Germans in Vienna that was, according to Misha Glenny, “a diplomatic triumph. The only real concession made to the Germans in the secret clauses attached to the published agreement concerning the transport of war materials through Yugoslavia. The Germans were not permitted to send troops across the country; nor did the agreement burden Yugoslavia with any other military obligations towards the Axis powers. Although a member of the Tripartite Pact, Yugoslavia would keep her neutrality virtually intact.”<sup>753</sup>

However, this judgment concerning the Vienna treaty was disputed by many Yugoslavs, and on March 27 the government under Prince Paul was overthrown in a coup led by the head of the Yugoslav air force, General Dušan Simović. The new pro-Allied government under King Peter renounced the agreement with the Axis powers. This coup was supported by the famous Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, who sent the following telegram to the citizens of Kraljevo: “Grateful to God, thankful to the people, we now look forward to a bright future without the stain of shame.”<sup>754</sup>

While the coup was applauded by Churchill, the Yugoslavs were in no position to make an effective resistance. The basic problem lay in the fact that Yugoslavia was no longer a centralized state. For, as Glenny writes, “in August 1939 Cvetković, the Prime Minister, had come to an agreement with Vladko Maček, the man who had assumed the leadership of the Croatian Peasant Party after the murder of Stjepan Radić. The Cvetković-Maček *Sporazum* (Agreement) had effectively split the country in two, creating an autonomous area of Croatia which included roughly half of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Most Serb opposition parties deeply resented the *Sporazum*”, as did the Church in the persons of Patriarch Gavriilo and Bishop Nikolai Velimirović...

“Simović was not in a position to establish control throughout the country unless he could come to an agreement with the Croats, and with Maček in particular. He secured this agreement, but only under certain conditions. The most important of these was a declaration to stand by the Vienna Agreement, committing Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact. Belatedly recognizing that the Yugoslav Army could not possibly resist a German onslaught, Simović and the new government consented to Maček’s condition. So the very reason for organizing a coup in the first place – resistance to the Tripartite Pact – was thrown out by the new government almost as soon as it was formed.

“Yet before Simović persuaded the Croats to back his government, Hitler had undergone a dramatic change of mood. Irritated by the intricacies of

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<sup>753</sup> Glenny, op. cit., pp. 473-474.

<sup>754</sup> Velimirović, *Pastirski glas*, no. 3, 1941; in *The New Chrysostom*, Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2011, p. 141.

Balkan politics, the Führer exploded in fury on receipt of the news from Belgrade. Almost immediately, he tore up the Tripartite Agreement with Yugoslavia, and ordered the Wehrmacht to invade the country. As Maček appeared to be cooperating with Simović, Ribbentrop was persuaded by Mussolini to switch German backing in Croatia to Ante Pavelić and his small gang of fascist thugs, who numbered no more than 360 when they seized control of the government in Zagreb in early April. They were brought to power solely by German guns and Italian politicians, and not by popular sentiment in Croatia, which overwhelmingly backed Maček. The installation of Pavelić's brutal fascist regime resulted in the single most disastrous episode in Yugoslav history, whose consequences were still being felt in the 1990s..."<sup>755</sup>

Hitler invaded Yugoslavia on April 6. Deserted by Pavelić's Croats, the Serbian resistance was soon crushed... The surrender was so rapid that many Serbian units, the so-called Četniks, escaped and formed an anti-Nazi resistance movement led by Draža Mihailović that was loyal to Prince Pavle's government-in-exile in London. The Bulgarians occupied Yugoslav Macedonia, the Hungarians - Vojvodina, the Italians - Kosovo, and the Croatian Ustaše - much of Bosnia. Many bishops, priests and laity were killed in all these occupied regions. The Bulgarians were especially ruthless. "As a result of wholesale ethnic cleansing, only 2,000 of Skopje' pre-war population of 20,000 Serbs... remained in the city by the spring of 1942."<sup>756</sup>

"Germany had also declared war on Greece on April 6, to rescue Mussolini's failed invasion (launched back on October 28, 1940). German troops, pouring in via Bulgaria, halted a Greek offensive [supported by British troops], and by April 27 the swastika rose over the Acropolis. Mussolini's army had suffered 154,172 dead, wounded and sick, and the Greek army about 90,000 casualties. German losses for Yugoslavia and Greece combined were 2,559 killed, 5,820 wounded, and 3,169 missing. While Italy occupied the Greek mainland and the Bulgarians hastily went into Thrace, German forces occupied Athens, Thessaloniki, central Macedonia, Crete, and other Aegean islands, taking 218,000 Greeks and 9,000 British prisoners."<sup>757</sup>

The British position in the Mediterranean was now significantly weaker, and the Soviets, too, were imperilled by the German conquest of the Balkans...

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The Germans arrested Patriarch Gavrilo and Bishop Nikolai; but although the two hierarchs were to spend the whole war in prisons and concentration camps (the last one was Dachau), they refused the Nazis' suggestion that they

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<sup>755</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 475-476.

<sup>756</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, p. 465.

<sup>757</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 849.

collaborate with them.<sup>758</sup> Once they were asked whether they would call on the Serbian people to rise up against the partisan communists. They replied: "The Serbian Church is not fighting against the communists. The Serbian Church is fighting against the atheists and the atheist ideology, against the atheists on the right and on the left, that is, against the German atheism from outside and our atheism from within and with every other atheism. But the partisans are our lost and deceived children and brothers. When the thunders of military conflict die down, each of them will return to his own peaceful work."

Nikolaj told Gavriilo that "a proclamation against the Communist Party would have been a grave mistake and an unpardonable error," because "it is very dangerous for the Church to issue proclamations against a political party, in this case the Communist Party. The Church is only concerned with whether a respective party programme propagates atheism or not. We are against atheism whether it is from the left or right; in other words, we are opposed to Hitler's atheists just as we are opposed to the Soviet ones. We can issue a proclamation only insofar as it is opposed to atheism and not communism. For should Communism recognize religion and revoke atheism from the party's program tomorrow, which could happen, we then have nothing against Communism and its economic program or political program in general."<sup>759</sup>

But of course if Communism recognized religion and revoked atheism, it would no longer be Communism...

In nearby Czechoslovakia Bishop Gorazd of Moravia-Silesia, a former Old Catholic, after being cut off from the Serbian Patriarchate, to which he was canonically subject, turned to ROCOR's Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade) in Berlin, asking him to take his diocese under his protection. Metropolitan Seraphim agreed, and gave him holy chrism and antimensia.<sup>760</sup> However, in September, 1942 "when the Nazi governor of Czechoslovakia was assassinated, those involved hid in the cathedral but were discovered by authorities. St. Gorazd (who had actually been trying to get them out of the cathedral basement) chose to take full responsibility for harboring them and so, he was tortured, then executed on September 4. Slain with him were the two priests of the cathedral, Sts. Vaclav (Vyacheslav), Vladimir and a pious layman Jan (John), and 546 others, including an entire village."<sup>761</sup> "The Orthodox Church in Bohemia and Moravia was shut down and its priests sent to camps in Germany."<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> See Jovan Byford, "From 'Traitor' to 'Saint': Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in Serbian Public Memory", *Analysis of Current Trends In Antisemitism*, 22 (2004) pp. 1-41; Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Sovremennykh Sobytij* (Chronicle of Current Events), part 3, p. 20.

<sup>759</sup> Bishop Artemije, *The New Chrysostom, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2011, p. 85.

<sup>760</sup> Seraphim, with the blessing of the Serbian Bishop Irinei, also took under his wing the parishes in Vojvodina that were now part of Hungary.

<sup>761</sup> Angelo Pepps, *Facebook*, September 5, 2020.

<sup>762</sup> Monk Gorazd, "Sviashchennomuchenik Gorazd" (Hieromartyr Gorazd), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 12 (1465), June 15/28, 1992.

It was in Croatia and Bosnia that the worst atrocities were committed against the Serbs by the Ustaše and the Catholics.<sup>763</sup> On April 28, 1941, the Catholic Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb issued an appeal rapturously praising the Ustaše and calling on all Catholic priests to collaborate with them. Three days before, the government had banned the Cyrillic script and imposed a special tax on the patriarchate. On May 8-10 the Serbs in Zagreb were expelled to the suburbs and forbidden from leaving their homes before six in the evening. On June 3 all Orthodox schools and kindergardens were closed, and on June 26 all Serbs were forced to wear coloured armbands with the letter "P" (for *Pravoslavac* – Orthodox). On July 18 the use of the term "Serbian Orthodox religion" was banned; in its place "Eastern Greek faith" was to be substituted. On August 9 services were banned in all Orthodox churches. On June 22 the minister of education said that one third of the Serbs in Croatia would be expelled, one third killed and one third converted to Catholicism. In July the arrests of Serbs began. By the autumn over 15,000 Serbs had passed through the camps, and by 1943 there were 300,000 Serbia refugees from Croatia in Serbia. On April 4, 1942 the Croatians passed a law ordering all Church feasts to be celebrated according to the new calendar. The Russian émigrés were informed of this, and were threatened with punishment if they did not obey. Metropolitan Anastasy, however, immediately petitioned for an exception to be made for the Russian parishes, and with the help of the German Evangelical Bishop Hackel, this request was granted. However, no Serb was allowed to visit the émigré services.<sup>764</sup>

Joachim Wertz writes: "In many villages the massacres followed a certain pattern. The Ustashi would arrive and assemble all the Serbs. They would then order them to convert to Catholicism. Those who refused, as the majority did, were told to assemble in their local Orthodox parish church. They would then lock them in the church and set it ablaze. In this manner many Orthodox men, women and children perished in scores of Serbian settlements."<sup>765</sup>

According to Archbishop Stepinac's report to the Pope on May 8, 1944, 240,000 Serbs had apostasized to Catholicism. However, many of these returned to Orthodoxy after the war. Hundreds of churches were destroyed or desecrated, and vast amounts of property were confiscated. According to German Nazi figures, about 750,000 Orthodox Serbs were killed, including five bishops and 177 other clergy.

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<sup>763</sup> See Sean Mac Mathuna, "The Role of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia's Holocaust", <http://churchandstate.org.uk/2015/12/the-role-of-the-catholic-church-in-yugoslavia-holocaust/>

<sup>764</sup> M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration), St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2009, p. 105; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 35.

<sup>765</sup> Wertz, "On the Serbian Orthodox Martyrs of the Second World War", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, N 1, January-February, 1983, pp. 15-26.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirović inscribed these martyrs into the Church calendar for August 31: "The 700,000 who suffered for the Orthodox faith at the hands of the Roman crusaders and Ustashi during the time of the Second World War. These are the New Serbian Martyrs."<sup>766</sup>

With the single exception of the Catholic Bishop of Mostar, all the Catholic bishops joined in the persecution of the Orthodox. The Franciscans were particularly cruel. Thus in the notorious camp of Jasenovac, where 200,000 Serbs perished, together with many Jews and Gypsies, 40,000 of them died on the orders of the Franciscan Father Filipovich. In Livno one Franciscan told his flock: "Brother Croats, go and kill the Serbs. And first of all, kill my sister, who has married a Serb. And then kill all the Serbs one by one. When you have finished your job, come to me, I will listen to your confessions and give you absolution of your sins."<sup>767</sup>

The Germans knew what was going on. Thus on February 17, 1942 Heindrich, who masterminded the Holocaust, wrote to Himmler: "The number of Slavs destroyed by the Croats by the most sadistic methods has reached 300,000... If the Serbs living in Croatia accept Catholicism they are allowed to live without persecution."<sup>768</sup>

One of those martyred in Jasenovac was an old man called Vukashin. He was standing "in an aura of peace and joy, softly praying to Christ. The executioner was greatly angered by the old man's peacefulness and saintly composure, and he ordered that he be dragged to the place of execution.

"St. Vukashin was given the usual charge, 'Accept the Pope or die a most terrible death'.

"The old man signed himself with the honourable Cross and peacefully intoned, 'Just do your job, my son'.

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<sup>766</sup> However, more recent scholarship gives generally lower figures for those killed. The Simon Wiesenthal Center calculated that 600,000 Serbs, 30,000 Jews and 29,000 Gypsies were killed (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 21). Mark Almond writes: "Probably about 325,000 Serbs were killed by the Ustasha in the NDH [Independent State of Croatia, which included Bosnia], including about 60,000 at Jasenovac alone. In other words about one in every six Serbs in Pavelic's realm was killed." (*Europe's Backyard War*, London: Mandarin, 1994, p. 137). See also Aleksa Djilas, "The Yugoslav Tragedy", *Prospect*, October, 1995, p. 39). Again, the Serb scholar Bogoljub Kocovic writes that 487,000 Serbs were killed during World War II altogether, as opposed to 207,000 Croats, 86,000 Muslims and 234,000 others; while the Croatian scholar Vladimir Zerjavic gives: 530,000 Serbs, 192,000 Croats, 103,000 Muslims and 202,000 others (Kocovic, *Zrtve drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji*, London: Libra Books, 1985, pp. 102, 174, 182; Zerjavic, *Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u drugom sovjetskom ratu*, Zagreb: Jugoslavensko Viktimolosko Drustvo, 1989, pp. 61, 82.

<sup>767</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>768</sup> Heindrich, in Karlheinz Deschner, *With God and Fuhrer*, p. 282; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 38.

“The executioner trembled with anger. He brutally slashed off one of the saint’s ears, repeating his charge. The Holy Martyr again peacefully replied, ‘Just continue to do your job, my son.’ And so the irrational persecutor continued: first the other ear, then the nose, and the fingers one by one. Like a new James of Persia, St. Vukashin was ‘pruned as a sacred grapevine of God.’ With each grisly and bloody cut, the noble Vukashin, filled with peace and joy by the Holy Spirit, calmly replied, ‘Just continue to do your job, my son.’

“At length, the vicious torturer gouged out the eyes of the martyr, and the saint once more replied, ‘Just continue to do your job, my son.’ With that, the executioner flew into a rage and slew the holy martyr. Almost immediately, the executioner lost his mind and went completely mad.”<sup>769</sup>

In February, 1942, Dr. Privislav Grisogno, a Croatian Catholic member of the former Yugoslav cabinet, wrote in protest to Archbishop Stepinac: “I am writing to you as a man to a man, as a Christian to a Christian. I have been meaning to do this for months hoping that the dreadful news from Croatia would cease so that I could collect my thoughts and write to you in peace.

“For the last ten months Serbs have been killed and destroyed in Croatia in the most ruthless manner and the value of their property that has been destroyed reaches billions. Blushes of shame and anger cover the faces of every honest Croat.

“The slaughter of Serbs began from the very first day of the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (Gospic, Gudovan, Bosanska Krajina, etc.) and has continued relentlessly to this very day. The horror is not only in the killing. The killing includes everybody: old men, women and children. With accompanying barbaric torture. These innocent Serbs have been impaled, fire has been lit on their bare chest, they have been roasted alive, burned in their homes and churches while still living, covered with boiling water, then their skin was peeled off, salt poured into their wounds, their eyes have been pulled out, their ears, noses and tongues cut off, the priests have had their beards and moustaches torn off from their skulls, their sex organs severed and put into their mouths, they have been tied to trucks and then dragged along the ground, nails have been pressed into their heads, their heads nailed to the floor, they have been thrown alive into wells and over cliffs, and grenades thrown after them, their heads smashed against walls, their backs broken against rocks and tree stumps, and many other horrible tortures were perpetrated, such as normal people can hardly imagine.

“Their rivers Sava, Drav, the Danube and their tributaries have carried thousands and thousands of their corpses. Dead bodies have been found with the inscription: ‘direction Belgrade – traveling to King Peter’. In a boat which was found on the Sava river there was a heap of children’s heads with the head

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<sup>769</sup> "Holy New Martyr Vukashin", *Orthodoxy Canada*, N 114, May-June, 1986, p. 3.

of a woman (which could have been a head of one of the mothers of the children) with the inscription: 'Meat for the Jovanova Market in Belgrade'.

"Horrifying is the case of Mileva Bozinic from Stanbandza whose child was removed from her womb. There was also the case of the roasted heads in Bosnia, the vessels full of Serbian blood, the cases of Serbs being forced to drink the warm blood of their slaughtered kin. Countless women, girls and children in front of their mothers were raped or else sent off to Ustashi camps to serve the Ustashi; rapes even took place on the altars of Orthodox churches. In the Petrinje county a son was forced to rape his own mother. The slaughter of the Serbs in the Glina Orthodox church and the murder of Serbs on the altar of the Kladusa church is without precedent in history. There are detailed and original accounts of all these horrors. Even the Germans and Italians were astounded by these crimes. They photographed a large number of cases of such slaughter. The Germans are saying that the Croats did this also during the Thirty Years War and that is why there has been a saying in Germany since then: 'God save us from plague, hunger and Croats.'

"The Srem Germans despise us because of this and behave in a more humane fashion with the Serbs. The Italians photographed a vessel with 3.5 kilograms of Serbian eyes, as well as a Croat who wore a necklace strung with Serbian eyes, and another one who came to Dubrovnik with a belt on which severed Serbian tongues were hanging!

"The horrors of the camps in which thousands of Serbs were killed or were left to die from exposure, hunger and cold weather, are too terrible to mention. The Germans have been talking about a camp in Lika where there were thousands of Serbs; but when the Germans got there they found the camp empty, drenched in blood and bloody clothing. In that camp it has been said a Serbian bishop also lost his life. Thousands upon thousands of Serbs in the camp of Jasenovac are still being tortured as they are spending fierce winter in wooden Gypsy shacks with no straw or covering and with a ration of two potatoes per day. In the history of Europe there have been no similar cases. One would have to go to Asia at the time of Tamerlane, or Genghis-Khan, or to Africa, to the countries of their bloodthirsty rulers to come upon similar situations. These events have shamed the name of Croatia for centuries to come. Nothing can absolve us fully from this ever again. We will not be able to tell even the last wretched man in the Balkans about our thousand year old Croatian culture, because even the Gypsies never perpetrated such cruelties. Why am I writing this to you, when you are not a political personage and cannot bear responsibility for all this. Here is why: in all these unprecedented barbarian crimes which are more than Godless, our Catholic church participated in two ways. A large number of clergy, priests, friars and organized Catholic youth took an active part in all this. It has also happened that Catholic priests became camp guards and Ustashi accomplices and so approved of the torture and slaughter of Christians. A Catholic priest even slit personally slaughtered an Orthodox clergyman. They could not have done all this without the permission of their bishops, and if they did, they would have



had to lose their jobs and be taken to court. Since this did not happen, it means that their bishops granted them permission.

“Secondly, the Catholic Church made us of all this to convert the surviving Serbs. And while the soil was still steaming from the innocent victims’ blood, while groans shuddered from the chests of the surviving victims, the priests, friars, nuns carried in one hand the Ustashi daggers and in the other their prayer books and rosaries. The whole of Srem is inundated with leaflets written by Bishop Aksamovic and printed in his printing shop in Djakovo, calling upon Serbs to save their lives and property by converting to Catholicism. It was as if our church wanted to show that it could destroy souls just as the Ustashi authorities destroy bodies. It is an even greater blot on the Catholic church, since at the same time many Orthodox churches and all the Orthodox monasteries have been confiscated, their property plundered as well as many historical treasures. Even the Patriarchal church in Sremski Karlovci has not been spared. All this violence against conscience and the spirit has brought even greater disgrace to the Croat nation and name...

“I write this to save my soul and leave it to you (Archbishop Stepinac) to find a way to save your soul.”<sup>770</sup>

Although some have claimed that Stepinac tried to restrain the murderers, there can be no doubt about his fanatical hatred of Orthodoxy. Thus on March 27 and 28, 1941, he wrote in his diary: “The spirit of Byzantium – that is, of the Eastern Orthodox Church – is something so terrible that only the Omnipotent and Omniscient God could tolerate it... The Croats and the Serbs are from two different worlds, two different poles; without a miracle of God they will never find a common language. The schism of the Eastern Orthodox Church is the greatest curse in Europe, perhaps even worse than Protestantism.” In 1946 Stepinac was tried by the communist government, found guilty of treason to the State and the murder of Serbs, and imprisoned for five years. On coming out of prison he was awarded a cardinal’s hat by the Vatican, and in 1998 was beatified by Pope John Paul II!

In spite of their mass murders of the Serbs, the Croats failed to achieve their “final solution” of the Serbian problem. So they had recourse to a clever plan: to create a so-called “Croatian Orthodox Church” for the Serbs in Croatia that would be completely under their control. On June 8, 1942, Archbishop Hermogen (Maximov) of Yekaterinoslav was raised to the rank of metropolitan of this uncanonical church, whose main task was to “Croatize” the Serbs. It enjoyed the full support of the Croatian authorities, but was rejected by the

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<sup>770</sup> Grisogno, in Liudmilla Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 230-233, and “Stepinac's Hat is Blood-Red”, *The Christian Century*, January 14, 1953, pp. 42-43. See also the article by the Catholic writer Richard West, “The War in Bosnia”, *Orthodox Christian Witness*, September 11/24, 1995, and Marko Markovich, “La Responsabilité de l’Eglise Catholique dans le Genocide des Serbes par les Oustachis au cours de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale”, in G. Ivanoff-Trinadtsaty, *Regards sur l’Orthodoxie* (Points of View on Orthodoxy), Lausanne: “L’Age d’Homme, 1997, pp. 173-190.

Serbian Church and by ROCOR under Metropolitan Anastasy, who banned Hermogen.

Nor did any other Orthodox Church recognize the new Church *de jure*. *De facto*, however, the Romanian Patriarch recognized it by sending Metropolitan Vissarion (Puo) to Zagreb in order to consecrate a new bishop, Spyridon (Mifka), together with Hermogen. The Serbian Church protested, pointing out that it had defrocked Spyridon in 1936. In October, 1944, Metropolitan Vissarion, learning that the Serbs and ROCOR had refused to recognize the Croatian Church, apologized to Metropolitan Anastasy.<sup>771</sup>

By the end of 1942 Metropolitan Hermogen had about 70 clergy and 42 parishes. But by the end of 1944 he had about 30 priests. So not many Orthodox supported him...<sup>772</sup>

On May 8, 1945 Metropolitan Hermogen was captured by Yugoslav partisans and dragged naked through the streets. On June 29 he, Bishop Seraphim and other clergy and laymen - 49 people in all - were sentenced to death by a Titoist court in Zagreb and killed - some by shooting, others by hanging - a few days later.<sup>773</sup> On March 7, 1956 the ROCOR Synod issued a special decree that "although Archbishop Hermogen committed a terrible sin against the Church, having fallen away from the Russian Church, and, having created an uncanonical church organization, he did not fall completely away from Orthodoxy, but partly redeemed his guilt through a martyric death."<sup>774</sup>

But can schismatics be martyrs? That is the question...

By contrast, in 1946 Cardinal Stepinac, who had killed so many Serbian Orthodox, was sentenced to sixteen years in prison, being released after only two years. He died in 1960, and was put forward for canonization by Pope John-Paul II...

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<sup>771</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., p. 158. In 1953, Metropolitan Vissarion, together with Archbishop John Maximovich and Bishop Nathaniel (Lvov), consecrated Archimandrite Theophilus (Ionescu) for the new calendarist Romanian flock in Western Europe.

<sup>772</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 43-44, 44-45; Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Zaviet Sviatogo Patriarkha* (The Testament of the Holy Patriarch), Moscow, 1996, p. 33.

<sup>773</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., pp. 160-161; Ilya Goriachev, in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 89-90.

<sup>774</sup> Shkvarovsky, op. cit., p. 160.

## 52. THE NAZIS INVADE RUSSIA

Hitler's Operation *Barbarossa*, the invasion of Russia, began on June 22, 1941, the feast of All Saints of Russia. "There were around 200 divisions arrayed against the USSR, including 154 German ones - a total of at least 3 million Wehrmacht soldiers and half a million troops from its Axis partners, as well as 3,600 tanks, 2,700 aircraft, and 700,000 field guns and other artillery, 600,000 motor vehicles, and 650,000 horses. The Soviets massed around 170 divisions, perhaps 2.7 million men in the west, along with 10,400 tanks and 9,500 aircraft. The two largest armies in world history stood cheek to jowl on a borer some 2,000 miles long."<sup>775</sup> And the ensuing war, lasting almost four years, turned out to be the bloodiest and most savage in world history...

The holy Orthodox elders had prophesied both the war and its outcome. Thus in 1911 Elder Aristocles of Moscow said: "You will hear that the Germans are rattling their sabres on the borders of Russia... Only don't rejoice yet. Many Russians will think that the Germans will save Russia from the Bolshevik power, but it will not be so. True, the Germans will enter Russia and will do much, but they will depart, for the time of salvation will not be yet. That will be later, later... Germany will suffer her punishment in her own land. She will be divided..."<sup>776</sup> Again, in 1940 the holy Catacomb Elder Theodosius (Kashin) of Minvody said: "There's going to be a war, such a terrible war, like the Terrible Judgement: people will perish, they have departed from the Lord, they have forgotten God, and the wind of war will carry them away like ashes, and there will be no sign of them. But if anyone will call on God, the Lord will save him from trouble."<sup>777</sup>

"For Hitler, annihilation of the Soviet Union and international Jewry was an end-in-itself. But he had a further aim, forced upon him, in his view, by necessity: to establish the equivalent of a British empire or U.S. transcontinentality by conquering and racializing Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It was his awe and fear of U.S. power, ultimately, that propelled him to take on what he long said needed to be done: eradicate 'Judeo-Bolshevism'...

"To Hitler, a consolidation of his gains and a defensive stance looked like a losing proposition; for time, he felt, was not on his side. American involvement with Britain would grow; the USSR would just get stronger..."<sup>778</sup>

"Much of Hitler's strategy," writes Max Hastings, "insofar as it was planned rather than the product of opportunism, derived from the knowledge that time favoured his enemies, empowering them to arm and coalesce against him. As

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<sup>775</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, p. 894.

<sup>776</sup> Elder Aristocles, in Sergei Fomin, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1993, p. 237.

<sup>777</sup> Chernov, *Tserkov' Katakombnaia Tserkov' na Zemle Rossijskoj* (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land), MS, Woking, 1980.

<sup>778</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 834, 835.

part of Stalin's deterrent strategy, before *Barbarossa* the German military attaché in Moscow was allowed to visit some of the vast new weapons factories under construction in Siberia. His reports, however, had the opposite effect to that which was intended. Hitler said to his generals: 'Now you see how far these people have already got. We must strike at once.' The destruction of Bolshevism and the enslavement of the Soviet Union's vast population were core objectives of Nazism, flagged in Hitler's speeches and writings since the 1920s. Overlaid on them was the desire to appropriate Russia's enormous natural resources.

"Stalin probably intended to fight his menacing neighbour at some moment of his choosing. If Germany had become engaged in a protracted attritional struggle against the French and British on the Western Front in 1940, as Moscow hoped, the Russians might have fallen on Hitler's rear, in return for major territorial concessions from the Allies. Stalin's generals prepared plans for an offensive against Germany - as they did also for many other contingencies - which could conceivably have been launched in 1942. As it was, however, in 1941 his armies were unfit to meet the almost undivided attention of the Wehrmacht. Though progressively mobilising - Russia's active forces doubled in size between 1939 and the German invasion - they had scarcely begun the re-equipment programme that would later provide them with some of the best weapons systems in the world.

"In Hitler's terms, this made Operation *Barbarossa* a rational act, enabling Germany to engage the Soviet Union while its own relative advantage was greatest. Hubris lay in its underestimate of the military and industrial capacity Stalin had already achieved; reckless insouciance about Russia's almost limitless expanses; and grossly inadequate support for a protracted campaign. Despite the expansion of the Wehrmacht since the previous year and the delivery of several hundred new tanks, many formations were dependent on weapons and vehicles taken from the Czechs in 1938-39 or captured from the French in 1940; only the armoured divisions were adequately provided with transport and equipment. It did not occur to Hitler, after his victories in the west, that it might be more difficult to overcome a brutalised society, inured to suffering, than democracies such as France and Britain, in which moderation and respect for human life were deemed virtues."<sup>779</sup>

After his conquest of Poland and France, Hitler was ready to conquer the living space he had always desired in the East. "Russia," he reportedly said, "will be our India!" and he had elaborate plans for colonizing the whole vast region. He had always known such a war would have to be fought. For as early as the Council of Ministers on 4 September 1934, "Göring explained that German rearmament 'started from the basic thought that a showdown with Russia is inevitable'."<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> Hastings. *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>780</sup> Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives*, 1992, p. 462.

“Hitler had always intended to attack the Soviet Union. *Mein Kampf* made it clear that only here could the German *Volk* find the living space it needed. Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland were mere appetizers for the Nazi empire. They could not supply sufficient agricultural land for the anticipated hordes of German settlers – nor, perhaps more importantly, the oil and other minerals essential to the German war machine.... [In 1939] he explained his priorities to Carl Burckhardt, the Swiss-Commissioner to the League of Nations in Danzig: ‘Everything that I undertake is directed against Russia. If those in the West are too stupid and too blind to understand this, then I shall be forced to come to an understanding with the Russians to beat the West, and then, after its defeat, turn with all my concerted force against the Soviet Union!’”<sup>781</sup>

Apart from oil, Hitler coveted the grain of Ukraine and the Russian steppes. This was the area of expertise of his economic adviser, Herbert Backe, who “led teams that produced successive drafts of what the aims and objectives of an invasion should be. As he stressed to Hitler, Ukraine was the key: control of the rich agricultural plains that ran across the north of the Black Sea and on past the Caspian would ‘liberate us from every economic pressure.’ Germany would be ‘invincible’ if it could take the parts of the Soviet Union that held ‘immense riches’. Gone would be the dependence on the USSR’s goodwill and its whimsical leadership; the effects of the British blockade of the Mediterranean and the North Sea would be massively reduced. This was the chance to provide Germany with access to all the resources it needed.

“This is exactly how Hitler came to talk about what was at stake after the attack eventually got under way in the summer of 1941. As German troops moved east with astonishing speed in the first days of the invasion, the Führer could hardly contain his excitement. Germany would never leave these newly conquered lands, he asserted gleefully: they would become ‘our India’, ‘our very own Garden of Eden’.

“Joseph Goebbels, Reichsminister of Propaganda, also had little doubt that the attack was all about resources, especially wheat and grain. In an article written in 1942, he declared in his characteristically deadpan and callous manner that the war had been started for ‘grain and bread, for a well-stocked breakfast, lunch and dinner table.’ This, and nothing more, was Germany’s war aim, he went on: the capture of ‘the vast fields of the east [which] sway with golden wheat, enough – more than enough – to nourish our people and all of Europe’.

“There was an urgent reality behind comments like these, for Germany found itself running increasingly out of food and supplies – with shipments of Soviet grain failing to resolve chronic problems of supply. In February 1941, for example, German radio was broadcasting that there were food shortages across Europe as a result of trade blockades by the British that had previously been described as nothing less than ‘mental derangement’ – or ‘dementia Britannica’,

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<sup>781</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, p. 429.

as announcers referred to it. By the summer of 1941, Goebbels was recording in his diary that shops in Berlin had bare shelves; finding vegetables for sale was a rarity. This caused unstable prices and fuelled a thriving black market, which increased the anxieties of a population that, while not yet restless, was starting to ask precisely what the benefits of German expansion had been – a development which made Hitler’s propaganda chief decidedly nervous. As one legal official put it, the ‘overworked and exhausted men and women’ in his part of Germany ‘do not see why the war must be carried on still further into Asia and Africa’. Happier days were now a distant memory.

“The solution had been provided by Backe and his cohort of analysts. Backe himself had been at pains to note the deteriorating food situation within Germany in his annual report on supplies at the end of 1940. Indeed, in a meeting held by state secretaries in January 1941 with Herman Göring in his capacity as co-ordinator of a Four Year Plan, he had gone so far as to warn that it would not be long before meat would have to be rationed, a step that had been repeatedly vetoed for fear of losing support not just for the war but for the Nazis.

“Becke’s proposal was radical. While the Soviet Union was vast and varied in terms of geography and climate, it could be divided by a crude line. To the south, covering Ukraine, southern Russia and the Caucasus, were fields and resources that formed a ‘surplus’ zone. To the north, that is central and northern Russia, Belarus and the Baltics, there was a ‘deficit’ zone. As Backe saw it, those on one side of the line produced food; those on the other side just consumed it. The answer to Germany’s problems was to concentrate on taking the former – and to ignore the latter. The ‘surplus’ zone should be captured, and its produce diverted to Germany. The ‘deficit’ zone was to be cut off and how it survived was of little concern. Its loss was to be Germany’s gain...”<sup>782</sup>

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Hitler and Stalin shared the same complete disregard for moral norms. Paradoxically, it may have been this closeness in evil that made Stalin refuse to believe the mountain of evidence that Hitler was going to invade Russia in 1941. He distrusted everyone – except Hitler! Even when Timoshenko and Zhukov tried to convince him to launch a pre-emptive attack in the early summer of 1941, he rejected the idea angrily, saying: “Do you want to provoke the Germans?”<sup>783</sup> It was as if he felt he could trust Hitler because he was so close to him in character, whereas his distrust of others, even his own followers, bordered on the paranoid schizophrenic... He knew Hitler’s desire for land in the east, and he knew the intelligence reports pouring in, both from his own agents and from Churchill, that said that Hitler was massing his troops in Poland. But he thought the intelligence reports were fabricated by western agents. He would not even allow the Red Army to take up a defensive position.

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<sup>782</sup> Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 172-174.

<sup>783</sup> Frankopan, *op. cit.*, pp. 179.

"I am sure," he said, "that Hitler will not dare to create a second front by attacking the Soviet Union. Hitler is not such a fool..."<sup>784</sup>

But he was wrong. It was not only Hitler, but also he, Stalin, who was shown to be the fool...<sup>785</sup>

But there was an important difference in character between the two men. Hitler was a megalomaniac who scorned calculation, putting all his trust in sheer force of will and destiny; he was much closer to Nietzsche's image of the super-man. But Stalin, for all his ruthlessness, was cautious and calculating. He thought that Hitler, still occupied as he was in mopping up the West, and still desperately needing the oil and grain that he received in large quantities under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, would not dare to open up a second front against Russia. In fact, it could be argued that, for all his scorn of the West's policy of appeasement in the 1930s, Stalin himself was actually trying to appease Hitler in the period 1939-41. For, seeing how easily the Germans had defeated France in June, 1940, he said: "The Germans will now turn on us, they will eat us alive." And so he discounted the predictions of invasion by his own spies and others, and placed his forces in a particularly vulnerable position near the border, so as not to "provoke" Hitler. For Stalin's "'war avoidance strategy'", writes John Erikson, "ruled out a pre-emptive strike, and even militated against timely defensive moves lest they be construed as 'provocative'..."

"A misreading of the political scene, coupled with his near paranoid suspicion of the British, led him to discount his own intelligence reports, but, worse, military errors impelled him to adopt a policy of outright appeasement towards Germany, which led inevitably towards disaster."<sup>786</sup>

Stephen Kotkin argues that Stalin, blinded by his hatred of Britain and admiration for Germany, clung onto the belief that Germany would not invade Russia before it had defeated Britain. Moreover, he was terrified that he would lose any war against Germany because, as a result of his own decimation of the Red Army, "85 percent of the officer corps was 35 or younger; those older than

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<sup>784</sup> Frankopan, *op. cit.*, pp. 180.

<sup>785</sup> David Reynolds, in the documentary film, "World War Two; 1941 and the Man of Steel" (BBC). In 1992 former GRU agent Victor Suvorov published *Ledokhod* (Icebreaker), in which he argued that Stalin was in fact planning to attack Hitler, but Hitler "beat him to the punch" ("Nikakoj Velikoj Otechestvennoj vojny ne bylo" (There was no Great Fatherland war), <http://faraj.com.tj/opinion/2616-viktor-suvorov-nikakoy-velikoy-otechestvennoj-voyny-ne-bylo.html>). This would explain why Stalin's armies collapsed so spectacularly in 1941 – he was preparing an offensive, not a defensive war. However, most historians reject Suvorov's thesis. Thus Simon Sebag Montefiore writes: "It is now known that the real view of the General Staff, including General Vasilevsky, was that they would have to retreat much deeper into their territory – hence Vasilevsky's proposal to move airfields and infrastructure back to the Volga, a proposal attacked as 'defeatist' by Kulik and Mekhlis. However, Stalin always kept an offensive war as a real possibility as well as an ideological necessity." (*Stalin. The Court of the Red Tsar*, London: Phoenix, 2004, p. 359, note)

<sup>786</sup> Erickson, "Barbarossa June 1941: Who Attacked Whom?" *History Today*, July, 2001, pp. 16, 17.

45 constituted around one percent. Fully 1,013 Soviet generals were under age 55, and only 63 were older than that. Many had been majors only a short time earlier. Out of 659,000 Soviet officers, only around half had completed military school, while one in four had the bare minimum (a few courses), and one in eight had no military education whatsoever.”

However, “Stalin’s dealings with Hitler differed from British appeasement in that Stalin tried deterrence as well as accommodation. But Stalin’s policy resembled British appeasement in that he was driven by a blinding desire to avoid war at all costs. He displayed strength of capabilities, but not will. Neither his fearsome resolve nor his supreme cunning – which had enabled him to vanquish his rivals and spiritually crush his inner circle – was in evidence in 1941. He shrank from trying to pre-empt Hitler militarily and failed to pre-empt him diplomatically.

“In the end, however, the question of who most miscalculated is not a simple one. ‘Of all the men who can lay claim to having paved the way’ for the Third Reich, Hitler liked to say, ‘one figure stands in awe-inspiring solitude: Bismarck.’ But Bismarck had built his chancellorship on avoiding conflict with Russia. When a bust of Bismarck was transferred from the old Reich Chancellery to Hitler’s new Reich Chancellery, it had broken off at the neck. A replica was hastily made and artificially aged by soaking it in cold tea. No one shared this omen with Hitler...”<sup>787</sup>

“Stalin saw the world in the darkest hues, as shaped by unseen sinister forces, with enemies lurking everywhere and no one’s motives to be trusted. But in what was by far the grandest challenge of his life, his pathological suspiciousness undermined him. In the machinations during 1941, he perceived two games: a British effort to entangle him in a war with Hitler and a German effort to intimidate and blackmail him. Neither was the game that was actually on. Ironically, the extensive penetration of Germany by dedicated antifascist agents became another weapon in Nazi hands, thanks to astute German disinformation and Stalin’s credulousness. Of course, the despot was far from alone in his misperceptions. But here was the greatest irony of all: even if he had been able to find the signal in the noise, it might not have done him much good. Stalin had allowed the Germans to see firsthand that he had forced into existence an army of colossal size, loaded with modern weaponry. But the Red Army’s forward defensive posture, the core of Soviet military doctrine, which both Stalin and the high command fully shared, meant that deep German penetration was a foregone conclusion. That deadly vulnerability would have held even in the event of a Soviet preemptive strike.”<sup>788</sup>

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<sup>787</sup> Kotkin, “When Stalin Faced Hitler”, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2017, pp. 61, 71.

<sup>788</sup> Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol. II, pp. 884-885.



The Nazi invasion of Russia gave renewed impetus to that movement of Russian patriotism in a Soviet mould that Stalin had been encouraging since 1934. Thus after he had recovered from the shock of the invasion, Stalin spoke to the people by radio, calling them by the traditional Orthodox title of “brothers and sisters” and referring to traditional Russian heroes such as Alexander Nevsky and Suvorov. But Stalin remained a communist first of all. He simply played down that fact for the time being...

Again, “Vyacheslav Molotov, the Foreign Minister, gave a radio address in which he spoke of the impending ‘patriotic war for homeland, honour and freedom’. The next day the main Soviet army newspaper, *Krasnaia Zvezda*, referred to it as a ‘holy war’. Communism was conspicuously absent from Soviet propaganda in the war. It was fought in the name of Russia, of the ‘family of peoples’ in the Soviet Union, of Pan-Slav brotherhood, or in the name of Stalin, but never in the name of the communist system.”<sup>789</sup>

Such patriotic appeals were necessary because, as Richard Overy writes, “by 1942 it was evident that the Communist Party alone could not raise the energies of the people for a struggle of this depth and intensity. The war with Germany was not like the war against the kulaks, or the war for greater production in the 1930s, although the almost continuous state of popular mobilization which these campaigns produced in some ways prepared the population to respond to emergency and improvisation. During 1942 the war was presented as a war to save historic Russia, a nationalist war of revenge against a monstrous, almost mythical enemy. The words ‘Soviet Union’ and ‘Communism’ appeared less and less frequently in official publications. The words ‘Russia’ and ‘Motherland’ took their place. The ‘Internationale’, the anthem of the international socialist movement played on state occasions, was replaced with a new nationalist anthem. The habits of military egalitarianism ingrained in the Red Army were swept aside. New medals were struck commemorating the military heroes of Russia’s past; the Tsarist Nevsky Order was revived but could be won only by officers. Aleksandr Nevsky, the Muscovite prince who drove back the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century, was a singularly apt parallel. In 1938 Stalin had ordered Sergei Eisenstein to produce a film on Nevsky. He interfered with the script to make the message clear about the German threat (and the virtues of authoritarianism). In 1939 the film was withdrawn following the Nazi-Soviet pact, but in 1942 it again became essential viewing.”<sup>790</sup>

However, there was no genuine revival of Russian patriotism. Nor could there be. The people’s hatred of the Bolsheviks was so great that they wanted the Germans, rather than the Soviets, to win – at first.

Thus the Germans were in general greeted with ecstatic joy. “I can tell you,” wrote Reader S.D. Pleskan to Metropolitan Alexis of Leningrad, “that the

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<sup>789</sup> Orlando Figes, *Natasha’s Dance*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 489.

<sup>790</sup> Overy, *Russia’s War*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, pp. 161-162.

Russians completely changed when the Germans appeared. The destroyed churches were erected, church utensils were made, vestments were provided from where they had been stored. Many churches were built and repaired. Everywhere they were painting. The peasant women hung clean cloths, which they themselves had sown, on the icons. Joy and consolation appeared. When everything was ready, they invited a priest and the church was consecrated. There were such joyful events at that time - I cannot describe them. People forgave each other offences. Children were baptized. People were invited to each other's houses. It was a real feast. The Russian peasants celebrated, and I felt that people were seeking consolation here."

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes: "Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia gave the Germans a jubilant welcome. Belorussia, the Western Ukraine, and the first occupied Russian territories followed suit. But the mood of the people was demonstrated most graphically of all by the Red Army: before the eyes of the whole world it retreated along a 2,000-kilometre front, on foot, but every bit as fast as motorized units. Nothing could possibly be more convincing than the way these men, soldiers in their prime, voted with their feet. Numerical superiority was entirely with the Red Army, they had excellent artillery and a strong tank force, yet back they rolled, a rout without compare, unprecedented in the annals of Russian and world history. In the first few months some three million officers and men had fallen into enemy hands!

"That is what the popular mood was like - the mood of peoples some of whom had lived through twenty-four years of communism and others but a single year. For them the whole point of this latest war was to cast off the scourge of communism. Naturally enough, each people was primarily bent not on resolving any European problem but on its own national task - liberation from communism..."<sup>791</sup>

Still banging the Russian nationalist drum, writes Serhii Plokhy, "in his next highly publicized address, delivered on November 7, 1941, Great October Socialist Revolution Day, on Red Square in front of troops leaving for the front lines only a few dozen kilometres from Moscow, Stalin dropped all references to the non-Russians. For him, the war was now a purely Russian undertaking. 'The war that you are waging is a war of liberation, a just war,' he declared. 'May you be inspired in that war by the manly image of our great ancestors - Aleksandr Nevsky, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuzma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharsky, Aleksandr Suvorov, and Mikhail Kutuzov! May you be shielded by the victorious banner of the great Lenin!' There was no mention of any non-Russian hero, only glorification of the imperial ones who had often been ridiculed by Soviet propaganda only a few years earlier. Even the reference to Lenin had religious overtones, as the Russian verb *oseniat'* (to shield) means 'to bless' or 'to make the sign of the cross'. With the regime's back to the wall, Stalin was invoking symbols and gods previously discarded and desecrated.

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<sup>791</sup> Solzhenitsyn, *The Mortal Danger*, London: The Bodley Head, 1980, pp. 39-40.

“It looked as if the emphasis on the Russian imperial tradition at the expense of the primacy of Marxist-Leninist ideology was working. The transfer of fresh Soviet divisions from the Far East helped Stalin hold on to Moscow in December 1941 and push the Germans back. In January 1943, in the middle of the furious fighting at Stalingrad, Stalin resurrected military shoulder patches that had been closely associated with the tsarist regime in Soviet pre-war propaganda. A less ideological foreign policy allowed for building bridges with former adversaries, Britain and the United States...”<sup>792</sup>

Hastings writes that “the ‘Great Patriotic War’ Stalin had declared became a reality that accomplished more for the cohesion and motivation of his peoples than any other event since the 1917 Revolution.”<sup>793</sup>

However, it must be remembered that this was an evil cohesion, a militantly atheist solidarity that deepened the captivity of Holy Russia. Of the two demons, Hitler and Stalin, Stalin proved the stronger. But his rule did not cease to be demonic...

For the patriotism in question here was *Soviet*, not Russian. For, as Anton Kuznetsov writes, “from the very beginning the Bolsheviks showed themselves to be an *anti-Russian power*, for which the concepts of Homeland, Fatherland, honour and duty do not exist; in whom the holy things of the Russian people elicit hatred; which replaced the word ‘Russia’ with the word ‘Internationale’, and the Russian flag with the red banner; which even in its national composition was not Russian: it was dominated by Jews (they constituted a huge percentage, and at first it seemed as if it was a question of a purely ‘Jewish power’) and foreigners.

“During the 24 years of its domination the Bolshevik (‘Soviet’) power had had enormous successes in the annihilation of historical Russia. All classes were wiped out one by one: the nobility, the merchants, the peasantry, the clergy and the educated class (including all the Russian officers), and all the state institutions of what had been Russia were destroyed: the army, the police, the courts, local administration, charitable institutions, etc. A systematic annihilation of Russian culture was carried out – churches were blown up, museums were robbed, towns and streets were renamed, Russian family and everyday traditions were exterminated, Russian sciences and schools were liquidated, the whole of Russian history was blotted out and spat upon. In the place of the annihilated Russian element a red and Soviet element was created, beginning with the Red army and the Red professors and ending with Soviet orthography and Soviet sport. Our earthly Fatherland, Russia, was in fact destroyed, by terror she was transformed into the Sovdepia, which was a complete denial of Russia – it was anti-Russia. A Russian person has no right to forget that a consistent denial of Russian statehood is that on which the Soviet regime stood and on which it prided itself with emphasis. One has no

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<sup>792</sup> Plokhly, *Lost Kingdom*, London: Allen Lane, 2017, p. 270.

<sup>793</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

right to call such a regime a national power. It must be defined as *an anti-national, occupying power, the overthrow of which every honourable patriot can only welcome.*"<sup>794</sup>

As the Bolsheviks retreated in August 1941 they blew up the Dnepropetrovsk dam, killing 100,000 people, according to one account.<sup>795</sup> Again, "the NKVD carried out a programme of liquidation of all the prisoners sitting in their jails. In the huge Lukyanov prison in Kiev thousands were shot in their cells. But in Stavropol they still had time to take the 'contras', including several old priests and monks, out of the city. They were led out onto the railway line from Kislovodsk to Moscow. At the small station of Mashuk, where the poet Lermontov had his duel, the wagons containing the prisoners were uncoupled from the trains and shunted into a siding at Kamenolomnya. Then the priests and monks were taken out with their hands bound and their eyes covered. In groups of five they were led to the edge of a sheer cliff, and thrust over the edge. Then the bodies were lifted up with hooks and covered with crushed stone and sand before a tractor levelled the area for the next wagon-full..."<sup>796</sup>

Another example of the Bolsheviks' hatred of their own people took place on November 17, 1941, when Stalin issued secret Order No. 0428: "... Destroy and burn to the ground all the inhabited areas in the rear of the German armies..." From the *Memoirs* of Army General Lyashenko: "At the end of 1941 I was in command of a regiment. We were in a defensive position. In front of us we could see two villages: as I remember, they were Bannovskoye and Prishib. An order came from the division: burn the villages that you can get to. When I was in my dugout working out the details of how I was to carry out this order, an elderly messenger unexpectedly burst in, violating all rules of subordination: 'Comrade Major! This is my village... There are my wife, my children, my sister with her children... How is it possible to burn them?! They will all perish!...' The messenger was fortunate: the hands of the Soviet army did not touch those villages. The execution of order no. 0428 threw out into the cold not so much Germans as peaceful inhabitants who had not managed to be evacuated. Thousands of women, old men and children were deprived of a roof over their heads in the savage winter of 1941/42."<sup>797</sup>

"There is a myth that the only time Stalin ceased the war against his own people was during 1941 and 1942; but during that period, 994,000 servicemen were condemned, and 157,000 shot, more than fifteen divisions..."<sup>798</sup> , while

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<sup>794</sup> Kuznetsov, "O Sovietsko-Germanskoj Vojne" (On the Soviet-German War), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print> page&pid=570, pp. 3-4, 7-8.

<sup>795</sup> <http://bbccnn.com.ua/archives/15823>, August 18, 2015.

<sup>796</sup> Chernov, *op. cit.* See also, for those shot in the prisons of Lvov: [http://bessmertnybarak.ru/article/rasstrelnyy\\_spisok\\_lvov/](http://bessmertnybarak.ru/article/rasstrelnyy_spisok_lvov/)

<sup>797</sup> [http://bessmertnybarak.ru/article/prikaz\\_stavki\\_0428/](http://bessmertnybarak.ru/article/prikaz_stavki_0428/)

<sup>798</sup> Montefiore, *Stalin*, p. 401. Soldiers shot by their own forces after tribunals: USA: 146; France: 102; Britain: 40; Germany: 7,810; USSR: 157,593. Ferguson (*op. cit.*, p. 539) puts the German figure much higher, at 15-20,000.

one million more soldiers were arrested.<sup>799</sup> This virtual civil war in the Soviet ranks may be the reason why the feast of victory of May 9 was not instituted until 1965, when many of the veterans who knew the truth were dead.

Stalin also deported many non-Russian nationalities *en masse* to terrible living conditions in Siberia on trumped-up charges of cooperating with the Nazis. As Shaun Walker writes, “The Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and ethnic Germans living inside the Soviet Union were deported to either Central Asia or Siberia, as well as several other smaller nationalities... A decree published in 1948 stated that the Kalmyk people had been deported ‘forever, and with no right of return to the previous place of habitation.’”<sup>800</sup>

The decisive turning-point in the Soviet-German War was the Battle of Moscow in December, 1941. Here General Weather, large stocks of tanks and materiel coming from Britain, and stiffening Soviet resistance, stopped the Nazis in their tracks. At the same time, Leningrad held out against a three-year Nazi siege, in spite of losing a million inhabitants. Hitler’s plan, writes Anthony Beevor, “was to advance to what was called the ‘AA line’, from Archangel to Astrakhan’. This would have taken them past Moscow and more or less beyond the line of the Volga. This is why, when it came to the battle of Stalingrad, many German troops felt that if they could only capture the city and get to the Volga they would have won the war.”<sup>801</sup> But the loss of Stalingrad, and the consequent loss of the Battle of Kursk, the biggest tank battle in history, in 1943, doomed the Germans to a long and bloody retreat all the way to Berlin...

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<sup>799</sup> Alexander Yakovlev, *A Century of Russian Violence in Soviet Russia*, Yale University Press, 2003.

<sup>800</sup> Walker, *The Long Hangover. Putin’s New Russia and the Ghosts of the Past*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 28, 29.

<sup>801</sup> Beevor, “Hitler’s Greatest Mistake”, *BBC History Magazine*, June, 2016.

## 53. THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST

Hitler at first tried to drive out the Jews rather than exterminate them. Siberia, Madagascar and even Palestine were seriously considered as destinations for deportation. In this project the Nazis even had the support of some prominent Jews. Thus “in the autumn of 1940, Abraham Stern, the creator of a movement called the Lehi, which became known to the [British] authorities in Palestine as the Stern Gang and whose members included the future Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as well as other founding fathers of modern Israel, sent a message to a senior German diplomat in Beirut with a radical proposal. ‘Common interests could exist,’ it began, between Germany and the ‘true national aspirations of the Jewish people’, whom Stern (and others) purported to represent. If ‘aspirations of the Jewish freedom movement are recognized,’ it went on, Stern offered to ‘actively take part in the war on the German side’. If the Jews could be liberated through the creation of a state, Hitler would surely benefit apart from ‘strengthen[ing the] future German position of power in the Middle East’, it would also ‘extraordinarily strengthen the moral basis’ of the Third Reich ‘in the eyes of all humanity’.

“However, as the hopes of what the invasion [of Russia] would bring were thwarted, the Nazi elite concluded that there was one solution for Germany’s problems. In a grotesque mirroring of the meeting that had already taken place in Berlin on 2 May 1941, another meeting took place less than eight months later in Wannsee, a leafy suburb of Berlin. Once again, the question revolved around the issue of the deaths of unquantifiable millions. The name given to the conclusions reached on the frosty morning of 20 January 1942 sends shivers down the spine. In the eyes of its makers, the genocide of the Jews was simply a response to a problem. The Holocaust was the ‘Final Solution’.”<sup>802</sup>

Wherever the Germans went, they rounded up and deported the Jews. Subordinate states, such as Vichy France, had to cooperate in the operation. In Russia, as Timothy Snyder writes, they “killed civilians almost exclusively in connection with the practice of racial imperialism. Germany invaded the Soviet Union with elaborate colonization plans. Thirty million Soviet citizens were to starve, and tens of millions more were to be shot, deported, enslaved, or assimilated.

“Such plans, though unfulfilled, provided the rationale for the bloodiest occupation in the history of the world. The Germans placed Soviet prisoners of war in starvation camps, where 2.6 million perished from hunger and another half-million (disproportionately Soviet Jews) were shot.”<sup>803</sup> A million Soviet

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<sup>802</sup> Frankopan, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-392, 393.

<sup>803</sup> “As Soviet POWs fell into German hands in extraordinary numbers, they were treated quite differently to their French or Belgian counterparts the previous year. They were starved to death or marched into the ground till they looked ‘more like skeletons of animals than humans’. Within six months, over two million Soviet POWs had starved to death in German captivity” (Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe’s Twentieth Century*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 171). (V.M.)

citizens also starved during the siege of Leningrad. In 'reprisals' for partisan actions, the Germans killed about 700,000 civilians in grotesque mass executions, most of them Belarusians and Poles. At the war's end the Soviets killed tens of thousands of people in their own 'reprisals,' especially in the Baltic states, Belarus, and Ukraine. Some 363,000 German soldiers died in Soviet captivity.

"Hitler came to power with the intention of eliminating the Jews from Europe; the war in the east showed that this could be achieved by mass killing. Within weeks of the attack by Germany (and its Finnish, Romanian, Hungarian, Italian, and other allies) on the USSR, the Germans, with local help, were exterminating entire Jewish communities. By December 1941, when it appears that Hitler communicated his wish that all Jews be murdered, perhaps a million Jews were already dead in the occupied Soviet Union. Most had been shot over pits, but thousands were asphyxiated in gas vans. From 1942, carbon monoxide was used at the death factories Chełmno, Belz'ec, Sobibór, and Treblinka to kill Polish and some other European Jews. As the Holocaust spread to the rest of occupied Europe, other Jews were gassed by hydrogen cyanide at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

"Overall, the Germans, with much local assistance, deliberately murdered about 5.4 million Jews, roughly 2.6 million by shooting and 2.8 million by gassing (about a million at Auschwitz, 780,863 at Treblinka, 434,508 at Belz'ec, about 180,000 at Sobibór, 150,000 at Chełmno, 59,000 at Majdanek, and many of the rest in gas vans in occupied Serbia and the occupied Soviet Union). A few hundred thousand more Jews died during deportations to ghettos or of hunger or disease in ghettos. Another 300,000 Jews were murdered by Germany's ally Romania. Most Holocaust victims had been Polish or Soviet citizens before the war (3.2 million and one million respectively). The Germans also killed more than a hundred thousand Roma Gypsies.

"All in all, the Germans deliberately killed about 11 million noncombatants, a figure that rises to more than 12 million if foreseeable deaths from deportation, hunger, and sentences in concentration camps are included. For the Soviets, the analogous figures are approximately six million and nine million. These figures are of course subject to revision, but it is very unlikely that the consensus will change again as radically as it has since the opening of Eastern European archives in the 1990s. Since the Germans killed chiefly in lands that later fell behind the Iron Curtain, access to Eastern European sources has been almost as important to our new understanding of Nazi Germany as it has been to research on the Soviet Union itself."<sup>804</sup>

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<sup>804</sup> Snyder, "Hitler vs. Stalin: Who Killed More?" *New York Review of Books*, March 10, 2011. Montefiore's estimate of the numbers killed by Himmler is: "6 million Jews (two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe), 3 million Russians, 3 million non-Jewish Poles, 750,000 Slavs, 500,000 Gypsies, 100,000 of the mentally ill, 100,000 Freemasons, 15,000 homosexuals and 5000 Jehovah's Witnesses" (*Titans of History*, p. 545).

By the time the Germans had left Soviet soil, they had killed, according to the official estimate, twenty-seven million people. However, the question of Soviet losses in World War Two is contentious. Pavel Gutiontov writes: "Stalin, on the basis of considerations inadmissible to a normal person, personally defined the USSR's losses as 7 million people – a little less than those of Germany. Khrushchev – as 20 million. Under Gorbachev there came out a book prepared for the Ministry of Defence under the editorship of General Krivosheev, *The Seal of Secrecy Removed*, in which the authors gave this very figure of 27 million, justifying it in all sorts of ways. Now it has become clear: this also was not true." For in 1997 the Duma Deputy Nikolai Zemstov, referring to declassified data of the USSR's Gosplan, declared: "The general losses of the population of the USSR from 1941 to 1945 were more than 52 million, 812 thousand people. Out of these, irreplaceable losses as a result of war-related factors were more than 19 million soldiers and about 23 million civilians. The general natural mortality of soldiers and civilians in this period can be put at more than 10 million, 833 thousand people (including 5 million, 760 thousand children who died before they reached four years of age). Irreplaceable losses of the population of the USSR as a result of war-related factors were almost 42 million people."<sup>805</sup>

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There were one and a half million Jews in the Balkans. Some local populations – the Ustaše in Croatia, and the Legionnaires in Romania – did not need encouraging. The Ustaše were even more savage than the Nazis.

However, In Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece some leaders tried to protect the Jews.<sup>806</sup> Jim Forest writes: "In 1941, after a period of neutrality, Bulgaria allied itself with Nazi Germany. This was a decision partly motivated by the Bulgarian government's wish to regain neighbouring territories that it had lost in previous wars. Early in 1943, the government in Sofia signed a secret agreement with the Nazis to deport 20,000 Jews. The deportations started with Jews in the annexed territories.

"Between March 4 and March 11 of that year, soldiers rounded up thousands of Jews and prepared boxcars to take them to the Treblinka extermination camp in occupied Poland, where approximately 850,000 people almost all Jews perished.

"Word of the planned deportation leaked out, triggering protests throughout Bulgaria. Opposing the deportation, Vice President of Parliament

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<sup>805</sup> Gutiontov, "Pobeda prediavljaet Schet" (The Victory Presents its Bill), *Novoia Gazeta*, March 21, 2017.

<sup>806</sup> Thomas King, "What Every Christian Needs to Know about all of the Christians Who Saved Jews in the Holocaust", 22 July, 2015, *Pravmir.com*, <http://www.pravmir.com/what-every-christian-needs-to-know-about-all-of-the-christians-who-saved-jews-in-the-holocaust/>



Dimitar Peshev managed to force its temporary cancellation; but it was only a brief delay.

“On March 10, boxcars were loaded with 8,500 Jews, including 1,500 from the city of Plovdiv. The bishop of Plovdiv, Metropolitan Kirill (later Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church), along with 300 church members, showed up at the station where the Jews were awaiting transport. Kirill pushed through the SS officers guarding the area his authority and courage were such that no one dared stop him and made his way to the Jews inside the boxcars.

“According to some accounts, as he reached them, he shouted a text from the Book of Ruth: ‘Wherever you go, I will go! Wherever you go, I will lodge. Your people will be my people, and your God, my God!’

“Kirill whose protest had the blessing of Metropolitan Stephan of Sofia, the highest ranking Bulgarian Church official during the Hitler years opened one of the boxcars in which Jews had been packed like sardines and tried to get inside, but now SS officers stopped him. However, when one door is locked, often another is left open. Kirill next walked to the front of the train, declaring he would lie down on the tracks if the train started to move.

“News of Metropolitan Kirill’s act of civil disobedience spread quickly. Some 42 members of Parliament rebelled against the government. Leaders of all the political parties sent protests to the government and the King. The next day the Jews were freed and returned to their homes.

“The struggle was not over. On April 15, King Boris arranged a meeting of the Holy Synod at his palace to persuade the bishops to support anti-Jewish policy and the Nazi deportation plans. ‘After all,’ he said, ‘other countries have dealt the same way with the “Jewish Problem”.’ He called upon the patriotism of the Church to accept the laws enacted by the Parliament, but his counsel was rejected by Metropolitans Stephan, Kirill and other Synod members.

“In May, Sofia’s Jews received deportation orders to the countryside. The Jewish community’s two chief rabbis, Daniel Zion and Asher Hannanel, asked Metropolitan Stephan to shelter them and pleaded for the cancellation of the deportation order. Stephan sent a number of messages to the King, pleading for him to have mercy on the Jews. ‘Do not persecute,’ he wrote, ‘so that you, yourself, will not be persecuted. The measure you give will be the measure returned to you. I know, Boris, that God in heaven is keeping watch over your actions.’

“The sudden death of King Boris in September 1943 stopped the deportation attempts once and for all.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>807</sup> Ya. Ya. Etinger wrote: “Tsar Boris III invited the German consul, A. Bickerle, and categorically declared: ‘The Jews of my country are its subjects and every encroachment on their freedom will be perceived by us as an insult to the Bulgarians.’ Prime Minister B. Filov wrote in his diary: ‘His Majesty completely revoked the measures taken against the Jews.’ On returning from Hitler’s headquarters on August 28, 1943, Tsar Boris very soon died. There are

“At the beginning of World War II, the Jewish population of Bulgaria was 48,000. At the end it was 50,000, making Bulgaria the only country under Nazi rule to end the war with more Jews than at the beginning.”<sup>808</sup>

Romanian anti-semitism brought the Romanians voluntarily into the Axis camp. “The Rumanian government,” writes Johnson, “followed Hitler step-by-step in his anti-Jewish policy, with far less efficiency but added venom. From August 1940, laws stripped Jews of their possessions and jobs and subjected them to unpaid forced labour. There were pogroms too – in January 1941 170 Jews were murdered in Bucharest. The Romanians played a major part in the invasion of Russia which for them was also a war against the Jews. They killed 200,000 Jews in Bessarabia. Jews were packed into cattle-trucks without food or water and shunted around with no particular destination. Or they were stripped of their clothes and taken on forced marches, some actually naked, others dressed only in newspapers. The Romanian troops working with Einsatzgruppe D in southern Russia outraged even the Germans by their cruelty and their failure to bury the corpses of those they murdered. On 23 October 1941 the Romanians carried out a general massacre of Jews in Odessa, after a landmine destroyed their army HQ. The next day they herded crowds of Jews into four large warehouses, doused them with petrol and set them alight: between 20,000 and 30,000 were thus burned to death. With German agreement, they carved out the province of Transnistria from the Ukraine, as their own contribution to the Final Solution. In this killing area, 217,757 Jews were put to death (an estimated 130,000 from Russia, 87,757 from Rumania, the Rumanians dispatching 138,957 themselves.”<sup>809</sup>

The official church particularly emphasized the Jewish nature of Bolshevism. Thus the metropolitan of Moldavia declared that God had “had mercy on them [the inhabitants of the Soviet-occupied provinces] and sent his archangels on earth: Hitler, Antonescu and [Finland’s] Mannerheim, and they headed their armies with the sign of the cross on their chests and in their hearts a war against the Great Dragon, red as fire, and they defeated him, chased him in chains, and the synagogue of Satan was ruined and scattered in the four directions of the earth and in their place they erected a sacred altar to the God of peace.”<sup>810</sup>

Patriarch Nicodemus of Romania showed that the anti-semitic religiosity of the Iron Guard had penetrated deep into his church’s consciousness: “God has shown to the leader of our country the path toward a sacred and redeeming alliance with the German nation and sent the united armies to the Divine Crusade against destructive Bolshevism... the Bolshevist Dragon... has found

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grounds for supposing that he was killed by the Hitlerites for refusing to carry out the will of the Fuhrer.” (*Spasennie v Kholokoste* (Etinger, in Monk Benjamin, part 3, pp. 52-53) (V.M.)

<sup>808</sup> Forest, “The Bishop who Stood in the Way”, *Pravmir. Com*, November 8, 2016, <http://www.pravmir.com/bishop-stood-way/#64103239>.

<sup>809</sup> Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 499-500.

<sup>810</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.

here also villainous souls ready to serve him. Let us bless God that these companions of Satan have been found mostly among the sons of the aliens [the Jews], among the nation that had brought damnation upon itself and its sons, since it had crucified the Son of God. If by their side there had also been some Romanian outcasts, then their blood was certainly not pure Romanian blood, but mixed with damned blood. These servants of the Devil and Bolshevism, seeing that their master, the monster called Bolshevist Russia, will soon be destroyed, are now trying to help him... they disseminate among our people all sorts of bad new words..."<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>811</sup> Burleigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.

## 54. RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY UNDER THE NAZI YOKE

The Nazi invasion had big consequences for Church life in Russia... By 1939 in the whole of the country there were only four bishops, all sergianists, at liberty, and only a tiny handful of Orthodox churches open. Stalin had silenced his greatest enemy, the Church of Christ, and the Russian people were now apparently defenceless against the most powerful and antichristian state in human history... However, the Word of God is not bound, and from 1941, thanks in part to the advance of the Germans deep into Russia, Orthodoxy experienced a miraculous revival. Thus "in the years of the war," writes Anatoly Krasikov, "with the agreement of the German occupying authorities, 7547 Orthodox churches were opened (as against 1270 opened in 1944-1947 with the permission of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church)."<sup>812</sup> Even in fully Sovietized regions such as Pskov and the Eastern Ukraine, 95% of the population, according to German reports, flooded into the newly-opened churches.

In the Baltic region, the Germans were quite happy to deal with the MP's exarch, Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky), who quickly showed his loyalty to them.<sup>813</sup> He immediately proceeded to bless the formation of an "Orthodox mission in the liberated regions of Russia", otherwise known as the "Pskov Orthodox Mission", whose official aim was the restoration of church life "destroyed by Soviet power". This mission included within its jurisdiction parts of the Leningrad and Kalinin regions, as well as the Pskov and Novgorod regions, with a population of about two million people. By 1944 it had 200 parishes and 175 priests. Lectures were read on Pskov radio, help was given to Soviet prisoners of war, and a children's home was created in a church in Pskov. The mission, on the insistence of Metropolitan Sergei (who was, after all, an NKVD agent), remained subject to the Leningrad diocese under Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), whose name was commemorated in each service. However, while remaining formally within the MP, Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky) carried out the commands of the Germans. For example, in the summer of 1943 he ordered that a thanksgiving service with the participation of all the clergy should take place in Pskov to mark the Germans' handing back of the land into the hands of the peasantry.

The True Orthodox Church supported neither the Soviets nor the Germans. The elders did not allow their spiritual children to fight in the Red Army, and some Catacomb Christians were martyred for their refusal to do so.<sup>814</sup> They were also wary of the Germans, while taking advantage of the freedom of

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<sup>812</sup> Krasikov, "'Tretij Rim' i Bol'sheviki" (The Third Rome and the Bolsheviks), in L.M. Vorontsova, A.V. Pchelintsev and S.B. Filatov (eds.), *Religia i Prava Cheloveka* (Religion and Human Rights), Moscow: "Nauka", 1996, p. 203.

<sup>813</sup> In Latvia, Metropolitan Augustine asked the Germans to allow him to re-establish the Latvian Church within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But they refused...

<sup>814</sup> Chernov, op. cit. Soldatov (op. cit.) writes: "In the Catacomb Church a tradition has been preserved about Schema-Monk Leontius (Mymrikov), who blessed True Orthodox Christians to go to war against the communists".

worship they provided. Thus the Kiev-Caves Lavra was reopened, and Catacomb Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze) returned to it with his monks, staying there until his death in 1942.<sup>815</sup> Also in Kiev, Archimandrite Michael (Kostyuk), together with Schema-Abbess Michaela (Shelkina), directed a large community of catacomb monks and nuns. They were even able to build an above-ground church with the permission of the Germans.<sup>816</sup> In the German-occupied north-west, however, the True Orthodox Christians remained underground.<sup>817</sup>

M.V. Shkarovsky writes that “the activity of the True Orthodox Christians seriously worried the higher leadership of the country. It received discouraging reports about a significant rise in the influence of the catacomb movement in the first years of the war. Thus the July, 1943 special communication of the head of the NKVD Administration in Penza province spoke of the activity of more than 20 illegal and semi-illegal groups that arranged prayers in private flats. In some region there were hundreds of these groups. In the report of the president of the Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, G. Karpov, to V. Molotov dated October 5, 1944, it was emphasised: ‘In the provinces with an insignificant number of functioning churches, and in the regions where there are no churches, a massive spreading of group worship in the homes of believers or in the open air has been noticed... Moreover, in these cases, believers invite clergy who are not registered to carry out the rite... A significant part of the activists of these unregistered church groups, together with their clergy, are hostile to the legal patriarchal church, condemning the latter for its loyal relationship to Soviet power and for its patriotic stance...’”<sup>818</sup>

On July 7, 1944, as the Red Army returned to the occupied territories, Beria petitioned Stalin for the deportation of 1,673 Catacomb Christians from the Ryazan, Voronezh and Orel regions to Siberia. He said the Catacombniks led “a parasitical way of life, not paying taxes, refusing to fulfil their obligations and service, and forbidding their children to go to school.”<sup>819</sup>

As Bishop Irinarchus of Tula and Briansk writes: “In 1943, according to the personal order of Stalin, several hundred Catacomb Orthodox Christians were

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<sup>815</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 32.

<sup>816</sup> Chernov, op. cit.; A. Smirnov, “Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni” (Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Flow of Time), *Simvol* (Symbol), N 40, 1998, pp. 250-267.

<sup>817</sup> M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo: techenie v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Josephitism: a tendency in the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: Memorial, 1999, pp. 187-188; Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Istoki i sviazi Katakombnoj Tserkvi v Leningrade i obl. (1922-1992)” (Sources and Links of the Catacomb Church in Leningrad and district (1922-1992), report read at the conference “The Historical Path of Orthodoxy in Russia after 1917”, Saint Petersburg, 1-3 June, 1993; “Episkopat Istinno-Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi 1922-1997gg.” (The Episcopate of the True Orthodox Church, 1922-1997), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 4 (8), 1997, pp. 12-13.

<sup>818</sup> Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, pp. 250-251.

<sup>819</sup> I.F. Bugayem, “Varvarskaia aktsia” (A Barbaric Action), *Otechestvo* (Fatherland), N 3, 1992, pp. 53-73; text in Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflyanstvo*, pp. 262-263.

removed from Tula and Ryazan regions and sent to Siberia. Many of them perished, but not all, glory to God. In Tula region they have been preserved to this day [2004]. The Lord entrusted them to me, and with God's help I am spiritually caring for them... Before the war only a few Catacomb priests were surviving in Briansk region. But when the region was occupied by the Germans, several hundred churches were opened in it, where they commemorated, not Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) as first hierarch, but Metropolitan Anastasy, the head of ROCOR. In Briansk region the Catacomb Christians were served by Bishop Stefan (Sevbo). Under the pressure of the red army Bishop Stefan and many clergy and laity emigrated to Belorussia, and then to Germany. Vladyka Stefan later ruled the Viennese diocese of ROCOR, and died in 1965."<sup>820</sup>

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"The beginning of the Second World War," writes Mikhail Shkarovsky, "stimulated hopes in a part of the emigration regarding the possibility of the fall of Soviet power, and these hopes were bound up, above all, with the excitation of the spiritual powers of the people itself. In an address on September 3, 1939 by Metropolitan Anastasy and representatives of the Russian national organizations in Yugoslavia to Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich, it was said: 'The cruel war that has begun could raise the question of the destiny of the Russian people and of our much-suffering Homeland... The course of developing events will keep us in extreme tension, and the Russian emigration abroad does not have the right to refrain from using the opportunity that has presented itself. We can and must count on ourselves and on the popular forces "there" that have preserve in their souls the feeling of love for all that is native and Russian.' Moreover, every possibility of compromise with Soviet power in the name of a resolution of the historical tasks of Russia was rejected. The power of the communists was represented as an absolute evil than which there could be nothing worse."<sup>821</sup>

But the metropolitan was cautious. "There is a reference in the Russian émigré literature to the fact that the occupation authorities had offered that Metropolitan Anastasy make a special appeal to the Russian people to cooperate with the Russian army, as if a crusade for the liberation of Russia from Bolshevism were taking place. This suggestion was supposedly strengthened by the threat of internment in the case of his refusal. But the metropolitan rejected it, 'pointing out that since the Germans' policy was unclear to him, and their aims in invading Russia were completely unexplained, he could not do it.' According to other sources representative of some émigré organizations asked him to make a similar speech. In any case the metropolitan, who always displayed caution and tried not to admit extremes

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<sup>820</sup> "Interviu s episkopom Irinarkhom Tul'skim i Brianskim (RPATs)" (Interview with Bishop Irinarch of Tula and Briansk (ROAC), *Vertograd*, N 440, 10 March, 2004.

<sup>821</sup> Shkarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Emigration), St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2009, p. 31.

in the expression of his sympathies and antipathies, did not write any epistle in connection with the beginning of the war in the summer of 1941.”<sup>822</sup>

However, ROCOR could not refrain from welcoming the resurrection of Orthodoxy in the occupied territories. Thus in his paschal epistle for 1942 Metropolitan Anastasy wrote: “The day that they (the Russian people) expected has come, and it is now truly rising from the dead in those places where the courageous German sword has succeeded in severing its fetters... Both ancient Kiev, and much-suffering Smolensk and Pskov are radiantly celebrating their deliverance as if from the depths of hell. The liberated part of the Russian people everywhere has already begun to chant: ‘Christ is risen!’”<sup>823</sup>

However, the Germans what did *not* want was the resurrection of the Great Russian people through the Church, and they hindered ROCOR’s attempt to send priests into the occupied territories. Moreover, as the war progressed and the behaviour of the Germans became steadily crueller, the attitude of the Russian Orthodox to them changed. As Metropolitan Anastasy wrote in October, 1945, in response to Patriarch Alexis’ charge that ROCOR sympathized with the Nazis: “... The Patriarch is not right to declare that ‘the leaders of the ecclesiastical life of the Russian emigration’ performed public prayers for the victories of Hitler’. The Hierarchical Synod never prescribed such prayers and even forbade them, demanding that Russian people prayed at that time only *for the salvation of Russia*. Of course, it is impossible to conceal the now well-known fact that, exhausted by the hopelessness of their situation and reduced almost to despair by the terror reigning in Russia, Russian people both abroad and in Russia itself placed hopes on Hitler, who declared an irreconcilable war against communism (as is well-known, this is the explanation for the mass surrender of the Russian armies into captivity at the beginning of the war), but when it became evident that he was in fact striving to conquer Ukraine, Crimea and the Caucasus and other rich regions of Russia, and that he not only despised the Russian people, but was even striving to annihilate it, and that in accordance with his command our prisoners had been starved to death, and that the German army during its retreat had burned and destroyed to their foundations Russian cities and villages on their path, and had killed or led away their population, and had condemned hundreds of thousands of Jews with women and children to death, forcing them to dig graves for themselves, then the hearts of all reasonable people - except those who ‘wanted to be deceived’ - turned against him...”<sup>824</sup>

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<sup>822</sup> Shkvarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii*, p. 33.

<sup>823</sup> *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), 1942, N 4; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 41.

<sup>824</sup> Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnyim liudiam po povodu ‘Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastyriam i kliru tak nazyvaemoj Karlovatskoj orientatsii’ (Epistle to the Russian Orthodox people on the ‘Address of Patriarch Alexis to the archpastors and clergy of the so-called Karlovtsy orientation), in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhiejskij Sobor Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej, Miunkhen (Germania) 1946 g.* (The Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Munich in 1946), Minneapolis, 2003, p. 13.

G.M. Soldatov writes: "It was suggested to the metropolitan that he issue an appeal to the Russian people calling on them to cooperate with the German army, which was going on a crusade to liberate Russia from the Bolsheviks. If he were to refuse to make the address, Vladyka was threatened with internment. However, the metropolitan refused, saying that German policy and the purpose of the crusade was unclear to him. In 1945 his Holiness Patriarch Gabriel of Serbia witnessed to Metropolitan Anastasy's loyalty to Serbia and the Germans' distrust of him...

"Referring to documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other departments of the German government, the historian M.V. Shkvarovsky pointed out that Metropolitan Anastasy and the clergy of ROCOR were trying to go to Russia to begin organizing missionary and charitable work there, but this activity did not correspond to the plans of Germany, which wanted to see Russia weak and divided in the future."<sup>825</sup>

In October 1945 Metropolitan Anastasy wrote to "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow in response to his call for reunification with Moscow that many Russians (including ROCOR clergymen) had harboured illusions about the Germans' plans. But these illusions had been shattered, among other things, by the extermination of the Jews, which he condemned in no uncertain terms: "One cannot, of course, attempt to conceal the commonly known fact that [some people,] worn down by the hopelessness of their situation and brought almost to the point of despair [by what was happening] in Russia, had placed their hope in Hitler, since he had declared an uncompromising struggle against communism. This, as you know, is the explanation for why Russian armies surrendered themselves *en masse* into captivity at the beginning of the war; yet when it became clear that he was actually seeking to conquer the Ukraine, Crimea, Caucasus, and other well-off regions of Russia, and that he not only had disdain for the Russian people but also was seeking to destroy it; that our prisoners were being starved to death at his orders; that the German army was burning down towns and villages, massacring their inhabitants or taking them captive, condemning hundreds of thousands of Jews together with their women and children to death, and forcing them to dig their own graves - then the hearts of all right-minded people turned against him, with the exception of those who wished to be deceived."<sup>826</sup>

Nevertheless, of the two alternatives - the Germans or the Soviets - ROCOR considered the latter the more dangerous enemy. For Soviet power had been anathematized at the Russian Local Council in 1918, and had subjected the Russian Church to an unprecedentedly severe persecution.

Thus Metropolitan Anastasy supported the Russian Liberation Army under General Vlasov, which fought as part of the Germany army, and in November,

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<sup>825</sup> Soldatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>826</sup> Metropolitan Anastasy, in M.V. Shkarovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Holocaust", in *ROCOR Studies*, December 7, 2019.



1944 addressed them as follows: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! From ancient times there has existed such a custom in the Russian land; before undertaking any good work, especially a collective work, they used to ask the blessing of God on it. And you have gathered here, dear brothers and fellow-countrymen, you workers and inspirer of the Russian national movement, thereby demonstrating the historical link of the great work of the liberation of Russia with the actions of our fathers and great-grandfathers... We are now all united by one feeling – a feeling of deadly irreconcilability with the Bolshevik evil and a flaming desire to extirpate it on the Russian land. For we know that as long as it reigns there, no rational human life is possible, no spiritual movement forward; as long as this evil threatens both our fatherland and the whole of Europe, death and destruction will be established everywhere. And insofar as you, dear brothers and sisters, are striving to crush this terrible evil... you are doing a truly patriotic, even more than that, universal work, and the Church cannot fail to bless your great and holy beginning... Dear brothers and sisters, let us all unite around this Liberation Movement of ours, let each of us struggle on this path and help the common great work of the liberation of our Homeland, until this terrible evil of Bolshevism falls and our tormented Russia is raised from her bed...”<sup>827</sup>

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In Belorussia and the Ukraine, the Germans encouraged the formation of national Churches independent of the Moscow Patriarchate. A Belorussian Autonomous Church was formed under Archbishop Philotheus of Slutsk (later of Hamburg).<sup>828</sup> Pressure from Belorussian nationalists to form a completely autocephalous Church was rejected. The Belorussian Church had no contact with the MP - the Germans forbade the commemoration of Patriarch Sergei. So formally speaking the Belorussians were *not* part of the MP. Moreover, in October, 1943, the Germans for the first time allowed the convening of a Council of ROCOR bishops in Vienna at which the Belorussians were represented by Archbishop Benedict of Grodno and Belostok and Archimandrite Gregory (Boriskevich). So *de facto* they were now in communion with ROCOR.

On October 25 the ROCOR bishops condemned the election of the patriarch as unlawful and invalid, comparing Sergei’s compromises to the third temptation of the Saviour, to whom Satan promised to give all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him...

“The conference composed and sent to the German authorities a memorandum which contained a series of bold demands. The memorandum is the best proof of the fact that the Conference took decisions independently, and

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<sup>827</sup> I.L. Solonevich, “Rossia v kontslagere” (Russia in the concentration camp), *Volia Naroda* (The Will of the People), November 22, 1944; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 78-79.

<sup>828</sup> Michael Woerl, “A Brief Biography of Archbishop Filofei (Narko)”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 50, N 6, November-December, 2000.

not at the command of the Nazis. In it first of all should be highlighted the protest against the Nazis' not allowing the Russian clergy abroad to go to the occupied territories of the USSR. The memorandum demanded 'the removal of all obstacles hindering the free movement of bishops from this side of the front', and the reunion of bishop 'on occupied territories and abroad'. (A.K. Nikitin, *Polozhenie russkoj pravoslavnoj obschiny v Germanii v period natsistkogo rezhima (1933-1945 gg.)* [The Situation of the Russian Orthodox Community in Germany in the Nazi period (1933-1945)], Annual Theological Conference PSTBI, Moscow, 1998). A vivid expression of this protest was the consecration by the participants of the Conference of Bishop Gregory (Boriskevich). He was consecrated for the Belorussian Autonomous Church and received the title of Bishop of Gomel and Mozyr. At the Council an appeal to Russian believers was agreed. The conference did not send any greetings to Hitler or other leaders of the Third Reich. The third agreed point was unexpected for the Nazi institutions. *De facto* it contained a critique of German policy in relation to the Russian Church and included demands for greater freedom: '(1) The free development and strengthening of the Orthodox Church in the occupied regions and the unification of all Orthodox ecclesiastical provinces liberated from Soviet power with the Orthodox Church Abroad under one common ecclesiastical leadership would serve as an earnest of the greater success of these parts of the Russian Church in the struggle with atheist communism... (3) It is necessary to give Russian workers in Germany free satisfaction of all their spiritual needs. (4) In view of the great quantity of various Russian military units in the German army, it is necessary to create an institution of military priests... (6) A more energetic preaching of the Orthodox religio-moral world-view... (9) Petition for the introduction of apologetic programmes on the radio... (10) The organization of theological libraries attached to the parishes... (13) Giving Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities the possibility of opening theological schools and the organization of pastoral and religio-moral courses.'"<sup>829</sup>

This 1943 Council was attended by 14 people including the following hierarchs: Metropolitans Anastasy, Seraphim (Lukyanov) and Seraphim (Lyade), and Bishops Benedict (Bobkovsky) of Grodno, Basil (Pavlovsky) of Vienna, Sergei of Prague, Philip (von Gardner)<sup>830</sup>, and Gregory (Boriskevich) of Gomel.<sup>831</sup> After fleeing to the West the entire episcopate of the Belorussian and Ukrainian Autonomous Churches was received into ROCOR "in their

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<sup>829</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 63-64, 64-65; M.V. Shkvarovsky, *RPTsZ na Balkanakh v gody Vtoroj Mirovoj Vojny* [ROCOR in the Balkans in the years of the Second World War]; Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), *Arkhiejskij Synod vo II Mirovuiu Vojnu* [The Hierarchical Synod in World War II].

<sup>830</sup> Philip's status as bishop is disputed.

<sup>831</sup> George later became bishop of Chicago and Detroit. See "Episkop Vasilij Venskij - 1880-1945gg." (Bishop Basil of Vienna - 1880-1945), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 18 (1663), September 14/27, 2000, p. 5.

existing rank" on May 6, 1946.<sup>832</sup> Another Belorussian hierarch, Bishop Stefan (Sevbo) of Smolensk, had good relations with the Catacomb Church.<sup>833</sup>

In Ukraine, the Germans allowed the creation of two Churches independent of the MP. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church was in essence a reactivation of the Lypkivsky "self-consecrators" schism, which had flourished in the Ukraine in the 1920s before being eliminated by Stalin, via the Polish Autocephalous Church. Thus on December 24, 1941, Metropolitan Dionysius of Warsaw, at the request of Ukrainian political and social-ecclesiastical activists, appointed Archbishop Polycarp (Sikorsky) of Lutsk as "Temporary Administrator of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church on the liberated lands of Ukraine".<sup>834</sup> Into this Church, without reordination, poured the remnants of the Lypkivsky schism, which soon led it onto the path of extreme Ukrainian nationalism. About 40% of the Orthodox in the Ukraine were attracted into this Church, which was especially strong in the West; but it had no monastic life, and very soon departed from traditional Orthodoxy.

On August 18, 1941, a Council of Bishops meeting in the Pochaev monastery elected Metropolitan Alexis (Gromadsky) as leader of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church, which based her existence on the decision of the 1917-18 Local Council of the Russian Church granting the Ukrainian Church autonomy within the framework of the Russian Church. Although the Germans tended to favour the Autocephalous Church over the Autonomous Church, it was the latter that attracted the majority of believers (55%) and opened the most churches. It even attracted catacomb priests, such as Archimandrite Leonty (Filippovich), who after his consecration as Bishop of Zhitomir restored about 50% of the pre-revolutionary parishes in his diocese and ordained about two hundred priests, including the future leader of the "Seraphimo-Gennadiite" branch of the Catacomb Church, Gennady Sekach, before he (Leontius) himself fled westwards with the Germans and joined ROCOR.<sup>835</sup> Also linked with the

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<sup>832</sup> *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 20 (1545), October 15/28, 1995, p. 4; Alexeyev, W. and Stavrou, T., *The Great Revival*, op. cit., chapter 4.

<sup>833</sup> "Good, albeit also not unambiguous relations were established between the True Orthodox Christians and the Belorussian Church. In particular, thanks precisely to the katakombniki the Belorussian Church took a more anti-patriarchal stand and entered into conflict with Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky), who was trying to infiltrate his people into Belorussia. The most ardent relations were with Bishop Stefan (Sevbo) of Smolensk (+1963), who even ordained several priests for the True Orthodox Christians and of whom a good memory was preserved in the 'catacombs'. It was precisely in Smolensk province and Mozhaisk district in Moscow province that the True Orthodox Christians became so active that they regenerated and greatly increased their flock, which had become very thin on the ground since the repressions of 1937" (Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Istinno-Pravoslavnie Khristiane i Vojna 1941-1945gg." (True Orthodox Christians and the War, 1941-1945), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 1 (15), 1999, pp. 23-24).

<sup>834</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 35.

<sup>835</sup> Alexeyev & Stavrou, *The Great Revival*, op. cit., chapter 5; Friedrich Heyer, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in der Ukraine* (The Orthodox Church in the Ukraine), Koln: Rudolf Muller, 1953 (in German); "Archbishop Leonty of Chile", *The Orthodox Word*, 1981, vol. 17, N 4 (99), pp. 148-154; Bishop John and Igumen Elijah, *Taynij Skhimitropolit* (The Secret Schema-Metropolitan), Moscow: Bogorodichij Tsentr, 1991; Andrei Psarev, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Leontia

Autonomous Churches was the Georgian Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), who lived in retirement in Kiev.

Andrew Psarev writes: "The Ukrainian Autonomous Church was formally subject to the Moscow Patriarchate, insofar as her leading hierarchs considered that they did not have the canonical right to declare themselves an autocephaly. But since the Moscow Patriarchate was subject to the Bolsheviks, in her administrative decisions the Autonomous Church was completely independent, which is why her spiritual condition was different from that of the Moscow Patriarchate."<sup>836</sup> Thus in 1943 she sent a representative to ROCOR's Council in Vienna, which condemned the election of Sergius as uncanonical.<sup>837</sup>

On March 30, 1942 the Autonomous Church declared that the newly formed autocephalists were to be considered as "the Lipkovtsy sect", and all the clergy ordained by them - graceless. In consequence, and because the Autonomous Church did not go along with the extreme nationalist politics of the autocephalists, it suffered persecution in the German-occupied regions both from the autocephalists and the Ukrainian nationalist "Benderite" partisans, who had formed an alliance.

Although the revival of ecclesiastical life in these regions was brief, it had important consequences for the future. First, many of the churches reopened in this period were not again closed by the Soviets when they returned. Secondly, some of those bishops and priests who could not, or chose not to, escape westwards after the war went underground and helped to keep the Catacomb Church alive in the post-war period. And thirdly, ROCOR received an injection of new bishops and priests from those who fled westwards to Germany in the closing stages of the war.

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Not only all patriotic and cultural forces, but also the Moscow Patriarchate was enrolled in defence of the Soviet "motherland". Thus on the very first day of the invasion, Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky) made an appeal to the nation to support the Soviets. Then the Germans asked the MP's exarch in the Baltic, Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky), who had refused to be evacuated eastwards with the Red Army, to react to it. His response was: "Soviet power has subjected the Orthodox Church to an unheard of persecution. Now the punishment of God has fallen on this power... Above the signature of

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Chilijskij (1901-1971 gg.)" (A Life of Archbishop Leonty of Chile (1901-1971)), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), N 4 (556), April, 1996, pp. 9-14. With the blessing of Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), Leonty was consecrated on November 7, 1941 by Archbishop Alexis (Gromadsky) of Volhynia, Bishop Benjamin (Novitsky) of Poltava and Bishop Damascene (Malyuta) of Kamenets-Podolsky (Sviatitel' Leontij (Filippovich) Chilijskij", [http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print\\_page&pdi=707](http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pdi=707).

<sup>836</sup> Psarev, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>837</sup> Woerl, op. cit.

Metropolitan Sergei of Moscow and Kolomna, the patriarchal *locum tenens*, the Bolsheviks have distributed an absurd appeal, calling on the Russian people to resist the German liberators. We know that the blessed Sergei, a man of great learning and zealous faith, could not himself compose such an illiterate and shameless appeal. Either he did not sign it at all, or he signed it under terrible threats..."<sup>838</sup>

Sergei Shumilo writes: "The hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territories that remained under the Soviets officially declared a 'holy war' and unambiguously called on the people to fight on the side of the God-hating regime of Stalin. Thus Metropolitan Sergei, who had usurped for himself the title 'patriarchal *locum tenens*', already on the first day of the war, June 22, 1941, appealed to 'the Soviet people', not only calling on them to 'the defence of the Soviet Homeland', but also declaring 'a direct betrayal of pastoral duty' even the very thought that the clergy might have of 'possible advantages to be gained on the other side of the front'. With the cooperation of the NKVD this appeal was sent to all the parishes in the country, where it was read after services as a matter of obligation.

"Not having succeeded in starting the war first, and fearing to lose the support of the people, Stalin's regime in desperation decided to use a German propaganda trick – the cultivation of national-patriotic and religious feelings in the people. As E.I. Lisavtsev affirms, already in July, 1941 unofficial negotiations took place for the first time between Stalin's government and Metropolitan Sergei. In the course of a programme of anti-Hitlerite propaganda that was worked out in October, 1941, when the German armies had come right up to Moscow, Metropolitan Sergei issued an Epistle in which he discussed the Orthodox hierarchs and clergy who had made contact on the occupied territories with the local German administration. *De facto* all the hierarchs and clergy on the territories occupied by the Germans, including those who remained in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, came under Metropolitan Sergei's excommunication.

"Having issued the Epistle, Metropolitan Sergei and all the members of the chancellery of the MP, together with the Soviet government and the leadership of the Soviet army and the NKVD, were evacuated from Moscow to Ulyanovsk (formerly Simbirsk), where on November 24 Metropolitan Sergei delivered a new appeal to the people, in which he called them to 'a holy war for Christian civilization, for freedom of conscience and faith'. In all during the years of the war S. Stragorodsky delivered more than 23 similar addresses. Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) also repeatedly called to a 'holy war'; his appeals to the partisans and the people in the form of leaflets were scattered in enormous quantities by Soviet military aviation onto the territories occupied by the German armies. However, such epistles only provoked the German command, and elicited reprisals against the local clergy and population. Besides this,

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<sup>838</sup> M.V. Shkarovsky, *Pravoslavie i Rossia* (Orthodoxy and Russia); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 31.

Metropolitan Nicholas repeatedly appealed to the 'erring' Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches, to the Romanian and Bulgarian soldiers who were fighting on the side of Germany, and also to the population and Church in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Greece and other countries. Nicholas Yarushevich himself was appointed a member of the so-called 'Pan-Orthodox Committee' created according to a decision of the communist party, and also of the Extraordinary State Commission for the investigation of fascist crimes. And it is precisely on Metropolitan Nicholas, as a member of this commission, that there falls the blame for the lie and disinformation concerning Stalin's crimes: he was among those who signed the unprecedentedly mendacious declaration to the effect that the shootings of thousands of Polish officers in a wood near Katyn were carried out by the Germans, and not by Soviet punishment squads, as was the case in actual fact. Moreover these were not the only such cases.

"It was for the same propagandistic aims that in 1942, in the printing-house of the Union of Militant Atheists, which had temporarily been handed over for the use of the MP, there appeared in several foreign languages a solidly produced book, *The Truth about Religion in Russia*, the foreword to which was composed by S. Stragorodsky. As it said in the foreword: '... This book is a reply first of all to the "crusade" of the fascists undertaken by them supposedly for the sake of liberating our people and our Orthodox Church from the Bolsheviks'. The whole of the book, from the first page to the last, is overflowing with outpourings of unreserved devotion to Stalin's regime and with false assurances about 'complete religious freedom in the USSR'.<sup>839</sup>

"The text of the telegram of Metropolitan Sergei of Moscow on November 7, 1942 addressed to Stalin on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bolshevik coup sounds like an evil joke, a mockery of the memory of hundreds of thousands of martyrs for the faith who perished during the years of the Stalinist repressions: 'In your person I ardently and prayerfully greet the God-chosen leader of our military and cultural forces, leading us to victory over the barbarian invasion...'

"However, besides propagandistic and ideological support for the Soviet regime, the clergy and parishioners of the MP also provided serious financial help to the army in the field. Thus in a telegram of Metropolitan Sergei to I. Stalin on February 25, 1943 we are formed: 'On the day of the jubilee of our victorious Red Army I greet you as its Supreme Commander in the name of the clergy and believers of the Russian Orthodox Church, I prayerfully desire that you experience the joy of complete victory over the enemy... The believers in their desire to help the Red Army have willingly responded to my appeal: they

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<sup>839</sup> Sergei wrote: "With complete objectivity we must declare that the Constitution, which guarantees complete freedom for the carrying out of religious worship, in no way constrains the religious life of believers and the Church in general..." Concerning the trials of clergy and believers, he said: "These were purely political trials which had nothing to do with the purely ecclesiastical life of religious organizations and the purely ecclesiastical work of individual clergy. No, the Church cannot complain about the authorities."

have collected money to build a tank column in the name Demetrius Donskoy. In all about 6,000,000 roubles have been collected, and, besides, a large quantity of gold and silver things..."<sup>840</sup>

In fact, all parishes in Soviet Russia were required to make contributions to the Soviet war effort. Sergius – the “compatriarch” or communist patriarch, as the Germans called him – announced huge contributions towards the equipping of a tank unit. From November, 1941 even the last open church of the Josephites in Leningrad began to contribute. However, helping the Soviet war effort and remaining True Orthodox were clearly incompatible aims – in November, 1943 the Trinity parish applied to join the MP...<sup>841</sup>

Shumilo continues: “Taking into consideration this loyal position of the leadership of the MP, and relying on the successful experiment of Nazi Germany on the occupied territories, Stalin, after long hesitations, finally decided on a more broadly-based use of religion in order to attain his own political ends. The more so in that this would help the new imposition of communist tyranny on the ‘liberated’ territories and in the countries of Eastern Europe. ‘First of all,’ wrote the Exarch of the MP in the Baltic region, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), in his report to the German occupying authorities already on November 12, 1941, ‘for the Soviet state the existence of legal ecclesiastical administration was very important for purposes of advertisement and propaganda. In the foreign Jewish press, which wanted to attract the hearts of its liberal readers to “Stalin’s constitution”, it was possible to point to the existence of the “Patriarchate” as an indisputable proof that in the Soviet state even the Orthodox Church, that support of tsarist reaction, had complete religious freedom. On the other hand, if the patriarchal administration and its members were annihilated, it would be difficult to bring the press abroad to silence. This would elicit a particularly powerful and long-lasting response among the Orthodox Balkan peoples... The existence of the patriarchal administration was allowed, since its abolition, like any form of open persecution of the Church, would not correspond to the interests of the subtle atheist propaganda, and could elicit politically undesirable disturbances in the broad masses of the Orthodox believers (their number is calculated at from 30 to 60 million) and arouse still greater hatred for the authorities.

“The forcible disbanding of the officially recognized leadership of the patriarchate would inevitably call into existence a secret leadership, which would significantly increase the difficulties of police supervision... In general there has existed in Russia a very lively secret religious life (secret priests and monks; secret places for prayer; secret Divine services; christenings; confessions; communions; marriages; secret theological studies; secret

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<sup>840</sup> Shumilo, “Sovietskij Rezhim i ‘Sovietskaia Tserkov’ v 40-e-50-e gody XX stoletia” (The Soviet Regime and the ‘Soviet Church’ in the 40s and 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century).

<sup>841</sup> “Iosiflianskiye obshchiny v blokadnom Leningrade” (Josephite Communities in Blockaded Leningrad), *Pravoslavnaya Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1731), July 15/28, 2003, pp. 12-13.

possession of the Sacred Scriptures, liturgical vessels, icons, sacred books; secret relations between communities).

“In order to destroy the catacomb patriarchate also, they would have to execute all the bishops, including the secret ones that would undoubtedly be consecrated in case of need. And if we imagine the impossible, that the whole ecclesiastical organization would be annihilated, then faith would still remain, and atheism would not make a single step forward. The Soviet government understood this, and preferred to allow the existence of a patriarchal administration.”<sup>842</sup>

“But there were other more substantial reasons: already at the end of September, 1941 William Everell, the authorized representative of President Franklin Roosevelt of the USA in Moscow, during negotiations with Molotov and Stalin with regard to drawing the USA onto the side of the USSR in the war with Nazi Germany, raised the question of politics in relation to religion in the USSR. For Roosevelt this was one of the key questions, on which depended the final result of the negotiations and the possibility of giving military help to the USSR.<sup>843</sup> In connection with this, on October 4, 1941 the Soviet deputy foreign minister Solomon Lozovsky assured the delegation of the USA that religion both in the USSR and outside it had a great significance for raising the patriotic spirit in a country, and for that reason, if some faults and mistakes had been admitted in the past, they would be corrected. So as to imitate so-called ‘freedom of conscience’ in the USSR and thereby win over the countries of the West, Stalin began cautiously flirting with religion. But in the beginning not with the Moscow Patriarchate, ... but with the Vatican...

“Cardinal changes in the internal politics of Stalin in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate... took place in the second half of 1943. At the beginning of autumn the leaders of the allied countries in the anti-Hitlerite coalition were preparing for their first personal meeting in Teheran. Stalin placed great hopes on the Teheran meeting, and so he sought out various means of urging on the allies. First of all, public movements in England and the USA for giving help to the USSR were given the most active support. Among these organizations with whose leaders Stalin carried out a personal correspondence, was Hewitt Johnson, the rector of the cathedral church of Canterbury. The Soviet historian V. Alexeev thinks that ‘this was a partner whom Stalin treasured, and who had no small influence in an allied country, where the Anglican church was the state religion.’

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<sup>842</sup> See also Fomin, op. cit., p. 125; Wassilij Alexeev and Keith Armes, "German Intelligence: Religious Revival in Soviet Territory", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 5, N 1, Spring, 1977, pp. 27-30 (V.M.).

<sup>843</sup> See D. Volkogonov, *Triumfi i Tragedia* (Triumph and Tragedy), Moscow: Novosti, 1989, book II, part 1, pp. 382-83; Shkarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo*, p. 185. Donald Rayfield writes: "Stalin may also have listened to an American envoy, who had pointed out that Congress would not hesitate to send the USSR military aid if religious suppression stopped" (*Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 405). (V.M.)



“Besides Hewitt Johnson, other hierarchs of the Anglican church were actively involved into the movement for the speediest provision of help to the USSR, including Archbishop Cosmo Lang. More than a thousand activists of the Episcopalian church of the U.S.A. addressed similar appeals to the president of the USA Franklin Roosevelt. Moreover, by the autumn of 1943 the leadership of the Anglican church had addressed the Soviet government through the embassy of the USSR in Great Britain with a request to allow a visit of their delegation to Moscow. As V. Alexeev remarks: ‘On the eve of the Teheran conference the visit of the delegation was recognized as desirable and useful by Stalin. In this situation it was extremely advantageous that the head of the delegation, the Archbishop of York, should be received by the higher leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church headed by the patriarch.’

“In connection with the above-mentioned political perspectives, Metropolitan Sergei (from Ulyanovsk) and Metropolitan Alexis (from Leningrad) were very quickly transported to Moscow on government planes. Together with Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), they were brought late at night on September 4, 1943 to Stalin in the Kremlin. Besides Stalin, the deputy president of the Sovnarkom of the USSR. V. Molotov and NKVD General-Major G. Karpov took part in the talks. As Alexeev witnesses, relying on G. Karpov’s report, at the meeting ‘Stalin approved of the convening of a council, but advised that a Hierarchical, not a Local council be convened at the given time... The metropolitans agreed. When Sergei touched upon the question of the time necessary for the preparation of the council, Stalin asked him: “Can we not produce a Bolshevik tempo?” Then, turning to Karpov, he asked him to help the leadership of the church to get the bishops to the council as quickly as possible. For this he was to bring in aviation and other forms of transport. Karpov assured Stalin that all the necessary work would be carried out and the council could be opened already in three to four days. Immediately Stalin and Metropolitans Sergei, Alexis and Nicholas agreed to set September 8 as the opening of the council.’

“Here we must note that Karpov’s report<sup>844</sup> sins through obvious exaggerations, which create the deceptive impression that the initiative in these ‘negotiations’ came from the hierarchs, while Stalin spoke only in the role of a ‘kind magician’ who carried out all their demands. In actual fact the subject of the so-called ‘negotiations’, and the decisions taken during them, had been worked out long before the meeting. Stalin, Malenkov and Beria had examined this question in their dacha already before the middle of the day on September 4. Confirmation of this is given by the speedy transport of Sergei and Alexis to Moscow, and also the spineless agreement of the metropolitans with Stalin’s proposals – ‘the metropolitans agreed’, as it says in Karpov’s report. But the delegation of metropolitans, being loyal to the authorities, could not act

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<sup>844</sup> According to Karpov’s report, Metropolitan Sergei brought up the question of electing a patriarch right at the beginning of the meeting as being “the most important and most pressing question” (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 53). This report was published in full in Russian in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 53-60, and in English in Felix Corbey (ed.), *Religion in the Soviet Union: an archival reader*, New York: New York University Press, 1996. (V.M.)

differently in their meeting with the dictator, in connection with which Karpov spiced up his report with invented initiatives of Sergei.

“Reviewing the question of the convening of the council, it was decided that Metropolitan Sergei (Stragorodsky) should, for political reasons, be proclaimed ‘patriarch of all Rus’ and not ‘of Russia [*Rossii*]’, as it was under Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin).<sup>845</sup> Turning to the metropolitans, Stalin said that the government was ready to provide her with the necessary financial means to support the international image of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also informed them that for the accommodation of the chancellery of the MP he was giving over to them a three-storey house with all its furniture – the past residence of the German ambassador Schulenberg. Obviously, Stalin presented this gift to annoy the Germans, who had opened Orthodox churches on the occupied territories.

“At the end of the meeting Stalin declared that he was intending to create a special organ for control of the Church – the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (SD RPTs). ‘... In reply the metropolitans thanked the government and Stalin personally for the reception he had given them, his enormous help to, and respect for, the Church, and assured the president of the Sovnarkom of their patriotic position, noting that they looked very favourably on the creation of a new state organ for the affairs of the Orthodox Church and on the appointment of [NKVD Major-General] G. Karpov to the post of its president... Turning to Metropolitan Sergei, Molotov asked him when it would be better, in his opinion, to receive the delegation of the Anglican church in Moscow... Sergei replied that since the council at which they would elect the patriarch would be held in four days, the delegation could be received practically at any time after that. On hearing this, Molotov concluded that it would be appropriate to receive it in a month’s time [that is, on the eve of the Teheran conference]. Stalin agreed.”<sup>846</sup>

The three hierarchs also raised the question of opening more churches. Stalin replied that the government had no objections. Then Metropolitan Alexis raised the question of releasing certain hierarchs who were in the camps. Stalin said: “Give me a list, and we shall look at it.”<sup>847</sup>

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<sup>845</sup> This was an important symbolic change. The pre-revolutionary Russian Church was *rossijskaia*, that is, the Church of the whole of the Russian empire and of all the Orthodox in it, whether they were Russian by race or not. By changing the title to *rusaskaia*, Stalin emphasized that it was the Church exclusively of the ethnically Russian people – that is, of the *russskikh*. Over half a century later, ROAC – the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church – resumed the title *rossijskaia*. (V.M.)

<sup>846</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>847</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 56. According to Anatoly Levitin-Krasnov, Molotov at one point “said that the Soviet government and Stalin personally would like to know the needs of the Church. While the other metropolitans remained silent, Metropolitan Sergei suddenly spoke up... The metropolitan pointed out the need for the mass re-opening of churches... for the convocation of a church council and the election of a patriarch... for the general opening of seminaries, because there was a complete lack of clergy. Here Stalin suddenly broke his silence. ‘And why don’t you have cadres? Where have they disappeared?’ he said... looking at the

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And so, as Eugene Blum writes, “the Church structure called the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (ROC-MP) was organized with the personal participation of the dictator Stalin in September, 1943. Not one priest of this ‘church’, could LEGALLY carry out services and rites without the corresponding permission of the ‘competent organs’ – first of all, the secret police of the NKVD-KGB, and was forced to cooperate with them. Every priest, or at least every bishop had to give a signed promise that he would cooperate. He also had to sign that he would not publicize this fact of his recruitment under threat of the death penalty.”<sup>849</sup>

The new Soviet church was given the name of “The Russian (*Russkaia*) Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate”. Under Patriarch Tikhon the

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bishops point blank... Everybody knew that ‘the cadres’ had perished in the camps. But Metropolitan Sergei... replied: ‘There are all sorts of reasons why we have no cadres. One of the reasons is that we train a person for the priesthood, and he becomes the Marshal of the Soviet Union.’ A satisfied smile touched the lips of the dictator: ‘Yes, of course. I am a seminarian...’ Stalin began to reminisce about his years at the seminary... He said that his mother had been sorry to her very death that he had not become a priest...” (*Likhie Gody, 1925-1941* (The Savage Years, 1925-1941), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977). Rayfield notes that the metropolitans went to the meeting “all wearing ordinary suits” (op. cit., p. 405). The story (perhaps fictional) goes that on seeing this, Stalin looked up to heaven and said: “Do you not fear Him? You fear me more...” According to Archimandrite Ioann (Razumov), Sergei was enchanted by Stalin. “How kind he is!... How kind he is!” he said in a hushed voice (in Sergei Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia*. Patriarkh Moskovskij i vseia Rusi Sergij Stragorodskij, (Guardian over the House of the Lord: Patriarch Sergei Stragorodsky of Moscow and All Rus’): Moscow Sretenskij monastery, 2003, p. 702). It was at about this time that Stalin is said to have “told the British ambassador that, in his own way, ‘he too believed in God’. The word began to appear in Pravda with a capital letter.” (Overy, op. cit., p. 162)

<sup>848</sup> Levitin-Krasnov, *Likhie Gody, 1925-1941* (The Savage Years, 1925-1941), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977. Donald Rayfield notes a (perhaps fictional) story that the metropolitans went to the meeting “all wearing ordinary suits”. On seeing this, Stalin looked up to heaven and said: “Do you not fear Him? You fear me more...” (Rayfield, op. cit.)

<sup>849</sup> Blum, LaSalle University Thesis, 2014.

Church had been called "The Russian (*Rossijskaia*) Orthodox Church". The difference in wording ("*Rusaskaia*" instead of "*Rossijskaia*") pointed, paradoxically, to the greater emphasis on Russian nationalism in the Soviet as opposed to the pre-revolutionary Russian Church.

The Church also acquired a precarious, semi-legal existence – the right to open a bank account, to publish *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* and a few booklets, to reopen some seminaries and churches, and, most important, to "elect" a new patriarch after the release from prison of some of the most malleable bishops. In return, it had to accept censorship and control of every aspect of its affairs by the newly constituted Council for Russian Orthodox Affairs, which came to be nicknamed "Narkombog" (People's Commissar for God) and "Narkomopium" (People's Commissar for Opium).

Stalin's new ecclesiastical policy was effective. Rayfield writes: "Promoting Orthodoxy had been more effective in galvanizing the nation than reiterating the slogans of Stalinism. Stalin may also have listened to an American envoy, who had pointed out that Congress would not hesitate to send the USSR military aid if religious suppression stopped. Right until Stalin's death Russian metropolitan bishops were delivered in large black limousines to appear on international platforms, such as peace congresses, in the company of such stalwart atheists as Fadeev and Ehrenburg."<sup>850</sup>

But from the Church's point of view, the new policy, while it ensured the Church's physical survival, made it completely a slave of the State. As Rayfield writes: "The Church was now... an arm of the state."<sup>851</sup>

At first, the Council for Religious Affairs exerted its control downwards via the bishops in accordance with the Church's rigidly centralized structure. From 1961, however, its control came to be exercised also from below, through the so-called *dvadsatky*, or parish councils of twenty laypeople, who could hire and fire priests at will, regardless of the bishops. Thus for all its increased size and external power, the MP remained as much a puppet of Soviet power as ever. As Vasilyeva and Knyshevsky write: "There is no doubt that Stalin's 'special organ' and the government (to be more precise, the Stalin-Molotov duet) kept the patriarch under 'eternal check'. Sergius understood this. And how could he not understand when, on November 1, 1943, the Council made it obligatory for all parishes to submit a monthly account with a detailed description of their activity in all its facets?"<sup>852</sup>

Shumilo continues: "The so-called 'hierarchical council'... took place on September 8, 1943. In all 19 hierarchs took part in it, six of whom were former renovationists who had been hastily consecrated not long before the 'council',

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<sup>850</sup> Rayfield, op. cit., p. 405.

<sup>851</sup> Rayfield, op. cit., p. 405.

<sup>852</sup> Vasilyeva, O., Kniashevsky, P., "Tainaia Vecheria" (The Last Supper), *Liternaturnaia Rossia* (Literary Russia), N 39, September 27, 1991.

and also several loyal bishops who were specially freed from prison and sent to Moscow in planes. At the given assembly there were no bishops from the occupied territories, nor from the emigration, or, still more, those who did not agree with Sergius and his ecclesiastical politics, who continued to languish in Soviet concentration camps. As the patriarchal historian D. Pospelovsky notes: '... At that time there were at least some tens of bishops in exile and the camps... Some of the imprisoned bishops refused to recognize the ecclesiastical politics of Sergei after 1927 as the condition of their liberation. At that time the Catacomb Church was still very active.'"<sup>853</sup>

At the 1943 council, contrary to the rules laid down by the 1917-18 Council, only one candidate for the patriarchy was put forward. "I think that this will be made infinitely easier for us by the fact that we already have someone bearing the patriarchal privileges, and so I suppose that an election with all the details that usually accompany such events is not necessary for us," declared Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), who put forward the candidacy of Sergei. There was nothing for the delegates to do but submit to the will of "the father of the peoples, Joseph Stalin", and to the question of Metropolitan Sergei: "Is nobody of another opinion?", reply: "No, agreed".<sup>854</sup>

"At the end of the session the council accepted a resolution read out by Sergei that was unprecedented in its amorality and uncanonicity. It said that 'every person who is guilty of betraying the common work of the Church and of passing over to the side of fascism is to be counted as excommunicated as being an enemy of the Cross of the Lord, and if he is a bishop or cleric is deprived of his rank.' Thus practically the whole of the population and clergy of the occupied territories – except, of course, the red partisans – fell under the anathema of the Soviet church, including 7.5 million Soviet prisoners of war, who had become prisoners of the Germans. According to Stalin's *ukaz* № 260 of September, 1941, all of them were declared traitors to their Homeland. 'There are no captives, there are only deserters,' declared Molotov, commenting on this *ukaz*."<sup>855</sup>

Sergei was enthroned on September 12. Then the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church was created, headed by Karpov. Since 1940 he had been "head of the Fifth Department of the NKVD, whose assignment was to combat 'the counterrevolutionary clergy.' In the NKVD Karpov's duty was to fight the church, in the council [-] to assist it..."<sup>856</sup>

In this way and at this time was the organization now calling itself the Moscow Patriarchate created – on the basis of a pact between the Church and the bloodiest persecutor of Christianity in history. This pact between the

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<sup>853</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>854</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>855</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>856</sup> Radzinsky, *Stalin*, p. 508.

supposed representative of Christ and Belial had profoundly ungodly consequences. However, church leaders round the world welcomed it.

“A week after the enthronement,” writes Shumilo, “on the orders of the Sovnarkom, Sergei accepted the long-awaited delegation of the Anglican church led by Archbishop Cyril Garbett in Moscow... In general, in the run-up to the Teheran conference the politics of the Soviet regime was ‘reconstructed’ not only in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate but also in relation to the Vatican. In October, 1943 support had been given to the official Georgian Orthodox and Armenian-Gregorian churches. The regime cooperated with the Muslims in convening in Tashkent a conference of loyal Muslim clergy and believers, in the organization in Bujnaks of a legal spiritual administration of the Muslims of the North Caucasus, in the opening of Muslim theological schools (*medrese*) in Bukhara, Tashkent, etc. However, it is quite mistaken to think that this ‘warming’ was a fully-fledged offering of freedom to the religious organizations in the USSR. In spite of their external freedom, the religious workers of the country, all without exception, remained hostages of the totalitarian system and remained under the constant strict supervision of the Soviet special services. But in relation to the so-called ‘unreliables’, the communist repressive apparatus continued to operate as before, although the religious workers themselves in all their official declarations categorically denied this, insinuating into popular opinion abroad the false idea that complete freedom of conscience and religious organizations had been re-established in the USSR. As V. Alexeev remarks: ‘... The deeply religious [!] F.D. Roosevelt was very satisfied with the new relationship of the authorities to the church in the USSR. These steps undertaken by Stalin also received approval in England, Canada and France, where the position of religious organizations in society was very strong. The Russian emigration was also satisfied with them.’”<sup>857</sup>

In an encyclical dated October 14, 1943, Metropolitan Sergei threatened all the clergy who were cooperating with the Germans with an ecclesiastical trial.<sup>858</sup> On October 27, 1943 he wrote to Karpov: “I ask you to petition the government of the USSR for an amnesty for the people named in the attached list, whom I would like to draw into Church work under my administration. I will not take upon myself to decide the question to what extent these people deserved the punishment they underwent. But I am convinced that clemency given them by the Government would arouse them (and give them the opportunity) to apply all their energy to demonstrate their loyalty to the Government of the USSR and to wipe out their guilt completely.” To this

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<sup>857</sup> Shumilo, op. cit. Of course, not all of the Russian emigration – only that (large) part that believed in the good intentions of the Soviet government.

<sup>858</sup> The Germans countered by confronting Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky) with the acts of the Vienna conference of ROCOR, which condemned Sergei Stragorodsky’s election as uncanonical, and demanded that he approve of them. In April, 1944, Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky) was ambushed and shot, probably by Soviets dressed in German uniforms. (Vasilieva, op. cit.; Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco (OCA), “Truth/Consequences”, [ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU](mailto:ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU), archives for September 21, 1999)

declaration was attached a list of 26 clergy, including 24 hierarchs. Most of them, as it turned out, had already been shot or had perished in the camps.<sup>859</sup>

On October 31, after the Georgians congratulated Sergei on his election, Sergei's representative, Archbishop Anthony of Stavropol and Pyatigorsk, concelebrated with Catholicos Callistratus of Georgia in Tbilisi. So eucharistic communion was re-established without preconditions. Until 1990 the Ecumenical Patriarch did not accept this act since it was carried out without his agreement.<sup>860</sup>

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Sergei did more than place the MP in unconditional submission to the God-haters. As Bishop Nektary (Yashunsky) wrote, he introduced a heretical concept of the Church and salvation: "Metropolitan Sergei's understanding of the Church (and therefore, of salvation) was heretical. He sincerely, it seems to us, believed that the Church was first of all an organization, an apparatus that could not function without administrative unity. Hence the striving to preserve her administrative unity at all costs, even at the cost of harming the truth contained in her.

"And this can be seen not only in the church politics he conducted, but also in the theology [he evolved] corresponding to it."

Thus in an article entitled "The Relationship of the Church to the Communities that have Separated from Her" (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*), Metropolitan Sergei explained the differences in the reception of heretics and schismatics, not on the basis of their objective confession of faith, but on the subjective (and therefore changeable) relationship of the Church's first-hierarchy to them. Thus "we receive the Latins into the Church through repentance, but those from the Karlovtsy schism through chrismation". And so for Sergei, concluded Bishop Nektary, "the truth of Holy Orthodoxy is not necessary for salvation, but it is belonging to a legal church-administrative organization that is necessary!"<sup>861</sup>

This heretical transformation of the MP into an "eastern papacy" was described by Fr. Vyacheslav Polosin: "If Metropolitan Sergei was ruled, not by personal avarice, but by a mistaken understanding of what was for the benefit of the Church, then it was evident that the theological foundation of such an understanding was mistaken, and even constituted a heresy concerning the Church herself and her activity in the world. We may suppose that these ideas were very close to the idea of the *Filioque*: since the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son, that means that the vicar of the Son...

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<sup>859</sup> GARF, f. 6991, op. 1, d. 5, l. 1; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 66.

<sup>860</sup> Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 61-63.

<sup>861</sup> Hierodeacon Jonah (Yashunsky), "Sergianstvo: Politika ili Dogmatika?" (Sergianism: Politics or Dogmatics?), 29 April / May 12, 1993, pp. 2-3, 5 (MS).

can dispose of the Spirit, so that the Spirit acts through Him *ex opere operato*...It follows necessarily that he who performs the sacraments of the Church, 'the minister of the sacrament', must automatically be 'infallible', for it is the infallible Spirit of God Who works through him and is inseparable from him... However, this Latin schema of the Church is significantly inferior to the schema and structure created by Metropolitan Sergei. In his schema there is no Council, or it is replaced by a formal assembly for the confirmation of decisions that have already been taken - on the model of the congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

"The place of the Council in his Church structure is taken by something lacking in the Latins' scheme - Soviet power, loyalty to which becomes in the nature of a dogma. This scheme became possible because it was prepared by Russian history. But if the Orthodox tsar and the Orthodox procurator to some extent constituted a 'small Council', which in its general direction did not contradict the mind-set of the majority of believers, with the change in world-view of those at the helm of Soviet power this scheme acquired a heretical character, since the decisions of the central ecclesiastical authorities, which were associated in the minds of the people with the will of the Spirit of God, came to be determined neither by a large nor by a small Council, but by the will of those who wanted to annihilate the very idea of God (the official aim of the second 'godless' five-year-plan was to make the people forget even the word 'God'). Thus at the source of the Truth, instead of the revelation of the will of the Holy Spirit, a deadly poison was substituted... The Moscow Patriarchate, in entrusting itself to the evil, God-fighting will of the Bolsheviks instead of the conciliar will of the Spirit, showed itself to be an image of the terrible deception of unbelief in the omnipotence and Divinity of Christ, Who alone can save and preserve the Church and Who gave the unlying promise that 'the gates of hell will not overcome her'... The substitution of this faith by vain hope in one's own human powers as being able to save the Church in that the Spirit works through them, is not in accord with the canons and Tradition of the Church, but *ex opere operato* proceeds from the 'infallible' top of the hierarchical structure."<sup>862</sup>

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<sup>862</sup> Polosin (Sergei Ventsel), "Razmyshlenia o Teokratii v Rossii" (Thoughts on Theocracy in Russia), *Vestnik Khristianskogo Informatsionnogo Tsentra* (Herald of the Christian Information Centre), N 48, November 24, 1989.



## 55. THE BIG THREE: TEHERAN AND YALTA

Both Britain and the Soviet Union depended critically on the industrial might of America's booming state capitalism to save them from the Nazis. But this was not possible while America remained neutral. Fortunately, this changed in December, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour, bringing the United States into the war on the side of the British and the Soviets (who were not allies before then, but became so now). And after Hitler's foolish declaration of war on the United States a little later, Roosevelt made the decision to place the European theatre of war above the Pacific one – a remarkable decision considering that the United States was directly involved in the Pacific theatre, but not in the European one.

The American economy now accelerated production at an astonishing, unprecedented rate, becoming what Roosevelt called “the arsenal of democracy” – but it involved a control over Americans' lives that was far from typically democratic. As Andrew Roberts writes, “In the course of 1943, US government interference into the lives of Americans continued apace. The Roosevelt administration rationed meat, fat cheese, gas and canned food, and Americans discovered recycling, with waste rubber, metal, paper, silk (for parachutes), nylon, tin cans and fat all being re-used for the war effort. Civilians were banned from buying more than three pairs of shoes a year; the Marine Corps was authorized to establish a female unit; the US Manpower Commission prohibited twenty-seven million workers in essential services from quitting their jobs; Roosevelt appointed the former Supreme Court justice James F. Byrnes to preside over the Office of War Mobilisation, which co-ordinated the work of all the Government's many agencies; and in December he ordered that, in order to prevent a national strike, all railroads were to be seized by the federal government...”<sup>863</sup>

The alliance of the three allied nations was cemented when Churchill flew into Moscow in May, 1942. He made two further such trips in August, 1942 and October, 1944. It was an unequal relationship from the beginning. The Soviets insisted, often rudely and sarcastically, that the Anglo-Saxons should open a second front in the West in order to draw 30 to 40 German divisions away from the Eastern Front – something the British and the Americans were by no means strong enough to do as yet. (There was a premature attempt at Dieppe in 1942 which ended in disaster – more than 4000 Allied casualties, most of them Canadian.) Instead, they opened up another front in North Africa, and, recognizing the enormous importance of the Soviet-German front for the ultimate outcome of the war, they sent vast quantities of arms and supplies by convoy around the Northern Cape to Murmansk and Archangelsk – although many convoys were intercepted and destroyed by the Germans. Meanwhile, the Americans kept the British afloat with Lend-lease supplies from across the Atlantic.

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<sup>863</sup> Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples since 1900*, London: Penguin, 2014, p. 330.

The North African campaign, though often considered a “sideshow” compared to the huge battles taking place in Russia, was nevertheless important in that the victor would gain access to the oil-fields of the Middle East - Hitler was desperately in need of oil. So both sides poured large forces into the North African struggle. At first, it looked as if the German Afrika Corps under Rommel would win. But he was stopped and then defeated in two battles at El Alamein in June-October, 1942 by British and Commonwealth forces under General Bernard Montgomery.

The saints of God also played a part in this victory. As John Sandopoulos explains, in the first battle of El - Alamein (which means “place of Menas”), where there was a ruined church of St. Menas, the saint appeared in front of the German army at the head of a troop of camels exactly as depicted on a fresco in his church and terrified the invaders.<sup>864</sup>

There could hardly have been a more paradoxical and contradictory alliance than that between the British aristocrat and fierce anti-communist, Churchill, and the leader of the communist world revolution, Stalin. There is a Russian proverb that in certain situations one should be ready to use “even the devil and his grandma” - Stalin once quoted this to the British and American leaders.<sup>865</sup> But there is another, English proverb that the Anglo-Saxons could have quoted: “When you go to dinner with the devil, use a very long spoon”. Unfortunately, the Anglo-Saxons tended to follow the Russian proverb more than their own, better one; for the tragic fact was that during the war, in order to drive out one demon, Hitler, they decided to enlist the aid of another, bigger demon, Stalin. Thus they repeated the mistake of the good King Jehoshaphat of Judah, who was rebuked by God for allying himself with the wicked King Ahaziah, and was told: “Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your works” (II Chronicles 20.37).

As an inevitable result, while the smaller demon was defeated, the larger one triumphed... One British sailor, who later became an Orthodox subdeacon, was on a cruiser in the Mediterranean when he heard the news of the alliance between Britain and the Soviet Union. Turning to a friend of his, he said: “Before, we were fighting for God, king and country. Now we are fighting for king and country.”<sup>866</sup> For, of course, in fighting alongside the devil’s Stalin, they could not be fighting for God...

Demonology occupied the war leaders from the beginning. Thus when Hitler invaded Soviet Russia in 1941, Churchill told the House of Commons that if Hitler had invaded hell, he would have found it in himself “to make a favourable reference to the devil in the House of Commons”.<sup>867</sup> Again, when

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<sup>864</sup> Sandopoulos, “The Miracle of Saint Menas in El Alamein in 1942”, <https://www.johnsandopoulos.com/2010/11/miracle-of-saint-menas-in-el-alamein-in.html>.

<sup>865</sup> Jonathan Fenby, *Alliance*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 160.

<sup>866</sup> Subdeacon Paul Inglesby, personal communication.

<sup>867</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 65.

Churchill met Stalin for the first time, in May, 1942, Stalin wished him success in Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa.

“‘May God help you,’ he added.

“‘God, of course, is on our side,’ Churchill said.

“‘And the devil is, naturally, on mine, and through our combined efforts we shall defeat the enemy,’ Stalin chuckled.”<sup>868</sup>

Very funny, no doubt, coming from the devil’s chief agent on earth... But the joke obscured, while at the same time pointing to, a supremely important truth: that God and the devil can never be on the same side, and that while God may use the devil and his servants towards his ultimate, supremely good aim, no human being can attempt to be so clever without destroying himself. For the ends do *not* justify the means: if we use evil means towards a good end, the end of it all will turn out to be evil...

Evidently, the deep meaning of this joke continued to occupy the minds of the leaders, because they returned to it at the Teheran conference in November, 1943.

“‘God is on our side,’ Churchill said. ‘At least I have done my best to make Him a faithful ally.’

“‘And the devil is on my side,’ Stalin chipped in. ‘Because, of course, everybody knows that the devil is a Communist and God, no doubt, is a good Conservative.’...”<sup>869</sup>

Nor were the Big Three averse to some straight lying and blasphemy. Thus in Moscow in October, 1944 Churchill spoke of “our three great democracies” which were “committed to the lofty ideals of freedom, human dignity and happiness” (!!!). Later, “When somebody compared the Big Three to the Holy Trinity, Stalin said Churchill must be the Holy Ghost because ‘he is flying all over the place’”<sup>870</sup>

Stalin was now in a much more powerful position than he had been in 1941, and so he was not afraid to point out the great gulf between Soviet Communism and British Conservatism, even hinting that the two were *not* on the same side. Churchill, of course, as an old anti-communist warrior, was well aware of this - as Roosevelt, apparently, was not. Or if Roosevelt was aware, he chose to

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<sup>868</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>869</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 239. He repeated the point once more in Teheran. “Ironically,” writes Niall Ferguson, “Hitler said the same about the Japanese in May 1942: ‘The present conflict is one of life or death, and the essential thing is to win - and to that end we are quite ready to make an alliance with the Devil himself.’” (*The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 511, footnote)

<sup>870</sup> Fenby, op. cit., pp. 331, 333; David Reynolds, “Confidence and Curve Balls”, *The New Statesman*, December 7, 2018, p. 55.

ignore this difference, while increasingly highlighting, to Churchill's great embarrassment, the ideological differences between imperialist Britain and the supposedly anti-imperialist United States. Moreover, he had a fatal pride in his ability to do business with the communist dictator, and win him over through charm alone. As he said to Churchill in 1942: "I know you will not mind my being brutally frank when I tell you that I think I can personally handle Stalin better than either your Foreign Office or my State Department. Stalin hates the guts of all your top people. He thinks he likes me better, and I hope he will continue to do so."<sup>871</sup>

Jean-François Revel recounts how, during the Teheran Conference, Roosevelt "even went in for elaborate jokes that rubbed Winston Churchill's prejudices the wrong way. After three days of talks during which Stalin remained icy, the President recounted that, at last, 'Stalin smiled'. A great victory for the West! It became total when 'Stalin broke out into a deep, heavy guffaw, and for the first time in three days I saw light. I kept it up until Stalin was laughing with me, and it was then that I called him Uncle Joe.' Democracy was saved."<sup>872</sup>

Churchill was now in a much weaker position in relation to both Stalin and Roosevelt, being almost entirely dependent on Stalin to defeat Hitler on land, and on Roosevelt to supply his island with arms and food by sea. And so he was afraid to highlight *any* ideological differences between the three. In fact, by this time both Churchill and Roosevelt were well on the path towards full appeasement of the bloody dictator – an appeasement that was even worse than that of Munich, and which had a much profounder, longer and more degrading influence on the behaviour of the western democracies...

Churchill was not unaware of the comparison with Munich. As he once said to his ministers: "Poor Neville Chamberlain believed he could trust Hitler. He was wrong, but I don't think I'm wrong about Stalin."<sup>873</sup> He was...

This abandonment of principle was especially striking in the case of Churchill – and not only in relation to Stalin's Communism. A.N. Wilson writes perceptively: "Churchill suffered almost more than any character in British history from watching his most decisive acts have the very opposite effect of the one intended. He who so deplored communism saw Eastern Europe go communist; he, who loved the British Empire, lost the Empire; and he who throughout his peacetime political career had lambasted socialism presided over an administration which was in many ways the most socialist government Britain ever had. While Churchill directed the war he left domestic policy to his socialist colleagues Attlee and Bevin. The controlled wartime economy, rationing, propaganda newsreels, austere 'British restaurants' for food, and the tightest government control over what could be bought, sold, said, publicly

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<sup>871</sup> Roosevelt, in Reynolds, op. cit., p. 376.

<sup>872</sup> Revel, *How Democracies Perish*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985, p. 220.

<sup>873</sup> Reynolds, op. cit., p. 57.

worn, produced what A.J.P. Taylor called 'a country more fully socialist than anything achieved by the conscious planners of Soviet Russia'.<sup>874</sup>

It all began very differently, with the agreement known as the Atlantic Charter in August, 1941. Britain and America agreed then that they would seek no territorial gains in the war; that territorial gains would be in accordance with the wishes of the peoples concerned; that all peoples had the right to self-determination; that trade barriers were to be lowered; that there was to be global economic cooperation and advancement of social welfare; that the participants would work for a world free of want and fear; that the participants would work for freedom of the seas; and that there was to be disarmament of aggressor nations, and a postwar common disarmament. In September a number of other western and Asiatic nations signed up to these principles. And on January 1, 1942 the Soviet Union and China, among other countries, also signed up.<sup>875</sup>

The Soviets had no intention of granting self-determination to the countries they had first conquered during their alliance with the Nazis. As Norman Stone writes, "Churchill did not have the strength to resist Stalin, and the Americans did not have the will."<sup>876</sup> Already by the Teheran Conference in November, 1943 the Allies had effectively given in. "'Now the fate of Europe is settled,' Stalin remarked, according to Beria's son. 'We shall do as we like, *with the Allies' consent.*'"<sup>877</sup> Or, as Churchill put it in October, 1944: "[It's] all very one-sided. They get what they want by guile, flattery or force."<sup>878</sup>

An important factor on Roosevelt's thinking was American public opinion, whose volatility at this point vividly illustrated one of the main weaknesses of democracy. Polls revealed that as late as 1939, as Hugh Brogan writes, that Americans, "if forced to choose, would have picked fascism rather than communism, since communism waged war on private property." However, "by 1942 the majority found no words too kind for Stalin and his armies. The switch was made easier by the comfortable delusion, assiduously propagated, that the USSR had abandoned communism. 'Marxian thinking in Soviet Russia,' said the *New York Times* in April 1944, 'is out. The capitalist system, better described as the competitive system, is back.' That granted, the architect of the Gulag archipelago, many of whose crimes had long ago been public knowledge, could be eulogized as the man who saved the capitalist world. 'A child,' it was said, 'would like to sit on his lap and a dog would sidle up to him.' The NKVD was 'a national police similar to the FBI and the Russians, 'one hell of a people', were remarkably like the Americans. Communism was like Christianity, being based on the brotherhood of man; and as Douglas MacArthur commented... from Corregidor in 1942, 'The hopes of civilization

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<sup>874</sup> Wilson, *After the Victorians*, p. 403.

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic\\_Charter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_Charter);

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration\\_by\\_United\\_Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_by_United_Nations).

<sup>876</sup> Stone, *The Atlantic and its Enemies*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>877</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 211. My italics (V.M.).

<sup>878</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 331.

rest on the banners of the courageous Red Army.’ Hollywood leaped onto the bandwagon by issuing a tedious, fellow-travelling movie, *Mission to Moscow*, which one day would get its makers into a lot of trouble...”<sup>879</sup>

Roosevelt himself, who had successfully fended off charges of being a socialist dictator in the 1930s, now seemed a full convert to Stalinism. Thus already on February 20, 1943, he wrote to the Jew Zabrowsky, who acted as liaison officer between himself and Stalin, that the USSR could be assured of control of most of Europe after the war with full equality with the other “tetrarchs” (Britain, America and China) in the post-war United Nations Security Council: “You can assure Stalin that the USSR will find herself on a footing of complete equality, having an equal voice with the United States and England in the direction of the said Councils (of Europe and Asia). Equally with England and the United States, she will be a member of the High Tribunal which will be created to resolve differences between the nations, and she will take part similarly and identically in the selection, preparation, armament and command of the international forces which, under the orders of the Continental Council, will keep watch within each State to see that peace is maintained in the spirit worthy of the League of Nations. Thus these inter-State entities and their associated armies will be able to impose their decisions and to make themselves obeyed...”

“We will grant the USSR access to the Mediterranean [overriding the territorial claims of Turkey]; we will accede in her wishes concerning Poland and the Baltic, and we shall require Poland to show a judicious attitude of comprehension and compromise [i.e. surrender to all Stalin’s demands]; Stalin will still have a wide field for expansion in the little, unenlightened [sic!] countries of Eastern Europe – always taking into account the rights which are due to the fidelity of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia – he will completely recover the territories which have temporarily been snatched from Great Russia.”<sup>880</sup>

The essential truth of the Zabrowsky letter was confirmed by Cardinal Spellman in a book by R.I. Gannon, SJ, *The Cardinal Spellman Story*. Describing a long talk he had had with Roosevelt on September 3, 1943, he wrote: “It is planned to make an agreement among the Big Four. Accordingly the world will be divided into spheres of influence: China gets the Far East; the US the Pacific; Britain and Russia, Europe and Africa. But as Britain has predominantly colonial interests it might be assumed that Russia will predominate in Europe. Although Chiang Kai-shek will be called in on the great decisions concerning Europe, it is understood that he will have no influence on them. The same thing might become true – although to a lesser degree –for the US. He hoped, ‘although it might be wishful thinking’, that the Russian intervention in Europe would not be too harsh.

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<sup>879</sup> Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA*, London: Penguin, 2019, p. 580.

<sup>880</sup> Roosevelt, in Count Léon de Poncins, *State Secrets*, Chulmleigh: Britons Publishing Company, 1975, pp. 77, 78.

*“League of Nations:* The last one was no success, because the small states were allowed to intervene. The future league will consist only of the four big powers (US, Britain, Russia, China). The small states will have a consultative assembly, without right to decide or to vote. For example, at the armistice with Italy, the Greeks, Jugoslavs and French asked to be co-signers. ‘We simply turned them down.’ They have no right to sit in where the big ones are. Only the Russians were admitted, because they are big, strong and simply impose themselves.

*“Russia:* An interview with Stalin will be forced as soon as possible. He believes that he will be better fitted to come to an understanding with Stalin than Churchill. Churchill is too idealistic, he [Roosevelt] is a realist. So is Stalin. Therefore an understanding between them on a realistic basis is probable. The wish is, although it seems improbable, to get from Stalin a pledge not to extend Russian territory beyond a certain line. He would certainly receive: Finland, the Baltic States, the Eastern half of Poland, Bessarabia. There is no point to oppose these desires of Stalin, because he has the power to get them anyhow. So better give them gracefully.

“Furthermore the population of Eastern Poland wants to become Russian [!]. Still it is absolutely not sure whether Stalin will be satisfied with these boundaries. On the remark that Russia has appointed governments of communistic character for Germany, Austria and other countries which can make a communist regime there, so that the Russians might not even need to come, he agreed that this is to be expected. Asked further, whether the Allies would not do something from their side which might offset this move in giving encouragement to the better elements, just as Russia encourages the Communists, he declared that no such move was contemplated [!!]. It is therefore probably that Communist Regimes would expand, but what can we do about it. France might eventually escape if it has a government *à la* Leon Blum. The Front Populaire would be so advanced, that eventually the Communists would accept it. On the direct questions whether Austria, Hungary and Croatia would fall under some sort of Russian protectorate, the answer was clearly yes. But he added, we should not overlook the magnificent economic achievements of Russia. Their finances are sound. It is natural that the European countries will have to undergo tremendous changes in order to adapt to Russia, but in hopes that in ten or twenty years the European influences would bring the Russians to become less barbarian.

“Be that as it may, he added, the US and Britain cannot fight the Russians...”<sup>881</sup>

The eventual post-war outcome in East and Central Europe, though very bad, was not quite as bad as Roosevelt envisaged. But no thanks to him! His attitude of defeatism and surrender in relation to Stalin, his plans, in spite of his democratic ideals and his acceptance of the Atlantic Charter, to surrender

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<sup>881</sup> Spellman, in de Poncins, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

most of Europe to the worst despotism in human history (while trying to break up the far milder tyranny of Britain over her colonies<sup>882</sup>), involuntarily makes one think that he was somehow bewitched by Stalin! What is certain is that, as the American ambassador to Moscow, Averill Harriman, said: "Roosevelt never understood communism. He viewed it as a sort of extension of the New Deal."<sup>883</sup>

Roosevelt's claim that the Russians could take everything they wanted anyway was false. The Allies' shipments of all kinds of supplies (suffering huge losses along the North Cape route) were vital to the Soviet war effort<sup>884</sup>, and they could have threatened to stop these in exchange for concessions. But the Americans seemed determined to allow the Soviet maximum freedom to do what they liked without regard to the Atlantic Charter or the rights of smaller nations... This was true not only of Roosevelt but also of his Foreign Secretary, Cordell Hull. "What he wanted from the conference was a grand declaration on the post-war international organization. The future of smaller European nations was of no concern to him - 'I don't want to deal with these piddling little things,' he told Harriman, adding that Poland was a 'Pandora's box of infinite trouble' best left unopened."<sup>885</sup>

But the British could not easily give up on Poland, for whose sake they had entered the war in September, 1939, and which contributed many tens of thousands of soldiers and airmen to the British Armed Forces. So Churchill continued to support the Polish government-in-exile and its underground army in Poland while Stalin built up another, communist underground army

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<sup>882</sup> Roosevelt wanted Britain to give India her independence even before the end of the war, and to give Hong Kong to China. His officials also wanted Britain to give up the system of Imperial Preference, the tariff system which protected British exports to the Empire.

<sup>883</sup> Revel, op. cit., pp. 219-220.

<sup>884</sup> Ferguson writes: "All told, Stalin received supplies worth 93 billion roubles, between 4 and 8 per cent of Soviet net material product. The volumes of hardware suggest that these official statistics understate the importance of American assistance: 380,000 field telephones, 363,000 trucks, 43,000 jeeps, 6,000 tanks and over 5,000 miles of telephone wire were shipped along the icy Arctic supply routes to Murmansk, from California to Vladivostok, or overland from Persia. Thousands of fighter planes were flown along an 'air bridge' from Alaska to Siberia. Nor was it only hardware that the Americans supplied to Stalin. Around 58 per cent of Soviet aviation fuel came from the United States during the war, 53 per cent of all explosives and very nearly half of all the copper, aluminium and tyres, to say nothing of the tons of tinned Spam - in all, somewhere between 41 and 63 per cent of all Soviet military supplies. American engineers also continued to provide valuable technical assistance, as they had in the early days of Magnitogorsk" (op. cit., p. 529). The general value of aid amounted to 12 billion dollars in 1941 prices, or 200 billion in contemporary terms. Russia repaid just 7% of this sum, and that only at the beginning of the 1990s. The rest of the debt was written off by the allies (<http://peaceinukraine.livejournal.com/2901882.html>).

"74% of the tanks employed by the Russians at the battle of Moscow in December, 1941 were imported from Britain. However, Norman Davies argues that Western supplies were less important to the Soviets in the early stages of the war. "British tanks were not what the Red Army needed, and British Army greatcoats (like German greatcoats) were totally unsuited to the Russian winter. The Soviets had already gained the upper hand *on their own account before Western aid began to reach them in quantity*" (*Europe at War*, London: Pan Books, 2006, p. 484)

<sup>885</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 208.



and government (the Lublin Committee). One of the reasons why he stopped on the eastern side of Vistula and did not allow the Red Army to aid the Warsaw uprising in August, 1944 was his desire to winkle out the Polish royalists and have them destroyed – whether by the Germans or his own men.

In September, writes Fenby, “though Stalin now claimed that he had been misinformed about the reasons for the rising, the Red Army still did not advance as anti-Communist Polish forces in the city were reduced to a handful. The deadly inaction had done the Lublin Committee’s work for it. Reporting to Washington, Harriman concluded that Stalin did not want the Poles to take credit for the liberation of Warsaw, and wished the underground leaders to be killed by Nazis or stigmatised as enemies who could be arrested when the Russians entered. ‘Under these circumstances,’ he added, ‘it is difficult for me to see how a peaceful or acceptable solution can be found to the Polish problem...’”<sup>886</sup>

But Churchill, too, made unacceptable compromises. Thus he, like the Americans, turned a blind eye to Stalin’s slaughter of 20,000 of Poland’s elite at Katyn, rejecting the correct accusation of the Polish government-in-exile and accepting the lie that the Germans had done it. This had the consequence that the Kremlin broke relations with the Poles, which in turn “allowed Stalin in due course to create a rival government-in-exile loyal to Moscow”.<sup>887</sup>

Again, when Foreign Minister Sir Anthony Eden visited Stalin in October, 1943, he “carried a note by Churchill recognizing that Moscow’s accession to the Atlantic Charter had been based on the frontiers of June 11, 1941, and taking note of ‘the historic frontiers of Russia before the two wars of aggression waged by Germany in 1914 and 1939’”.<sup>888</sup> In other words, Germany’s conquests in Poland after the shameful Molotov-Ribbentrop pact were not to be recognized, but Russia’s were!

The difference between Roosevelt and Churchill was that the latter, unlike the former, sometimes got angry with the dictator and did wrestle some concessions from him. Thus in October, 1944 he obtained the famous percentages agreement with Stalin over spheres of influence in Eastern Europe: in Romania and Bulgaria the relative shares were 90% to the Soviets and 10% to the West; in Yugoslavia it was 50-50; and in Greece it was 90% to the West and 10% to the Soviets. This (very informal) agreement was firmly adhered to by Stalin, enabling Greece to escape the communist yoke.

And yet this concession could have been greatly improved on if only the Americans had accepted the British plan, put forward at Quebec in August, 1943, of attacking Hitler in the Western Balkans. “The British proposed marching on Vienna to pre-empt Stalin’s ambitions in Central Europe, but an

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<sup>886</sup> Fenby, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>887</sup> Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>888</sup> Fenby, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

increasingly frail Roosevelt seemed unmoved by Churchill's warnings about 'the rapid encroachment of the Russians into the Balkans and the consequent dangerous spread of Russian influence in the area'.<sup>889</sup> In the next month, Italy surrendered, and the Yugoslav resistance movement was growing in strength; so the time was right. The implementation of such a plan would not only have saved the Balkans from communist domination: it would have shortened the war with Germany considerably. But the Americans were always irritated by the British insistence on the Mediterranean theatre of operations. Earlier in the war Churchill had concentrated British forces on North Africa and the defence of Egypt, because if the Germans had conquered the Suez Canal they would have cut off the British from the oil of the Persian Gulf, on which they were critically dependent, as well as from India and their Far Eastern colonies. Later, after the Germans had been expelled from North Africa, he favoured an attack on the "soft underbelly" of the Axis powers in Italy because he feared that an attack on the "hard snout" of the German defences in Northern France might lead to a disaster on the scale of Gallipoli or Dunkirk. In this he was probably right, as the disastrous Canadian assault on Dieppe in 1942 proved. However, the battle for Italy proved tougher than expected – more like the "tough guts" of the underbelly, as the American General Mark Clark put it. In July, 1943, two days after the Allies had landed in Sicily and capture Palermo, Mussolini was deposed by Italy's great council. However, the Germans took over the defence of the peninsula, and the Allies did not conquer Rome until June 5, 1944, only one day before D-Day and the invasion of Normandy – to which Churchill was by this time grudgingly reconciled.<sup>890</sup>

Instead of accepting Churchill's idea, writes Misha Glenny, the Americans insisted "on driving up through difficult Italian terrain in preparation for Operation Dragoon, the seaborne assault on southern and western France. 'I still don't understand,' noted General Rendulic, the man coordinating the Wehrmacht's struggle against Tito, 'why the Allies gave up their drive across the Balkans after they had taken Sicily in August [1943]. Instead, they sustained many losses over a period of months as they squeezed their way through the narrow roads of the Italian peninsula before finally landing on the West coast of France, far away from all the strategic theatres of war. I am convinced that by giving up an assault on the Balkans in 1943, the Allies might have postponed the end of the war by a year.'"<sup>891</sup>

Churchill again raised the idea of a joint Anglo-American thrust into the Balkans at the famous conference of the Big Three at Yalta in February, 1945. But neither Stalin nor Roosevelt responded. Stalin's resistance was understandable – he wanted the Red Army, not the Anglo-Americans, to

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<sup>889</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger. 1923-1968: The Idealist*, New York: Penguin, 2016, p. 133.

<sup>890</sup> David Reynolds, "1942 and Hitler's Soft Underbelly", BBC4 documentary, September 18, 2016.

<sup>891</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 519. The Allies would have had even more casualties in Italy if the British, through a brilliant intelligence operation called "Operation Mincemeat", had not deceived the Germans into thinking that the invasion of July, 1943 would be into Greece, not Sicily.

dominate the Balkans. Roosevelt's resistance was less clear; probably he simply wanted to demonstrate to Churchill that he was very much the junior partner in the Anglo-American alliance now, and that "the Big Three" were now, as one American put it, "the Big Two-and-a-Half"...

In any case, the idea was dead...<sup>892</sup>

And so, as a direct result, would be millions of East Europeans...

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Although Yalta has been seen as the decisive meeting of the Allies, as Tony Judt rightly says, "nothing was decided at Yalta that had not already been agreed at Teheran and elsewhere".<sup>893</sup> By then, Stalin already held all the cards. Not only was the Red Army already in effective control of most of Eastern and Central Europe (its forward units were 70 kilometers from Berlin while the Western Allies were 600 kilometers away). Through his listening devices at Yalta and his spies in the West – especially Guy Burgess in the British Foreign Office, Donald Maclean in the British Embassy in Washington, Alger Hiss in the State Department, Harry Dexter White at the US Treasury and Klaus Fuchs at the Manhattan Project in New Mexico – he knew exactly what the plans of the western leaders were, what they wanted in their negotiations with him, what they wanted to hide from him (for example, the building of the atomic bomb) and what their disagreements amongst them were.<sup>894</sup>

Indeed, Roosevelt did everything he could to demonstrate to the Soviets that he was not in agreement with the British on many points, and sabotaged all attempts to establish a joint Anglo-American position before the beginning of the conference. He appeared to prefer the role of mediator between the Soviets and the British perhaps because this gave him more flexibility in his negotiations with Stalin, over whom he counted on being able to work his charm.<sup>895</sup> Or perhaps he was deliberately aiming at giving the Soviets the very large sphere of influence as envisaged in the Zabrusky letter (though formally he rejected the idea of "spheres of influence"). In any case, his behavior annoyed the British and definitely strengthened the Soviet negotiating position.

"Roosevelt was even forthcoming enough," writes Jean-François Revel, "to tell Stalin he did not think American troops could remain in Europe for more than two years after Germany's surrender. Besides, he said, he did not believe in maintaining strong American forces in Europe. He couldn't have been more obliging. By informing Stalin in advance that American troops would be withdrawn and when, Roosevelt was behaving like a home owner who put up

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<sup>892</sup> S.M. Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 85.

<sup>893</sup> Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, London: Paladin, 2007, p. 101.

<sup>894</sup> Plokhy, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

<sup>895</sup> Plokhy, op. cit., pp. 101, 35.

posters to tell local burglars when he planned to take his vacation and leave the apartment unguarded.

“Armed with this assurance, Stalin could calmly lay his postwar plans. First he demanded that the Allies grant him full control over the areas Germany had promised him in the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, the only real agreement to divide up territory signed in the twentieth century. He was instantly granted the Baltic states and chunks of Finland and Romania – in other words, everything Hitler had awarded him in 1939. But Poland... was not delivered over to Stalin in any of the accords reached in February, 1945. He took it by trickery and force...”<sup>896</sup>

Poland was the one question on which both the Americans and the British dug their heels in – for a time. They, like almost all Poles, recognized only the London government-in-exile, while the Soviets recognized only their puppets, the Lublin Committee. However, after Roosevelt had obtained two of his goals from Stalin – the foundation of the United Nations and the Soviet entry into the war with Japan – his resistance effectively collapsed. The British conducted a spirited rearguard action, but effectively the battle was lost: it was the Lublin regime that was recognized, albeit “reorganized” and with the promise of “fair” elections in which non-communists could take part.

The British had some smaller victories to make up for this, their greatest defeat. One was the inclusion of the French in the Allied Control Commission and the creation of the French occupation zone. Stalin had opposed this, but he surrendered after Roosevelt changed his mind and swung behind the British position.

Another British victory was over the question of reparations from Germany. Stalin demanded \$20 billion in reparations, with \$10 billion going to the Soviets. Churchill and Eden argued that such an enormous demand would jeopardize Germany’s economic recovery, which was vital to the economy of the whole world; it would mean that they would have no money to pay for imports, which would hinder other countries’ export trade; and it would threaten mass unemployment and starvation in Germany, not to mention the resurrection of that resentment which had played such an important part in the rise of Hitler after the First World War. They were supported by a letter from the British war cabinet which said that this huge sum could not be paid “by a Germany which has been bombed, defeated, perhaps dismembered and unable to pay for imports”. Molotov mocked the British: “The essence of Eden’s statement comes down to taking as little from Germany as possible”. Stalin employed the same tactic, asking Churchill whether he was “scared” by the Soviet request. But Churchill held his ground, backed by his leading general, Sir Alan Brooke, who had vehemently opposed the Morgenthau plan already in Quebec, on the ground that Germany would be needed as an ally against ‘the Russian threat of twenty-five years hence’”.<sup>897</sup>

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<sup>896</sup> Revel, *How Democracies Perish*, pp. 270-271.

<sup>897</sup> Ferguson, *Kissinger*, p. 134.

Then Roosevelt once again changed course and backed the British. "Under pressure from the State Department and seeking to placate the media, Roosevelt had abandoned the Morgenthau plan, but could easily return to some of its provisions in spirit if not in letter, to placate the Soviets."<sup>898</sup> With great reluctance, the Soviet dictator accepted that the amount and nature of reparations should be decided by the Reparations Commission, to which both sides would present their proposals. Here was another demonstration of how much more could have been achieved if the western allies had always worked together...

If at the top of Stalin's wish-list was his complete control over Poland, German reparations and the return of all Soviet prisoners of war (about which more in a later chapter), Roosevelt's main desires were for the Soviets' entry into the war against Japan, and the establishment of the United Nations. Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan three months after a German surrender, but extracted a high price – mainly at the expense of China, but also at the expense of Roosevelt's loudly proclaimed principles of political behaviour. For in a secret agreement, to which even the British were not party, Roosevelt agreed that the Soviets should take control of the Kurile islands, southern Sakhalin, Port Arthur, the Manchurian railroads, and that outer Mongolia should become an independent country (under Soviet control, naturally).

Thus were the worst fears of the Chinese nationalists realized. They naturally wanted to free their country not only from the Japanese but also from the Chinese Communists, whose allies, of course, were the Soviet Communists. But Roosevelt wanted not only to hand large chunks of China over to the Soviets, but also to appease the Chinese Communists. However, as Fenby writes, "Despite US efforts, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong were intent on renewing their civil war. The Generalissimo remarked pointedly to Patrick Hurley, who had become the US ambassador, that he did not want a repetition in his country of what had happened in Poland and Yugoslavia. His perennial concern about the reliability of American support was deepened by the discovery of an OSS plan to train and equip the Communists..."<sup>899</sup>

The Far Eastern agreement, together with other, less important agreements on Iran, the Dardanelles and the Balkans, demonstrate in a fascinating way how the foreign policy aims of Stalin in 1945 and of Tsar Nicholas over thirty years earlier were very similar – except, of course, that the means they chose to their ends were completely different, and that Stalin's end was to strengthen the kingdom of Satan over these territories, whereas the Tsar's end had been precisely the opposite, to strengthen Orthodoxy. The Yalta conference took place in the Tsar's former villa in Livadia, with recollections of the murdered Royal Family all around, and Stalin arrived in the Crimea in the Tsar's former railway carriage. Nothing demonstrated more clearly the essence of the

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<sup>898</sup> Plokhly, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>899</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 347.

situation: the temporary triumph of evil over good, of the enemies of Russia over Holy Rus', of the Antichrist over Christ...

The Soviet press lauded the Yalta agreements. The Western press also lauded it, and all the members of the American and British delegations to Yalta thought it had been a success and "Uncle Joe" a most pleasant and cooperative negotiator. Roosevelt and his adviser Hopkins were in "a state of extreme exultation", according to Hopkins' biographer,<sup>900</sup> and Roosevelt expressed his firm faith in Stalin to Congress. He had seen through Hitler early on, even before he had embarked on his worst crimes. But he completely failed to understand Stalin and the essence of communism – even after he had proved himself the greatest murderer in history...

Only in the very last days of his life (he died on April 12, 1945) did Roosevelt express any distrust of Stalin ...<sup>901</sup>

As for Churchill, he was, as always, a mass of contradictions. On the last day at Yalta, as the other leaders left, he said to Eden: "The only bond of the victors is their common hate".<sup>902</sup> And he continued to express fears about the future – especially, and with good reason, in regard to Poland. But he did so only in private.<sup>903</sup> In public he joined in the general dithyrambs to the collective Antichrist. As he said in the House of Commons: "Most solemn declarations have been made by Marshal Stalin and the Soviet Union that the sovereign independence of Poland is to be maintained, and this decision is now joined in both by Great Britain and the United States... The impression I brought back from the Crimea, and from all my other contacts, is that Marshal Stalin and the Soviet leaders wish to live in honourable friendship and equality with the Western democracies. I feel also that their word is their bond. I know of no Government which stands to its obligations, even in its own despite, more solidly than the Russian Soviet Government. I decline absolutely to embark here on a discussion about Russian good faith..."<sup>904</sup>

A shameful lie, for which Churchill received an immediate and just reward: ejection from office in the election of 1945...

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<sup>900</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 381.

<sup>901</sup> Victor Sebestyen, *1946: The Making of the Modern World*, London: Pan, 2014, pp. 88-89.

<sup>902</sup> Fenby, op. cit., p. 379.

<sup>903</sup> Thus on March 8 he wrote to Roosevelt: "The Russians have succeeded in establishing [in Eastern Europe] the rule of a communist minority by force and misrepresentation... which is absolutely contrary to all democratic ideas... Stalin has subscribed on paper to the principles of Yalta which are certainly being trampled down." And again he wrote on March 13: "We are in the presence of a great failure and utter breakdown of what was agreed at Yalta" (Paul Ham, *Hiroshima Nagasaki*, London: Doubleday, 2010, p. 10).

<sup>904</sup> Plokhly, op. cit., p. 335.

Perhaps the most important agreement at Yalta was the Declaration on Liberated Europe: "To foster the conditions in which the liberated peoples may exercise those [democratic] rights, all three governments will jointly assist the people in any European liberated state or former Axis satellite state in Europe" – that is, to form representative governments and facilitate free elections. But Stalin had no intention of keeping this pledge, as the western leaders soon discovered to their fury. However, their protests fell on deaf ears. It could not have been otherwise. The Allies supped with the devil at Yalta, although they knew all about his demonism, and returned fatally poisoned. As Ferguson puts it: "The wartime alliance with Stalin, for all its inevitability and strategic rationality, was nevertheless an authentically Faustian bargain..."<sup>905</sup>

And it immediately involved *lying*: lying, for example, about Stalin's slaughter of the Polish elite at Katyn, lying about the abandonment of Eastern Europe in general. For if "totalitarianism probably demands a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth" (George Orwell), those who cooperate with it are bound to become infected with its mendacity.

Max Hastings writes: "The Americans and British had delivered half Europe from one totalitarian tyranny, but lacked the political will and the military means to save ninety million people of the eastern nations from falling victim to a new, Soviet bondage that lasted almost half a century. The price of having joined with Stalin to destroy Hitler was high indeed..."<sup>906</sup>

The question is: could the Allies have acted differently? Plokhy's conclusion is: no. "There were of course other possibilities, but they had the potential of leading to a new war before the old one was over. Joseph Goebbels nourished high hopes as he followed the coverage of inter-Allied tensions in the Western media from his hideout in Berlin. If one were to take Stalin's fears as a guide to policy alternatives, then a separate peace with the dying Nazi regime or, more realistically, an armistice leading to the end of hostilities on the western front, could have been adopted instead of the policy that Roosevelt and Churchill followed at Yalta. These options could only be perceived as dead ends by the two Western leaders, who were committed to leading their nations and the long-suffering world toward peace.

As Charles Bohlen wrote to George Kennan [the architect of the western policy of containment in the Cold War] from Yalta, regarding his proposal to divide Europe in half: 'Foreign policy of that kind cannot be made in a democracy.'<sup>907</sup>

It is this last point that is the most important. Is democracy really incapable of making the most vital, most *moral* of choices? If so, then so much the worse for democracy...

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<sup>905</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., p. 511.

<sup>906</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, London: Harper Press, 2011, pp. 654-654.

<sup>907</sup> Plokhy, op. cit., p. 399.

“Valuable work was done at Yalta,” writes Andrew Roberts, “on the creation of the United Nations, the de-Nazification of German society, war trials, and many other important areas of post-war policy, but over the issue with which the word ‘Yalta’ will always be connected in history – the condemnation of so many Eastern European people to Soviet communist domination for so long – the sad but unavoidable truth is that the United States and Great Britain simply had no choice but to accede to Stalin’s *fait accompli*. Never since 1900 were Western statesmen’s decisions more important, more long-lasting, more bitter to swallow and yet more impossible to escape...

“... Western public opinion would simply not have understood, let alone accepted, any kind of aggressive stance against Stalin at that stage of the war. In the back of Western minds was also the fear that the Soviets might do another deal with the Germans, as they had in August 1939...”<sup>908</sup>

But peoples, like individuals, are always capable of making choices. Tragically, western democracy, at the moment of its greatest power and responsibility, failed the test in 1945... “Western public opinion would simply not have understood...” Indeed, that is almost certainly true. But is that not the greatest condemnation of democracy: that its most important decisions have to be made, not in accordance with God’s law, which always (this is a critical point) brings with it the help of God, “with Whom all things are possible”, but in accordance with public opinion – vox populi, not vox Dei?

Nothing is ever absolutely inevitable; there are *always* alternatives for political leaders, if they are truly leaders and not followers; kow-towing to Stalin was by no means inevitable in 1945 or at any other time. However, a successful war against apocalyptic evil – for that is what the war against the Soviet Antichrist was in reality – could only be undertaken by a leader who truly led his people and was not led by them, who could inspire them to “blood, sweat and tears” not only in defence of their own sovereignty but for the sake of some higher, supra-national ideal – in essence a religious ideal in obedience to God, with His almighty help, and for the sake, not of earthly survival only, but of salvation for eternity.

But democracy, as has been noted many times in this History, is a mode of political life that is centred entirely on secular, earthly goals. An exceptional democratic leader may briefly be able to raise his people to a higher than usual level of courage and personal self-sacrifice, as Roosevelt did America in 1933 (perhaps) and Churchill did Britain in 1940 (certainly). But the aim remains earthly – in Roosevelt’s case, economic recovery, and in Churchill’s, national survival.<sup>909</sup> The point is that in a democracy, even an exceptional leader cannot

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<sup>908</sup> Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-61.

<sup>909</sup> As he put it in parliament in May, 1940: “What is our aim?... Victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.”



run far in front of his people, by whom he is elected and to whom he remains answerable; and so far no democratic nation has voted for a leader that will sacrifice earthly survival for a heavenly ideal. That is the lesson of Churchill's electoral defeat in 1945. The people were tired of war (as they had been in 1919, when Churchill again tried to inspire them to continue fighting against the Soviets after defeating the Germans), and certainly did not want to undertake another war against Soviet Russia. So an inspirational leader of the Churchillian type was not what they wanted, and in a democracy the people gets what it wants, whether it is good for them or not. They wanted a new leader who would concentrate once again on earthly matters - tax rates, redistribution of wealth, a National Health Service, etc. A despot like Stalin can do more than a democratic leader in propelling his people to feats of self-sacrifice - as Stalin did the Soviet people in 1941-45. But they are compelled to such feats by fear - fear of men, not of God.

Only an Orthodox Autocrat can inspire his people to sacrifice themselves for a truly heavenly ideal, even if that spells the end of all their earthly hopes. St. Lazar was an Orthodox Autocrat who inspired the Serbs to sacrifice everything for the Heavenly Kingdom on Kosovo field. Tsar Nicholas II was a man of comparable quality who also looked to heavenly rather than earthly crowns (the great mass of his people, tragically, did not). But by 1945 there were no more Orthodox Autocrats; Stalin's victory in 1945 consolidated Lenin's in 1917. Autocracy, the only truly God-pleasing form of political life, the only form that is capable to directing the life of the people to heavenly rather than earthly goals, was - temporarily - no more...

## 56. THE COMMUNISTS INVADE THE BALKANS

The Anglo-American decision not to invade the Western Balkans sealed the fate of the Balkan nations: with the exception of Greece, they were all to become communist in the post-war world, as Churchill had predicted in January, 1945. And yet the victory of communism, and its near-victory in Greece, did not take place on an empty space. The roots of this victory go far back into the pre-war years, when Communism had been a growing problem throughout the region.

Until the war the communists were held at bay in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece by Orthodox kings who had freed themselves from parliamentary control – King Alexander of Yugoslavia from 1929, and King Boris of Bulgaria from 1934. In Greece, “the Communist party made a small but significant showing in Parliament for the first time in 1935. That same year the monarchy was restored and King George II returned to Greece. In 1936 Communist agitation disrupted the country, and to forestall civil war John Metaxas imposed martial law with the consent of the King and the senior politicians, and became dictator.”<sup>910</sup>

**1. Romania.** Only in Romania were the communists not a major problem – the danger there was from the fascists. As we have seen, in September 1940, the king appointed General Ion Antonescu as President of the Council of Ministers. He joined with the Legionnaires to form the National Legionnaire State, but this was abrogated on February 14, 1941; the Legionnaires were disbanded, their leaders killed, imprisoned or exiled; and Antonescu formed a classic Fascist state in union with Germany for the next three-and-a-half years. As the Romanian army invaded the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian Jews were killed, while many others from Bukovina and Bessarabia were transported to Transnistria. In 1945 Romania fell to the communists. King Mihail of Romania survived until 1947, but then had to flee.

At the beginning, the Romanian communists under Ana Pauker had only 1000 members. However, “on February 13,” writes Plokhy, “two days after the end of the Yalta Conference, the Romanian communists organized a mass demonstration in Bucharest demanding the removal of the coalition government of General Nicolae Radescu and its replacement by a communist-controlled cabinet. When the American and British representatives on the Allied Control Commission for Romania requested a meeting of the commission on February 24, Stalin sent Andrei Vyshinsky to Bucharest. Judging by the short biography prepared by the State Department on the eve of the Yalta Conference, the Americans regarded Vyshinsky as relatively liberal [!]. They credited him with the Soviet recognition of the Marshal Pietro Badoglio government in Italy and with their conciliatory approach to the Radescu government in Romania. They were soon to be bitterly disappointed.

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<sup>910</sup> Lardas, “The Old Calendar Movement in the Greek Church”, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jurdanville, 1983 (unpublished thesis).

“Vyshinsky arrived in Bucharest on February 27 and immediately requested a meeting with the king. There, he demanded the dismissal of the Radescu government, claiming that it was unable to maintain order. He wanted it to be replaced by a government based on ‘truly democratic forces’, meaning the communists and their allies. The next day Vyshinsky accused the existing government of protecting ‘fascists’ and gave the king two hours to dismiss the government. ‘In leaving,’ wrote James Byrnes on the basis of a report from the American representative in Bucharest, ‘he slammed the door so hard that the plaster around the door frame was cracked badly. It has never been fixed; it remains to testify to the strength of his feeling and his arm.’ Through a combination of threats (to abolish Romanian statehood) and promises (to attach Hungarian Transylvania to Romania), Vyshinsky eventually managed to install a new government led by the communist Petru Groza.

“The Soviet-engineered coup d’état alarmed London and Washington. Since Churchill, given his percentage deal, was in no position to protest directly, he appealed to Roosevelt. He told the president that ‘[t]he Russians had succeeded in establishing the rule of Communist minority by force and misrepresentation.’ Roosevelt agreed but refused to act, believing that ‘Romania is not a good place for a test case’. The Soviets had been in complete control there since the fall of 1944, and given the country’s strategic location on the Red Army supply and communications lines, it would be difficult to challenge Soviet claims concerning the military necessity of their actions. Roosevelt knew about Churchill and Stalin’s deal on the Balkans and apparently decided to avoid involvement in a potentially embarrassing situation.

“In Washington there was a growing realization that something had to be done, but given the president’s silence, Stalin felt it safe to ignore the efforts of American diplomats to remedy the situation. On March 17, 1945, Molotov turned down an American request for consultations on the Romanian situation in keeping with the provisions of the Declaration on Liberated Europe – the approach Churchill had suggested to Roosevelt. The Romanian crisis was resolved, Molotov told Harriman, and there was thus no need to invoke the provisions of the declaration, which required joint Allied consultation in case of a crisis...”<sup>911</sup>

**2. Bulgaria.** Tsar Boris of Bulgaria remained in power during the war, keeping his country out of military alliances with either the fascists or the communists by cleverly playing them off against each other. After the death of Tsar Boris, his brother, Prince Cyril, was arrested by Soviet troops and shot on “Bloody Thursday”, February 3, 1945. Romania and Bulgaria were directly in the path of the Red Army, and had in any case been given up by Churchill to Stalin’s tender mercies; so they had no chance. The only difference was that the Romanians were relatively worse treated because of their Russophobia, while “there was less looting, rape and expropriation in Bulgaria than elsewhere. In

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<sup>911</sup> Plokhy, op. cit., pp. 346-347.

general, Bulgarians welcomed the liberating troops with polite enthusiasm. The Soviets found the local Communist Party larger and better-organized than its Romanian counterpart.”<sup>912</sup>

As in all communist countries, the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria was persecuted: so-called associations of priests controlled by the communists were infiltrated into the Church of Bulgaria, as into neighbouring Serbia.

“After assuming power,” writes the Bulgarian historian Ivan Marchevsky, “the communists began to destroy the clergy: a third of the 2000 members of the clergy was killed. Then they began to act in a different way: Vladykas appointed ‘from above’ ordained obedient priests...”

**3. Yugoslavia.** During the war, Nazi occupation elicited guerrilla resistance movements of both royalist and communist kinds. The royalists owed allegiance to the government-in-exile in London and attracted almost exclusively Serbs. The communist partisans, on the other hand, were made up of men of all the nationalities and religions of the country, and were clearly aiming to construct the beginnings of a new polity that would take the place of the old kingdom after the war and owe allegiance only to Moscow.

At first, as John Fine writes, “attempts were made by the two to co-operate against the common enemy. However, action, whether ambushes of German units or acts of sabotage, led to violent German reprisals: 100 Yugoslavs (since the action was then chiefly in Serbia, this meant Serbs) were shot for each German killed, and the number executed continued to rise. [The royalist leader] Mikhailović was a Serb, and his goal was the restoration of pre-war royalist Yugoslavia... He could see that the resistance was too weak to do serious damage to the Germans, and that the only result of actions against the occupiers was the murder of thousands of Serbs. He therefore decided that it would be best to stop an active policy, build up his forces, and then conserve them to act when the time was propitious, i.e. when the Allies invaded. He also feared Tito’s Partisans since he knew Tito was a Communist and disliked the idea of a Communist revolution as much as the German occupation or even more. So he took a passive policy toward the Germans.”<sup>913</sup>

Tito, on the other hand, was not deterred by massive reprisals against Serbs. Moreover, his partisans, though mainly Serbs, were able to recruit more volunteers from non-Serb nationalities because of their more internationalist ideology.

And so “in December 1943,” writes Hastings, “Churchill shifted his support decisively towards the communist leader, who claimed to have 200,000 men under arms. In this, the prime minister was influenced by some illusions that

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<sup>912</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

<sup>913</sup> Fine, “Strongmen can be beneficial: the exceptional case of Josip Broz Tito”, in Berndt Frischer (ed.), *Balkan Strongmen*, London: Hurst, 2006, p. 275.

Tito's partisans 'were not real communists'; that they could be persuaded to forge an accord with King Peter; and that they were single-mindedly committed to the struggle against the Axis. Communist sympathisers in SOE's Cairo headquarters contributed to this roseate perception; London was ignorant of the fact that for some months in 1943 Tito negotiated with the Germans for a truce which would enable him to crush Mihailovič, and committed most of his forces to kill Chetniks. Milovan Djilas was among partisan negotiators who spent days at German headquarters, where officers professed revulsion at the Yugoslavs' manner of making war. 'Look what you have done to your own country!' they exclaimed. 'A wasteland, cinders! Women are begging in the streets, typhus is raging, children are dying of hunger. And we wish to bring you roads, electricity, hospitals.'

"Only when Hitler rejected any deal with the communists did conflict resume between partisan and occupiers. The subsequent bloodbath radicalised much of the population, and enabled Tito to create a mass movement. His followers eventually gained control of large rural areas. But they lacked strength to take important towns or cities until the Red Army arrived in 1944, and they were as committed as the Chetniks to achieving post-war domination. Thirty-five Axis divisions were deployed in Yugoslavia, but few were front-line troops, and this concentration reflected Hitler's obsessive fear of an Allied landing in the Balkans as much as the need to secure the country against Tito. The partisans' military achievements were less significant than London allowed itself to believe. From late 1943 onwards, the Allies began to send Tito weapons in quantities far larger than those supplied to any other European resistance movement. But most were used to suppress the Chetniks and secure the country for Tito in 1944-45, rather than to kill Germans."<sup>914</sup>

The British transfer of support from the Chetniks and King Peter to Tito's communists was probably influenced by a Stalinist spy in their ranks. Thus Nikolai Tolstoy writes that "at SOE in Cairo a Major James Klugman did not neglect opportunities to injure Mihailovich's cause and boost Tito's. Klugman was a fanatical Communist who played a large part in the 1930s in recruiting youths at Cambridge and other universities to the Soviet cause."<sup>915</sup>

Again, Fr. James Thornton writes: "Tragically, America and Britain were deceived by communists agents within their own ranks, who sought to besmirch the reputation of Mihailovich by circulating the outrageous lie that he was collaborating with the Germans, while assuring everyone that the rival communist Partisan leader, Josip Broz Tito, was the true friend of the West. This was confirmed beyond question in 1997 when, as [Gregory Freeman, the author of *The Forgotten 500*] shows, declassified British documents revealed that a Soviet agent, James Klugman, 'was principally responsible for sabotaging the Mihailovich supply operation and for keeping from London information about how much Mihailovich forces were fighting the Germans and how much

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<sup>914</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, pp. 466-467.

<sup>915</sup> Tolstoy, *Stalin's Secret War*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1981, p. 342.

successes they were having.’ Upon reaching America, that disinformation was amplified by Soviet agents in key positions within our own government. Because of Klugman's activities, supplies were recounted to Tito, thus assuring the post-war communist takeover of Yugoslavia. Yet, despite this horrifying volte-face, General Mihailovich remained faithful to his Western Allies, not only assuring the safety of the 500 airmen, but assisting in ‘Operation Halyard,’ the extremely perilous airlift operation that returned all the men to Allied-controlled Italy.”

In spite of the British change in allegiance, Tito was not grateful for the help he received. Towards the end of the war he was determined to resist any encroachment on Yugoslavia from British troops in Italy. This drew a sharp rebuke from Stalin, who had agreed a 50-50 split with Churchill in Yugoslavia.

And so, as Glenny writes, “the leadership of the new [communist] Yugoslavia made some formal concessions to the Big Three. They invited Ivan Šubašić, Prime Minister in the royal government in exile, to become Foreign Minister, to show that the new regime enjoyed a broad democratic base. On the ground, however, they imposed a harsh revolutionary justice. As German troops streamed out of Yugoslavia, the Croat fascist leader, Ante Pavelić, and 1-200,000 Ustaša troops and civilians set off for the Austrian border on 7 May 1945, with Partisan forces in hot pursuit. They got as far as Bleiburg, a small Austrian border town, before being surrounded by British troops to the north and Partisans to the south. With RAF Spitfires buzzing overhead, about 30-40,000 soldiers, including Pavelić, managed to disappear into the surrounding woods and then deep into Austria. But the remainder were taken prisoner by Partisan forces amid scenes of carnage. Some 30,000 Ustaše were killed on the four-day march towards the Slovene town of Maribor. On 20 May, near the village of Tezna, ‘50,000 Croat soldiers and about 30,000 refugees, mainly women and children, were executed over a five-day period... A macabre end to the ‘Independent State of Croatia’.

“In Serbia, the Chetniks fared little better even though many had fought bravely against the Germans. Mihailović, the Chetnik leader, led a small band of fighters into the mountains of eastern Bosnia. He was eventually caught, tried and executed in 1946 as an alleged war criminal. But thousands of Chetniks became fugitives in a twilight world. Many were secondary-school pupils when they joined the resistance. Now, they were hunted in villages and towns throughout Serbia. Thousands hid from the secret police in Belgrade, moving at dusk from one safe place to the next. Occasionally, they would risk capture by visiting their families. In place of the bright adolescent who had left three or four years before, mothers and fathers now saw a ‘tall, grim-looking young man... who appeared... on their doorstep with one hand always clutching something in the pocket of his raincoat and whose eyes were ringed with dark circles.’

“Arrested by the Gestapo during the war, Dimitrije Djordjevic, a young Chetnik leader, survived Mauthausen only to fall into the hands of the

Gestapo's communist successor when he returned to Belgrade. 'Both [organizations] had in common the violence with which they imposed their authority. The Gestapo destroyed the body; Ozna [the Yugoslav equivalent of the KGB] raped the soul. The Gestapo killed by shooting and by imprisonment in death camps; Ozna engaged in brainwashing, demanding repentance for sins not committed and self-abnegation. 'The difference was one of physical as opposed to spiritual annihilation.'

"OZNa, *Odsek za zaštitu naroda* (Department for the Protection of the People), modelled itself on the Soviet secret police, the NKVD. But during the war, under the dour leadership of Aleksandar Rankovic, the Communist Minister of the Interior, it matured independent of Soviet control. Rankovic built a network of informers and a devoted political police whose efficiency gave birth to the popular Orwellian rhyme, *Ozna sve dozna* (Ozna finds out everything). He aimed to make OZNa omnipresent, recruiting 'in every block of flats, in every street, in every village and in every barrack room'. The Nazi and Ustaše camps throughout Yugoslavia were turned over for use by the communists. Tens of thousands of people were executed in 1946-7 while hundreds of thousands were interned. In 1947, there were so many men in camps or prisons that the penal system started to buckle under the strain. The mass arrests had removed so many young men from the labour market that the economy was being disrupted. Against Rankovic's better judgement the Party was forced to declare amnesty for tens of thousands.

"Thanks chiefly to OZNa, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička Partija Jugoslavije* - KPI) was able to neutralize all political opposition soon after the elections of November 1945, which were comprehensively rigged. The communist monopoly on power took hold in Yugoslavia much earlier than anywhere else in eastern Europe..."<sup>916</sup>

Churchill had foreseen this a long time before. As he wrote to Stalin on April 28: "I must say that the way things have worked out in Yugoslavia certainly does not give me the feeling of a fifty-fifty interest as between our countries. Marshal Tito has become a complete dictator. He has proclaimed that his prime loyalties are to the Soviet Union. Although he allowed members of the Royal Yugoslav Government to enter his government they only number six as against twenty-five of his own nominees. We have the impression that they are not taken into consultation on matters of high policy and that it is becoming a one-party regime..."<sup>917</sup>

**4. Greece.** After the Greeks had been conquered by the Germans in April, 1941, they saw their country divided between the Bulgarians (in the north), the Germans (in the centre, Athens and Salonika) and the Italians (in the rest of the country). Hunger and disease stalked the land - hundreds of thousands died.

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<sup>916</sup> Glenny, op. cit., pp. 530-532.

<sup>917</sup> Plokhy, op. cit., p. 380.

Many priests perished at the hands of the German, Italian and Bulgarian forces during the occupation of 1941-1944.

The situation was particularly bad in the Bulgarian zone, where the Bulgarians wanted revenge for their defeats in 1913 and 1918. "In September 1941," writes R.J. Crampton, "the local Greek population staged a rising, and committed atrocities against Bulgarians; the latter took fearsome revenge in an effort, some believe, to drive the Greeks out of the region."<sup>918</sup>

"Hitler had sanctioned Bulgaria's occupation of Western Thrace, not its annexation. The Bulgarians disregarded this fine point. They had just emerged as the most powerful country in the Balkans and saw that possession was nine-tenths of the law. The Bulgarian administration in western Thrace was arguably one of the harshest occupational regimes in all Europe. Up to 100,000 Greeks were expelled from the region, and many thousands imprisoned in the island of Thasos. The smallest manifestation of Greek culture was persecuted. The Bulgarians also seized Greek-owned land and distributed it to tens of thousands of Bulgarian peasant colonists..."<sup>919</sup>

In September, 1944, as the Germans retreated from Greece, the communist partisans of ELAS (*Ellenikos Laikos Apeleutherotikos Stratos*) with their two political sponsors, EAM and KKE (the Communist Party), and OPLA (KKE's nascent secret police), poured down from their mountain strongholds in the north and were soon in control of four-fifths of the country. They caused great suffering to the people, and more than 200 Orthodox priests were murdered by Communist partisans during the civil conflicts of 1943-1949, often with a bestial cruelty worthy of their Soviet counterparts. The only non-communist resistance movement, EDES, which was loyal to King George II, was esconced in north-western Epirus in much smaller numbers.

Among the hieromartyrs of this period was Hieromonk Joseph Antoniou. In 1938 he was imprisoned by the new calendarists. On his release he was sent by the True Orthodox Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades to Xylocastron, near Corinth. Once installed in Xylocastron, he brought his parents there and continued his apostolic activity. During the German occupation, communist guerrillas entered the area and occupied several of the villages. Fr. Joseph fearlessly denounced their false teaching and terrible cruelties against the people. Two or three times they warned Fr. Joseph to stop speaking against them. But he replied: "You are waging the anti-Christian communist struggle, but I am waging the opposite struggle, the Christian struggle."

Soon the decision was taken by the communists to execute the troublesome priest... Shortly after Pascha, 1944, an unknown old man entered the church where Fr. Joseph was serving, and told him that throughout the service he had seen blood flowing from under this cassock. From that time, Fr. Joseph

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<sup>918</sup> Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 172.

<sup>919</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 482.



prepared himself for martyrdom. Attacks on priests were increasing at this time. Only three months before Fr. Joseph was killed, he invited Bishop Germanus of the Cyclades to baptize the son of his spiritual son John Motsis. The local communist chief ordered the bishop to leave immediately.

On July 20 Fr. Joseph celebrated the Liturgy in the village of Laliotis. Then the communists entered the house where he was staying, arrested him and threw him into prison, where he was tortured. On July 22, he was taken out of prison with another young man by three guerillas. On seeing the youth of the executioners, Fr. Joseph sadly shook his head and urged them not to commit the crime. The communists forced their victims to dig their own graves, killed the young man, and then turned to Fr. Joseph.

He was allowed to sing his own funeral service. Then one thrust a knife into his back, but the blade broke. While another knife was being fetched, the executioners smoked and watched Fr. Joseph's death agony. He said: "I will be the last victim of this knife, but the one who kills me will be the first to die from this knife." After killing the martyr, as the executioners were returning, they quarreled and the one who had killed Fr. Joseph was killed by his comrades, while the first one was later executed by the Germans... In September, 1945, Fr. Joseph's father and brother, with the help of his donkey, found and exhumed his body. It was fragrant. A heavenly light was often seen over the tomb of the hieromartyr during the evenings.<sup>920</sup>

However, atheism never gained a strong foothold in Greece - in a poll carried out in 1951 only 121 out of 7,500,000 people declared themselves to be atheists.<sup>921</sup> It is this fact, together with the strength of the True Orthodox Old Calendarist movement, which probably saved the Greeks from the horrors of a permanent communist yoke. But it came close to that, nevertheless..."By the end of 1944, membership of EAM has been estimated at about two million, an astonishing figure in a country of seven million. They had been drawn to the movement because it established rudimentary health and education facilities, food supplies where necessary and, above all, a sense that for the first time the peasantry actually mattered to the men and women of the cities. The stage was set for victory in Athens where the KKE held enormous popular appeal. But the order to march on the city was never issued..."<sup>922</sup>

Nevertheless, by mid-December most of Athens was in communist hands: only the very centre, "Scobia", named after the British General Scobie, was outside their control. What saved Greece was the real influence that the Greek government-in-exile had through their coalition with the resistance<sup>923</sup>, together

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<sup>920</sup> The above account is taken from Metropolitan Kalliopios of Pentapolis, *Saint Joseph de Desphina* (St. Joseph of Desphina), Lavardac: Orthodox Monastery of St. Michael, 1988. In 2015 Joseph was canonized by the True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens.

<sup>921</sup> Bishop Kallistos (Ware); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, p. 14.

<sup>922</sup> Glenny, op. cit., p. 538.

<sup>923</sup> Fine, op. cit., p. 279.

with the informal alliance between the British and the Soviets based on Churchill's agreement with Stalin allowing him 90-10 dominance in Greece. The communists also made two major mistakes: first, KKE's order to ELAS forces in the north to attack the royalists of EDES in the north-west, and secondly the consequent abandonment by ELAS troops of the siege of Salonika, allowing its defenders, the British India division, to sail to Piraeus and reinforce Scobie's hard-pressed soldiers in Athens.

Then, on December 26, 1944, Churchill and American and French representatives arrived in Athens and met with the warring sides. The new calendarist Archbishop Damascene also tried to mediate. Churchill eventually persuaded the Greek king to make Archbishop Damascene the temporary head of the government on condition that the communists did not form part of it.<sup>924</sup>

This, the Varkiza Agreement of February 9, 1945, "led to the disarmament of ELAS. In exchange, the provisional government headed by General Plastiras promised an amnesty for political crimes and the disbanding of the right-wing formations that had collaborated with the Nazis. EAM/ELAS continued to control the Greek interior and much of Macedonia. Plastiras's government enjoyed little support and the General was unable to administer the entire country; yet in Attica and the Peloponnese, the Government was at least the nominal power. As the communists receded, the brutal killers of  $\chi$ , a right-wing paramilitary organization, and other anti-communist groups, roamed the Athenian walkways and the mountains and coasts of the Peloponnese. White Terror was eager to prove that it was more than a match for Red Terror.

"Popular support for the communists waned after the Varkiza Agreement. Their behaviour during the December uprising had alienated many ordinary Greeks, not only because of the murder of hostages. In Aegean Macedonia, they had fought with the SNOF, the Titoist Liberation Front representing tens of thousands of Slav Macedonians still living in Greece. EAM had permitted the publication of Slav newspapers and encouraged cultural autonomy for the Slavs which many Greeks considered a real threat to the country's sovereignty.

"The Right was in contrast bolstered by the Varkiza Agreement. Over the next twelve months, the National Guard, the police and the army expanded rapidly to a strength of almost 200,000 well-armed men. In areas like the Peloponnese and Epirus, where monarchists and rightists drew their traditional strength, these forces were swift to exact revenge on the communists. The authorities were unable to prevent the lumpen fascists of  $\chi$  from infiltrating the security forces. Inside the Army's officer corps a new conspiracy, the Sacred Bond of Greek Officers (IDEA), disseminated its anti-communist and expansionist philosophy. With their allies in the government, IDEA members weeded out suspected liberal or left-wing sympathizers from the officer corps.

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<sup>924</sup> Churchill, *Road to Victory*; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 79.

“The absence of war improved the material circumstances of most Greeks, who benefited from a heroic effort made by the United Nations Refugee and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA). The British presence curbed the more extreme political violence in the major towns and introduced a greater professionalism into the police force. But as one bumbling administration after another fell, it was hard to disguise the fact that British troops were propping up a sordid coalition of unforgiving nationalists and businessmen intent on reviving the hugely exploitative interwar economy. The elections called under American and British pressure in March 1946 were boycotted by the KKE [against Stalin’s advice]... The populist administration which was swept into office redoubled the repression against communists and their sympathizers. Pressure for actions mounted in the ranks of ELAS, emboldened by the return of veteran fighters from Yugoslav camps. When King George was welcomed back in September 1946 after a dubious plebiscite restoring the monarchy, chaos was come again...”<sup>925</sup>

Although the British intervention in Greece was in accordance with Churchill’s percentage agreement with Stalin, and in the long run saved the country from the terrible fate of the rest of Eastern Europe, it formally contradicted the “Declaration on Liberated Europe”, agreed in Yalta, which decreed that the Allies should not interfere with the free choice of the liberated countries as to their post-war government. The Soviets later seized on this formal violation (only formal, because interference to prevent a violent communist takeover was absolutely necessary in order to guarantee truly free elections). But they themselves had, of course, violated the principle not only formally but in essence both in Poland and in every other country they occupied. The Declaration also contained a reference to the need to eliminate vestiges of Fascism and Nazism in liberated Europe – which gave the Soviets the opportunity, as Churchill foresaw, of calling any politician they disliked a “fascist” and so getting him removed from government...”<sup>926</sup>

And so, after the horrors of fascist occupation, most of the Balkans fell under the even worse horrors of the communist yoke. Only Greece escaped – but only after the Civil War between the royalists (supported by Britain and the United States) and the communists (supported by Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria) ended in 1949, leaving one hundred thousand dead and one million homeless. Greece was left bitterly divided and in ruins...

All this went to show that the real watershed had been 1917 and the abdication of the Tsar, not any later date or royal death or abdication. After the removal of “him who restrains”, the Emperor of the Third Rome, all restraint was removed, and even the remaining Orthodox kings were living on borrowed time. By 1945 it was all over...

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<sup>925</sup> Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 540-542.

<sup>926</sup> Plokhy, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-266.

## 57. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN 1945

“Patriarch” Sergei died on May 15, 1944. “They say that not long before his death [he] had a vision of Christ, after which he sobbed for a long time over the crimes he had committed.”<sup>927</sup> It would be good to know that this Judas had really repented of his terrible crimes; but there is no evidence that he ever tried to mitigate, let alone reverse, their impact on Church life...

The former renovationist Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky) of Leningrad became patriarchal *locum tenens*. His first act was to send a telegram on May 19 to Stalin, in which he thanked him for the trust he had showed him, promised to continue the politics of Stalin without wavering and assured him of his love and devotion to the cause of the party and Stalin. He kept his promise...

In the period from the Stalin-Sergei pact of September, 1943 to the enthronement of the new “patriarch” Alexis in January, 1945, the 19 bishops of the MP (they had been only four at the beginning of the war) were more than doubled to 41. Catacomb Bishop “A.” wrote: “Very little time passed between September, 1943 and January, 1945. Therefore it is difficult to understand where 41 bishops came from instead of 19. In this respect our curiosity is satisfied by the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* for 1944. Looking through it, we see that the 19 bishops who existed in 1943, in 1944 rapidly gave birth to the rest, who became the members of the 1945 council.

“From the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* we learn that these hasty consecrations were carried out, in the overwhelming majority of cases, on renovationist protopriests.

“From September, 1943 to January, 1945, with a wave of a magic wand, all the renovationists suddenly repented before Metropolitan Sergei. The penitence was simplified, without the imposition of any demands on those who caused so much evil to the Holy Church. And in the shortest time the ‘penitent renovationists’ received a lofty dignity, places and ranks, in spite of the church canons and the decree about the reception of renovationists imposed [by Patriarch Tikhon] in 1925...

“As the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* informs us, the ‘episcopal’ consecrations before the ‘council’ of 1945 took place thus: the protopriest who had been recommended (undoubtedly by the civil authorities), and who was almost always from the ‘reunited’ renovationists or Gregorians, was immediately tonsured into monasticism with a change in name and then, two or three days later, made a ‘hierarchy of the Russian Church’.”<sup>928</sup>

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<sup>927</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>928</sup> "Pis'mo 2-oe Katakombnogo Episkopa A. k F.M." (The Second Letter of Catacomb Bishop A. to F.M.), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), N 14, III-1992; *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), 1996, N 2 (2), pp. 10, 11.

This acceptance of the renovationists was dictated in the first place by the Bolsheviks, who now saw the Sergianists as more useful than the renovationists. Thus on October 12, 1943 Karpov wrote to Stalin and Molotov: "The renovationist movement earlier played a constructive role but in recent years has lost its significance and base of support. On this basis, and taking into account the patriotic stance of the Sergianist church, the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs has decided not to prevent the dissolution of the renovationist church and the transfer of the renovationist clergy and parishes to the patriarchal, Sergianist church."<sup>929</sup>

On October 16 Karpov sent secret instructions to the regions not to hinder the transfer of renovationists to the sergianists.<sup>930</sup> Since he wanted the renovationists to join the state church, the rules for their reception were relaxed. Thus in 1944 Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky) severely upbraided Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) for forcing "venerable" renovationist protopriests to "turn somersaults", i.e. repent, before the people, in accordance with Patriarch Tikhon's rules.<sup>931</sup>

As Roslof writes: "The relaxation of rules by the patriarchate reflected the needs of both church and state. The patriarchal synod had full backing from the government and expected to emerge as the sole central authority for the Orthodox Church. So it could afford to show mercy. At the same time, the patriarchate faced a scarcity of clergy to staff reopened parishes and to run the dioceses. Sergii's bishops had problems finding priests for churches that had never closed. This shortage of clergy was compounded by the age and poor education of the candidates who were available. The patriarchate saw properly supervised red priests as part of the solution to the problem of filling vacant posts."<sup>932</sup>

Stalin now needed to convene a council to elect a new patriarch. He convened it "at the beginning of 1945, that is, in time for the official meeting of the heads of the governments of the USSR, USA and Great Britain from February 4 to 12 in Yalta, which had for Stalin a strategically important significance. With this aim, already at the end of November, 1944 a congress of bishops had been carried out in Moscow at which they were given special instructions and commands on the order in which the council was to be carried out and the role of each of them in it. It was here that the projected conciliar documents were drawn up, and the order for the election of the new Soviet patriarch was drawn up. The former Catacomb Archbishop Luke (Vojno-Yasensky), who had been freed from a camp during the war and united to the

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<sup>929</sup> Karpov, in Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 194-195.

<sup>930</sup> Roslof, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>931</sup> See Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, *Mitropolit Manuel (Lemeshevsky) (Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky)*, St. Petersburg, 1993, p. 185. Of course, a guilty conscience may also have had something to do with it: both "Patriarch" Sergei and his successor, "Patriarch" Alexis, were themselves "repentant renovationists".

<sup>932</sup> Roslof, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

MP, reminded the gathered bishops of the resolution of the Local Council of 1917-1918 to the effect that the patriarch had to be elected by secret ballot from several candidates. But none of the sergianist bishops decided to support this resolution and the single candidate, as had been planned, remained Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky). Since Archbishop Luke did not agree with this violation of the conciliar norms, he was through the efforts of Protopriest Nicholas Kolchitsky and Metropolitan Alexis not admitted to the council and took no part in it."<sup>933</sup> And so, as Sergei Firsov writes, "this Council, like that of 1943, did not have the possibility of restoring the traditions laid down in 1917-18. The new situation forced, not the restoration of the former church order, but the creation of a new one."<sup>934</sup>

The council consisted of four Russian metropolitans, 41 bishops and 141 representatives of the clergy and laity. Also present were the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Georgia, and representatives of the Constantinopolitan, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian and other Churches. In all there were 204 participants.

"A significant amount of money," writes Shumilo, "was set apart by Stalin for its preparation. The best hotels of the capital, the "Metropole" and "National" were placed at the disposal of the participants of the council *gratis*, as well as Kremlin government food reserves, government "ZIS" automobiles, a large government house with all modern conveniences and much else. Stalin was also concerned about the arrival in the USSR of representatives of foreign churches, so as to give an international significance to the given action. As V. Alexeev notes: '... By having a local council Stalin forestalled possible new accusations of the council's lack of competency and representativeness, etc. for the election of a patriarch from the foreign part of the Orthodoxy clergy... So that the very fact of the election of a new patriarch should not elicit doubts, the patriarchs of the Orthodox churches and their representatives from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and the Middle East were invited for the first time to Moscow.' And although in the actual council only three patriarchs - those of Georgia, Alexandria and Antioch - took part, representatives from other local churches also arrived; they were specially brought to Moscow by Soviet military aeroplanes.

"The council opened on January 31, 1945 with a speech of welcome in the name of the Soviet Stalinist regime by the president of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, NKVD Major-General G. Karpov. He noted that the council 'was an outstanding event in the life of the Church', whose activity was directed 'towards helping the Soviet people to secure the

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<sup>933</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.; Fr. Sergei Gordun, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Svyateishikh Patriarkhakh Sergii i Aleksii" (The Russian Orthodox Church under their Holinesses Patriarchs Sergius and Alexis), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 158, I-1990, p. 92.

<sup>934</sup> Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' Nakanune Peremen* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes), Moscow, 2002, p. 568.

great historical aims set before it', that is, the construction of 'communist society'.

"In its turn the council did not miss the opportunity yet again to express its gratitude and assure the communist party, the government and Stalin personally of its sincere devotion. As the address put it: 'The Council profoundly appreciates the trusting, and to the highest degree benevolent and attentive attitude towards all church undertakings on the part of the state authorities... and expresses to our Government our sincerely grateful feelings'.

"As was planned, the sole candidate as the new Soviet patriarch was unanimously confirmed at the council - Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky). Besides this, a new 'Temporary Statute for the Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church', composed by workers at the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and the chancellor of the MP, Protopriest Nicholas Kolchitsky, was accepted at the council. This Statute radically contradicted the canonical principles of Orthodoxy. 'This Statute turned the Moscow patriarchate into a certain likeness of a totalitarian structure, in which three people at the head with the so-called "patriarch of Moscow and all Rus'" received greater power than a local council, and the right to administer the Church in a still more dictatorial fashion than Peter's synod. But if the emperors up to 1917 were nevertheless considered to be Orthodox Christians, now the official structures of the Church were absolutely subject to the will of the leaders of the God-fighting regime. Church history has not seen such a fall in 2000 years of Christianity!' By accepting in 1945 the new Statute on the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church that contradicted from the first to the last letter the conciliar-canonical principles of the administration of the Church confirmed at the All-Russian Local Church Council of 1917-1918, the Moscow patriarchate once more confirmed its own Soviet path of origin and development, and also the absence of any kind of link or descent from the canonical 'Tikhonite' Church, which legally existed in the country until 1927."<sup>935</sup>

After the enthronement of Alexis, Stalin ordered the Council to congratulate him and give him "a commemorative present. The value of the gift was determined at 25-30,000 rubles. Stalin loved to give valuable presents. It was also decided to 'show gratitude' to the foreign bishops for their participation in the Council. The commissariat was told to hand over 42 objects from the Moscow museums and 28 from the Zagorsk state museum - mainly objects used in Orthodox worship - which were used as gifts for the Eastern Patriarchs. Thus, for example, Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria was given a golden *panagia* with valuable stones...

The patriarchs were expected to reciprocate, and they hastened to express the main thing - praise... Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria said: 'Marshal Stalin,... under whose leadership the military operations have been conducted

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<sup>935</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

on an unprecedented scale, has for this purpose an abundance of divine grace and blessing.”<sup>936</sup> The other Eastern Patriarchs also recognised the canonicity of the election, “hastening,” as Shumilo says, “to assure themselves of the support of the head of the biggest and wealthiest patriarchate, which now, moreover, had acquired ‘the clemency [appropriate to] a great power’”.<sup>937</sup>

The price they paid for the favour of this “great power” was an agreement to break communion with ROCOR. As Karpov reported: “The Council was a clear proof of the absence of religion in the USSR [!] and also had a certain political significance. The Moscow Patriarchate in particular agreed with Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria and with the representatives of the Constantinople and Jerusalem patriarchates to break links with Metropolitan Anastasy, and on the necessity of a joint struggle against the Vatican.”<sup>938</sup>

The MP, having meekly submitted to the rule of the totalitarian dictator Stalin, was now in effect a totalitarian organization itself. All major decisions in the Church depended on the single will of the patriarch, and through him, of Stalin. And this critical dependence on the atheist state continued throughout the Soviet period (and after).

For, as Fr. Sergei Gordun writes: “For decades the position of the Church was such that the voice of the clergy and laity could not be heard. In accordance with the document accepted by the Local Council of 1945, in questions requiring the agreement of the government of the USSR, the patriarch would confer with the Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church attached to the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR. The Statute did not even sketchily outline the range of questions in which the patriarch was bound to agree with the Council, which gave the latter the ability to exert unlimited control over church life.”<sup>939</sup>

The power over the Church that the 1945 council gave to the atheists was revealed in the secret 1974 Furov report of the Council for Religious Affairs to the Central Committee: “The Synod is under the control of the Council for Religious Affairs. The question of the selection and placing of its permanent members was and remains completely in the hands of the Council, and the candidature of the non-permanent members is also agreed beforehand with responsible members of the Council. All issues which are to be discussed at the Synod are first discussed by Patriarch Pimen and the permanent members of the Synod with the leaders of the Council and in its departments, and the final ‘Decisions of the Holy Synod’ are also agreed.”<sup>940</sup>

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<sup>936</sup> Alexeyev, “Marshal Stalin doveriaet Tserkvi” (Marshal Stalin trusts the Church), *Agitator*, N 10, 1989, pp. 27-28.

<sup>937</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>938</sup> RTsKhIDNI.F.17.Op.132.D.111.L.27; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 81.

<sup>939</sup> Gordun, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>940</sup> Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, London: Croom Helm, 1986, p. 215.



Soon after the council, on April 10, 1945, Stalin personally met Patriarch Alexis. "At the meeting, besides Stalin, there took part the people's commissar for foreign affairs V.M. Molotov, and from the MP Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), who soon became president of the newly created Department of External (i.e. international) Church Affairs (OVTsS), and Protopriest N. Kolchitsky - chancellor of the MP, in charge of questions of international relations. This is how Patriarch Alexis later recalled this meeting: '... Full of happiness at seeing face to face him whose name alone is pronounced with love not only in every corner of our country, but also in all the freedom-loving and peace-loving countries, we expressed our gratitude to Joseph Vissarionovich... The discussion was a completely unforced conversation of a father with his children.' As V. Alexeev affirms, citing the correspondence between [Patriarch Alexis] Simansky and G. Karpov, at the meeting 'besides discussing intra-ecclesiastical problems, the conversation first of all concerned the tasks of the Russian Orthodox Church in the field of international relations... The Church, according to Stalin's conception, had to play a significant role in facilitating the international contacts of the USSR, using its own channels'. Soon after this meeting, on May 28, 1945, Patriarch Alexis unexpectedly set off on a 'pilgrimage' to the Middle East, where he met not only prominent religious personalities, but also the heads of governments and other influential politicians..."<sup>941</sup>

This foreign trip was to have important consequences for the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), which now represented the last public, organized, institutional voice of Russian Orthodoxy and Russian anti-communism.

During the Second World War, ROCOR had had its headquarters in Belgrade. However, the approach of the Red Army forced its leadership to flee to Munich. ROCOR Archbishop Seraphim (Ivanov) of Chicago recalled: "The Second World War came to an end. Germany was in dust and ashes. The USSR was at the height of its glory and might. After all, nobody judges the victors. The West was frightened and servile. Europe, you could say, was at the feet of the Bolsheviks. If they had only wanted it, they could have seized Europe within a few weeks. However, something incomprehensible held them back. Chekist bloodhounds were roving around everywhere. All the more prominent anti-communists were being liquidated or seized (the handover of Vlasov and Lienz), while the rest were terrified and in fear and trembling. It was a terrible time.

"ROCOR was going through a terrible crisis. There had been no news about the Synod for many months. At the same time Bolshevik agents were spreading rumours that the President of the Synod, Metropolitan Anastasy, had been killed during a bombing raid, or that he had been taken to Moscow, where he had recognized the Soviet patriarch.

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<sup>941</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

“Many began to believe in the evolution of Soviet power. After all, there were marshals, generals and colonels with almost tsarist epaulettes, orders of Alexander Nevsky, Suvorov and Kutuzov, and finally, by the will of Stalin... ‘his All-Holiness the Patriarch of All Russia’. The unification of the whole Slavic world under the aegis of Moscow. While for the émigrés there was, supposedly, a complete amnesty and calls to return to the Homeland, which was opening her motherly embrace to her erring children. It was enough to make your head spin.

“In Russian émigré circles there was great disturbance. With rare exceptions, the anti-communists were in hiding, fearing to speak out. The disturbance also penetrated Russian church circles. Metropolitan Evlogy recognized the Moscow patriarch, and left his Greek jurisdiction. He took a Soviet passport and publicly declared his intention to return to Russia. After him, alas, there followed our Parish metropolitan Seraphim, who previously had spoken out sharply against the communists. Soviet agents gave him to understand that he did not recognize the Moscow patriarch, he would put on trial as a war criminal.

“Having surrendered to the communists, Metropolitan Seraphim sent orders to the abroad churches that were subject to him, and also to those that were not subject to him, informing them of his submission to Moscow and demanding that they follow him in commemorating the Soviet patriarch during Divine services. In North America Metropolitan Theophilus also issue an order on the commemoration of the patriarch. Something similar took place also in South America and the Far East.

“At this time our Vladimirovo monastic brotherhood in the name of St. Job of Pochaev succeeded in extracting ourselves from Germany and settling in Geneva. Already as we were approaching the Swiss border we were fortunate enough to receive the news that Metropolitan Anastasy was alive and was with the Kursk wonderworking icon in the German town of Füssen...

“On arriving in Geneva, we immediately wrote to all the Russian ecclesiastical centres that Metropolitan Anastasy was alive and in Germany. This news encouraged and delighted many. In particular, after receiving our happy news, Archimandrite Anthony [in the future archbishop of Los Angeles], the head of our spiritual mission in Palestine, found the strength in himself to push away the patriarch of Jerusalem and the Soviet patriarch who arrived there, and who promised the archimandrite the title of metropolitan if his mission moved into the jurisdiction of Moscow.

“The same thing happened in Shanghai. There they had already begun to commemorate the patriarch, because Bolshevik agents had managed to convince the Orthodox clergy that Metropolitan Anastasy was in Moscow and recognized the patriarch. But immediately our news came from Geneva, they reversed course.

“Together with the rector of the Geneva church, the present Bishop Leonty, we began to make urgent representations for an entry visa for Metropolitan Anastasy into Switzerland. With God’s help, all obstacles were overcome, and two years before the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in 1945, to our great joy Vladyka arrived in Geneva with the Kursk wonderworking icon.

“Vladyka used his time in Switzerland, that is, about six months, to consolidate the position of the Russian Church Abroad. From Geneva it was easy and convenient for him to communicate with the whole of the free world, which it was impossible to do from Germany at that time.

“Vladyka sent telegrams and letters to all the bishops of our Church Abroad, informing them that the Hierarchical Synod existed and was in Germany and that it had been joined by hierarchs of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church led by Archbishop Panteleimon and the Belorussian Church led by Metropolitan Panteleimon. The communications also said that the Synod did not recognize the Soviet patriarch, and for that reason there could be no thought of submitting to him or of commemorating him in Divine services. All this had a sobering effect on many.”<sup>942</sup>

A telegram from Metropolitan Anastasy confirmed the great wonderworker, St. John, Bishop of Shanghai, in his loyalty to ROCOR. But within a few years he was organizing the evacuation of his flock – thousands in number – from China to the small Philippine island of Tubabao in order to escape Mao’s communists. From there (after praying for a change in the law on the steps of the Capitol) he managed to get most of them transferred to the United States.<sup>943</sup>

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In 1945 it was not only the Red Army and the Soviet Communist Party that triumphed. On their backs the Moscow Patriarchate – already completely controlled by the KGB – was proving its value to its masters, both inside and outside Russia. Ivan Andreev writes: “The Underground or Catacomb Church in Soviet Russia underwent her hardest trials after February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1945, that is, after the enthronement of the Soviet Patriarch Alexis. Those who did not recognize him were sentenced to new terms of imprisonment and were sometimes shot. Those who did recognize him and gave their signature to that effect were often liberated before their terms expired and received appointments... All secret priests detected in the Soviet zone of Germany were

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<sup>942</sup> Bishop Seraphim, in Count A.A. Sollogub (ed.), *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' Zagranitsej. 1918-1968* (Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. New York: Rausen Language Division. 1968. vol. 1, pp. 200-205

<sup>943</sup> Ajay Kamalakar, “When the Philippines Welcomed Russian Refugees”, *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, July 7, 2015. [http://rbth.com/arts/2015/07/07/when\\_the\\_philippines\\_welcomed\\_russian\\_refugees\\_47513.html](http://rbth.com/arts/2015/07/07/when_the_philippines_welcomed_russian_refugees_47513.html).

shot."<sup>944</sup> "This fact," comments M.V. Shkarovsky, "is partly confirmed by documents in the archives of the security police. In 1944-45 in the camps a whole series of cases on counter-revolutionary organizations was fabricated. In these, many clergymen were sentenced to an increase in their sentence or were shot."<sup>945</sup>

The NKVD GULAG administration made the following decisions: "1. To enrol qualified agents from among the prisoners who are churchmen and sectarians, ordering them to uncover the facts concerning the anti-Soviet activity of these prisoners. 2. In the process of the agents' work on the prisoners, to uncover their illegal links with those in freedom and coordinate the work of these links with the corresponding organs of the NKVD." As a result of these instructions, many catacomb organizations among the prisoners were liquidated. For example, "in the Ukhtoizhensky ITL an anti-Soviet group of churchmen prisoners was liquidated. One of the leaders of this group, the priest Ushakov, composed prayers and distributed them among the prisoners. It turned out that he had illegal links with a [Catacomb] Bishop [Anthony] Galynsky."<sup>946</sup>

Vitaly Shumilo writes: "An internal result of the Moscow council of 1945 that was positive for the Soviet regime was the fact that, thanks to the participation in it of the Eastern Patriarchs, the appearance of 'legitimacy' and 'canonicity' had been given to this Stalin-inspired undertaking, which led into error not only a part of the Orthodox clergy and hierarchy in the emigration, but also many of the True Orthodox Catacomb pastors in the USSR, who naively did not suspect that there might have been any anti-canonical crimes."<sup>947</sup>

"And again, as in the 30s, repressions were renewed against the clergy who did not accept the 'Soviet church'. Thus in Moscow province alone, where there had been more than ten Catacomb pastors in 1941, none were left at liberty by the beginning of 1945."<sup>948</sup>

"As was to be expected," continues Shumilo, "thanks to the massive arrests of priest and active parishioners of the Catacomb Church and the opening of churches for the Moscow Patriarchate (MP), the government succeeded in obtaining a reduction in the number of 'headless underground groups', the passive members of which began to turn to the legal clergy, while the 'stubborn fanatics' 'isolated themselves' from the external world. Besides this, for the

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<sup>944</sup> I.M. Andreev (Andreevsky), "The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land".

<sup>945</sup> Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, p. 205.

<sup>946</sup> Irina Osipova, *Khotelos' by vsiekh poimennen nazvat'* (I would like to call all of them by name), Moscow: Fond "Mir i Chelovek", 1993, pp. 161, 193.

<sup>947</sup> Shumilo, "Sovietskij Rezhim i 'Sovietskaia Tserkov'" v 40-e-50-e gody XX stoletia" (The Soviet Regime and the 'Soviet Church' in the 40s and 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=678>

<sup>948</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

more successful ferreting out of the illegal communities of the Catacomb Church the MP, too, was drawn in, beginning a 'struggle with sectarianism' with the cooperation of the MGB and the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church. Many instances are known in which monks or priests of the MP, recruited by the MGB, were sent into catacomb communities and informed against their members, in connection with which the most active among them were arrested. The creation of such a system of informing was not slow in producing the results that the regime needed: already by the middle of the 50s Soviet state security had succeeded in revealing and 'dissolving' more than 50% of the Catacomb communities and monasteries in the USSR, thereby stopping both the growth in numbers and the influence of the Catacomb Church on the population."<sup>949</sup>

Stalin treated the Catholics much as he did the Catacomb Church - as enemies of the state that had to be exterminated. For Pope Pius XII was a fervent anti-communist, and led the attack on the Yalta agreements in the West. Undoubtedly the MP's "international obligations" included cooperation in the suppression of the Roman Catholics, especially the Ukrainian uniates; and so the NKVD arrested Metropolitan Iosif Slipy of the Ukrainian uniate church in Lvov, together with all his bishops; very few survived their imprisonment in the Gulag. Meanwhile, their flocks were forced to join the Moscow Patriarchate.<sup>950</sup> Those who refused went underground. Similar persecution of the Uniates took place in Romania and Czechoslovakia. However, towards the end of the Cold War, in 1989, the Uniates took advantage of the more liberal atmosphere, emerged from the underground and seized most of the MP churches in Western Ukraine.

In this connection his words on the Catacomb Church to the American Polish Catholic priest, Fr. Stanislav Orlemanski, are interesting: "We are not

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<sup>949</sup> Shumilo, op. cit.

<sup>950</sup> Raphael Lemkin wrote in 1953: "Only two weeks before the San Francisco conference [of the United Nations], on 11 April 1945, a detachment of NKVD troops surrounded the St. George Cathedral in Lviv and arrested Metropolitan Slipyj, two bishops, two prelates and several priests. All the students in the city's theological seminary were driven from the school, while their professors were told that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had ceased to exist, that its Metropolitan was arrested and his place was to be taken by a Soviet-appointed bishop. These acts were repeated all over Western Ukraine and across the Curzon Line in Poland. At least seven bishops were arrested or were never heard from again. There is no Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church still free in the area. Five hundred clergy who met to protest the action of the Soviets, were shot or arrested.

"Throughout the entire region, clergy and laity were killed by hundreds, while the number sent to forced labour camps ran into the thousands. Whole villages were depopulated. In the deportation, families were deliberately separated, fathers to Siberia, mothers to the brickworks of Turkestan and the children to Communist homes to be 'educated'. For the crime of being Ukrainian, the Church itself was declared a society detrimental to the welfare of the Soviet state, its members were marked down in the Soviet police files as potential 'enemies of the people'. As a matter of fact, with the exception of 150,000 members in Slovakia, the Ukrainian Catholic Church has been officially liquidated, its hierarchy imprisoned, its clergy dispersed and deported." ("Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine", in L.Y. Luciuk (ed), *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008)

cannibals," he told the priest. "We Bolsheviks have a point in our program that provides for freedom of religious convictions. From the first days of the existence of Soviet power, we set ourselves the goal of implementing this point. But the rebellious conduct of activists of the Orthodox Church deprived us of the possibility of implementing that point, and the government had to accept battle after the church laid a curse of Soviet power [in 1918]. Misunderstandings arose on that basis between representatives of religion and the Soviet government. That was before the war with the Germans. After the beginning of the war with the Germans, people and circumstances changed. War eliminated the differences between church and state, the faithful renounced their rebellious attitude, and the Soviet government renounced its militant attitude with regard to religion."<sup>951</sup>

The penetration of the patriarchate by "red priests" - both former renovationists and new recruits to the KGB - meant that the new, post-war generation of clergy was quite different from the pre-war generation. The former renovationists had, of course, already proved their heretical cast of mind, and now returned to the neo-renovationist Moscow Patriarchate (MP) like a dog to his vomit (II Peter 2.22), forming a heretical core that controlled the patriarchate while being in complete obedience to the atheists. Their obedience was illustrated a few years later, when the MP sharply reversed its attitude towards ecumenism, from strictly anti-ecumenist in 1948 to pro-ecumenist only ten years later.

A still clearer sign of their total submission to the atheists was the cult of Stalin that began to take root during the war. Thus Fr. Gleb Yakunin writes: "From the beginning of the war and the church 'renaissance' that followed it, the feeling became stronger in the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate that a wonderful act of Divine Providence in the historical process had happened in Russia. God's instrument in this process was, in their opinion, the 'wise, God-established', 'God-given Supreme Leader'."<sup>952</sup> And yet Stalin never changed his basic hostility to the Church. In 1947 he wrote to Suslov: "Do not forget about atheistic propaganda among the people". And the murder of True Orthodox Christians, uniates and others in the camps continued...<sup>953</sup>

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<sup>951</sup> S.M. Plokhly, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, London: Penguin, 2010, pp. 374-375.

<sup>952</sup> Yakunin, op. cit, p. 190.

<sup>953</sup> Nikolai Savchenko, in *Vertograd-Inform*, September, 1998, Bibliography, pp. 1, 2.

## 58. GERMANIA DELENDA EST

The long-expected sea-borne invasion of Western Europe by the Western Allied powers took place on June 6, 1944, "Operation Overlord" or "D-Day". The success of the operation - against a formidable and well-prepared enemy - was by no means a foregone conclusion. After all, the only comparable sea-borne invasions in history - Kublai Khan's invasion of Japan in 1280 and the invasion at Caen in 1942 - had ended in failure. After the Allies landed and consolidated their position, however, there was no longer any question about it: the Germans were going to lose the war, fighting as they now were on two fronts against vastly superior forces. Nevertheless, they fought on, partly out of professional pride and ingrained discipline, partly because their fanatical leader, in whom many of them still believed, ordered them to, and partly out of fear of falling into the hands of the barbarous Soviets, from whom they could expect no mercy. They fought well; and this fact, combined with Allied mistakes (for example, the attempt to take the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem), meant that the war continued much longer than expected, well into 1945. The result was a bloodbath, especially in the east, where the Soviets took Budapest and Berlin in scenes of apocalyptic horror, while the Anglo-Saxon powers stopped at the Elbe, as had been agreed. And so "one third-of all German losses in the east took place in the last months of the war, when their sacrifice could serve no purpose save that of fulfilling the Nazi leadership's commitment to self-immolation".<sup>954</sup>

The Red Army in its passage through Eastern Germany left behind an unparalleled trail of murder and rape. Soviet road signs pointed the way: "Soldier, you are in Germany; take revenge on the Hitlerites."<sup>955</sup> As Richard Evans writes: "Women and girls were subjected to serial rape wherever they were encountered. Rape was often accompanied by torture and mutilation and frequently ended in the victim being shot or bludgeoned to death. The raging violence was indiscriminating. Often, especially in Berlin, women were deliberately raped in the presence of their menfolk, to underline the humiliation. The men were usually killed if they tried to intervene. In East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia it is thought that around 1,400,000 women were raped, a good number of them several times. Gang-rapes were the norm rather than the exception. The two largest Berlin hospitals estimated that at least 100,000 women had been raped in the German capital. Many caught a sexually transmitted disease, and not a few fell pregnant; the vast majority of the latter obtained an abortion, or, if they did give birth, abandoned their baby in hospital. The sexual violence went on for many weeks, even after the war formally came to an end. German women learned to hide, especially after dark; or, if they were young, to take a Soviet soldier, preferably an officer, as a lover and protector..."<sup>956</sup>

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<sup>954</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, London: Harper Press, p. 597.

<sup>955</sup> Daniel Goldhagen, *Worse than War*, London: Abacus, 2012, p. 443.

<sup>956</sup> Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, London: Penguin Books, 2009, pp. 710-711. It was not only the Germans who suffered this kind of treatment. After the Soviets conquered Budapest, "a large

On April 12 the German Philharmonic Orchestra gave its last concert, ending, appropriately, with Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. The twilight of the real-life gods of the Third Reich began on April 16 when Zhukov hurled 2.5 million men, 6,250 armoured vehicles and 7,500 aircraft at Berlin. They were opposed by some 45,000 SS and Wehrmacht troops with 40,000 Volkssturm and 60 tanks. Hitler committed suicide in his bunker, with only a portrait of Frederick the Great on the wall, hoping in vain for a repetition of Frederick's "Brandenburg miracle", when he was saved from Russian invasion by the death of Tsaritsa Elizabeth.

Hastings sums up the sequel well: "Germany's leaders had conducted a long love affair with death: in Berlin in April 1945, this achieved a final consummation.

On 28 April Benito Mussolini was captured and shot by partisans while attempting to escape from northern Italy. On the afternoon of the 30<sup>th</sup>, as Russian troops stormed the Reichstag building four hundred yards from Hitler's bunker, the leader of the Third Reich killed himself and his wife...

"Most Germans received the news of Hitler's death with numbed indifference... In the capital sporadic fighting persisted for two more days, until Berlin's commandant Lt. Gen. Karl Wiedling surrendered on 2 May.

"A terrible quiet, the quiet of the dead and damned, fell upon the city...

"Everywhere the Soviet victors held sway, they embarked upon an orgy of celebration, rape and destruction on a scale such as Europe had not witnessed since the seventeenth century.

"Stalin was untroubled by the behaviour of his soldiers towards the Germans - or to their supposedly liberated slaves. The Soviets saw no shame, such as burdens Western societies, about the concept of revenge. The war had been fought chiefly on Russian soil. The Russian people had endured sufferings incomparably greater than those of the Americans and British. As conquerors, the Germans had behaved barbarously, their conduct rendered the more base because they spoke so much of honour, and professed adherence to civilised values. Now the Soviet Union exacted a terrible punishment. The German nation had brought misery on the world, and in 1945 it paid. The price of having started and lost a war against a tyranny as ruthless as Stalin's was that vengeance was exacted almost as mercilessly as those Hitler's minions had imposed on Europe since 1939..."<sup>957</sup>

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proportion of Budapest's surviving women, of all ages from ten to ninety and including pregnant mothers, were raped by Red soldiers. The plight of the victims was worsened by the fact that many of the perpetrators were diseased..." (Hastings, op. cit., p. 604)

<sup>957</sup> Hastings, op. cit., pp. 626, 627, 629.



However, vengefulness was not exclusively a characteristic of Stalin and the Soviets. The American and British looted energetically and raped occasionally. "But few men sought explicit revenge. The French, however, saw many scores to be paid..."<sup>958</sup> Vengefulness would also be a not inaccurate description of the policy of "unconditional surrender" that was agreed on by all the Allies at Yalta and which probably contributed more than any other single factor to the prolongation of the war. This policy, reminiscent of pagan Rome at its most savage, had first been floated by Roosevelt – and balked at by Churchill – at Casablanca in 1943; it became known as "the Morgenthau plan" after Roosevelt's Jewish Secretary to Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, who, with his deputy, Harry Dexter White (a Soviet spy), formulated it in detail.

Count Leo de Poncins writes that, according to Dr. Anthony Kubek, the editor of the *Morgenthau Diaries*, "the objective of the Morgenthau Plan was to de-industrialize Germany and diminish its people to a pastoral existence once the war was won. If this could be accomplished, the militaristic Germans would never rise again to threaten the peace of the world. This was the justification of all the planning, but another motive lurked behind the obvious one. The hidden motive was unmasked in a syndicated column in the New York *Herald Tribune* in September 1946, more than a year after the collapse of the Germans. The real goal of the proposed condemnation of 'all of Germany to a permanent diet of potatoes' was the Communization of the defeated nation. 'The best way for the German people to be driven into the arms of the Soviet Union,' it was pointed out, 'was for the United States to stand forth as the champion of indiscriminate and harsh misery in Germany' (issue of 5<sup>th</sup> September 1946). And so it then seemed, for in a recent speech Foreign Minister Molotov had declared the hope of the Soviet Union to 'transform' Germany into a 'democratic and peace-loving State which, besides its agriculture, will have its own industry and foreign trade' (10<sup>th</sup> July 1946). Did Russia really plan on becoming the saviour of the prostrate Germans from the vengeful fate which the United States had concocted for them? If this was indeed a hidden motive in the Morgenthau Plan, what can be said of the principal planner? Was this the motive of Harry Dexter White? Was White acting as a Communist but without specific instructions? Was he acting as a Soviet agent when he drafted the plan? There is no confession in the Morgenthau Diaries in which White admits that he was either ideologically a Communist or actively a Soviet agent. But it is possible, given an understanding of Soviet aims in Europe, to reconstruct from the Diaries how White and certain of his associates in the Treasury worked assiduously to further those aims. From the Diaries, therefore, it is possible to add significant evidence to the testimonies of J. Edgar Hoover [head of the CIA] and Attorney General Herbert Brownell that Harry Dexter White was ideologically a Communist and actively a Soviet agent from the day he entered the service of the United States Government."<sup>959</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> Hastings, op. cit., p.631.

<sup>959</sup> Kubek, in de Poncins, op. cit., p. 100.

The State Department had a very different plan, which was that there was to be no “large-scale and permanent impairment of all German industry”; instead it called for “eventual integration of Germany into the world economy”.<sup>960</sup> On hearing of it, Morgenthau flew to England in August, 1944 and managed to get General Eisenhower on his side. Finally, after strong opposition from State and War, Roosevelt came down on the side of Morgenthau, and at the Quebec Conference in September, an initially angry Churchill (he did not want to be “chained to a dead Germany”) was won over with the promise of a \$6.5 billion loan...

Foreign Secretary Hull wrote in his *Memoirs*: “The whole development at Quebec, I believe, angered me as much as anything else that had happened during my career as Secretary of State. If the Morgenthau Plan leaked out, as it inevitably would – and shortly did – it might well mean a bitter German resistance that could cause the loss of thousands of American lives.

“... I still feel that the course proposed by the Treasury would in the long run certainly defeat what we hope to attain by a complete military victory, that is, the peace of the world, and the assurance of social, economic and political stability in the world... I cannot believe that they (the Treasury proposals) will make for a lasting peace. In spirit and in emphasis they are punitive, not, in my judgement, corrective or constructive. They will tend through bitterness and suffering to breed another war, not to make another war undesired by the Germans or impossible in fact... the question is not whether we want Germans to suffer for their sins. Many of us would like to see them suffer the tortures they have inflicted on others. The only question is whether over the years a group of seventy million educated, efficient and imaginative people can be kept within bounds on such a low level of subsistence as the Treasury proposals contemplate. I do not believe that is humanly possible... Enforced poverty... destroys the spirit not only of the victim but debases the victor... it would be a crime against civilization itself.”<sup>961</sup>

Fortunately, the Morgenthau Plan was never fully realized; and after the war the generous Marshall Plan helped to place Western Europe back on its feet and prevent it from going Communist...<sup>962</sup> However, the Morgenthau Plan was leaked, and “as a result German resistance was strengthened. The Nazi radio was shouting day and night that the Germans would become starving peasants if they surrendered. General Marshall complained to Morgenthau that the leakage to the press was disastrous to the war effort, for nothing could have been greater in its psychological impact upon Germany than the news of Morgenthau’s coup at Quebec in September 1944. Until then there was a fair chance, according to intelligence reports, that the Germans might discontinue

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<sup>960</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>961</sup> Hull, in De Poncins, op. cit., pp. 113, 114.

<sup>962</sup> See Jan Fleischhauer, “The Thirty Years’ War: How Peace Kept WW1 Alive”, *Spiegel Online International*, February 7, 2014.

resistance to American and British forces while holding the Russians at bay in the east in order to avoid the frightful fate of a Soviet occupation. This could have shortened the war by months and could have averted the spawning of a malignant Communism in East Germany which has plagued Europe for the past twenty years. According to Lt.-Col. Boettiger, the President's son-in-law, the Morgenthau Plan was worth 'thirty divisions to the Germans'."<sup>963</sup>

The overriding question at Yalta, according to Simon Jenkins, "was once more what to do with Germany. The mistakes of Versailles had to be avoided. Germany had to be made secure for democracy, but few agreed on how. Churchill felt the need, as he had in 1918, for a strong Germany as a bulwark against Soviet communism. He had foreseen 'a United States of Europe... with an international police force, charged with keeping Prussia disarmed.' He did not say if Britain should be a member.

"The Soviet Union had borne the brunt of the war and felt it should be duly rewarded. It got what Stalin wanted, a 'sphere of influence' over Germany's east European conquests. France regained Alsace-Lorraine. For the time being, Germany was administered by the four Allied powers, America, Britain, France and the Soviets. Partitioned too was Austria and the German capital, Berlin, uncomfortably isolated within the Soviet sector."<sup>964</sup>

As Bernard Simms writes, "Germany... was to pay extensive reparations, mainly in kind of such items as 'equipment, machine tools, ships, rolling stock... these removals to be carried out chiefly for the purpose of destroying 'the war potential of Germany'. The British, Americans and Russians promised to 'take such steps, including the complete disarmament, demilitarization and dismemberment of Germany as they deem[ed] requisite for future peace and security'. A joint Allied Control Council of Germany would administer the country after victory had been achieved."<sup>965</sup>

The decisions of the Yalta Conference were made with Morgenthau in attendance, and turned out to be quite compatible with his Plan. However, there was still strong resistance from the Departments of State and War. And so, on March 21, the Jews wheeled in their biggest gun - the New York financier and close friend of the President, Bernard Baruch.

In a meeting with the War Cabinet, he "was asked where he stood on the German problem. According to Morgenthau's report to his staff, Baruch replied that his recent trip to Europe had made him much stronger for the decentralization of Germany than when he left. The Treasury Plan was much too soft, Baruch said, and its author practically 'a sissy'. He would 'cut his (Clayton's) heart out if he doesn't behave himself', the financial wizard declared, adding ominously: 'he won't be able to stay around Washington after

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<sup>963</sup> De Poncins, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>964</sup> Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, pp. 268-269.

<sup>965</sup> Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 385.

I get through with him.' Clayton had either to get 'right' on this German 'thing' or 'leave town'. Baruch was adamant. 'All I have got to live for now,' he said, 'is to see that Germany is de-industrialized and that it's done the right way, and I won't let anybody get in my way'. He became so emotional that tears came to his eyes. 'I have never heard a man talk so strongly as he did,' exulted Morgenthau, adding that he 'got the feeling from Baruch that he realizes the importance of being friendly with Russia...'"<sup>966</sup>

Indeed, the Jews around Roosevelt were now working hand-in-glove with the Soviets (and their spies in the administration), determined to dismember, deindustrialize and communize Germany, extract huge reparations and make her workforce virtual slaves of the victors. This was a Carthaginian peace to make the "Carthaginian peace" of 1918 look like a picnic... However, in April Roosevelt died, and the new president, though a 33-degree Mason, did not like the Jewish plan. When Morgenthau asked to be joined to the delegation to Potsdam, and threatened to resign if he was not, Truman accepted his resignation. Jewish vengeance stalled... But there were still 140 of "Morgenthau's boys" from the Treasury in the military government in Germany, and during the surrender negotiations in May, the Allied Commander Eisenhower showed where his true sympathies lay ...<sup>967</sup>

Admiral Doenitz, Hitler's successor, was desperate that as many Germans soldiers and civilians as possible should escape to the British and American zones of occupation – he knew about the Morgenthau Plan, but still considered the Anglo-Saxons a safer bet than the rampaging Bolsheviks in the east. However, the Morgenthau-influenced order of Joint Chiefs of Staff JCS 1067 ordered Eisenhower to stop at the Elbe, leaving the whole area to the east, including Berlin and Prague, to the Red Army. Doenitz's conclusion, as he proclaimed on the radio on May 1, was that "as from this moment, the British and the Americans are no longer fighting for their own countries, but for the extension of Bolshevism in Europe".

It is hard to quarrel with this conclusion – though this was certainly not the conscious intention of any British or American commander on the ground.

In his *Memoirs* Doenitz explained that "the latest operations which [Eisenhower] had ordered showed that he was not in the least aware of the turn taken by world politics at that moment. After his troops had crossed the Rhine at Remagen, America had achieved her strategic object of conquering Germany. From this moment the paramount objective should have become political, namely, the occupation of the largest possible area of Germany before the arrival of the Russians. Thus it would have been judicious for the American

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<sup>966</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>967</sup> It should not be thought that Morgenthau's boys were the only people to hold such Germanophobic sentiments. During the Blitz the diplomat Rober Vansitartt published *Black Record*, in which he described Germany as irredeemably evil and called for it to be destroyed and a fundamentally new country established in its place (Kirk Graham, "A Good Germany?" *History Today*, July, 2017, p. 8-11)

commander to have pushed rapidly east in order to be the first to seize Berlin. But Eisenhower did not do this. He kept to the military plan which had been drawn up for the destruction of Germany and its occupation in collaboration with the Red Army, and so he stopped at the Elbe. Thus the Russians were enabled to take Berlin and conquer whatever they could of eastern Germany. Perhaps this policy had been dictated by Washington, but he did not understand how radically the world situation was to be transformed from this moment..."<sup>968</sup>

On May 5 Doenitz succeeded in negotiating a partial capitulation with the British General Montgomery. However, when his envoy flew on to see Eisenhower, the latter demanded immediate, unconditional surrender *on all fronts, including the Russian*. But the Germans were terrified to fall into Russian captivity, and Doenitz knew that his men would simply refuse to do it.

Fortunately, however, General Jodl found a more understanding attitude in General Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, who extracted a delay of 48 hours. And so "between 5<sup>th</sup> of May, the date of the armistice concluded with the British, and 9<sup>th</sup> May, the date of the general capitulation, Admiral Doenitz, by means of all the resources at his disposal, succeeded in rescuing three million German soldiers and civilians, who thus escaped Russian slavery owing to the understanding of Field-Marshal Montgomery."<sup>969</sup>

But many were left behind to be captured. "Obviously," wrote Eisenhower in his *Memoirs*, "the Germans sought to gain time in order to bring back into and behind our lines the maximum number of men who were still fighting in the East. I began to have had enough. I ordered Bedell Smith to tell Jodl that if he did not immediately stop dragging out the negotiations, we would go so far as to use force in order to prevent the refugees from crossing."<sup>970</sup>

"This," writes De Poncins, "in fact is just what the Americans did. Thus by his obstinate intransigence, Eisenhower handed over hundreds of thousands, and perhaps even millions, of innocent Germans to the appalling Bolshevik tyranny - which, for the majority, meant either death or the concentration camps and, for the women, the prospect of certain violation."<sup>971</sup>

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Why did the Allies win? One can point to major strategic mistakes on Hitler's part: his failure to finish off Britain in 1940, his declaration of war on the United States in 1941, his disdaining to ask his Japanese allies to invade the Soviet Union through Siberia, above all his invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. But in the end the crucial factors were the superior numbers of the Red Army

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<sup>968</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>969</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>970</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>971</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 72.

on the eastern front, and the huge material and financial resources of the United States on the western front. According to Richard Overy in *Why the Allies Won*, the Second World War was decided by the Allies' superior technology in the air, resulting in their air supremacy over Germany. Some technological innovations were important, such as the British invention of radar and the Soviet T-40 tank. But others, such as the German V-2 rockets and the American atomic bomb, came too late to influence the war's outcome.

Perhaps the most important factor, cutting the war short by two years according to one calculation and saving 14 million lives,<sup>972</sup> was the breaking of the Germans' "enigma" communications code by a small group of British scientists in Bletchley Park. But the spiritual cost was great: it led them to believe that they – or their machines – had won the war. As Alan Turing, the leader of the group, whom many consider the father of the computer, said: "They think that God won the war. But we won it..." After the war, Turing was punished for his hubris: convicted of homosexuality, and forced to undergo "chemical castration", he committed suicide...<sup>973</sup>

And yet the real battle was between Hitler and Stalin, And it was neither the superior numbers of the Red Army nor the superior technology that the Western powers put at the service of Stalin that ultimately gained his victory over Hitler. The critical factor, according to J.G. Nyquist, was that "Hitler's sociology, which was domestically superior to Lenin's, proved internationally inferior. Hitler was a treaty-breaker, but he had a bad habit of wearing his intentions on his sleeve. Hitler never understood how to milk the Great Western Cow. Stalin, however, milked the cow and won."<sup>974</sup>

The future totalitarian tyrant with global ambitions will need to learn this lesson. He will need to be able to combine Hitler's mastery of domestic propaganda with Stalin's cunning exploitation of both the psychological weaknesses and material resources of the West. There are signs that Putin has learned this lesson...

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Civilians were the biggest losers in this war. Hastings writes: "Combatants fared better than civilians: around three-quarters of all those who perished were unarmed victims rather than active participants in the struggle."<sup>975</sup>

The millions killed by the Germans are well recorded. Well known, but not yet officially acknowledged by the states involved, are the hundreds of thousands of German civilians killed by the British and American bombers' attacks on Hamburg, Dresden and other German cities, and the thousands of

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<sup>972</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan\\_Turing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Turing).

<sup>973</sup> See the film "The Imitation Game" (2014) on Turing's life.

<sup>974</sup> Nyquist, *Origins of the Fourth World War*, Chula Vista, Co.: Black Forest Press, 1999, p. 74.

<sup>975</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. 670.

anti-Bolshevik Russians handed over to certain death at Stalin's hands by the British and Americans at Lientz and other places. Not since Genghis Khan had civilians suffered so much by comparison with warriors.

"What all this reminds us," writes Ferguson, "is that in order to defeat an enemy they routinely denounced as barbarian the Western powers had made common cause with an ally that was morally little better [in fact worse] – but ultimately more effective at waging total war. 'The choice before human beings,' George Orwell observed in 1941, 'is not... between good and evil but between two evils. You can let the Nazis rule the world: that is evil; or you can overthrow them by war, which is also evil... Whichever you choose, you will not come out with clean hands.' Orwell's *Animal Farm* is nowadays revered as a critique of the Russian Revolution's descent into Stalinism; people forget that it was written during the Second World War and turned down by no fewer than four publishers (including T.S. Eliot, on behalf of Faber & Faber) for its anti-Soviet sentiments. Nothing better symbolized the blind eye that the Western powers now turned to Stalin's crimes than the American Vice-President Henry Wallace's visit to the Kolyma Gulag in May 1944. 'No other two countries are more alike than the Soviet Union and the United States,' he told his hosts. 'The vast expanses of your country, her virgin forests, wide rivers and large lakes, all kinds of climate – from tropical to polar – her inexhaustible wealth, [all] remind me of my homeland... Both the Russians and the Americans, in their different ways, are groping for a way of life that will enable the common man everywhere in the world to get the most good out of modern technology. There is nothing irreconcilable in our aims and purposes.' All were now totalitarians..."<sup>976</sup>

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<sup>976</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 532-533. If Roosevelt was not a communist, it is difficult to say the same of his vice-president. Henry A. Wallace (1888 - 1965) 'was a farm leader, agriculture secretary (1933-40) Democratic politician, and Vice President under Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1941-1945. After a disastrous term as vice president, he was dropped from the ticket in 1944 despite strong support from the left. The Democratic Party, with concern being expressed privately about Roosevelt being able to make it through another term, chose Harry S. Truman as Roosevelt's running mate at the 1944 Democratic convention. Wallace was succeeded as Vice President on January 20, 1945, by Truman. On April 12, 1945, Vice President Truman succeeded to the Presidency when President Franklin D. Roosevelt died. Wallace had missed being the 33rd President of the United States by just 82 days. If FDR had died one year earlier, the USA would have had a Soviet sympathizer for president, probably with Soviet spy Harry Dexter White as his treasury secretary and Soviet spy Alger Hiss as his secretary of state.

Later, Wallace ran as the Progressive Party candidate in 1948, a party which was a "safe-haven" for Communists, "fellow travellers" or Communist sympathizers, and anti-war "liberals." He was also listed as the candidate on the Communist Party-USA ticket.

Wallace believed that both the American and the Russian revolution were part of "the march to freedom of the past 150 years." After having met Molotov, he arranged a trip to the "Wild East" of Russia. On May 23, 1944, he started a 25-day journey accompanied by Owen Lattimore. Coming from Alaska, they landed at Magadan where they were received by Sergei Goglidze and Dalstroi director Ivan Nikishov, both NKVD generals. The NKVD presented a fully sanitized version of the slave labor camps in Magadan and Kolyma to their American guests, convinced them that all the work was done by volunteers, charmed them with entertainment, and left their guests impressed with the "development" of Siberia and the spirit of the "volunteers". (Patrick Fodor, on Facebook, March 7, 2020)

This most evil of all wars defiled everybody involved in it at anything other than the lowest level. Perhaps the worst of all its evil consequences was the fact that the Soviets were able enormously to extend their utterly evil empire at the expense especially of God's people, the peoples of the Orthodox Church – Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian. Thus was fulfilled the Scripture: “So I looked and behold, a pale horse [*khloros*, “pale”, better translated as “flesh-coloured”]. And the name of him who sat on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given the over a quarter of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6.8). The western democracies, which came into the war to fight the undoubted evil of Nazism, were defiled by their alliance with the still greater evil of Communism. They forgot the apostolic word: “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers” (II Corinthians 6.14).

And almost everybody forgot the last recorded words of Tsar Nicholas II, whose murder by his own people was the ultimate cause of this catastrophe, that evil is not overcome by evil, but only by good...



## 59. JAPONIA DELENDA EST

War in the Far East began years before that in Europe, beginning with the Japanese Rape of Nanking in 1938, if not the invasion of Manchuria in 1937. "In December 1938," writes Chang, "Japanese soldiers under the command of General Matsui Iwane took the Nationalist [Kuomintang] capital of Nanjing and began 'an orgy of cruelty seldom if ever matched in world history'. As recounted by Irish Chang in her pathbreaking book, 'For months the streets of the city were heaped with corpses and reeked with the stench of rotting flesh... Tens of thousands of young men were... mowed down by machine guns, used for bayonet practice... and in decapitation contests,... or soaked with gasoline and burned alive... An estimated 20,000-80,000 Chinese women were raped. Many soldiers went beyond rape to disembowel women, slice off their breasts, nail them alive to walls. Fathers were forced to rape their daughters, and sons their mothers... Not only did live burials, castration, the carving of organs, and the roasting of people become routine, but more diabolical tortures were practiced, such as hanging people by their tongues on iron hooks or burying people to their waists and watching them get torn apart by German shepherds.'

"By the time the mayhem was over, more than 200,000 Chinese civilians had been massacred. Some experts believe the figure to exceed 350,000, which would place the Rape of Nanjing in the ranks of the world's worst instances of barbarism. In a matter of a few weeks, the death toll in Nanjing exceeded the number of civilian casualties of some European countries for the entire duration of World War II. The figure in the case of Britain was 61,000; for France, 108,000; Belgium, 101,000; and the Netherlands, 242,000. More Chinese were killed in Nanjing than the Japanese death toll of 210,000 from America's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"In all, in the eight years of China's War of Resistance (*Kangzhan*) against Japan from 1937 to 1945, Japanese war casualties (dead, missing, captured, and wounded) numbered some 400,000 – one-fiftieth that of the Chinese. By the time Japan surrendered to the Allies on August 10, 1945, more than 10 million Chinese civilians and soldiers had lost their lives – the equivalent of the entire population of Greece or Belgium. Forty million Chinese were rendered homeless. Some estimates put the Chinese death roll at 20 million."<sup>977</sup>

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In September, 1940 Japan signed a Tripartite Pact in Berlin with Germany and Italy. If the Japanese had then, in the following year, supported the German invasion of Russia by attacking the Soviets in the rear, then the history of the Second World War might well have turned out very differently. However, as far as we know, Hitler, perhaps out of racial prejudice, did not even ask his new allies to cooperate with him in his plan. In any case, the Japanese were probably deterred by their experience in 1939, when Zhukov had defeated a

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<sup>977</sup> Maria Hsia Chang, *Return of the Dragon*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2001, pp. 80-81.

Japanese army at Nomonhan in Siberia, “the bloodiest of the many border clashes which took place between the two great Far Eastern powers during the 1930s” ...<sup>978</sup>

For all the differences between the members of the Tripartite Pact, writes Niall Ferguson, “Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan shared certain fundamental assumptions about the character of the world they hoped to forge in the fires of war. It was to be a world ruled by three empire-states, imperial in the extent of their power, but state-like in the centralized nature of their power. It was to be a world shared between three master races: the Aryan, the Roman and the Yamato. As one of the Pact’s Japanese architects put it: ‘World totalitarianism will take the place of Anglo-Saxonism, which is bankrupt and will be wiped out.’”<sup>979</sup>

Japan was similar to Germany in its “evolutionary humanism” – that is, its racism – with the Chinese taking the place occupied by the Jews in the Nazi system. Hence the horrific “Rape of Nanking” and other atrocities carried out by the Japanese in China. “‘The Chinese people.’ wrote General Sakai Ryu, the Chief of Staff of the Japanese forces in North China in 1937, ‘are bacteria infesting world civilization’.”<sup>980</sup>

“Japan, it is true, had no Hitler, no single ideologue adumbrating a utopia which all others could ‘work towards’. But it had many little Hitlers. In ‘An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus’, a report completed in July 1943, officials in the Population and Race Section of the Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry’s Research Bureau took as their premise that the Japanese were the ‘leading race’ of Asia, whose mission was to ‘liberate the billion people of Asia’ by planting as much Japanese blood as possible in Asian soil.”<sup>981</sup>

The plan now was to include the whole of Japanese-conquered East Asia into a huge slave-empire, the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, which would be to Japanese colonists what Eastern Europe was meant to be for the Nazis. By 1940 the Japanese had consolidated their hold over Eastern China. Then the blitzkrieg began: by the end of July, 1941 they had overrun Hong Kong, Malaya, Burma, Indochina, the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies. Singapore fell in February, 1942 – an enormous blow to the power and prestige of the British Empire.

However, the danger for the Japanese was that they would incite the United States to war; several strategists, including Admiral Yamamoto, knew that, in spite of their conquests, they would run out of oil by 1943 and eventually lose any war with the far more powerful America. But as Hastings writes, “conceit,

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<sup>978</sup> Brendon, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

<sup>979</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 473-474.

<sup>980</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

<sup>981</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

fatalism – a belief in *shikata go nai*, ‘it cannot be helped’ – and ignorance of the world outside Asia, propelled the Japanese militarists onward to disaster.”

On August 9, writes Max Hastings, “Tokyo made a final decision against launching an attack on Russia, in 1941 anyway. By September, Japanese thinking was dominated by the new policy of the US oil embargo, an earnest of Roosevelt’s resolve, although there is evidence that his subordinates translated a presidential desire to limit Japanese oil supplies and thus promote strategic restraint, rather than to impose an absolute embargo that accelerated the slide to war. Tokyo concluded that its only options were to bow to US demands, the least plausible of which was to quit China, or to strike swiftly. Emperor Hirohito pressed his government for further diplomacy and prime minister Prince Konoe accordingly proposed a summit between himself and Roosevelt. Washington, recognizing an attempt at prevarication, rebuffed the initiative. On 1 December an imperial conference in Tokyo confirmed the decision to fight. War Minister Gen. Hideki Tojo, who assumed the premiership on 17 October, said: ‘Our empire stands at the threshold of glory or oblivion.’ Thus starkly did Japan’s militarists view their choices, founded on a grandiose vision of their rightful dominance of Asia. Yet Tojo recognized the impossibility of achieving victory over the US. He and his colleagues instead sought to empower themselves for battlefield triumphs to achieve a regulated settlement...<sup>982</sup>

The Japanese vision of their nation as destined for either “glory or oblivion” was identical with Hitler’s vision of the future of the German people under his leadership. That is why both regimes, on facing the certainty of defeat, refused to negotiate with the enemy but went down in a Wagnerian apocalypse. Stalin was less suicidal – and ultimately, therefore, more effective in the long run...

The enormous initial successes of the Germans in Russia came to an end on December 6, 1941, when the Russians, supported by massive shipments of tanks from Britain via Murmansk, counter-attacked and saved Moscow. The next day, the Japanese attacked the American fleet in Pearl Harbour, bringing the United States into the war. Pearl Harbour was only the beginning. Soon the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island and the western tip of Alaska – the population of which totaled more than 16 million nationals – all fell to the Japanese.<sup>983</sup> Shortly after, Hitler declared war on the Americans – a supreme act of suicidal recklessness that guaranteed his downfall. The linking of the European and Far Asian theatres, and the entrance of the United States, the world’s greatest industrial power, into the war against the Axis made it genuinely global and swung the pendulum slowly but inexorably against the Axis powers. Already in June, 1942 the Americans had defeated the Japanese at the Battle of the Midway; in October the British had defeated the Germans at El-Alamenin; and in February the Russians forced the Germans to surrender at Stalingrad,

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<sup>982</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>983</sup> Daniel Immerwahr, “America’s Hidden Empire”, *BBC World Histories*, April / May, 2019, p. 34.

followed by the great tank victory at Kursk in June, 1943. It was now only a matter of time before the Axis powers were defeated.

The main theatre of the war against the Japanese was the vast Pacific region, which the Americans gradually reconquered. They encountered stubborn resistance on the islands and archipelagos, and towards the end suicide pilots assaulted them from the air; but as they approached the Japanese mainland their superiority in men and weaponry was overwhelming. The war on land was on a smaller scale and progress was slower, but there, too, the Japanese were in retreat. In the spring of 1944 the British Fourteenth Army under General William Slim defeated the Japanese in Assam: "the outcome of the twin battles of Imphal and Koshima was the heaviest defeat ever suffered by a Japanese army: out of 85,000 men committed, 53,000 became casualties."<sup>984</sup> The way was now open to the reconquest of the whole of South-East Asia. As this took place the terrible cruelties committed by the Japanese against their prisoners was revealed...

In Asia, as in Europe, only the fanaticism of the ruling militarist elite prevented a much earlier end to the war. Early in 1945 the American General MacArthur "liberated" Manila in the Philippines at the cost of 100,000 civilian dead, together with 1000 Americans and 16,000 Japanese. But was such bloodshed really necessary? "'The Philippines campaign was a mistake,' says Hando, who lived through the war. 'MacArthur did it for his own reasons. Japan had lost the war since the Marianas were gone.' The Filipino people whom MacArthur professed to love paid the price for his egomania in lost lives - something approaching half a million perished by combat, massacre, famine and disease - and wrecked homes."<sup>985</sup> In fact, argues Hastings, "it was rationally unnecessary for the Allies to launch major ground operations in South-East Asia - or, for that matter, the Philippines. If they merely maintained naval blockade and air bombardment, the Japanese people must eventually starve, their oil-deprived war machine [they were totally dependent on imported food and fuel] would be reduced to impotence. Given the nature of war, democracies and global geopolitics, however, 'eventually' was not soon enough..."<sup>986</sup>

If it is really in the nature of democracy not to allow an opponent to surrender at a time of his choosing (for the method of blockade at least gives him that option), but rather he must be destroyed in the most brutal and indiscriminating way possible, then this is indeed an indictment of democracy...

And American democracy must be recognized to have deserved that indictment at this time. For "on March 9, 1945," writes Ferguson, "Tokyo suffered the first of a succession of raids that claimed the lives of between

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<sup>984</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. 563.

<sup>985</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. 575.

<sup>986</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

80,000 and 100,000 people, 'scorched and boiled and baked to death', as [the American commander] LeMay frankly put it. Within five months, roughly two fifths of the built-up areas of nearly every major city had been laid waste, killing nearly a quarter of a million people, injuring more than 300,000 and turning eight million into refugees. Besides Tokyo, sixty-three cities were incinerated. Japan's economy was almost entirely crippled...<sup>987</sup>

"Why, then, was it necessary to go further - to drop two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? LeMay could quite easily have hit both these targets with conventional bombs. As if to make that point, Tokyo was scourged with incendiaries one last time on August 14 by a horde of more than a thousand aircraft; it was the following day that the Emperor's decision to capitulate was broadcast, not the day after Hiroshima. In all probability, it was the Soviet decision to dash Japanese hopes of mediation and to attack Japan that convinced all but the most incorrigible diehards that the war was over. Defeat in the Pacific mattered less to the Japanese generals than the collapse of their much longer-held position in Manchuria and Korea. Indeed, it was the Soviet landing on Shikotan, not far from Japan's main northern island of Hokkaido, that forced the military finally to sign the instrument of surrender.<sup>988</sup> Historians have sometimes interpreted Harry Truman's decision to use the Bomb against Japan as a kind of warning shot intended to intimidate the Soviet Union; an explosive overture to the Cold War. Others have argued that, having seen \$2 billion spent on the Manhattan Project, Truman felt compelled to get a large bang for so many bucks. Yet if one leaves aside the technology that distinguished the bombs dropped on August 6 and August 9 - and the radiation they left in their wakes - the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was simply the culmination of five years of Allied strategic bombing. Roughly as many people were killed immediately when the bomb nicknamed 'Little Boy' exploded 1,189 feet above central Hiroshima on the morning of August 6 as had been killed in Dresden six months before, though by the end of 1945 the Japanese death toll had risen much higher, to as many as 140,000 in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki... "<sup>989</sup>

"The final decision to surrender was taken on 14 August. The War Minister and the two chiefs of staff opposed it, and the Prime Minister, Admiral Suzuki, had to ask the Tenno to resolve the dispute. As Hirohito later put it: 'At the time of the surrender, there was no prospect of agreement no matter how many discussions they had... When Suzuki asked me at the Imperial conference which of the two views should be taken, I was given the opportunity to express my own free will for the first time without violating anybody else's authority or responsibilities.' Hirohito then recorded a surrender message to the

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<sup>987</sup> Michael Hoffman, "Remembering the US War Crime/Holocaust in Tokyo, March 9-10, 1945", March 9, 2021, <https://revisionistreview.blogspot.com/2021/03/us-war-crime-holocaust-in-tokyo.html>. (V.M.)

<sup>988</sup> That fear of Soviet invasion was the real reason the Japanese surrendered is the theme of Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's book *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan* (2005). (V.M.)

<sup>989</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 573-574.

Japanese people which admitted that the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage' and that in order to avoid 'the total extinction of human civilization' Japan would have to 'endure the unendurable and suffer what is unsufferable'. Army officers broke into the palace to destroy this recording before it was broadcast, killed the head of the Imperial Guard and set fire to the homes of the Prime Minister and the chief court minister. But they failed to stop the broadcast; and immediately after it the War Minister and others committed suicide in the Palace Square..."<sup>990</sup>

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That the bombing of Hiroshima expressed the judgement of Divine Justice on Japanese imperialism is revealed by the fact that "coincidentally" it was from Hiroshima that the Japanese emperor had watched his troops embark on their invasion of China in 1894...

It also showed how much scientism had come to dominate politics. In the twentieth century, the scientists were less responsible than, for example, Leonardo da Vinci, who kept several of his scientific discoveries to himself for fear of the harmful effect they would have on mankind. Thus he wrote: "I know how one can stay under water and survive a long time without food. But I will not publish this or reveal it to anyone. For men are wicked and would use it to kill, even at the bottom of the sea. They would make holes in the hulls of ships and sink them with all the people in them."<sup>991</sup> But in the twentieth century scientists even the greatest scientists went astray. Thus on August 2, 1939 Einstein wrote to Roosevelt encouraging him to develop the bomb before the Nazis could develop one. Later he came to regret this letter, saying: "The release of atom power has changed everything except our thinking... the solution to this problem lies in the heart of mankind. If only I had known, I should have become a watchmaker..."

We have seen the importance that innovations in technology acquired in the First World War. In the second, such innovations, and particularly the invention of the atomic bomb, were still more important. But the real novelty of the period was not in the technologies but in the fact that men had become "technologized" in their attitude to the killing of their fellow men. There had always been mass-killers like Sennacherib and Tamerlane in earlier ages, but now ordinary men who called themselves Christian could commit mass murder of innocents or surrenderers just by pressing a switch...

Thus the killing of prisoners was not confined to Soviet communists, German Nazis or Japanese pagans - or American presidents. "It is clear from many accounts that American and Australian forces often shot Japanese surrenderers. It happened at Guadalcanal, especially after twenty Marines fell

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<sup>990</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 426-427.

<sup>991</sup> Leonardo, in E.H. Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*, London: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 167.

victim to an apparent Japanese surrender that turned out to be an ambush. The Marines' battle cry on Tarawa was 'Kill the Jap bastards! Take no prisoners!' At Peleliu, too, American troops had no compunction about bayoneting Japanese soldiers who had just surrendered. On New Guinea in 1944 Charles Lindbergh heard it 'freely admitted that some of our soldiers tortured Japanese prisoners and were as cruel and barbaric at times as the Japs themselves. Our men think nothing of shooting a Japanese prisoner or soldier attempting to surrender. They treat the Japs with less respect than they would give to an animal, and these acts are condoned by almost everyone.' This behaviour was not merely sanctioned but actively encouraged by Allied officers in the Pacific. An infantry colonel told Linbergh proudly: 'Our boys just don't take prisoners'. Nor was this a peculiarity of American forces. The testimony of Sergeant Henry Ewen confirms that Australian troops killed prisoners at Bougainville 'in cold blood'. When Indian soldiers serving with the British in Burma killed a group of wounded Japanese prisoners, George MacDonald Fraser, then an officer in the 14<sup>th</sup> Army, turned a blind eye..."<sup>992</sup>

The whole period 1914-1945, and especially its final phase, opened the eyes of all who did not want to remain blind that western civilization – in which almost the whole world was now participant to a greater or lesser degree – was spiritually and morally bankrupt. The spread of the humanist philosophy of the Enlightenment and the doctrine of human rights all over the world had not inhibited states and individuals on all sides from committing the grossest crimes. The age that followed tried to introduce new institutions like the United Nations, and new moral codes like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to conceal this fact and restore western humanity's belief in itself. But the foundations of this house had been revealed to be sand and the house itself had already collapsed.

Tragically, no attempt has yet been made on a large scale to rebuild the house on the only sure foundation, the Rock that is Christ...

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<sup>992</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 544-545.

## CONCLUSION. VICTORS' JUSTICE

"It was plain," writes Ian Kershaw, that the Second World War "had to be fought. National interest and a moral cause conveniently blended together. If ever there was a just war, this was it..."<sup>993</sup>

But was it? We may accept that until June 22, 1941 it was indeed a just war: Hitler invaded Western Europe for no good reason, and he had to be resisted. But then the side of justice entered into union with the most evil state in the whole history of mankind – the Soviet Union. And this most evil state, the collective Antichrist, turned out on the side of the victors, who did not punish it for its crimes. This was the ultimate injustice...

"On 8 May 1945," writes Jurgen Tampke, "the worst of the Nazi nightmare was over. At the headquarters of the Western Allies in Rheims, General Walter Bedell Smith, chief of staff to commander of the Western Front General Dwight D. Eisenhower, handed over the documents specifying the unconditional capitulation of the German Wehrmacht. The papers had been signed on behalf of the Germans by General Alfred Jodl, who had used the occasion to give a last speech about the brave achievements and suffering of his people, a heroic effort that he claimed history had never before witnessed. There was not a word of remorse about the violent death of tens of millions and the utter devastation the Third Reich had inflicted upon the countries of Europe and beyond. The capitulation procedure was repeated the next day in Berlin, where Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel signed in front of Marshal Georgy Zhukov, head of the Soviet forces that had taken the capital.

"The Fuhrer had married his longtime partner Eva Braun after midnight on 29 April, and committed suicide with her the next day in the bunker before the Reich Chancellery. His most loyal assistant, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, and his wife killed themselves a day later, but not before poisoning their six children. Hermann Goring managed to commit suicide the day before he was to be executed. He was one of 23 prominent Nazis put on trial at Nuremberg for 'major war crimes'. Of these, eleven were given the death penalty. They included Generals Jodl and Keitel, foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, and chief ideologist Alfred Rosenberg. The remainder received lifelong or lengthy prison sentences, but only the Fuhrer's former deputy, Rudolf Hess, died in captivity: he was kept in Berlin's Spandau prison until his suicide in 1987. Also tried at Nuremberg were doctors charged with using and killing humans in medical experiments, and chemists involved in the manufacturing of the poison gas used at Auschwitz and other extermination camps. Viktor Brack and Karl Brandt were sentenced to death for their involvement in the murder of the mentally ill and disabled in the 'euthanasia action'. Few of the others charged at Nuremberg served the full terms of their sentences.

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<sup>993</sup> Kershaw, *To Hell and Back*, London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 348.



“Another 250,000 Nazis were arrested throughout Germany as part of the ‘de-nazification program’ carried out by the Allies after the war. In the three western zones, 5,000 were eventually sentenced. Of the 806 death sentences, only 486 were carried out. The rest were let off relatively lightly.

“Rarely, if ever, had so much damage been done in so little time. Twelve years of Nazi rule had produced enough Orwellian Napoleons, along with their killer dogs, to ensure that only total defeat at the hand of the Allies would bring the nightmare to an end. With the Allies closing in on all sides, and with German cities relentlessly bombed, leaving thousands dead after each raid, Gestapo, SS units, and other self-appointed fighters for ‘final victory’ unleashed a last wave of terror against alleged political opponents, deserters, defeatists, or anyone else who wanted to call a halt to the long-lost war. Tens of thousands perished. In the end, Germany lay in ruins physically, militarily, politically, economically. The nation was ethically and morally bankrupt.

“That an Austrian *Hinterwaldler*, a failed novelist from the Rhineland, a Bavarian chicken-farmer, and a morphine addict, supported by a legion of thugs, could usurp the power of the entire German military, political, and economic establishment was a national humiliation. That the regime had committed crimes – as a brave German president admitted forty years later – that have few, if any, parallels in human history was unforgivable. Many people had compromised themselves during the years of Nazi rule, but the professional classes stood out. Lawyers profited as their Jewish competitors were forced to close their offices; likewise doctors, and medical experiments on human beings were not confined to the concentration camps. Academics exulted in fostering the Nazi state – none more than historians. Judges handed out over 16,000 death sentences: voicing opposition to official policies sufficed for the gallows, as did petty theft that allegedly undermined Germany’s war effort. Industrialists, too, made a fortune. Until the last stages of war, the benefits of the Third Reich to all those sections of industry and finance connected with armament production were colossal. Shopkeepers benefited as Jewish shops closed, public servants as Jews were sacked, and looting was frequent when Jewish citizens were deported. And there was scarcely an enterprise in Germany that did not benefit from forced labour. The Holocaust and the extermination of the Slavonic ‘subhumans’ (*Untermenschen*) was not confined to SS units, but involved the Wehrmacht as well.”<sup>994</sup>

Did the Germans repent? As Max Hastings writes, “among Germans in the summer of 1945, self-pity was a much more prevalent sensation than contrition: one in three of their male children born between 1915 and 1924 were dead, two in five of those born between 1920 and 1925. In the vast refugee migrations that preceded and followed VE-day, over fourteen million ethnic Germans left homes in the east, or were driven from them. At least half a million – modern estimates vary widely – perished during their subsequent odysseys; the historic

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<sup>994</sup> Tampke, *A Perfidious Distortion of History*, London: Scribe, 2018, pp. 229-232.

problem of Central Europe's German minorities was solved in the most abrupt fashion, by ethnic cleansing."<sup>995</sup>

Tony Judt writes that "throughout the years 1945-49 a consistent majority of Germans questioned in a survey of the American zone took the view that 'Nazism was a good idea badly implemented'. In November 1946, 37 per cent of Germans questioned in a survey of the American zone took the view that the extermination of the Jews and Poles and other non-Aryans was necessary for the security of Germans'.

"In the same poll of November 1946, one German in three agreed with the proposition that 'Jews should not have the same rights as those belonging to the Aryan race.' This is not especially surprising, given that respondents had just emerged from twelve years under an authoritarian government committed to this view. What *does* surprise is a poll taken six years later in which a slightly higher percentage of West Germans - 37 percent - affirmed that it was better for Germany to have no Jews on its territory. But then in that same year (1952) 25 percent of West Germans admitted to having a 'good opinion' of Hitler..."<sup>996</sup>

Nevertheless, however imperfect the process of denazification was, in the longer term it had a good effect. Later generations of Germans, even though they were born only during or after the war, felt a certain collective guilt for the sins of their fathers. And the extraordinary success story that is Germany since the war surely witnesses to the fact that they had learned their lesson and that God had withdrawn His chastening hand...

The terms dictated to Germany, unconditional surrender, were tough, but understandable. In 1919 justice had not really been done: Germany had not really paid for starting the First World War, for invading neutral countries, for the killing of civilians by aerial bombardment (from zeppelins), for enormous damage to industries, for wiping out whole nations, above all for attacking Orthodox Russia and paying for Lenin's revolution. Although Germany had lost millions of men, her own territory had not been touched... And, most importantly, she had not repented of her sins, but insisted, on the contrary, that a great injustice had been done to her... But in 1945 it was a different matter: after still greater sins, including the murder of "six million Jews (two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe), 3 million Russians, 3 million non-Jewish Poles, 750,000 Slavs, 500,000 Gypsies, 100,000 of the mentally ill, 100,000 Freemasons, 15,000 homosexuals and 5000 Jehovah's Witnesses"<sup>997</sup>, the German homeland was devastated, much of it occupied by the Soviets.

This time, it seemed, justice *had* been done, and there were very few to argue the opposite.

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<sup>995</sup> Hastings, *All Hell Let Loose*, London: HarperPress, 2011, pp. 653-654.

<sup>996</sup> Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, London: Pimlico, 2007, p. 58.

<sup>997</sup> Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 545.

And yet there were doubts... There were practical obstacles to achieving real justice (assuming that such a thing is attainable in this life)... Thus in May, 1945 there were eight million Nazi Party members, and if all top Nazis had been put on trial and purged, as the Allies wanted, the whole country would have ground to a halt. So only a fraction were tried...

Moreover, the Allies simply did not have the personnel to conduct a thorough denazification. So most former Nazis were removed from their posts for a short while and then returned to them. Again, many scientists and engineers were whisked away to America (and others to the Soviet Union) where they lived a good life working for the American military. This manifest injustice caused resentment and mockery among the Germans themselves, which did not encourage repentance.

Another manifest injustice was the failure to capture, let alone convict, the most serious criminals of the Jewish Holocaust. Only a small proportion of the leading Nazis were brought to trial at Nuremburg; for others, like Adolf Eichmann, justice came, not at Nuremburg, but later and elsewhere. He was arrested, tried and executed in Israel on May 31, 1962...

A.N. Wilson writes, "The Nuremberg trials of the twenty-two surviving movers in the Third Reich made it clear, beyond any doubt, that this was a regime founded upon the idea of aggressive war, sustained by banditry, theft and the abolition of morality and justice, and gluttoned like some blood-feeding ogre on mass murder. The catalogue of crimes, the abuses of science by doctors, the systematic use of slave labour, and the detailed programme to eliminate the Jews, could not, after the trials, be in any doubt..."

"The first stage of the trials, then, the hearings of about the twenty-two chief Nazis, was a purgative experience, for Germany, for the Allies, and for the world. The trial tried to set the precedent, alas too optimistic, that any future tyrant would know that one day he would stand answerable for his crimes before the bar of justice and the law.

"Clearly, when it came to dealing with all the tens of thousands of underlings who had done the dirty work in the Third Reich, and, even more complicated, with the numberless thousands who had somehow or other colluded in the crimes while not actually perpetrating murder or theft, what was to be done? For several years after the war, many of the nastier individuals involved in labour and death camp atrocities and so on had escaped to South America. Most of them escaped justice altogether..."<sup>998</sup>

The Nuremberg war trials have been condemned as "victors' justice". If this is taken to mean that the legal process was often unwieldy, that it proved difficult for the victors to obtain completely convincing evidence in all cases, that they invented new crimes unknown to jurisprudence, and that they

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<sup>998</sup> Wilson, *After the Victorians*, London: Hutchinson, 2003, pp. 482, 483.

applied these definitions retrospectively to deeds committed before the definitions had been made, then this is true, but relatively trivial. After all, nobody doubts that the accused were guilty as charged, and that trials of this kind, however impromptu their juridical basis, were far better than no justice at all or the summary execution of 50,000 Germans as Stalin once demanded. Hastings puts it well: "The Nuremburg and Tokyo trials represented not injustice, but partial justice."<sup>999</sup> As A.T. Williams writes, although the justice obtained at Nuremburg may have been "symbolic, shambolic, illusory... it was essential for all that."<sup>1000</sup> "In Germany itself opinion surveys conducted at the time, in fact showed huge approval for the fairness of the trials and the verdicts."<sup>1001</sup>

For the desire for truth and justice is one of the ineradicable elements of human nature: it can be despised or overlooked only at great cost for future generations.

The Germans, not unnaturally, were in general punished more severely than collaborators of other nationalities in the occupied territories<sup>1002</sup>, where the process of justice varied greatly from country to country and involved many compromises. Austria, for example, had willingly joined in the slaughter of the Jews, but was spared retribution since it had been invaded by Hitler. As Judt points out, "such compromises were probably inevitable. The very scale of destruction and moral collapse in 1945 meant that whatever was left in place was likely to be needed as a building block for the future. The provisional governments of the liberation months were almost helpless. The unconditional (and grateful) cooperation of the economic, financial and industrial elites seemed vital if food, clothing and food were to be supplied to a helpless and starving population. Economic purges could be counter-productive, even crippling. But a price for this was paid in political cynicism and a sharp falling away from the illusions and hopes of the liberation..."<sup>1003</sup>

The crux of the case at Nuremburg," writes Niall Ferguson, "as agreed by the victorious powers in London in the summer of 1945, was that the leaders of Germany and Japan had premeditated and unleashed 'aggressive war' and 'set in motion evils which [had left] no home in the world untouched'. They were accused, firstly, of the 'planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of a war of aggression, or war in violation of international treaties, agreements and assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the

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<sup>999</sup> Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. 672.

<sup>1000</sup> Williams, *A Passing Fury: Searching for Justice at the End of World War II*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2016.

<sup>1001</sup> Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

<sup>1002</sup> Willing collaborators in the Holocaust in occupied countries included Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Croats, Vichy Frenchmen and others. See Judt, "The 'Problem of Evil' in Postwar Europe", in *When the Facts Change*, London: Vintage, 2015, p. 131.

<sup>1003</sup> Judt, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

accomplishment of any of the foregoing'. Yet whose side had the Soviet Union been on in 1939?"<sup>1004</sup>

In fact, perhaps the greatest single injustice of the post-war settlement was the subjection of Poland to the power of the Soviets, who had forcibly occupied half of the country in 1939 with Hitler's blessing, and now obtained the other half as well. At Potsdam in July, 1945, the West was in no position to resist Stalin on this point. As Jenkins writes, "Roosevelt had died and been replaced by his vice-president, Harry Truman (1945-53). Churchill was ousted by Labour's Clement Attlee in an election held in the middle of the conference. With the west lacking in leadership experience, Stalin was cock of the walk. He ignored western demands for a larger Poland, and emphatically rejected democracy or self-determination in eastern Europe. 'A freely elected government in every one of these countries,' he said baldly, 'would be anti-Soviet and we cannot permit that.' The words echoed across the continent. A new Europe would clearly be two Europes..."<sup>1005</sup>

Then there were the injustices done by the Soviets to their own countrymen. "In 1945," writes Protodeacon Christopher Birchall, "there were some 4 million Russians in the former territory of the Third Reich. About 6 million Russian prisoners of war fell into German hands, most of them soon after the invasion of Russia in 1941. The Russian prisoners of war were kept in appalling conditions; some were simply herded into open fields in the winter and left to die of exposure. This treatment, so different from that accorded to British prisoners by the Germans, was explained largely by the fact that Joseph Stalin had renounced them, stating that anyone who allowed himself to be taken captive, rather than die fighting, was a traitor. As a result, most Russian prisoners died and only about 1 million survived by May 1945. Understandably most of these 'traitors' were terrified at the prospect of returning to the Soviet Union. In addition, there were the *Ostarbeiter* ("workers from the east") – Russians who were brought to Germany to work in the war industries. Some had volunteered but most were conscripts. They were treated poorly and humiliated by the Nazis, who regarded them as *Untermenschen* ("subhumans"), close to the bottom of the racial hierarchy they devised. Whenever outside the camps, these workers were required to wear a badge with the *OST* (EAST) written on it to display their origin.

"When the war ended, there were some 3 million *Ostarbeiter* in Germany. These formed the majority of the vast numbers of Russians liberated by the Allies in 1945. In addition, there were refugees who had decided to leave Soviet territory with the retreating German armies. Some were terrified of Soviet reprisals meted out to anyone 'contaminated' by contact with the invaders; others, especially those in areas where the Germans had behaved with a degree of restraint, simply seized the opportunity to escape from communist rule. The populations of entire districts, particularly Cossacks from the Caucasus, piled

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<sup>1004</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 578-579.

<sup>1005</sup> Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 269.

their possessions into wagons and evacuated to the west. Finally, there were those who agreed to fight with the Germans in the hope of overthrowing communism in Russia, approximately 800,000 in all. The largest group was nominally led by General Andrey Vlasov, who had been captured by the Germans in 1942 while trying to raise the siege of Leningrad. He was taken from a prisoner of war camp and made head of this the Russian Army of Liberation (ROA – *Russkaia Osvoboditel'naia Armia*). However, the ROA existed more on paper than in the field because Vlasov had very little control over the units, most of which had German officers. The Germans distrusted these brigades of Slavic *Untermenschen* and sent many to the western front after the Normandy invasions.<sup>1006</sup> In addition to the ROA, Cossack units were formed under the German General Helmuth von Pannwitz.

“At the infamous Yalta Conference of February 1945, Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt reached an agreement with Stalin to hand over any ‘Soviet Nationals’ who fell into British or American hands. A Soviet National was defined as anyone who had lived in Soviet territory before September 1, 1939. Thus excluded were the old émigrés as well as inhabitants of western parts of Russia and Ukraine, which had been annexed to Poland during the Civil War. On arrival in the Soviet Union, the displaced persons were either shot or sent directly to labour camps, most in the Far North of Siberia. Alexander Solzhenitsyn described graphically the fate of many such people in his book *The Gulag Archipelago*.

“One might wonder why the Soviet authorities were so determined to secure the return of these people. The explanation largely lies in the personal paranoia of Stalin, which infected the rest of the Soviet power apparatus. Another significant factor was the Soviets’ genuine fear of the existence of a strong, anti-Soviet emigration or even scattered groups of exiles. As one Soviet leader observed, ‘That’s the way we got our start!’ Only thirty years previously, the émigré Russians were not ‘White’ Russian exiles but rather various groups of Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and anarchists who were plotting the overthrow of Imperial Russia...”<sup>1007</sup>

Shortly after D-day, large numbers of Russian soldiers in German uniform began to be captured by the Allies. Of these, some had put on German uniform

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<sup>1006</sup> “Vlasov’s crucial weakness,” writes Hosking, “was that Hitler had no intention of promoting Russian nationalism, and would not allow him to set up his own army or political movement until the autumn of 1944, when it was far too late to make any difference to the course of events. Many Soviet officers in captivity who sympathized with his aims refused to join him for this reason. The project of a Russian national liberation movement independent of both Stalin and Hitler was simply impractical. In the end, ironically, almost the only combat which Vlasov’s army saw was *against* the Germans: his men fought to help the Czechs free their capital from the S.S. in May 1945” (*Russia and the Russians*, p. 500). Vlasov had been ordered by the Germans to burn Prague down to the ground, but he refused and cooperated with Czech nationalists in saving the old city. Rejected by the Allies and captured by the Soviets, he was sentenced and hanged on August 1 1946. (V.M.)

<sup>1007</sup> Birchall, *Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen: The Three Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Publications, 2014, pp. 321-323.

involuntarily, forced to it by the threat of death or the terrible conditions in the German POW camps. Others, the “Vlasovites”, had volunteered to fight in the German army, not out of love of Nazism, but simply in order to help in the destruction of the hated Soviet regime. Among the Vlasovites, some had been Soviet citizens, but others were former White soldiers who had fled from Russia after the Civil War and had never been Soviet. Most of them did not want to be repatriated, but pleaded to stay in the West.<sup>1008</sup>

This created a major problem for the British government. Lord Selborne, Minister for Economic Warfare, who was also in charge of secret espionage and sabotage (SOE), argued passionately that they should be allowed to stay because they had not voluntarily donned German uniforms, they had suffered terribly already, and would probably be shot if returned to Russia. Churchill was for a time inclined to listen to Selborne, but the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, who had already made a verbal agreement with Molotov, argued that they had to return the prisoners if Stalin insisted on it, that to anger the Soviets would be dangerous for the war effort, that the British had “no legal or moral right” to interfere in the way they were treated in Russia, and that if they did not accede to Soviet demands British and American prisoners liberated from German camps by Soviet forces might not be repatriated to the West.

Unfortunately, by September, Eden had won the argument, and thousands of Russians began to be deported from Britain to Murmansk and Odessa, in accordance with the Yalta Conference agreement.

However, well into 1945, writes S.M. Plokhy, the State Department “continued to resist Soviet requests for the extradition of those Soviet citizens who had been captured in German uniform and claimed the protection of the Geneva Convention until the end of hostilities in Europe. But then the department’s position suddenly changed. As Joseph Grew explained in a letter to Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, he did not object to extradition ‘now that Germany has unconditionally surrendered, that all American prisoners of war held by the German armed forces have been liberated and that therefore there no longer exists any danger that the German authorities will take reprisals against American prisoners of war.’

“On June 29, after learning of the decision to extradite them to the USSR, 154 Soviet prisoners of war in Fort Dix, New Jersey, shut themselves in their barracks and attempted to commit mass suicide. The American guards fired tear-gas grenades into the building, forcing the prisoners to break out of their quarters. Seven POWs were gunned down by the guards as they rushed at them. In the barracks they found three men hanging from the rafters next to fifteen nooses prepared for the next group. News of the revolt of Soviet prisoners who preferred death to extradition leaked out to the press, aborting

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<sup>1008</sup> The following account is taken mainly from Nicholas Bethell’s *The Last Secret* (London: Futura, 1976) and Victor Sebestyen, 1946: *The Making of the Modern World* (London: Pan, 2014, ch. 13).

the next attempt to ship POWs to the USSR. In August, however, James Byrnes, who succeeded Stettinius as secretary of state, authorized extradition 'in conformity with commitments taken at Yalta'..."<sup>1009</sup>

A particularly tragic case took place in May-June, 1945, in Lienz in Austria, when "the English occupying authorities handed over to Stalin to certain death some tens of thousands of Cossacks who had fought in the last months of the war on the side of Germany. Eye-witnesses of this drama recall that the hand-over began right during the time of the final liturgy, which Smersh did not allow to finish. Many Cossacks tried to hurl themselves into the abyss so as not to be delivered to the communists..."<sup>1010</sup>

Many of the British soldiers involved in the handover had come to like the Cossacks and were deeply distressed that they had to lie to them about the handover and had to use force against them. Some confessed that they had been wrong; but most justified themselves on the grounds that they were following orders. It is interesting to note, however, that in the Nuremburg trials this same excuse, in the mouth of Nazi defendants, was not considered sufficient...<sup>1011</sup>

Another aspect of the tragedy is that among the Cossacks handed over were men who had never been Soviet citizens, including the famous White Generals Krasnov and Shkuro, who were hanged in Moscow in 1947. So the British "over-fulfilled" their "duty" (Johnson calls it "an excess of zeal") according to the Yalta agreement, which specified only "Soviet nationals"..."<sup>1012</sup>

The British were also involved in the handover of thousands of Croats and Slovenes, including the remnants of the Ustashi regime, to Tito's Partisans, who shot 50-65,000 of them at Kocevje and Maribor without any kind of trial.<sup>1013</sup> "Some 25,000 Croats were likewise 'returned' to the Communist regime in Yugoslavia, where they became showpieces of a 'death march' through the cities: '...starved, thirsty, emaciated, disfigured, suffering and agonizing, they

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<sup>1009</sup> Plokhly, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, London: Penguin, 2010, p. 304.

<sup>1010</sup> Archbishop Savva (Raevsky), "Lienz", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 56, N 4, 2005, pp. 2-8. The head of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anastasy, blessed the Cossacks who had formally ended their lives through suicide because they did not want to fall into the hands of the Reds, to be given a church burial. 'Their actions,' he wrote, 'are closer to the exploit of St. Pelagia of Antioch, who hurled herself from a tall tower so as escape desecration [rape].'..."

<sup>1011</sup> "Of all the countries in the whole world, only one minuscule (its land mass is 157 square kilometres) but noble Principality of Lichtenstein categorically refused to hand over to the Soviets what was left of the General Homston-Smilovsk army, granting them political refuge on its territory. Soviet military leaders threatened Lichtenstein's Government with political and economic sanctions, to which the head of the Principality - A. Frik responded: 'Well, that is your affair, but I don't want my grandchildren to say one day that their grandfather was a murderer.'" (S. V. Shumilo, "Sovietsky Rezhim in Sovietskaia Tserkov' v 40-e-50-e gody XX stoletia" (The Soviet Regime and the 'Soviet Church' in the 40s and 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=678>).

<sup>1012</sup> Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, *Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Martyrs of Russia), Jordanville, volume 3, chapter 26, in <http://cliuchinskaya.blogspot.co.uk/2017/01/iii-xxvi-1944-1946.html>.

<sup>1013</sup> Sebastyen, op. cit., p. 150.



were forced to run long distances alongside their “liberators”, who were riding on horses or in carts.”<sup>1014</sup>

Mother Alexandra (Spektor) writes: “With the help of the English and American military authorities, by January 1, 1953 5 million, 457 thousand and 856 Soviet and ‘equated’ with them citizens had been repatriated. Of these 2 million 272 thousand were prisoners of war and their families. The cruellest of these repatriations were the handovers of the Cossack camp in Lienz (24 thousand military and civilians), the Caucasians in Oberdrauburg (4 thousand 800) and the Cossack cavalry corps in Feldkirchen (about 35 thousand). All these people had been given the status of prisoners of war and were assured that the English would not hand them over to certain death. But their hopes were not realized.

“What was their fate in the homeland? 20% of the prisoners of war returned to the USSR received the death penalty or 25 years in the camps; 15-20% - 5-10 years in the camps; 10% were exiled to distant regions of Siberia for a minimum of 6 years; 15% were sent to forced labour in regions destroyed by war, of whom only 15-20% returned to the places of their birth after their labour. Of the remaining 15-20%, some were killed or died on the road, while others fled...”<sup>1015</sup>

Plokhy summarizes the difference between the western and Soviet attitudes to prisoners of war: “There was no higher priority for soldiers of the Western democracies at the end of the conflict than to save their prisoners of war. There was no greater crime in the Soviet code than that of falling into enemy hands...”<sup>1016</sup>

Alexander Soldatov writes: “The memory of the ‘Vlasovites’ is dear to many children of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR)... In the memorial cemetery of ROCOR in Novo Diveyevo near New York there stands an obelisk which perpetuates the memory of all the officers and soldiers of the Russian Army of Liberation, who perished ‘in the name of the idea of a Russia free from communism and fascism’...”<sup>1017</sup> The slogan, “Russia free from communism and fascism” is as relevant now as it was in 1945...

And so “from 1945 to 1947, 2,272,000 people were handed over by the Allies to the USSR. Of these more than 600,000 had served in the ‘eastern forces’ of the German army. About 200,000 managed to remain in the West.”<sup>1018</sup>

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<sup>1014</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 431. Tony Judt gives a figure of 40,000 Croats killed and 10,000 Slovenes handed over (op. cit., pp. 23, 30, notes).

<sup>1015</sup> Spektor, *Facebook* communication, June 2, 2016.

<sup>1016</sup> Plokhy, op. cit., pp. 305-06.

<sup>1017</sup> Soldatov, “Radosti Paskhi i Skorb’ Pobedy” (The Joys of Pascha and the Sorrow of Victory), *Moskovskie Novosti* (Moscow News) and *Vertograd*, N 520, May 14, 2005.

<sup>1018</sup> Soldatov, op. cit., p. 11, footnote 6.

According to Sergei Shumilo, however, “more than 6 million ‘Soviet’ prisoners of war, ‘Osty’ workers, refugees and émigrés were forcibly repatriated to the U.S.S.R. up to 1948. The majority of them perished within the walls of Stalin’s NKVD.”<sup>1019</sup> Ferguson calculates that by 1953 the West “had sent nearly five and a half million people back to the Soviet Union. Of these around a fifth were executed or sentenced to the maximum of twenty-five years in labour camps.”<sup>1020</sup>

Protopriest Michael Ardov writes: “I remember quite well the years right after the war, 1945, 1946, and how Moscow was literally flooded with cripples, soldiers who were missing arms and legs, returning from the war, and then, suddenly, they all disappeared. Only later did I learn that they were all picked up and packed off to die on the island of Valaam, in order not to spoil the view in the capital. There was no monastery there then. You can just imagine for yourselves the conditions that they had to endure there while living out their last days. They were so poor, and were reduced to begging in order to survive. This is how they were treated, just so that the capital should not be spoiled by their presence! This I remember quite well. Besides this, as we all know that, because of Stalin and his military leaders, an enormous number of Soviet citizens were taken out of the country as prisoners. The government immediately disowned them; they were immediately branded traitors. And the consequences of this were that when they, for some reason or another, came back to our country, most of them were whisked off to Stalin’s labour camps. This is how they treated the veterans then...”

“Under the pretext of restoring ‘socialist legality’ whole families, and even settlements, were sent to Siberia, mainly from Western Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic region. By the end of the 40s, Soviet Marshal Zhukov had ordered the forcible removal from Western Ukraine to Siberia, Kazakhstan and other regions of more than 600,000 people.”<sup>1021</sup>

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Norman Davies writes: “The Strategic Bombing Offensive, which killed perhaps half a million civilians, has long been the subject for charges of ‘excessive force’, and if the German raid on Coventry, which killed 380 persons, is judged a crime, it is hard to see why the British raids on Cologne, Hamburg, Kassel, Berlin and Dresden should not be classed in the same way. In morality, two wrongs do not make a right, and pleas of justified response do not wash. If a criminal kills another man’s brother, the injured party is not entitled, even in the middle of a just war, to go off and kill all the criminal’s neighbours and relatives...”<sup>1022</sup>

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<sup>1019</sup> Shumilo, “Sovietskij Rezhim i ‘Sovietskaia Tserkov’”.

<sup>1020</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 588.

<sup>1021</sup> Shumilo, *op. cit.*

<sup>1022</sup> Davies, *Europe at War 1939-1945*, London: Pan, 2006, pp. 67-68.

The Allies condemned the Germans for bombing civilians at Guernica in the Spanish Civil War and the Japanese for bombing the Chinese in 1937. And on September 1, 1939 President Roosevelt appealed to the governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Poland to affirm that their armed forces “shall in no event, and under no circumstances, bombard civilian populations or unfortified cities from the air”.<sup>1023</sup> But when the Americans joined the war, they promptly bombed civilian populations in both East and West, culminating, as we shall see, in Hiroshima... Even before that, “Lord Weir, secretary of state for air, instructed air staff Hugh Trenchard, on 10 September 1918, ‘If you could start up a really big fire in one of the German towns. If I were you, I would not be too exacting in regard to accuracy in bombing railway stations in the middle of towns. The German is susceptible to bloodiness and I would not mind a few accidents due to inaccuracy.’”<sup>1024</sup>

In the Second World War Weir’s cynical experiment could be made on a proper scale in the Strategic Bombing Initiative. Churchill, who himself had ordered bombing of Iraqi civilians in 1920<sup>1025</sup>, wanted to employ it over Germany in retaliation for the German bombing of London and Coventry in 1940-41. He “was well aware of the moral decay war brings; was appalled by it. He had initiated the mass-bombing strategy on 2 July 1940 because he was overwhelmed by the prospect of Nazi occupation – the ultimate moral catastrophe – and saw bombing as the only offensive weapon then available to the British. This was the old utilitarian theory of morals, as opposed to natural law theory which ruled that the direct destruction of war-waging capacity was the only legitimate manner of conducting combat. But all forms of moral relativism have an innate tendency to generate moral collapse since they eliminate any fixed anchorage and launch the ship of state on an ocean where there are no bearings at all...”<sup>1026</sup>

Already in October, 1940 Churchill declared: “The civilian population around the target areas must be made to feel the weight of war.” Throughout 1941 he “repeatedly emphasized the need for Bomber Command to target the morale of ordinary Germans.”<sup>1027</sup>

“By the end of 1941,” continues Johnson, “with both Russia and America in the war, the defeat of Hitler, as Churchill himself realized, was inevitable in the long run. The utilitarian rationale for attacks on cities had disappeared; the moral case had always been inadmissible. By this time the bomber force was in being, and the economy geared to producing large numbers of long-range Lancasters.... Bombing used up 7 per cent of Britain’s total military manpower, and perhaps as much as 25 per cent of Britain’s war production.”<sup>1028</sup>

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<sup>1023</sup> Roosevelt, in Gavin Mortimer, “Countdown to Conflict”, *BBC History*, September, 2019, p. 34.

<sup>1024</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, pp. 206-207.

<sup>1025</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 558.

<sup>1026</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, pp. 402-403.

<sup>1027</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>1028</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 403.

In March, 1942 it was decided to adopt the plan of the government's scientific advisor Lindemann to bomb working-class German homes with the final aim of destroying 50 percent of all houses in the larger cities.<sup>1029</sup> The directive was issued by Bomber Command that a primary objective was the destruction of the morale of German civilians. "The first major raid carried out in accordance with the new order was on Lubeck on 28 March 1942; the city 'burned like kindling', said the official report. The first 1,000-bomber raid followed on 10 May and in the summer the American Air Force joined the campaign."<sup>1030</sup> At Casablanca in 1943 the Allies agreed that their aims should be "the progressive destruction and undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened".<sup>1031</sup>

This paved the way for the horrific Allied bombings of Hamburg (45,000 killed, 250,000 homes destroyed in July, 1943), Lubeck, Cologne, Berlin, Dresden (35,000 killed, 95,000 homes destroyed in February, 1945), Pforzheim and Wurzburg (February-March 1945).<sup>1032</sup>

However, "by 2013 the British historian Richard Overy would revise down the figures of civilians killed by Allies' wartime bombing from 600,000 to 353,000, with *Der Spiegel* concluding that no more than 18,000 to 25,000 were killed at Dresden. These were still huge numbers, compared to the roughly 60,000 British civilians killed by German bombing..."<sup>1033</sup>

The origin of the Dresden raid "was the desire of Roosevelt and Churchill at the Yalta Conference to prove to Stalin that the Allies were doing their best to assist the Russian effort on the Eastern front. In particular they wanted to deliver a crippling blow to German morale to help on the Russian offensive which began on 13 January. Dresden was not an industrial but a communications centre. Its population of 630,000 had been doubled by German refugees, 80 per cent of them peasants from Silesia. Stalin wanted them destroyed to facilitate his plan to 'move' Poland westwards and he also believed the city was being used as a concentration point for troops. According to Sir Robert Standby, deputy head of Bomber Command, the Russians specifically asked for Dresden as the target of 'Operation Thunderclap'. Not long before, the Command's chaplain, Canon L. John Collins (later to create the nuclear disarmament campaign), had invited the pious Christian socialist, Sir Stafford Cripps, who was Minister of Aircraft Production, to talk to senior officers. He took as his text 'God is my co-pilot' and told them it was essential

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<sup>1029</sup> Count Léon de Poncins, *State Secrets*, Chulmleigh, 1975, p. 57.

<sup>1030</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 403.

<sup>1031</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 562.

<sup>1032</sup> "More people had perished," writes James Barker, "in the July 1943 Hamburg firestorm than in Dresden; and Pforzheim and Wurzburg, savaged by RAF bombing in February and March 1945, would suffer disproportionately more destruction and more loss of life" ("Sowing the Wind", *History Today*, March, 2005, p. 57).

<sup>1033</sup> Sara Moore, *The Fourth Reich?* Jollies Publishing, 2016, p. 234.

they should be sure they were attacking military targets: 'Even when you are engaged in acts of wickedness, God is always looking over your shoulder.' This led to an angry scene, since Bomber Command believed Cripps's Ministry was deliberately starving them of aircraft for pseudo-moralistic reasons. Thereafter they were anxious to make it clear they were under politicians' order. Hence they queried the Dresden order. It was confirmed direct from the Yalta Conference (by either Churchill or Air Chief Marshal Portal)."<sup>1034</sup>

In all, writes Hastings, "between 1940 and 1942, only 11,228 Germans were killed by Allied bombing. From January 1943 [the month in which Roosevelt declared the "unconditional surrender" policy in Casablanca] to May 1945, a further 350,000 perished, along with unnumbered tens of thousands of foreign PoWs and slave labourers. This compares with 60,595 British people killed by all forms of German air bombardment including V-weapons between 1939 and 1945."<sup>1035</sup>

Johnson gives a still higher figure of Germans killed in the raids – 600,000, and argues that the raids "reduced but could not prevent the expansion in German war production up to the second half of 1944, achieved by the switch from civilian consumer goods which, against an index of one hundred in 1939, fell to ninety-one in 1943 and eighty-five in 1944 – Britain's being as low as fifty-four in both years."<sup>1036</sup>

By the spring of 1943 the raids forced 70 percent of the German fighter force to be diverted from the east to the west, thereby helping the Soviet advance considerably. And by D-Day most of the remaining planes had been shot down, thereby helping the Anglo-American advance. Speer called the air war "the greatest lost battle on the German side".<sup>1037</sup> Nevertheless, "post-war assessment," writes Jenkins, "was that barely seven per cent of German industrial plants were put out of action."<sup>1038</sup>

Moreover, in Speer's opinion the Allies lost a great opportunity to shorten the way by concentrating on cities rather than oil stores and ball bearings factories. "Bomber Command under Harris," writes Jonathan Glover, "resisted the priority given to oil. In October 1944, 6 per cent of the effort was directed against oil. Between October and December, 14 per cent was directed against oil and 58 per cent against cities."<sup>1039</sup> For the killing of soldiers and military equipment was not the main aim of the bombing campaign: it was *civilian* casualties that were seen, not as inevitable, albeit regrettable "collateral

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<sup>1034</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 404. With regard to Dresden, as Ferguson writes, "the latest research suggests that 25,000 victims died there on 13-14 February, rather than the hundreds of thousands once supposed" (Hastings, op. cit., p. 610, note).

<sup>1035</sup> Hastings, op. cit., p. 480.

<sup>1036</sup> Johnson, *Modern Times*, p. 403.

<sup>1037</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 566-568.

<sup>1038</sup> Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2018, p. 267.

<sup>1039</sup> Glover, *Humanity. A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1999, pp. 75-76.

damage", but as *essential* to the main purpose of the bombing, which was, in Churchill's words, "the progressive destruction and undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened".<sup>1040</sup> But, as Bishop George Bell of Chichester, a friend both of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, said in 1943: "To bomb cities as cities, deliberately to attack civilians, quite irrespective of whether they are actively contributing to the war effort, is a wrong deed, whether done by the Nazis or by ourselves."<sup>1041</sup>

Notwithstanding, on February 16, 1945, just after the Dresden bombing, the Allies announced that the new plan was to "bomb large population centres and then to attempt to prevent relief supplies from reaching and refugees from leaving them - all part of a programme to bring about the collapse of the German economy" ...<sup>1042</sup>

After Dresden, even Churchill began to have had doubts: "The moment has come when the question of the bombing of German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror... should be revised... The destruction of Dresden remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing." However, Sir Arthur Harris "remained impertinent and uncomprehending. 'In Bomber Command we have always worked on the assumption that bombing anything in Germany is better than bombing nothing.'..."<sup>1043</sup>

Niall Ferguson is right to point out an important moral difference between Allied bombing and Nazi racial killing: "the crews of Bomber Command were flying their missions in order to defeat Nazi Germany and end the war. Whether or not this was the best means of advancing that end was not for them to decide; their intent was not dishonourable. For the Nazis, let it be reiterated, the murder of Jews and other 'alien' civilians was an end in itself. Hatred filled the minds of the SS men at Belzen; it was absent from the thought of the Allied airmen."<sup>1044</sup> Nevertheless, while this may mitigate, it does not remove the guilt of the Allies; for the ends do not justify the means...

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The other Axis power that was mightily punished in 1945 was, of course, Japan, whose appalling treatment especially of the Chinese, who suffered fifteen million dead<sup>1045</sup>, but also of Allied prisoners of war and Korean women, and, last but not least, of their own people, as when they induced or coerced 100,000 Okinawans to commit suicide before the American invasion of Okinawa, merited severe punishment.

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<sup>1040</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., p. 562.

<sup>1041</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., p. 570.

<sup>1042</sup> De Poncins, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>1043</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 418.

<sup>1044</sup> Ferguson, op. cit., p. 571.

<sup>1045</sup> Hastings, op. cit., p. 669.

And they got it...

However, as we shall see, this did not make the Americans' bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki anything other than mass murder, and no justice was obtained for the victims of that mass-murder...

The repentance of the Japanese was more superficial than that of the Germans, perhaps because they lacked the Germans' Christian heritage... "In the aftermath of the war," wrote Kazutoshi Hando in 2007, "blame was placed solely on the Japanese army and navy. This seemed just, because the civilian population had always been deceived by the armed forces about what was done. Civilian Japan felt no sense of collective guilt – and that was the way the American victors and occupiers wanted it. In the same fashion, it was the Americans who urged that no modern Japanese history should be taught in schools. The consequence is that very few people under fifty have any knowledge of Japan's invasion of China or colonisation of Manchuria..."<sup>1046</sup>

As regards Japanese war crimes trials, Sebestyen writes: "In the Asian countries that Japan had occupied during the war, 984 Japanese had already been executed, many without proper trials, including 236 by the Dutch, 223 by the British, 153 by the Australians, 140 by the Americans. Nearly all were Japanese soldiers who had mistreated and killed prisoners of war. The trials of the Japanese leaders charged with 'waging a war of aggression' were an altogether more complex matter. The primary issue, as two of the judges noted, was that the greatest war criminal was not in the dock. The Australian judge Sir William Webb said: 'The leader of the crime, though available for trial, was granted immunity. The Emperor's authority was required for war. If he did not want war, he should have withheld his authority.'

"The French judge Henri Bernard stated that the entire proceedings were flawed and he couldn't pass judgement at all. The absence of the Emperor in court was 'a glaring inequity... Japan's crimes against peace had a principal author who escaped all prosecution. Measuring the Emperor by different standards undermines the cause of justice.'

"Many of the Americans who organised the trial later said that it backfired. MacArthur was doubtful about the hearings in the first place. He told Truman that it was 'comparatively simple' where the Nazis were concerned to prove genocidal intent and apportion guilt, but in Japan 'no such line of demarcation has been fixed.' One of the officers who interrogated the defendants to decide who should face trial, Brigadier-General Elliot Thorpe, told MacArthur that the entire proceedings were 'mumbo-jumbo... we made up the rules as we went along.' Later, Thorpe wrote that 'we wanted blood and by God we got blood'.

"For many others, the trials were not only victor's justice; they were white man's justice. People in the occupied countries had suffered the most, but not

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<sup>1046</sup> Hando, in Hastings, op, cit., p. 673.

one was represented on the panel of judges. A British judge represented the Malays, a French judge acted for the Vietnamese and the Cambodians. Korea had been colonised with brutal rapacity by Japan for nearly fifty years; there was no Korean judge. Among the charges faced by the two dozen defendants was that they 'engaged in a plan or conspiracy to regain their colony in Vietnam against an independence movement led by Ho Chi Minh; the Dutch fought the nationalists in an attempt to repossess their Indonesian territories, and the British fought guerrillas seeking independence in Malaya.

"Only one of the judges, the Indian Radhabinod Pal, pointed out the double standard involved. He agreed that the Japanese had committed vile crimes during their invasion and occupation of various countries but, he argued, they were neither unique nor without precedent. 'It would be pertinent to recall... that the majority of the interests claimed by the Western prosecuting powers in the Eastern hemisphere were acquired by such aggressive methods.' They claimed 'national honour' or 'the protection of vital interests' or concepts of 'manifest destiny' similar to the Japanese. The Japanese conquerors were guilty of crimes, but those crimes should be set in context. For much of Asia, the end of the Pacific war was only the beginning of the process of liberation, not the end. The trials opened up the entire question of how long the old European powers could maintain their empires. This was not the message the Allies wanted to hear - or to send to the world - when, in 1948, they executed seven military chiefs of the former Japanese empire, including the Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, who had earlier tried, and failed, to commit suicide..."<sup>1047</sup>

So how are we to evaluate what was for many the greatest war crime, the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

On the one side is the argument that dropping the Bomb saved many American lives that would have been lost in an invasion of the Japanese mainland. In support of this argument is the fact, only recently established and cited by Antony Beevor, "that the Imperial Japanese Army could never contemplate surrender, having forced all their men to fight to the death since the start of the war. All civilians were to be mobilised and forced to fight with bamboo spears and satchel charges to act as suicide bombers against Allied tanks. Japanese documents apparently indicate that their army was prepared to accept up to 28 million deaths."<sup>1048</sup> Again, Richard Frank writes: "The fact is that there was no historical record over the past 2,600 years of Japanese surrendering, nor any examples of a Japanese unit surrendering during the war. This was where the great American fear lay."<sup>1049</sup>

However, as against this argument, we now know that the Japanese were on the verge of surrender long before the nuclear bombs were dropped. Thus

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<sup>1047</sup> Sebestyen, op. cit., pp. 363-365.

<sup>1048</sup> Beevor, "Yes, Truman had little choice", *BBC History Magazine*, August, 2015, p. 58.

<sup>1049</sup> Frank, "Yes. It saved millions of lives in Japan and Asia", *BBC History Magazine*, August, 2015, p. 59.



MacArthur told Roosevelt as early as January, 1945 that the Japanese were ready to surrender on terms very similar to those eventually accepted. Some flexibility in the terms offered to the Japanese *then* would have saved hundreds of thousands both of American and Japanese lives *later*. Moreover, it would have obviated the need to ask the Soviets to intervene in the north. In that northern invasion, "some 600,000 Japanese civilians and POWs were deported to the Siberian gulags, where it was said a corpse lay under every sleeper of the railways they built. The Soviet dismantled and removed around £2 million worth of plant, while subjecting local women to attentions as infamous as those they had imposed on the women of Germany..."<sup>1050</sup>

There may also have been massive consequences for the longer-term future of the Far East. Thus John J. McLaughlin wonders: "Was Roosevelt's curt dismissal of MacArthur's warning the 'nail' that cost us the loss of not only thousands of soldiers and sailors at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, but also the Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War, and Vietnam?..."<sup>1051</sup>

General Eisenhower witnessed: 'During his [Secretary of War Henry Stimson's] recitation of the relevant facts [about the plan for using the atomic bomb], I had been conscious of a feeling of depression and so I voiced to him my grave misgivings, first on the basis of my belief that Japan was already defeated and that dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary, and secondly because I thought that our country should avoid shocking world opinion by the use of a weapon whose employment was, I thought, no longer mandatory as a measure to save American lives. It was my belief that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of 'face'...'"<sup>1052</sup>

"In all probability," writes Ferguson, "it was the Soviet decision to dash Japanese hopes of mediation and to attack Japan that convinced all but the most incorrigible diehards that the war was over. Defeat in the Pacific mattered less to the Japanese generals than the collapse of their much longer-held position in Manchuria and Korea. Indeed, it was the Soviet landing on Shikotan, not far from Japan's main northern island of Hokkaido, that forced the military finally to sign the instrument of surrender."<sup>1053</sup>

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<sup>1050</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Small Wars, Far Away Places*, London: Pan, 2013, p. 110.

<sup>1051</sup> McLaughlin, "The Bomb was not Necessary", *History News Network*, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/129964>.

<sup>1052</sup> Eisenhower, in Daniel Goldhagen, *Worse than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*, London: Abacus, 2012, pp. 3-4. Eisenhower wrote: "First, the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated to see our country be the first to use such a weapon." (Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, with Rhodes citing a 1963 profile called "Ike on Ike", in *Newsweek*, November 11, 1963).

<sup>1053</sup> Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 574.

As A.N. Wilson points out, “Albert Einstein, as early as 1946, stated the true reason for dropping the Bomb, namely that it was ‘precipitated by a desire to end the war in the Pacific by any means before Russia’s participation...’”<sup>1054</sup>

Another argument in favour of the Bomb and against the invasion of Japan was that “the Japanese had sent out an instruction to all prison commanders that in the event of an Allied landing on the home islands, all PoWs were to be killed. A copy was found in a vault in Taiwan (then Formosa) after the war and the original is now in an American archive.” (C.E.C. Lowry, letter to *The Daily Mail*, August 10, 2015, p. 58). The existence of such an order was confirmed in a book published in 1970 by Laurens van der Post, *The Night of the New Moon*. It would seem to indicate that the bomb saved perhaps a million lives of Allied PoWs in South-East Asia.”<sup>1055</sup> This is a powerful argument, but one that was not and could not have been used at the time because the decision-makers did not know about this instruction...

We come back, then, to the alternative of a blockade by sea that would very likely have starved the Japanese into surrender quite quickly, especially if a formula amounting to slightly less than unconditional surrender had been proposed enabling the Emperor to remain as the formal head of the Japanese government. His retention as the figurehead was necessary since the Army would have surrendered only at his command. In the end, such a compromise was made with regard to the Emperor, which led to the Japanese surrender. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it would seem, played no significant part in the Japanese decision to surrender when they did.

The conclusion, then, must be that Truman committed mass murder in order to end the war before the Russians intervened, but that the Japanese surrendered when they did, not because of the bomb, but because the Russians were about to intervene. For, as Daniel Jonah Goldhagen writes, Truman knew that each bomb “would kill tens of thousands of Japanese civilians who had no direct bearing on any military operation, and who posed no immediate threat to Americans. In effect, Truman chose to snuff out the lives of approximately 300,000 men, women and children. Upon learning of the bomb’s annihilation of Hiroshima, Truman was jubilant, announcing that ‘this is the greatest thing in history’. He then followed up in Nagasaki with a second *greatest thing*. It is hard to understand how any right-thinking person could fail to call slaughtering unthreatening Japanese *mass murder*.”<sup>1056</sup>

Of course, few would say that Truman was as bad a man as his ally of the time, Stalin, or his enemies of the time, Hitler and the Japanese militarists. The evaluation of the man – *any* man – belongs to God alone. However, we must define the act for what it was. As Goldhagen continues, “The failure to

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<sup>1054</sup> Wilson, op. cit., pp. 471-472.

<sup>1055</sup> Christopher Booker, “The terrible Bomb really saved millions of lives”, *The Sunday Telegraph*, August 9, 2015, p. 20).

<sup>1056</sup> Goldhagen, op. cit., p. 3.

distinguish between defining an act, explaining it, and morally judging it likely leads many to recoil at putting Truman in the dock with the greatest monsters of our age. Nevertheless, that Truman should have found himself before a court to answer for his actions seems clear. How such a court's judgement and essence would read – compared to those of the other four {Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot} can be debated. Truman was not a Hitler, Stalin, Mao or Pol Pot. In this sense, people's intuitions are correct. But that should not stop us from seeing his deeds for what they are..."<sup>1057</sup>

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So was justice done at the end of the Second World War? Could the savage vengeance carried out on the Germans by the Soviets, with the connivance of the Americans and the British, or on the Japanese by the Americans with the connivance of the British and the Soviets, be justified on the basis of the defeated states' undoubted criminality? By no means. If this was justice, it was terribly partial and flawed: some of the criminals were condemned, many went scot-free (like the Emperor of Japan). Still more important, it was also grossly hypocritical: almost every crime that the Germans committed, except the wholesale slaughter of Jews, was imitated by the Soviets and the Anglo-Americans. For, as Niall Ferguson writes, "the charges against the Japanese leaders who stood trial in Tokyo included 'the wholesale destruction of human lives, not alone on the field of battle... but in the homes, hospitals, and orphanages, in factories and fields'. But what else had the Allies perpetrated in Germany and Japan in the last months of the war?"<sup>1058</sup>

However, the victors were the judges, and so could not be brought to justice. Contrary to the first principle of liberal democracy, they were above the law. Schiller said: "World history is the world's court (of judgement)" (*Die Weltgeschichte ist Weltegericht*). But this cannot be true unless history includes the very last moment of history - the moment that goes beyond history - the Day of the Last and most Terrible Judgement. True justice will have to wait until then, until the verdict of the only Just Judge.

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<sup>1057</sup> Goldhagen, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>1058</sup> Ferguson, *The War of the World*, p. 579.