

ESSAYS IN BALKAN ORTHODOXY

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INTRODUCTION

This collection of essays, written over a period of several years, discusses various events in the religious and political history of the Balkans, excluding Greece. The longest and most recent essays are devoted to the True Orthodox Churches of Serbia and Romania in particular. It is hoped that they will contribute to a deeper understanding of a little-known but very important segment of Orthodox Church history.

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1. THE FIRST BULGARIAN EMPIRE

Early in the 860s Khan Boris of Bulgaria was converted to the Orthodox faith by the famous Greek bishop St. Methodius. Methodius with his brother St. Cyril had originally been invited to the court of Prince Rostislav of Moravia, but the German bishops of Passau and Salzburg persuaded Pope Stephen V to ban Slavonic as a liturgical language (reversing the decision of his predecessor, John VIII), and so St. Methodius and his disciples had been forced to flee to Bulgaria. In 865 Boris was baptized, probably by St. Photius, and took the name Michael after his godfather, the Emperor Michael. In this way the foundation was laid, not only of the Christianization of Bulgaria, but also of the unification of its two constituent peoples, the Bulgar ruling class and the Slavic peasants, who had been at loggerheads up to that time.

However, Tsar Boris-Michael wanted the Bulgarian Church to be autonomous, a request that the Mother Church of Constantinople denied. So, taking advantage of the rift that was opening up between the Eastern and Western Churches and empires, he turned to Pope Nicholas I with a series of questions on the faith and a request that Bulgaria be given a patriarch. The Pope did not grant the latter request, but in other respects (for example, in relation to permissible food and clothing) he showed greater flexibility than the Byzantines, and Boris was sufficiently encouraged by his reply to expel the Greek clergy and allow Roman missionaries – with the new Frankish heresy of the Filioque – into his land.

Since the Bulgarian Church was clearly within the jurisdiction of Constantinople, the Pope's mission to Bulgaria was already a canonical transgression and a first manifestation of his claim to universal dominion in the Church. It would never have happened if the West had recognised the authority of the East Roman Emperor, as the Popes had done in earlier centuries. The same could be said of the later expulsion of Saints Cyril and Methodius from Moravia by jealous German bishops – these were all fruits, in the ecclesiastical sphere, of that division that had first begun in the political sphere, when the Pope crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Romans.

After some turmoil, the Bulgarian Church was firmly re-established within the Eastern Church and Empire with its see in Ohrid. A pagan reaction was crushed, the Scriptures and services were translated into Slavonic by the disciples of St. Methodius, Saints Clement and Nahum, and a vast programme of training native clergy was initiated. The conversion of the Slavs to Orthodoxy began in earnest...

However, the virus of national self-assertion had been sown in Bulgaria almost simultaneously with the Christian faith, and during the reign of St. Boris' youngest son, Symeon, Bulgaria was almost continuously at war with the Empire. Autonomy for a native Bulgarian Church was now no longer the issue: the Bulgarian khans now wanted to take the place of the Byzantine emperors. Thus Symeon assumed the title of "tsar of the Bulgarians and the Romans" and tried to capture Tsargrad (Constantinople).

St. Nicholas the Mystic vigorously defended the authority of the East Roman Emperor. "The power of the Emperor," he said, "which extends over the whole earth,

is the only power established by the Lord of the world upon the earth.” Again, he wrote to Tsar Symeon in 913: “God has submitted the other sceptres of the world to the heritage of the Lord and Master, that is, the Universal Emperor in Constantinople, and does not allow his will to be despised. He who tries by force to acquire for himself the Imperial dignity is no longer a Christian”.

However, Symeon continued to act like a new Constantine, transferring the capital of the new Christian kingdom from Pliska, with its pagan associations, to Preslav on the model of St. Constantine’s moving his capital from Rome to Constantinople. And during the reign of his more peaceful son Peter (927-969) the Byzantines conceded both the title of “basileus” to the Bulgarian tsar (so there were now three officially recognised Christian emperors of the one Christian empire, with capitals at Constantinople, Aachen and Preslav!) and (in 932) the title “patriarch” to the first-hierarchy of the Bulgarian Church, Damian. Peter’s legitimacy was also recognised by the greatest of the Bulgarian saints, John of Rila.

However, after the death of Peter, in about 971, the Bulgarian kingdom was conquered by the Byzantines, as a consequence of which the local Bulgarian dioceses were again subjected to the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. There was a resurgence of Bulgarian power in Macedonia under Tsar Samuel, who established his capital and patriarchate in Ohrid. But this did not last long either. In 1014 the Bulgarian armies were decisively defeated by Emperor Basil “the Bulgar-slayer”, leading to the end of the Bulgarian empire and its re-absorption into the Roman Empire. The Ohrid diocese’s autocephaly was still recognised, but it was demoted from a patriarchate to an archbishopric.¹ And so Bulgarian nationalism was dealt a decisive blow in both Church and State...

Now it has been claimed that the task assigned to Bulgaria and King Boris by God “could be realized only by an independent, autonomous church, since, if the nation were to be dependent on another people in church matters, it could easily lose its political independence along with its religious independence and disappear from the face of the earth.”² Perhaps; and yet the idea that each nation-state has to have its own independent church was a new one in the history of Christianity. De facto, as a result of the conquest of certain parts of the Roman Empire by barbarian leaders, independent national Churches had sprung up in various regions, from Georgia in the East to England in the West. But the idea of a single Christian commonwealth of nations looking up to its father in God, the Christian Roman Emperor, was never completely lost; and there was still the feeling that de jure all Christian nations owed

¹ However, the autonomy of the Bulgarian Church was vigorously defended by its archbishops, including also its Greek archbishops. Thus Blessed Theophylact, the Greek archbishop of Ochrid towards the end of the eleventh century forbade a monk to found a stavropegial monastery subject directly to Constantinople, since it was “in accordance with neither the sacred canons nor the laws of the kingdom. I forbid him, for what relations are there between the Church of Bulgaria and the Patriarch of Constantinople? None at all. Constantinople possesses neither the right of ordination, nor any other rights, in Bulgaria. Bulgaria recognizes only its own archbishop as its head” (*The Explanation of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*, House Springs, Mo.: Chrysostom Press, 2011, pp. xvii-xviii).

² Archimandrite Doctor Seraphim, “The Life of King Boris-Michael, Converter of the Bulgarian People to Christianity”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 35, № 3, May-June, 1985, p. 14.

him some kind of allegiance. We see this as far afield as Scotland in the far north-west, where St. Columba anointed a king directly in the Roman autocratic tradition, and in the Arabian kingdom Himyar in the far south-east, where the anointing was carried out by an Italian bishop owing allegiance to the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople but in Aachen. It was the Bulgarian emperors who made the first serious breach in this internationalist ideal; for they called their kingdom, not by the internationalist name of Rome, but “the kingdom of the Bulgarians and the Greeks” – in other words, a national kingdom composed of two nations, with the Bulgarians as the dominant ethnic element. Coups by individuals were commonplace in Byzantine history: the attempt to place one nation above all others was new...

On the other hand, it could be argued that the Bulgarians’ ecclesiastical nationalism, as expressed in their insistence on having an autocephalous Church independent of Constantinople, was a natural reaction to the Greeks’ no less dangerous and prideful insistence that their empire “extends over the whole earth, and is the only power established by the Lord of the world upon the earth”. The idea of the Roman universal empire was an essentially pagan one that refused to die out when the empire became Christian. It was unsustainable, not only for the obvious reason that the Byzantine Empire never ruled the whole world and towards its end ruled only a tiny area much smaller than, for example, that of the Russian Great Prince, but also because the legitimacy of Orthodox Christian kingdoms, such as those of England or Spain or Georgia, neither derived from, nor depended on, Byzantium in any way.

The idea of the New Rome as the primus inter pares was acceptable to all the Orthodox Christian States: the idea that the legitimacy of their States, and the independence of their Churches, depended completely on their submission to, or recognition by, New Rome, was not. With the single exception of Serbian autocephaly (and that only at the beginning), the Byzantines always resisted the bestowal of ecclesiastical autocephaly. Ignoring the obvious benefits that an independent Church would bring in promoting the Faith in a newly Christianized kingdom, they tended to offer it only when they had no alternative, as a bargaining chip in negotiations with a stronger rival – and withdrew the favour immediately they themselves felt stronger. Byzantine imperial nationalism was revived, after the fall of the City in 1453, in the form of Greek quasi-imperial nationalism, and elicited anti-imperial nationalisms among the Balkan Orthodox that have caused innumerable quarrels down the centuries, undermining the true universalism that is the Orthodox Christian ideal...

2. ST. SAVA AND SERBIAN AUTOCEPHALY

Among the achievements of the Nicaean Empire was the granting of autocephaly to the Serbian Church in the person of her first archbishop, St. Savva. This was a unique event in that *full* autocephaly, - as opposed to, for example, the semi-autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church centred at Ohrid, - had never been granted before to any Church by the Byzantines. As Alexander Dvorkin writes, St. Savva “received practically complete independence from Constantinople and jurisdiction ‘over all the Serbian and coastal lands’ (an unambiguous reference to Zeta [Montenegro], which had left to join the Latins). Thus the status of the Serbian Church was in essence equivalent to that of a patriarchate or to the autocephalous Churches of today. The one link with Constantinople that was demanded of it was the commemoration of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the Eucharistic prayer (‘Among the first, O Lord, remember...’). The autocephalous status of the Serbian Church became in many ways a new formula...”

“The establishment of the Serbian demonstrated a subtle, but very important evolution in the meaning of the concept of autocephaly. Before that, with the single exception of Georgia, all the autocephalous Churches had been in the Empire and had acquired juridical status by a one-man decision of the emperor or by a decree of an Ecumenical Council. The new autocephalies (that is, Serbia and Bulgaria) were created by means of bilateral agreements between two civil governments. This reflected the new tendency to view ecclesiastical autocephaly as the mark of a national state, which undoubtedly created a precedent for ecclesiastical relations in recent history, when increasingly passionate nationalist politics – both in the Balkans and in other places – turned the struggle for national autocephalies into the phenomenon which we know today as ecclesiastical **phyletism**...”³

And yet the Serbian autocephaly was neither motivated by phyletism, nor were its consequences in the medieval period anything other than good. For the Serbs proceeded to create one of the most perfect examples of Church-State symphony in Orthodox history. Both in the fact that the first king, St. Stefan, and the first archbishop of the Nemanja dynasty, St. Savva, were father and son, and that the son became the spiritual father of his physical father, we see a profound symbol of the true relationship between Church and State, in which the physical pre-eminence of the State is controlled and purified by the spiritual pre-eminence of the Church.

Moreover, St. Savva enshrined the ideal in his *Zakonopravilo* or *Kormchija*, “a code,” as Dmitrije Bogdanovich writes, “written in 1220 and consisting of a selection of Byzantine legal texts, to be enforced in the Serbian Church and State life. Under the title of ‘The Law of the Holy Fathers’, they were enforced throughout the Middle Ages; to a certain extent, they were valid even later, during the reign of the Ottoman empire. It is a known fact that the reason behind the drafting of this code was the planned establishment of an independent, autocephalous Serbian Church. On his way back from Nicaea, where in 1219 he succeeded in having the autocephaly recognized, thus securing the preconditions for the organization of a new Church, Serbia’s first

³ Dvorkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 688, 690.

archbishop St. Sava, aided by a group of collaborators and working on Mount Athos and in Salonika, put together a selection of Byzantine Church laws, relying on the existing nomocanon but taking a highly characteristic course. Instead of following the existing nomocanonic codes, where certain commentators opposed the original symphony of the political and ecclesiastical elements, subordinating the latter to the former, Sava selected texts which, as opposed to the ideas and relations then obtaining in Byzantium ('Caesaropapism', the supremacy of the State over the Church), constituted a return to the old, authentic relation, i.e. the original Orthodox, early Byzantine political philosophy.

"'St. Sava', as S. Troitsky puts it, 'rejected all the sources containing "traces of the Hellenic evil" in the form of the theory of Caesaropapism', since that theory went against the dogmatic and canonical doctrine of the episcopate as the seat of Church authority, as well as the political situation in Serbia, where imperial authority had not yet been established at the time. He also rejected the theory of "Eastern Papism", which, according to Troitsky, imposes the supremacy of the Church of Constantinople over all the other local Churches of the Orthodox oecumene – and which was, moreover, at variance with the dogmatic doctrine of the Council as the supreme organ of Church authority, with the canonical doctrine proclaiming the equality of the heads of the autocephalous Churches, and with the position of the Serbian Church itself, which met the fundamental canonical condition of autocephaly (that of independently electing its own bishops), so that any interference of the Patriarch of Constantinople in its affairs would have been anticanonical. Sava therefore left out of the *Nomocanon* any work from the Byzantine canonical sources in which either the centripetal ideology of Caesaropapism or the Eastern Papism theory was recognized; he resolutely 'stood on the ground of the diarchic theory of symphony', even to the extent of amending it somewhat..."⁴

"Serbian history," writes Bishop Nikolai, "never knew of any struggle between Church and state. There were no such struggles, but bloody wars have filled the history of Western nations. How does one explain the difference between the two cases? The one is explained by theodulia [the service of God]; the other by theocracy.

"Let us take two tame oxen as an example, how they are both harnessed to the same yoke, pull the same cart, and serve the same master. This is theodulia. Then let us take two oxen who are so enraged with each other that one moment the ox on the left pulls himself out from the yoke and gores the other one, goading him on to pull the cart alone, while the next moment the ox on the right does the same to his companion on the left. This is theocracy: the war of the Church against the state and the war of the state against the Church; the war of the pope against kings and the war of kings against the pope. Neither ox wished to be yoked and serve the Master; each of them wanted to play the role of the Master and drive his companion under the yoke. Thus the Master's cart has remained stationary and his field uncultivated and has

⁴ Bogdanovich, "The Political Philosophy of Medieval Serbia", in 1389-1989, *Boj na Kosovu* (The Battle of Kosovo), Belgrade, 1989, p. 16. St. Savva's *Zakonopravilo* has only recently been published in full by Professor Miodrag M. Petrovich – not in Serbia, where the official hierarchy discouraged its publication, but in Greece.

eventually become completely overgrown with weeds. This is what happened in the West.”⁵

“In those days 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...”⁶

5 Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, *A Treasury of Serbian Orthodox Spirituality*, Grays lake, Ill.: Free Serbian Diocese, 1988, pp. 23-24.

6 Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, “The Life of St. Sava”, in *Sabrana Dela* (Collected Works), volume 12, Khimelstir, 1984, pp. 573-574.

3. TSAR DUSHAN AND THE SERBIAN EMPIRE

"The 14th century," writes Dvorkin, "buried the epoch of multinational super-empires. The future lay with centralized national states. However, it is interesting to note how long the peoples did not want to part with the myth of the Empire, to become the centre of which became the dream of practically every European state both in the East and in the West, from Bulgaria to Castilia. In the course of the 13th-14th centuries the canonists of many countries independently of each other developed the principle of the translatio imperii (translation of the empire). This process touched Russia a little later – in the 15th century, in the form of the theory of the Third Rome, which Moscow became..."⁷

Of all the newly powerful nation-states of the 14th century formed out of the ruins of the ever-decreasing Byzantine Empire, the most powerful was Serbia.

Aristides Papadakis writes: "Greatly expanded under powerful leaders like King Stephen Urosh Milutin (1282-1321) and particularly Stephen Dushan (1331-55), the Serbian kingdom annexed traditionally Byzantine territories in Macedonia and northern Greece. In fact, Stephen Dushan dominated the entire Balkan peninsula. It was inevitable that, like Symeon of Bulgaria in the tenth century, he would dream of taking Constantinople itself and assume the 'Roman' imperial title. In the expectation of achieving this goal, he called himself – provisionally – 'emperor and autocrat of Serbia and Romania' (1345) and raised the archbishop of Pech to the rank of 'patriarch of the Serbs and the Greeks'. The important city of Skopje, captured by Milutin, had, more than the other, smaller cities of the Serbian realm, the appearance of an imperial capital. There, on April 16, 1346, Dushan was crowned emperor by his newly-established patriarch Ioannikije."⁸

Shortly after this, Dushan published his "Archangelic Charter", whose introduction set out his political theology in impressive style. The foundation of all power is the Lord God, Who dwells in eternal light. The earthly ruler is a lord only for a time; he does not dwell in eternal light; and his splendour is only a reflection of the splendour of the Lord God. The incarnation of God the Word, His humiliation and descent, is imitated by the earthly ruler in his constant self-correction and the thought of death: "I am reminded of the terrible hour of death, for all the prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and saints, and emperors died in the end; none of them remained, all were buried, and the earth received them all like a mother". At the same time, the ruler, if he protects Orthodoxy and is guided by love for God, earns the titles "holy lord", "patriot", "enlightener of Serbia" and "peace libator". In accordance with this dual character of the ruler's power, his subjects are obliged, on the one hand, to obey him, in accordance with St. Paul's word, and on the other to criticise him if he departs from the true path. For while power as such is from God, those in power may act in accordance with God's will or against it.⁹

⁷ Dvorkin, op. cit., p. 716.

⁸ Papadakis, op. cit., pp. 258-259.

⁹ Bogdanovich, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

Dushan's code, writes Rebecca West, "brought up to date the laws made by the earlier kings of the Nemanyan dynasty and was a nicely balanced fusion of Northern jurisprudence and the Byzantine system laid down by Justinian. It coped in an agreeable and ingenious spirit with the needs of a social structure not at all to be despised even in comparison with the West.

"There, at this time, the land was divided among great feudal lords who ruled over innumerable serfs; but here in Serbia there were very few serfs, so few that they formed the smallest class in the community, and there was a large class of small free landowners. There was a National Diet which met to discuss such important matters as the succession to the throne or the outbreak of civil war, and this consisted of the sovereigns, their administrators, the great and small nobility, and the higher clergy; it was some smaller form of this, designed to act in emergencies that met to discuss whether John Cantacuzenus should receive Serbian aid. All local government was in the hands of the whole free community, and so was all justice, save for the special cases that were reserved for royal jurisdiction, such as high treason, murder, and highway robbery. This means that the people as a whole could deal with matters that they all understood, while the matters that were outside common knowledge were settled for them by their sovereign and selected members of their own kind; for there were no closed classes, and both the clergy and the nobility were constantly recruited from the peasantry."¹⁰

In this period, the way in which the Serbian kings were portraying themselves was almost indistinguishable from the symbolism of the Byzantine Emperors. Thus Desanka Miloshevich describes a portrait of Tsar Milutin in Grachanitsa in which "the king had all the prerogatives of power of the Byzantine Emperor, except for the title. The crown, the garments, the loros and the sceptre were all identical to the Byzantine Emperor's. Before Milutin, something like this would have been absolutely unthinkable, for only the Byzantine Emperor was Christ's regent on earth..."¹¹

Dushan went further: directly challenging the authority of the Byzantine Emperor, he refused to call his kingdom, following Byzantine custom, "of the Romans", but rather "of the Serbs and the Greeks". The ethnicity of this title was in direct contradiction to the universalism of Christian Romanity. And yet he had come to the throne by rebelling against and then strangling his own father, St. Stephen Dechansky; so his claim even to the Serbian throne, not to speak of the Byzantine, was weak.

In spite of this, so feeble and divided was the Empire at this time that many Greeks supported his claims, and the protos of Mount Athos was present at his coronation in Skopje. But St. Gregory Palamas, remained loyal to Byzantium – even though Dushan had ransomed him from captivity to the Turks. St. Gregory confirmed the traditional Byzantine theory that just as there is only one true God, so there can be only one Orthodox empire. As he wrote: "Will you transform into two emperors that one

10 West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, pp. 892-893.

11 Miloshevich, in Tim Judah, *The Serbs*, London: Yale University Press, 1997, p. 22.

emperor whom God has established for us on the earth? Will you demonstrate that his empire is composed of two empires?"¹²

"The Serbian patriarchate was immediately recognized and supported by the patriarch of Trnovo and the archbishop of Ochrid (the latter was now controlled by Serbian power), as well as the monasteries of Mount Athos. It included within its realm a number of Greek dioceses, located on territories conquered by Dušan. In the circumstances, it is understandable that the establishment of such a patriarchate was challenged in Constantinople: on December 1349, ecumenical patriarch Callistus anathematized the Serbian Church."¹³

To anathematize a whole Local Church neither for heresy nor for schism, but for appropriating to itself territories that did not belong to it may have been a defensible step, but it was also a drastic one. It showed how anxious the patriarch was, in the absence of a strong emperor, to retain the centralising power of the patriarchate as the "glue" holding the Byzantine commonwealth together.

However, there is no question: the leading power in the Balkan peninsula at this time was not Byzantium, but Serbia. Dushan's land was prosperous, and attracted Venetians and Ragusans as traders, and Saxons as miners. As West writes: "Against the military difficulties that constantly beset Stephen Dushan there could be counted the security of this possession: a country rich in contented people, in silver and gold, in grain and cattle, in oil and wine, and in the two traditions, one Byzantine and mellow, one Slav and nascent, which inclined its heart towards civilization... Stephen Dushan ordered that all foreign envoys travelling through the land should be given all the meat and drink they desired at the imperial expense. As he pressed southward into Byzantine territory he restored to it elements necessary to civilized life which it had almost forgotten. He was not in need of money, so he did not need to rob his new subjects after the fashion of participants in the Civil War; he taxed them less, repaired gaps in their strongholds, and lent them Serbian soldiers as police. He also practised the principle of toleration, which was very dear to the Byzantine population; it must be remembered that the Orthodox crowd of Constantinople rushed without hesitation to defend the Saracen merchants' mosque when it was attacked by the fanatic Latin knights. There could be no complete application of this principle, and Stephen Dushan certainly appointed Serbian governors to rule over his new territories, as well as Serbian ecclesiastics when the local priests were irreconcilable; but he left the indigenous social and political systems as he found them, and there was no economic discrimination against the conquered.

"It was as if there were falling down the map from the Serbian Empire an ooze of honey, runnels of wine. They must drip across Byzantium, they must spread all over the country to the sea, to the Bosphorus. To all men's minds it became possible that some day Stephen Dushan might come to Constantinople and that he might be

12 St. Gregory Palamas, *Triads*, III, 2, 27, in *Défense des saints hésychastes (Defence of the Holy Hesychasts)*, edited by John Meyendorff, Louvain: Sacrelegium Sacrum Lovaninense, 1973, pp. 692, 693 (in French and Greek).

13 Papadakis, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

Emperor not only of the Byzantines but of Byzantium, seated at its centre in the palace that had known Constantine the Great and Justinian... His own age, and those who lived within recollection of its glory, believed him capable of that journey, and more..."¹⁴

But it was not to be. Why? Because Dushan's quarrel with Byzantium divided the Orthodox world at just the moment it needed to unite against their common enemy, the Turks. Indeed, it was the rivalry between the two Orthodox states that let the Turks into the Balkans, leading to the destruction of both... For, as Andrew Wheatcroft writes, "in 1350 the Byzantine Emperor, John Cantacuzenus, recruited [Sultan] Orhan's Ottoman warriors in his campaign against the King of Serbia, Stephen Dushan. Three years later Orhan's son, Suleiman, crossed the Hellespont to take possession of the fortresses promised as the price of their support. Within a few years, from their base at Gallipoli, the Ottomans had advanced to cut the road from Constantinople to the fortress town of Adrianople, the capital of Thrace."¹⁵

Still more importantly, the prosperity and justice of the Serbian Empire under Tsar Dushan could not outweigh the injustice of his seizure of the throne, and, above all, the curse of the Church on the ecclesiastical and political disunity that he introduced into the Orthodox world. And so Dushan, for all his glory, was one of the few kings of the glorious Nemanja dynasty who is not inscribed among the saints. Like King Solomon's in the Old Testament, his reign marks the culmination of his people's glory in the political sphere, on the one hand, and on the other, the beginning of its decline in the spiritual sphere.

¹⁴ West, *op. cit.*, pp. 893-894.

¹⁵ Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 203.

4. TSAR LAZAR AND KOSOVO POLJE

In 1354 Patriarch Ioannikije died, and in 1355 - Tsar Dushan. "It was as if," writes Fr. Daniel Rogich, "the passing of two great religious and secular leaders created a huge vacuum over the empire which was filled by a black cloud of lack of faith and political disaster. The upcoming events and internal and external strife would bring Serbia to the brink of political and religious disaster.

"The new leadership fell into the hands of Dushan's son, King Urosh IV and Empress Helen. Urosh was only seventeen years old at the time... Being truly humble in spirit and less worldly than his departed father, Urosh was unable to control such a vast territory. In fact many began to call him Urosh 'the Weak'. As a result, the next twenty years saw the breakup of the entire region of the southern territory of the Serbian empire, as well as a vying for power in the northern half."¹⁶

In 1371 the Serbs were disastrously defeated by Sultan Murad I on the Maritsa, and in the same year Tsar Urosh died. However, at this point the Serbian Prince Lazar of Krushevac gradually began to reunite the Serbs with the slogan, Samo Sloga Srbina Spasava, that is, "Only Unity Saves the Serbs".

Still more important, he finally managed to heal the ecclesiastical break with Constantinople. "In the spring of 1375, Holy Lazar called a National Church Assembly, inviting all civil leaders and bishops to his palace in Krushevac. The widowed Empress Helen, Dushan's wife, was given a special place of honor, and Patriarch Sava IV served as the ecclesiastical head of the meeting. It was decided at the gathering to bless the virtuous monk Isaiah of Hilandar, with monks Theophanes, Silvester, Niphon, and Nicodemus as companions, to travel to Constantinople to visit His Holiness, Patriarch Philotheos (1364-1376). Due to the letters of the Patriarch and Holy Tsar Lazar, Patriarch Philotheos granted, as Archbishop Danilo II wrote in his *Lives of the Kings and Archbishops of Serbia*, 'that the Serbs would no longer simply have an archbishop, but an autocephalous Patriarch over whom no one would exercise authority.' The Patriarch also forgave Tsar Dushan, Patriarch Ioannikios, Patriarch Sava IV, King Urosh IV, and all the Serbian Orthodox Christians. He also sent two hieromonks, Matthew and Moses, to Prizren to celebrate Divine Liturgy with His Holiness Patriarch Sava IV, and to pronounce over the grave of Tsar Dushan in Pristina the revocation of the anathema. This took place on Thomas Sunday, April 29, 1375. Shortly thereafter Patriarch Sava IV fell asleep in the Lord, and Tsar Lazar summoned the Synod of Bishops, which elevated the venerable elder Ephraim as the new Patriarch of Serbia".¹⁷

In spite of this inspiring miracle of political and ecclesiastical peacemaking, the Turks continued to make inroads into Serbia, culminating in the famous battle of Kosovo Polje (Blackbird Field) in 1389, at which the Sultan was killed, but also 77,000 Serbs, including Tsar Lazar. According to tradition, on the eve of the battle King Lazar had a vision in which he was offered a choice between an earthly victory and an

¹⁶ Rogich, *Great Martyr Tsar Lazar of Serbia*, Platina: St. Herman Brotherhood, 2001, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷ Rogich, *Great Martyr Tsar Lazar of Serbia*, pp. 11-12.

earthly kingdom, or an earthly defeat that would win him the Heavenly Kingdom. He chose the latter and lost the battle – but his incorrupt relics continue to work miracles to this day.¹⁸

For as Patriarch Danilo wrote in his late-fourteenth century *Narrative about Prince Lazar*: “We have lived for a long time in the world, in the end we seek to accept the martyr’s struggle and live for ever in heaven. We call ourselves Christian soldiers, martyrs for godliness to be recorded in the book of life... Suffering begets glory and labours lead to peace.”¹⁹

According to the great Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, it was this conscious seeking of martyrdom, rather than self-preservation, that distinguished Kosovo from all other battles between Orthodox armies and the enemies of Orthodoxy. “As the dead are dressed in new and expensive clothes, so was the Serbian army dressed in its best robes. The shiny and glowing procession hurried from all the borders of the empire into the focus of honour and fame, to the field of Kosovo. Shaded by cross-shaped banners and the icons of the family saints (slava), singing and cheering, singing and playing musical instruments, with song and joy, the army rushed towards its place of execution. Not a single Christian martyr is known to have prayed to God to save him from his approaching death, while thousands and thousands are known to have prayed not to be spared from a martyr’s death. Neither did Lazar’s army hold prayers for salvation from death. On the contrary – it confessed its sins and took Communion – for death. One whole armed people as one Christian martyr, obedient to the thoughtful will of the Almighty, accepted the bitterness of death and that not as bitterness but as a vital force. And hasn’t Kosovo right up to the present day, indeed, served as a vital force to dozens of generations? In the history of the Christian peoples there is not a case of one whole army, one whole armed people being imbued by the wish to die, to meet death for the sake of its religion. Not to meet a suicidal but a heroic death. Kosovo is unique in the twenty-century-old history of the Christian world.”²⁰

However, as he stood dying, supported in the arms of a Turkish soldier, the holy king began to have doubts. “He prayed to God to reply to the question that was tormenting him: ‘I am a sinner, and I am dying, but why are my people and my warriors condemned to this torment, to these sufferings?’ And at this moment the king remembered that he had once made a choice between the earthly kingdom and the Heavenly Kingdom. And at that time he had chosen the Heavenly Kingdom. Perhaps his choice had been incorrect, and he had stirred up his people, forcing it to suffer. This thought tormented the dying king. Perhaps it was this decision of his that had become the main reason for the defeat of Serbia and the destruction of his people, the destruction of his closest friends...

“At that moment, when the pain in the soul of the king was so deep that he could no longer feel his physical sufferings, he was suddenly overshadowed by a bright light, and before him there stood an angel and someone else in shining raiment. (This

18 Tim Judah, *The Serbs*, Yale University Press, 1997, p. 39.

19 Danilo, in Wheatcroft, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

20 Velimirovich, “Kosovo”, in 1389-1989, *Boj na Kosovu*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

was the Prophet Amos – King Lazarus' holy 'slava', that is, his heavenly protector – Nun I.).

"The angel addressed him with the following words: 'Do not grieve, King Lazarus. I am sent from God. I have been sent to you to answer all the questions which are tearing your soul apart. Do not suffer thinking that you made an incorrect choice. Your choice was correct'....

"He said: 'Why has your country fallen? Because it has grown old.'

"Seeing the perplexity of the king, the angel explained that old age is not a physical condition, but a spiritual one (more precisely, not old age, but spiritual paralysis). The poison of sin had poisoned the Serbian nobility and made it old, and this poison was beginning also to penetrate the people and poison its soul. Only a powerful storm could sweep away this evil, the corrupting spirit of the poison, and save the people from the destruction that threatened it. And so in order to save the country spiritually (from sin), it would have to be overthrown. 'Do not grieve, king,' continued the Angel, 'your choice was correct and in agreement with the will of God. It is clear that Christ Himself and His angels, while confirming the sufferings of life, have given them a special higher meaning and thereby forced man to find in them a higher righteousness: to find in these sufferings the path to a better life.' King Lazarus had to understand this inner and higher meaning of sufferings. These sufferings had to be perceived by him as a voluntary exploit taken on by him and his people, an exploit of love for the highest principles of life.

"The world cannot accept this love, for it loves only itself with a love of the flesh and sensuality.

"'No, king, no,' said the angel, 'you made no mistake in your choice, and therefore you will receive a double crown, both a heavenly and an earthly. You have made the right choice, but you are sinning in doubting it.'

"'But how can my choice of the Heavenly Kingdom,' asked the king, 'bring good to my people?'

"Your choice of the Heavenly Kingdom will undoubtedly give unwaning benefit to your people. It will purify their mind, heart and will. It will transfigure their souls into radiant mirrors in which eternal life will be reflected. The Heavenly Kingdom will enter into them and will make them worthy of It. Their minds will be purified from impurity, and their hearts will become worthy of grace. 'In Thy light shall we see light'...

"'Since neither the example of the saints of your people, not the sermons of the priests have produced any benefit or positive result, Providence allowed this terrible death, this killing of your noble generals, and your death. Then will come a time of deep repentance, silence and sufferings. And so, step by step, the hearts of people will have to be drawn away from this world and return to Heaven. Their hearts must be freed from the smoke of hell and be filled with the true Light...

“One more question tormented King Lazarus: ‘Will not slavery destroy that feeling of inner freedom which is innate in my people? And will not all their talents and abilities dry up under the heavy yoke of slavery?’

The angel replied: ‘Your words, O king, witness to the fact that you are still in the chains of the flesh. But in the Heavens human affairs are evaluated only in accordance with the motives that rule man. All the rest: cities, palaces, mechanisms – are emptiness without any value. Huge cities are all just the dust of the roads, smoke that vanishes. A small, pitiful bee can laugh on looking at your huge towers and empires. And how is one to explain to a bird sitting in a cage this inner, deep meaning of the freedom of a free bird? Those who have chosen the earthly kingdom cannot understand those who have chosen the Heavenly Kingdom. Their evil will is united with the demonic will and so they cannot look on the Heavenly Kingdom. The entrance into it is closed to them. And they have no freedom, they are the slaves of their flesh and the demons.

“‘Understand, O king, that this sad day may be the day of the turning of your people, not to evil, but to good. Until now their earthly will has dragged them down into the abyss of eternal death. Beginning from now, your people must carry out the will of another, and this can teach them to carry out the will of God, separating them from self-opinion and self-will.

“‘They will have to submit to the will of a cruel tyrant, and so will be able to understand and hate their own tyranny, the tyranny of their flesh over their soul. Through the years and centuries, labours and sorrows will teach them to hate these evil powers, their own will and the will of their slave-owners.

“‘And so the people will strive upwards, to heaven, as a tree in a thick wood, and will seek the bright light of their Creator, for, not possessing anything earthly, they will easily acquire the Heavenly Light; for they will hate both their own will and the will of their slave-owners. And then the Divine will will become for them sweeter than milk and honey.

“‘... And so, O king, say to God: ‘Thy will be done.’ It is possible to understand the meaning of the cross and sufferings only if one voluntarily accepts to take up the cross sent by God. Taking up the cross is a witness to one’s love for God through one’s voluntary sufferings. The cross is the witness of holy love.’

“The angel also explained the meaning of freedom. What does freedom mean? It is a symbol. The word ‘freedom’ has many meanings. When the external form of freedom changes to the tyranny of one man over another, and is not punished by the laws of the country, then the Lord takes away the freedom of this nation and casts it into the ‘school’ of slavery, so that the people may esteem and understand true freedom. But this true, golden freedom is closely linked with the honourable cross. Only through the cross is golden freedom revealed to people. Golden freedom is true, unfailing freedom. And only that mortal man who acquires such freedom becomes truly free, and not the slave of the flesh and passions. Then it truly becomes free from

illusions, fleshly passions and glory, free from people and demons, free from himself, from his passions. Free at all times and in all places, wherever he may be, whether in freedom or in slavery. This gem is preserved precisely in the depths of the human soul. True freedom is that freedom which cannot be taken away from man by prison or any foreign power. Without this freedom man is a pitiful slave, be he a king or the meanest servant. This freedom is not from obedience to God, but this freedom is in God - the true, eternal, joyful and golden freedom.

“... And the angel added: ‘It is better to acquire the Kingdom of Heaven by sufferings than the kingdom of the earth by evil. And there is no evil on earth, or in hell, that could conquer the eternal wisdom of the Heavens.’

“After these words of the angel, Lazarus was no longer spiritually the old man, but was renewed in spirit. His soul was enlightened by the spirit of the Heavens. And although the battle still raged around him, in his soul Lazarus felt a new, eternal life and eternal joy. He sighed deeply and said: ‘Amen’.”²¹

After the death of King Lazar and the slaughter of the Serbian army at Kosovo, the Serbian State continued to exist, albeit reduced in size, under his son, St. Stefan Lazarevich. However, the Serbian Despot was now a Turkish vassal, and had to fight on the Turkish side at the battle of Nicopolis in 1396, when a western army under King Sigismund of Hungary. It may be that, like St. Alexander Nevsky 150 years before, he consciously chose to support the Turks rather than the Catholics, seeing in the latter a greater danger to the Serbian Faith and Nation. However, in the opinion of Barbara Tuchman, “as a vassal of the Sultan, the Serbian Despot, Stephen Lazarevich, might have chosen passive neutrality like the Bulgarians on whose soil the struggle was being fought, but he hated the Hungarians more than the Turks, and chose active fidelity to his Moslem overlord. His intervention was decisive. Sigismund’s forces were overwhelmed.”²²

21 Velimirovich, in Nun Ioanna, “Taina kosovskoj bitvy – dukhovnoe zaveschanie tsaria Lazaria” (“The Mystery of the Battle of Kosovo – the Spiritual Will of Tsar Lazarus”), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’* (Orthodox Life), N 7 (583), July, 1998, pp. 15, 16, 19, 21, 22-23. See also James E. Held, “Legend of the Fall, 1389: the battle of Kosovo”, *Medieval History*, N 5, January, 2004, pp. 32-37.

22 Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century*, New York: Knopf, 1978, p. 560.

5. THE BALKANS UNDER THE TURKISH YOKE

After the Ottoman Conquest, a new, and in some ways more hopeful, situation arose for the Balkan Orthodox Christians. First, the temptation to betray the faith to the Pope in order protect the State from the Sultan was removed; this allowed the Church to renounce the unia and return to Orthodoxy very soon after the Conquest. Moreover, Ottoman rule continued to give the Christians of the Balkans some protection against the inroads of western, mainly Jesuit, missionaries.

Secondly, the main cause of the conflicts between the Balkan Orthodox nations, - the imperialist nationalism of the Byzantine State, on the one hand, and the anti-imperialist nationalism of the Slavic States, on the other - were also removed. No nation could now encroach on the sovereignty of any other nation, since they were all equally the miserable subjects of the Sultan. In theory, at any rate, this communion in suffering should have brought the Christians closer together.

But in one important respect the Sultan had preserved the status quo of Greek superiority, and in this way sown the seeds of future conflicts... "The Muslims," writes Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), "drew no distinction between religion and politics: from their point of view, if Christianity was to be recognized as an independent religious faith, it was necessary for Christians to be organized as an independent political unit, an Empire within the Empire. The ecclesiastical structure was taken over in toto as an instrument of secular administration. The bishops became government officials, the Patriarch was not only the spiritual head of the Greek Orthodox Church, but the civil head of the Greek nation - the ethnarch or millet-bashi."²³

An outward symbol of this change in the status of the Patriarch was his wearing a crown in the Divine services. Hieromonk Elia writes: "Until Ottoman times, that is until the 14th century, bishops did not wear crowns, or anything else upon their heads in church. When there was no longer an Emperor, the Patriarch began to wear a crown, and the 'sakkos', an imperial garment, indicating that he was now head of the millet or nation."²⁴

So the Serbs, Bulgars and Romanians were again under a Greek ruler who wore a crown, even if he in turn was ruled by the Sultan! And they knew that if the Sultan were removed, then the Greek Patriarch-Ethnarch would again be in charge, like the Byzantine Autocrats of old... The fact that the Orthodox of all nations were now one nation in law could have been seen as a message from God: "You - Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Romanians - are all one nation in My eyes. Cease your quarrelling, therefore, and love each other." But if that was the message, it was not heeded. After a pause the Greco-Slavic conflicts of the Byzantine period resumed...

Now the millet system had the consequence that "the Church's higher administration became caught up in a degrading system of corruption and simony. Involved as they were in worldly affairs and matters political, the bishops fell a prey

²³ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, London: Penguin Books, 1997, p. 89.

²⁴ Fr. Elia, "[paradosis] Re: Bareheaded", orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com, May 9, 2006.

to ambition and financial greed. Each new Patriarch required a berat from the Sultan before he could assume office, and for this document he was obliged to pay heavily. The Patriarch recovered his expenses from the episcopate, by exacting a fee from each bishop before instituting him in his diocese; the bishops in turn taxed the parish clergy, and the clergy taxed their flocks. What was once said of the Papacy was certainly true of the Ecumenical Patriarchate under the Turks: everything was for sale. When there were several candidates for the Patriarchal throne, the Turks virtually sold it to the highest bidder; and they were quick to see that it was in their financial interests to change the Patriarch as frequently as possible, so as to multiply occasions for selling the berat. Patriarchs were removed and reinstated with kaleidoscopic rapidity."²⁵

The only Christians who could pay these bribes were the Phanariots, wealthy merchants from the Phanar district in Constantinople, who enjoyed considerable privileges throughout European Turkey, especially in Romania. According to Runciman, they "needed the support of the Church in the pursuit of their ultimate political aim. It was no mean aim. The Megali Idea, the Great Idea of the Greeks, can be traced back to days before the Turkish Conquest. It was the idea of the Imperial destiny of the Greek people. Michael VIII Palaeologus expressed it in the speech that he made when he heard that his troops had recaptured Constantinople from the Latins; though he called the Greeks the Romaioi. In later Paleologan times the word Hellene reappeared, but with the conscious intention of connecting Byzantine imperialism with the culture and traditions of ancient Greece. With the spread of the Renaissance a respect for the old Greek civilization had become general. It was natural that the Greeks, in the midst of their political disasters, should wish to benefit from it. They might be slaves now to the Turks, but they were of the great race that had civilized Europe. It must be their destiny to rise again. The Phanariots tried to combine the nationalistic force of Hellenism in a passionate if illogical alliance with the oecumenical traditions of Byzantium and the Orthodox Church. They worked for a restored Byzantium, a New Rome that should be Greek, a new centre of Greek civilization that should embrace the Orthodox world. The spirit behind the Great Idea was a mixture of neo-Byzantinism and an acute sense of race. But, with the trend of the modern world the nationalism began to dominate the oecumenicity. George Scholarius Gennadius had, perhaps unconsciously, foreseen the danger when he answered a question about his nationality by saying that he would not call himself a Hellene though he was a Hellene by race, nor a Byzantine though he had been born at Byzantium, but, rather, a Christian, that is, an Orthodox. For, if the Orthodox Church was to retain its spiritual force, it must remain oecumenical. It must not become a purely Greek Church.

"The price paid by the Orthodox Church for its subjection to its Phanariot benefactors was heavy. First, it meant that the Church was run more and more in the interests of the Greek people and not of Orthodoxy as a whole. The arrangement made between the Conquering Sultan and the Patriarch Gennadius had put all the Orthodox within the Ottoman Empire under the authority of the Patriarchate, which was inevitably controlled by Greeks. But the earlier Patriarchs after the conquest had been

²⁵ Ware, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

aware of their oecumenical duties. The autonomous Patriarchates of Serbia and Bulgaria had been suppressed when the two kingdoms were annexed by the Turks; but the two Churches had continued to enjoy a certain amount of autonomy under the Metropolitans of Peć and of Tirnovo or Ochrid. They retained their Slavonic liturgy and their native clergy and bishops. This did not suit the Phanariots. It was easy to deal with the Churches of Wallachia and Moldavia because of the infiltration of Greeks into the Principalities, where anyhow the medieval dominance of the Serbian Church had been resented. The Phanariot Princes had not interfered with the vernacular liturgy and had, indeed, encouraged the Roumanian language at the expense of the Slavonic. The upper clergy was Graecized; so they felt secure. The Bulgarians and the Serbs were more intransigent. They had no intention of becoming Graecized. They protested to some effect against the appointment of Greek metropolitans. For a while the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć was reconstituted, from 1557 to 1755. The Phanariots demanded tighter control. In 1766 the autonomous Metropolitanate of Peć was suppressed and in 1767 the Metropolitanate of Ochrid. The Serbian and Bulgarian Churches were each put under an exarch appointed by the Patriarch. This was the work of the Patriarch Samuel Hantcherli, a member of an upstart Phanariot family, whose brother Constantine was for a while Prince of Wallachia until his financial extortions alarmed not only the tax-payers but also his ministers, and he was deposed and executed by the Sultan's orders. The exarchs did their best to impose Greek bishops on the Balkan Churches, to the growing anger of both Serbs and Bulgarians. The Serbs recovered their religious autonomy early in the nineteenth century when they won political autonomy from the Turks. The Bulgarian Church had to wait till 1870 before it could throw off the Greek yoke. The policy defeated its own ends. It caused so much resentment that when the time came neither the Serbs nor the Bulgarians would cooperate in any Greek-directed move towards independence; and even the Roumanians held back. None of them had any wish to substitute Greek for Turkish political rule, having experienced Greek religious rule...."²⁶

26 Runciman, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-380. Thus, as J. Frazee writes, "the first Greek had been appointed to the patriarchate of Peć in 1737 at the insistence of the Dragoman Alexandros Mavrokordatos on the plea that the Serbs could not be trusted. The Phanariots began a policy which led to the exclusion of any Serbian nationals in the episcopacy" (*The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1853*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 7, note 1). Again, Noel Malcolm writes: "By 1760, according to a Catholic report, the Patriarch in Peć was paying 10,000 scudi per annum to the Greek Patriarch. In 1766, pleading the burden of the payments they had to make under this system, the bishops of many Serbian sees, including Skopje, Niš and Belgrade, together with the Greek-born Patriarch of Peć himself, sent a petition asking the Sultan to close down the Serbian Patriarchate and place the whole Church directly under Constantinople... The primary cause of this event was not the attitude of the Ottoman state (harsh though that was at times) but the financial oppression of the Greek hierarchy. In the Hapsburg domains, meanwhile, the Serbian Church based in Karlovci continued to operate, keeping up its de facto autonomy." (*Kosovo*, London: Papermac, 1998, p. 171). Again, Stanoe Stanoevich writes: "The Patriarchate of Constantinople was aspiring to increase its power over all the Serbian lands in the hope that in this venture the Greek hierarchy and Greek priesthood would abundantly increase their parishes. The intrigues which were conducted for years because of this in Constantinople produced fruit. By a firman of the Sultan dated September 13, 1766, the Peć patriarchate was annulled, and all the Serbian lands in Turkey were subject to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Immediately after this the Greek hierarchy, which looked on the Serbian people only as an object for material exploitation, began a struggle against the Serbian priesthood and against the Serbian people" (*Istoria Sprskogo Naroda* (History of the Serbian People), Belgrade, 1910, p. 249 (in

“Everywhere,” writes Schmemmann, “former bishops who were native Bulgars and Serbs were deposed and replaced by Greeks. This canonical abuse of power was accompanied by forced ‘Grecizing’, particularly in Bulgaria, where it later served as the basis of the so-called Bulgarian question.

“This same sad picture prevailed in the East as well, in the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, where Orthodox Arabs became the victims of this forced unification. All these offenses, stored up and concealed – all these unsettled accounts and intrigues – would have their effect when the Turkish hold began to slacken and the hour for the rebirth of the Slavic peoples drew near...”²⁷

Even in the eleventh century, when Emperor Basil II destroyed the First Bulgarian empire, and demoted the Bulgarian patriarchate to the status of a “holy archiepiscopate”, he did not destroy the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church. Moreover, he appointed a Bulgarian as first archbishop of Ochrid in the new dispensation. And two centuries later, the Greeks were prepared to grant autocephaly to the Serbian Church... In the eighteenth century, however, the Greeks achieved through “peaceful” means – and through the agency of the godless Turks – what they had refused to carry out in the eleventh century: the complete suppression of Slavic ecclesiastical independence. Moreover, if, in the eleventh century they had had some excuse in that the Byzantine Empire was indeed the Empire of Christian Rome, and recognized as such throughout the Orthodox world, in the eighteenth century they were not even an independent nation-state, but slaves of the godless Turks...

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The Serbs had always seen themselves as the western outpost of Orthodoxy. As such, they suffered not only from eastern invaders, such as the Turks, but also from western heretics, such as the Austrians and Hungarians. The last remnants of Serbian independence against the Turks, centered on Smederovo, disappeared in 1459²⁸, and Bosnia fell in 1463.

Serbian)). Again, Mark Mazower writes: “A saying common among the Greek peasants,’ according to a British traveller, was that ‘the country labours under three curses, the priests, the *cogia bashis* [local Christian notables] and the Turks, always placing the plagues in this order.’ In nineteenth-century Bosnia, ‘the Greek Patriarch takes good care that these eparchies shall be filled by none but Fanariots, and thus it happens that the... Orthodox Christians of Bosnia, who form the majority of the population, are subject to ecclesiastics alien in blood, in language, in sympathies, who oppress them hand in hand with the Turkish officials and set them, often, an even worse example of moral depravity.’ The reason was clear: ‘They have to send enormous bribes yearly to the fountainhead.’ This story of extortion and corruption spelled the end of the old Orthodox ecumenicism, created bitterness between the Church and its flock, and - where the peasants were not Greek speakers - provoked a sense of their exploitation by the ‘Greek’ Church which paved the way for Balkan nationalism.” (*The Balkans*, London: Phoenix, 2000, pp. 61-62)

²⁷ Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, London: Harvill, 1963, p. 280.

²⁸ According to Dr. Miodrag M. Petrović, there was no independent Bosnian Church, although there were Orthodox Christians served by clergy of the Serbian Church. The so-called “Bosnian Church” was not an organization with an ecclesiastical territory and jurisdiction, but a completely secular institution, a diplomatic, advisory, arbitration and intermediary body at the courts of Bosnian rulers.

"The devastation was terrible. According to early Turkish sources, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were ten to fourteen active places of Christian worship left in Kosovo and Metohija."²⁹

Of particular significance in the history of Serbia under the Turkish yoke was the burning of the body of St. Sava, which had been placed in the monastery of Mileshevo. "Mileshevo was plundered and destroyed," writes Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, "but happily not destroyed. The sarcophagus with Sava's incorruptible body was not removed or desecrated for one hundred and fifty years after the Turkish conquest. Ever since Sava's body was laid in it, and for over two hundred years of Serbian freedom and independence, Mileshevo had been a place of pilgrimages, equal to Zhicha and Studenica. It had been endowed and adorned by the Bans of Bosnia, the Princes of Herzegovina, the Zhupans of the seacoast and kings and tsars of Serbia. The petty lords wanted to make themselves great, and the great would make themselves still greater if they had some connection with Sava's tomb or Sava's name. So Tvrtko I chose Mileshevo in which to be crowned King of Bosnia at the tomb of St. Sava in 1277, although he was a protector of the Bogomils. Prince Stjepan Kossacha, an open Bogomil, adopted the title 'Duke of St. Sava'. Of course, the Orthodox rulers competed even more eagerly with each other to do something remarkable for that sanctuary in which the sacred body was preserved. In those bright days of freedom, Mileshevo was a true center of lofty piety, education and educational activity. For Sava's spirit ruled there and gave an example of strenuous labor and many accomplishments.

"In the dark days of Turkish tyranny, however, Mileshevo became to the Christian people a place of retreat, of deep repentance and of heavenly consolation. It was at the mercy of the Muslims and yet, strange as it may seem, it was for a long time protected by the Muslims themselves and the Serbs who were converted by force to Islam. The Muslims also witnessed innumerable miracles at the tomb of Saint Sava. A large village of Muslim converts, Hissarjik, close to the monastery, surpassed all others in their devotion to and protection of Mileshevo. Some of the daring European travellers who came to Serbia under the Osmanlis saw in Mileshevo the sarcophagus of Saint Sava 'heaped with the gifts given by the Muslims'. Some of them mentioned that even Roman Catholics from Dalmatia and Jews made pilgrimages to the tomb of the saint.

"This situation lasted until the end of the sixteenth century. But in that century the Osmanli Turks became exasperated because of the ceaseless revolts and insurrections of the Serbs. The Serbs had never reconciled themselves to their cruel fate under the Turkish yoke, Guerillas from forests inside the country on the one hand, and refugees from Srem, Slavonia and Banat, on the other, constantly disturbed the Ottoman government. The Turks thought the trouble makers and revolutionaries had been inspired by the ancient Serbian monasteries. The cult and veneration of Saint Sava was then as great as ever before, and even greater on account of increasingly accumulated wonders.

("Kudugers-Bogomils in Byzantine and Serbian sources and the 'Bosnian Church'", Belgrade, 1998, pp. 90-97)

29 "Orthodox Kosovo", *Saint Herman Calendar* 2009, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.

“Facing the growing danger of frequent insurrection, the Turkish sultans of that time were imprudent enough to use means contrary to wisdom. Instead of dousing fire by water, they intensified it by wood and straw. They sent more and more petty tyrants to suppress the revolts by torture, destruction and bloodshed.

“At the beginning of the year 1595, a change took place on the throne in Istanbul. The new sultan, Mohammed III, son of a weak father, cruelly ordered Sinan Pasha to quell the Serbian revolts forever by any means. This ruthless pasha was informed that the Serbian monasteries were inspirational centers for the revolts against the Turks. He was informed that Mileshevo was a place of pilgrimage, a new Kaba, even for Muslims, and that many of them had been converted to the Christian faith because of the healing of their sick relations, and other wonders at the tomb of Saint Sava. Sinan Pasha at once ordered that Sava’s body be taken to Belgrade and burnt.

“A certain Ahmed beg Ochuse was assigned the commission to carry out the pasha’s order. This brutal servant of the brutal lord, true to his nature, did it in a brutal way. He first placed a military cordon around the monastery of Mileshevo. Then he forced the monks to take the wooden coffin with the body of the saint out of the sarcophagus. The coffin was put on horses which were led by the monks themselves, because the Turks were afraid to touch it. And so the melancholy procession started. On the way the sobbing and crying monks were beaten and every Serbian man or women met on the way was killed or taken along, lest they should inform the outlaws in the forests. So in this way the procession swelled considerably by the time it reached Belgrade.

“In the outskirts of the city of Belgrade, at a place called Vrachar, a pyre was made. On that pyre the wooden coffin containing the sacred boy was laid. On April 27, 1595, Saint Sava’s body was burnt to ashes. An unusually big flame soared heavenward, illuminated the city in the night and was seen from over the Danube River. And while the Turks were celebrating with satisfaction, and the enslaved Serbs in Belgrade were weeping and praying, the free Serbs beyond the Danube and the guerrillas on the mountains presented their swords in homage to their saint.

“So Sinan Pasha destroyed the body of Saint Sava, but increased his glory and influence. The triumph was only passing because it destroyed a cage from which the dove had fled long ago. The joy of the Turks was of short duration, for as the flame subsided, a sudden fear seized them, and they ran to their homes and shut the doors behind them. In Vrachar a few monks on their knees watched the fire from afar, waiting to take a handful of sacred ashes back to Mileshevo...”³⁰

In the seventeenth century, the persecution against the Serbian Orthodox intensified; such great pillars of Orthodoxy as St. Basil of Ostrog (+1671) had to struggle both against the Jesuits and against the Turks...

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30 Velimirovich, *The Life of St. Sava*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989, pp. 157-160.

Meanwhile, the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija had a further scourge in the shape of the Albanians, who gradually came down from the mountains and settled in the plain, and were then given significant positions of power because of their conversion to Islam.

Now the Albanians had not always been enemies of the Serbs. Many of them had fought for Tsar Dushan, and some for St. Lazar at Kosovo. At the time of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, the Albanians, were fighting on the Christian side under their famous ruler Skanderbeg. Jason Tomes writes: "Born Gjergj Kastrioti around 1405, the legendary patriot was taken as a tribute child to be reared as a Muslim and trained for the Ottoman army. He covered himself with glory fighting for the Turks, and to his Islamic name Iskandar was added the honorific title bey (or beg). The Sultan appointed him Governor of Kruja, but in 1443 he mutinied, reverted to Catholicism, and declared himself ruler of Albania. Allied with Hungarians and Venetians, Skanderbeg resisted the Turks for twenty-five years, and his victories against tremendous odds won him an enduring place in European history. But, as so often with a military genius, his legacy proved unsustainable. Skanderbeg died of fever in 1468, and independence was lost within a decade ..." ³¹

Mark Mazower writes: "Albania was perhaps a special case from the point of view of religion. 'We Albanians have quite peculiar ideas,' one notable told Edith Durham. 'We will profess any form of religion which leaves us free to carry a gun. Therefore the majority of us are Moslems.'" ³²

Srdja Trifković writes: "Wealth and material position were important factors affecting the decision of conquered peoples to convert to Islam. This contributed to the new stratification of the society under Ottoman rule, and a new power balance among national groups. The balance was shifting, and as far as the Albanians and Serbs were concerned, it was shifting drastically in favour of the Albanians, to the detriment of good relations between them. The emergence of a significant number of Islamized Albanians holding high Ottoman posts was reflected in Kosovo and Metohija. Albanians started appearing as officials and tax collectors in local administration, replacing Turks as the pillar of Ottoman authority. Local Serbs, who remained Christians, and Albanians, who were eager to convert, being divided by language and culture, and subsequently by religion, gradually became members of two fundamentally opposed social and political groups.

"The Albanians' readiness to come to terms with the conquerors gave them the upper hand. This was the beginning of a tragic division, of separate roads. The former became the rulers and the latter the ruled.

"The latent Serbian-Albanian conflict came into the open during the Holy League's war against the Ottoman Empire (1683-1690). Many Serbs joined the Habsburg troops as a separate Christian militia. The Albanians – with the exception of the gallant

³¹ Tomes, *King Zog: Self-Made Monarch of Albania*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007, p. 10.

³² Mazower, *The Balkans*, London: Phoenix, 2000, p. 73.

Roman Catholic Klimenti (Kelmendi) tribe – reacted in accordance with their recently acquired Islamic identity and took the side of the sultan’s army against the Christians.”³³

The Austrians advanced as far east as Kosovo, but then retreated, leaving the Serbs who had taken their side at the mercy of the vengeful Turks. Under the leadership of Patriarch Arsenije III of Peć, the Serbs “abandoned their farms and villages to trek north, then crossed the Danube with the retreating Austrians into Habsburg-ruled Hungary. In what was thereafter called Vojvodina, from the Slavonic for ‘duchy’, the emperor gave the Serbs [in 1690] a charter to establish their own community. The Habsburgs used these exiles as the first line of defence against Ottoman incursions.”³⁴

According to Noel Malcolm, the document that the Austrian Emperor Leopold I issued to Patriarch Arsenije was not in fact “inviting the Patriarch to bring his people to Hungary; on the contrary, it was urging him and his people to rise up against the Ottomans, so that Austrian rule could be extended all the way to ‘Albania’. For that purpose, it guaranteed (as Marsigli had suggested) that Habsburg dominion over their territory would not infringe their religious freedom or their right to elect their own vojvods. The original manuscript of this document was endorsed: ‘An exhortation to the Patriarch of the Rascians, to rouse his people to rebel against the Turks’; and a key passage in the text said: ‘Do not desert your hearths, or the cultivation of your fields.’ Some nineteenth-century historians of a romantic Serbian persuasion dealt with this passage in a wonderfully economical way: instead of printing the correct text, which says non deserite (do not desert), they simply omitted the ‘non’.

“In the summer of 1690, however, all such plans for reconquest were abandoned. The Ottomans, under their competent Grand Vizier, had built up their forces, and the military tide had definitely turned. A massive Ottoman army advanced on Niš and besieged it; it surrendered on 6 September. The Imperial garrison was allowed to leave, but a large number of ‘Rascian’ soldiers (400 in one account, 4000 in another) were taken out and killed. In the last week of September, Belgrade was under siege; it held out for just twelve days, before an Ottoman shell hit the fort’s main powder-store on the night of 8 October, blowing the whole citadel to smithereens.

“By September Belgrade had become the natural destination of a large number of refugees. One modern historian estimates that there were 40,000 there; many of these would have come from the Niš region, and the region between Niš and Belgrade – areas which had been under Austrian administration for a whole year. But among them also would have been some of the people who had fled from the Prishtina-Trepça area of Kosovo. Their Patriarch had reached Belgrade much earlier in the year. In June he had gathered a large assembly of Serbian religious and secular leaders there, to discuss further negotiations with the Emperor over the question of religious autonomy in the areas still under Austrian control...

33 Trifković, “Kosovo: The Score Squaring the Circle in the Balkans”, in *Kosovo and Metohija: arguments in favour of its future within Serbia*, Geopolitika, 2006, pp. 34-35.

34 Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 239.

"How – and exactly when – the Serb refugees escaped into Hungary is not clear... The conditions most of them had to live in, as they camped out in the central Hungarian region in the winter, were atrocious. Before the end of the year Patriarch Arsenije sent a petition to the Emperor Leopold begging for assistance for these people; he also gave an explicit estimate of their numbers.' There have come to Esztergom, Komárom and Buda men with their wives and children, completely destitute and bare, coming to a total of more than 30,000 souls.' Much later, in 1706, Arsenije made another estimate in a letter to Leopold's successor: he said he had come to Hungary with 'more than 40,000 souls'."³⁵

Arsenije created a metropolitanate at Karlovtsy, while a new Patriarch was appointed at Peć. There were now three Serbian Churches: the Patriarchate at Peć under the Turks, the metropolitanate at Karlovtsy under the Austrians, and a small independent Church in Montenegro which escaped the dominion of both great powers...

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It was hard to know which was the more difficult master – the Turks or the Austrians. The Turks kept their Christian subjects in poverty and ignorance, but did not, in general, compel them to renounce their religion. The Austrians were more "enlightened", but at the same time a greater threat to the faith of their subjects. Thus the Corfiot Eugene Voulgaris preached as far as the court of the Russian Empress Catherine II on the dangers of Austro-Hungarian Catholicism to the Orthodox of the Balkans.

There were many Romanians living in Transylvania, where, as Barbara Jelavich writes, "the Romanian Orthodox majority of the population was effectively blocked from political influence. The control of the province lay in the hands of the Hungarians; of the Szeklers, who were related to the Hungarians and spoke the same language; and of the Germans, called Saxons, descendants of twelfth-century immigrants. The Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian churches were recognized, but not the Orthodox. In the eighteenth century a Uniate church [Orthodox in rite, but papist in obedience] was established, which attracted some Romanians and played an important cultural role. The Orthodox church and its leaders, in particular Bishop Andreiu Şaguna, were an even greater influence on the Romanian movement in the province."³⁶

During the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1741-1780), the Romanian Orthodox of Transylvania and the Banat suffered great persecution from the Hungarian Catholics. Among those martyred for the faith then were SS. Bessarion, Sophronius and Oprea, and the Priests Moses and John.³⁷ Others took avoiding action. Thus,

³⁵ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, London: Papermac Books, 1998, pp. 158-160, 161.

³⁶ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: vol. 2, Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 6.

³⁷ Hieromonk Makarios, *The Synaxarion*, Ormylia (Chalkidike), 1998, October 21, pp. 450-454.

fearing papist influence, the great monastic founder Paisius Velichkovsky moved his monks east, into Turkish Moldavia.

This persecution coincided with a Catholic onslaught in other parts of the Orthodox world. Thus Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia writes: "In 1724 a large part of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch submitted to Rome; after this the Orthodox authorities, fearing that the same thing might happen elsewhere in the Turkish Empire, were far stricter in their dealings with Roman Catholics. The climax in anti-Roman feeling came in 1755, when the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem declared Latin baptism to be entirely invalid and demanded that all converts to Orthodoxy be baptized anew. 'The baptisms of heretics are to be rejected and abhorred,' the decree stated; they are 'waters which cannot profit... nor give any sanctification to such as receive them, nor avail at all to the washing away of sins'."³⁸

Towards the end of the century the Austrian Emperor Joseph II introduced a certain measure of religious freedom, including for the Orthodox Christians. However, other measures introduced by him caused great harm to the Orthodox. Thus in the *life* of the Serbian Martyr Theodore Sladich we read: "In the late eighteenth century, many confused Serbs who had grown weary under the Turkish yoke and who wanted nothing of the Roman heresy, decided to turn to the 'new' ideas of the Enlightenment which came first to Voyvodina from Western Europe via Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and other European university centers. One of these ideas was the reduction of the number of holy days celebrated, in order to facilitate new economic plans and conditions. Some one hundred holy days were to be erased from the liturgical calendar. Also, under the Turkish system, Serbian clerical education was rather limited. Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790), 'the enlightened despot' in Vienna, with the blessing of Metropolitan Moses Putnik (1781-1790) in Srenski Karlovci (Lower Karlovac), advocated the closing of a number of monasteries in order to generate revenue to build various educational institutions. One supporter of this idea was the famous Serbian man of the Age of Reason, Dositheus Obradovich (1739-1811). Beginning as a monk in the Monastery of New Hopovo, he then left for Western Europe, returning to Vojvodina and later to Serbia as a humanist philosopher, a fierce critic of Church practices, and as Serbia's first Minister of Education! In the end, this opting for the rationalism of the so-called Western European Enlightenment created within the pious Serbian peasantry a tremendous distrust of Church leadership, an abiding disdain for Church life and practices, and a many-faceted regression which was to last well into the nineteenth century.

"With all this in mind, it can now be easily ascertained why pious Serbs everywhere especially venerate St. Theodore Sladich. Quite often in his lifetime he was approached by both propagandists of the Latin Unia and by Serbian converts to Western rationalism who wanted him to leave the Church and embrace 'modernistic' ways of thought and living. Theodore was an ardent Orthodox and, due to his love for liturgical ritual and the vision of the doctrines of the Church, he became an outspoken proponent against the Latin Unia and the rationalistic innovations of Western Europe... In regard to rationalism and so-called 'modern' education,

³⁸ Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware), *The Orthodox Church*, London: Penguin, 1964, p. 98.

Theodore responded by explaining that the source of every true knowledge flowed from the Church – that all worldly knowledge can never replace that which a true Christian receives in church, God Himself educates the believer wholly: by acting upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the splendor of the images and of the building in general, by the fragrance of the incense, by the veneration of the Gospels, Cross and icons, by the singing and by the reading of the Scriptures. And most importantly, as Theodore once said: ‘In no way can secular education bring about the greatest mystery offered by the Church: the cleansing from sins’.”³⁹

39 Fr. Daniel Rogich, *Serbian Patericon*, vol. I, Forestville, CA: St. Paisius Abbey Press, 1994, pp. 150-152. St. Theodore and 150 followers were burned to death by the Turks in 1788.

6. THE GRECO-BULGARIAN SCHISM

In 1872, an ecclesiastical schism took place between the Greek and Bulgarian Churches that lasted until the end of the Second World War. This article is a brief examination of the main outlines of its history and causes.

In the Middle Ages the Bulgarian Church had already had a highly troubled relationship with the Great Church of Constantinople. More than once, the Bulgarian Church been granted autocephaly by the Patriarchate of Constantinople when the Bulgarian state was flourishing, only to have that autocephaly rescinded when the state declined. In 1393 Bulgaria was finally conquered by the Turks, as was Constantinople sixty years later. The Turkish Sultan then placed all the Orthodox Christians in Turkish-occupied territories under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. In 1766-67 the patriarchate formally abolished the patriarchates of Serbia and Bulgaria.

However, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Greeks, the Serbs and the Romanians gradually liberated themselves from the Turkish yoke. At the same time the independent Churches of Free Greece, Serbia and the Romanian principalities arose. Now by the 1870s the Bulgarians were the only Orthodox nation in the Balkans that had not achieved some measure of political independence through revolution. By the same token, however, they were the only nation that had not been *divided* by revolution. Thus the Greek revolution had divided the Greek nation between the Free State of Greece and the Ottoman Empire, and successive Serbian rebellions had divided the Serbs between the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and the Free States of Serbia and Montenegro. Romania was a more-or-less independent state, but with many Romanians still outside her borders. Of the Balkan Christian nations in 1871, only the Bulgarians had no independent State or statelet. Almost all Bulgarians were all living within the borders of one State - the Ottoman empire.

However, things were stirring in Bulgaria, too. Only the Bulgarians saw the main obstacle to their ambitions not in the Turks - some were even happy at the thought of a "Turkish tsar" (after all, the Bulgarians were partly of Turkic origin) - but in the neighbouring Christian nations. There was particular tension in Thrace and Macedonia, which from ancient times had been Greek⁴⁰, but where there were now more Bulgarians than Greeks. The question was: if Turkish power finally collapsed, which nation would take control in those provinces - the Greeks or the Bulgarians?

Parallel to the movement for political independence was a movement for ecclesiastical independence. "In 1839," writes Christopher Walter, "the Ottoman government published the first of a series of edicts, granting liberty of conscience to its Christian subjects. The Bulgarians then petitioned the Phanar to appoint Bulgarian

40 Moreover, the 28th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council specifically mentions Thrace and Macedonia as coming within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Greeks were to use this canon in defence of their position.

bishops and to authorize the celebration of the liturgy in Slavonic.⁴¹ Progressively the Bulgarians became more insistent. When the Phanar so manipulated the election to the synod convoked in 1858 to study the Bulgarians' demands that none of them were accepted, the first symptoms of rupture became manifest. Greek bishops were expelled from districts where Bulgarians were in the majority. On Easter Sunday 1860, the Liturgy was celebrated in the church of St. Stephen in Constantinople in Slavonic, and the commemoration of the patriarch was omitted."⁴²

"There followed," writes Eugene Pavlenko, "a de facto refusal of the Bulgarians to submit to the Patriarchate, which did not satisfy their demands for the right to elect their own bishops in their own dioceses and the granting to them the possibility of occupying the higher Church posts on an equal basis with the Greeks. The Patriarchate of Constantinople made various concessions: it issued Divine service books for the Bulgarian clergy in the Slavonic language, and appointed archimandrites from the Bulgarians. Later, under the influence of passions aroused on both sides, the demands of the Bulgarians intensified and flowed out into the desire to have their own separate exarchate. In 1867 the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Gregory VI proposed a project for the creation of a separate Bulgarian exarchate, but no meeting of minds was achieved on this project. It was hindered not only by the impossibility of precisely delineating dioceses with Greek and Bulgarian populations, but also by the gradually formed striving of the Bulgarians to create their own national Church, in which every Bulgarian, wherever he might be – in Bulgaria or in Asia Minor, would be in subjection only to the Bulgarian hierarchy. Such a striving was leading to a situation of ecclesiastical dual powers and to schism, but the Bulgarians were no longer upset by this. They wanted a schism, they were seeking it. They wanted separation not only from the Greeks, but also from the whole of Orthodoxy, since such a separation made them an independent people. 'Look how willingly religion has been sacrificed for the same purely tribal principle, for the same national-cosmopolitan impulses!' said K.N. Leontiev in this connection."⁴³

"In 1868 Patriarch Gregory VI of Constantinople attempted to settle the Greco-Bulgarian question by convening an Ecumenical Council, but without success. In these circumstances the Bulgarians decided to act through the sultan and submitted to him a petition concerning the re-establishment of the ecclesiastical independence which had been lost because of the abolition of the Trnovo Patriarchate. 'Asking the Porte to establish their national independent hierarchy,' wrote Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, 'shows that although the Bulgarians have had sufficient time to think over what they are doing, they still have the stubborn desire without having acquired understanding. It is possible to establish a new independent hierarchy only with the

41 The Phanar's refusal led to two distinct movements for Bulgarian ecclesiastical independence: the Bulgarian Uniate Church, which was in communion with Rome, and the Bulgarian exarchate, later the Bulgarian patriarchate, which remained Orthodox. What is written here relates exclusively to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. (V.M.)

42 Walter, "Raphael Popov, Bulgarian Uniate bishop: problems of uniatism and autocephaly", *Sobornost'*, 6:1, 1984, p. 53.

43 Leontiev, "Plody natsional'nykh dvizhenij" (The Fruits of the National Movements), in *Vostok, Rossia i Slaviansstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 559.

blessing of a lawfully existing hierarchy.’⁴⁴ In reply to this request of the Bulgarians the Porte put forward two projects. According to point 3 of both projects, ‘in Constantinople, next to the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch, a pre-eminent Orthodox Metropolitan of Bulgaria must be introduced..., to whom the supervision of the administration of the Bulgarian churches is to be entrusted and under whom there will be an assembly, that is, a kind of Synod, occupied with church affairs.’ In point 5 of one of these projects the Bulgarian Church is also called ‘a separate body’, while the aforementioned assembly is more than once called a Synod.

“It goes without saying that Patriarch Gregory VI spoke out against such projects that transgress the canons of the Church. The ecclesiastical decrees which forbid such dual power situations are contained in:

- (a) The 8th canon of the First Ecumenical Council: ‘Let there not be two bishops in a city.’
- (b) The 35th canon of the Holy Apostles: ‘Let not a bishop dare to carry out ordinations outside the bounds of his diocese in cities and villages not subject to him’, which is confirmed and clarified by the 22nd canon of the Council of Antioch: ‘Let a bishop not go into another city that is not subject to him, nor into a settlement that does not belong to him, in order to ordain someone, and let him not establish priests or deacons in places subject to another bishop...’
- (c) The 34th canon of the Holy Apostles: ‘The bishops of each people should know the first among them, and recognise him as their head, and do nothing exceeding their authority without obtaining his permission: but each must do only that which touches his diocese and those places that belong to it.’

“With regard to the words from the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles: ‘The bishops of each people’, there developed a polemic between the Bulgarians and Constantinople which was destined to have a long history. The Bulgarians considered that the words: ‘The bishops of each people’ meant the order of the joint administration of one and the same (geographical) district by several priestly hierarchies belonging to different nationalities. But this passage was interpreted in a different way by the Byzantine interpreters Zonaras, Balsamon and Aristene. Zonaras, in his explanation of the 34th Apostolic canon, says: ‘With this aim (the prevention of ecclesiastical disorder) the present canon commands that the first bishops of each district, that is, the hierarchs of the metropolia, should be recognised by all the bishops of that district as their head.’ Thus Zonaras considers the expression ‘of each people’ to be identical with the expression ‘of each district’. This interpretation is confirmed by the juxtaposition of the 34th Apostolic canon with the 9th canon of the Council of Antioch: ‘In each district it behoves the bishops to know the presiding bishop in the metropolia... in accordance with the rule of our fathers that has been in force since ancient times.’ Zonaras: ‘Although this canon does not coincide completely in its wording with the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles, nevertheless as far as the meaning is concerned it agrees with it in everything.’ Balsamon: ‘The content of this canon is explicated by the interpretation of the 34th Apostolic canon.’ Aristene: ‘This canon has

44 Metropolitan Philaret, in Leontiev, “Pis'ma o vostochnykh delakh” (Letters on Eastern Matters), *op. cit.* p. 360.

exactly the same teaching as the 34th canon of the Holy Apostles.' As we see, the authoritative Byzantine interpreters agree that by the expression 'the bishops of each people' 'the bishops of each district' must be understood, and so this canon agrees with all the remaining canons which forbid dual power in the Church.

"The Patriarch's refusal to make concessions elicited the irritation of the Turkish government, and in 1870 the sultan issued a firman, in which permission was granted to the Bulgarians to establish a separate exarchate with a specified number of dioceses. The administration of the exarchate was given to the Synod of the Bulgarian bishops under the presidency of the exarch, who had to commemorate the name of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch during the Divine service. The Synod was obliged to refer to the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in connection with the most important matters of the faith, and after the election of its exarch it had to seek a confirmatory certificate from the Patriarch. The Bulgarians also had to receive chrism from the Patriarch. In accordance with the ecclesiastical canons (the 6th and 7th canons of the First Ecumenical Council and the 3rd canon of the Second Ecumenical Council), independent patriarchal sees and the Synods having equal honour to them have to be established in a conciliar fashion, and not on the orders of a secular power. Patriarch Gregory VI asked the Turkish government for permission to convene an Ecumenical Council to examine this question, but he was refused, and he resigned his see. In accordance with the decree of the Turkish government, the Bulgarian Assembly in Constantinople elected its exarch, who was presented to the sultan on April 4, 1872. However, the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, who was now Anthimus IV, did not agree not only to recognise, but also to receive the exarch, from whom he demanded written repentance for all that had been done. But the semi-independent existence of the exarchate no longer suited the Bulgarians, either. They longed for complete separation from the Greeks, which could only be achieved by means of an ecclesiastical schism. On May 11, 1872, after the Gospel during the Liturgy, which was celebrated in Constantinople by the exarch together with the other Bulgarian bishops and many clergy, an act signed by the Council of seven Bulgarian bishops was proclaimed, which declared that the Bulgarian Church was independent. On May 15, the Patriarchal Synod declared the Bulgarian exarch deprived of his rank and defrocked; the other Bulgarian bishops, together with all the clergy and laity in communion with them, were subjected to ecclesiastical punishments. A declaration was also made concerning the convening of a Local Council.

"The feelings of the sides drawn in one way or another into the ecclesiastical conflict between the Greeks and the Bulgarians were described in detail on the eve of the Local Council of 1872 by K.N. Leontiev in his work, *The Fruits of the National Movements*. The Bulgarians affirmed that they would fight until 'the last Bulgarian village, even including those in Asia Minor, is liberated from the ecclesiastical authority of the Patriarch'.⁴⁵ The Bulgarians did not fear a schism, they found a schism convenient for themselves. While the Turks, in their turn, considered that a quarrel between the Orthodox would be useful for their disintegrating state. The liberally inclined Russians sympathised with the 'national-liberation' movement of the Bulgarians... At the same time the Athenian Greeks were trying by all means to bring

⁴⁵ Leontiev, "Plody natsional'nykh dvizhenij", *op. cit.*, p. 558.

the matter to the convening of a Council and the ecclesiastical condemnation of the Bulgarians. Besides, they hoped that the Russian Holy Synod would finally come out openly in defence of the Bulgarians, after which they would be able to declare the Russians, too, to be schismatics, and having thereby separated themselves from the whole of Slavdom, tie their fate in with the peoples of Western Europe. The Athenian Greeks were drawn by the idea of a Great Hellas, the Bulgarians – by the idea of a Great Bulgaria. ‘We must baptise the sultan,’ they dreamed, ‘merge with the Turks, become established in Tsargrad and form a great Bulgar-Turkish state, which instead of aging Russia would take up the leadership of Slavdom.’⁴⁶ ‘Who has remained faithful to Orthodoxy?’ cried K.N. Leontiev. ‘It is only these same Greek bishops who are subjects of the Turks who have remained faithful to these foundations, to Orthodoxy and its ancient rules and spirit.’⁴⁷ He called these bishops Phanariots (after the Phanar, the quarter of Istanbul in which the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate was situated). They cursed Bulgarian phyletism at the Council of 1872, but did not allow a break also with Russia. The Russian Holy Synod, which at that time supported neither side, made no mistake meanwhile. The Constantinopolitan Patriarchate could not without transgressing the canons break with us, to which they were being urged by the Greeks of Hellas. But Constantinople did not wish to transgress the canons. Both in relation to the Bulgarians and in relation to Russia the Phanariots remained unshaken and faithful to the laws and traditions, in spite of all the difficulties caused by our [Russian] liberals’ flirting with the Bulgarians.

“The Local Council of Constantinople opened on August 29, 1872. 32 hierarchs and all the Eastern Patriarchs except Jerusalem took part in it. On September 16, in its third session, the Constantinopolitan Council confirmed the decision according to which all the Bulgarian hierarchs with their clergy and laity were declared schismatics, and the whole of the Bulgarian Church was declared schismatic. In relation to phyletism the Council made the following decision: ‘...We have concluded that when the principle of racial division is juxtaposed with the teaching of the Gospel and the constant practice of the Church, it is not only foreign to it, but also completely opposed, to it.’ ‘We decree the following in the Holy Spirit: 1. We reject and condemn racial division, that is, racial differences, national quarrels and disagreements in the Church of Christ, as being contrary to the teaching of the Gospel and the holy canons of our blessed fathers, on which the holy Church is established and which adorn human society and

46 Leontiev, “Plody natsional’nykh dvizhenij”, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

47 Leontiev, “Plody natsional’nykh dvizhenij”, *op. cit.*, p. 560. As he wrote in another place: “They wanted to have not, an *administrative*, or *topographical* exarchate within definite boundaries, but a *tribal* [*ethnic*] exarchate, a ‘phyletic’ exarchate as the Greek clergy put it at the council of 1872. The Ecumenical Patriarch could have given them an administrative exarchate or even a patriarchy, and he would have been forced to do that later by force of circumstances... but the Bulgarians wanted a ‘tribal’ exarchate, that is, they wanted all Bulgarians, wherever they lived, to depend directly and in all respects on their national clergy. Of course, the Patriarch *did not* even *have the right* to bow to their wishes *in this form*. The Bulgarians then separated in a self-willed manner; while the council declared them to be... ‘schismatics’...” (“Dopolnenie k dvum stat’iam o panslavizme” (Supplement to Two Articles on Pan-Slavism), *op. cit.*, p. 81.)

And again: “In the ecclesiastical question the Bulgarians and the Greeks were equally cunning and wrong according to conscience. The difference lay in the fact that *canonically*, formally, in the sense precisely of *abstract principles of tradition*, the Greeks were more right” (“Khram i Tserkov” (Temple and Church), *op. cit.*, p. 165). (V.M.)

lead it to Divine piety. 2. In accordance with the holy canons, we proclaim that those who accept such division according to races and who dare to base on it hitherto unheard-of racial assemblies are foreign to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are real schismatics.”⁴⁸

The Churches of Russia, Jerusalem, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania remained in communion with both the Greeks and the Bulgars.⁴⁹ Bishop Theophan the Recluse, who travelled extensively in the East in the 1850s and knew the Greeks as well as the Bulgars, was completely on the side of the Bulgars: “The ‘East’ does not understand the Bulgarian affair. For them the Bulgarians are guilty. But in fact they are not guilty. They could not of themselves separate from the patriarchate – and they did not separate, but asked [to separate]. But when they asked, the patriarchate was obliged to let them go. Did it not let them go? They constructed a departure for themselves in another way. How did we [the Russian Church] separate from the patriarchate [in the fifteenth century]?! We stopped sending [candidates to the metropolitanate] to them, and that was the end of it. That is what they [the Bulgars] have done. The patriarchate is guilty. But their Council which condemned the Bulgarians was the height of disorder. There it was the Hellene γένος that ruled.”

For many Russians the conciliar condemnation of nationalism carried little weight because it came from the patriarchate that they considered the first sinner in this respect. Thus D.A. Khomiakov wrote. “Is not ‘pride in Orthodoxy’ nothing other than the cultural pride of the ancient Greek? And, of course, the true ‘phyletism’, formulated for the struggle against the Bulgarians, is precisely the characteristic of the Greeks themselves to a much greater extent than the Bulgarians, Serbs, Syrians and others. With them it is only a protest against the basic phyletism of the Greeks. The contemporary Greek considers himself the exclusive bearer of pure Orthodoxy...”⁵⁰

Professor Nicholas Glubokovsky wrote: “Greek nationalism historically merged with Orthodoxy and protected it by its own self-preservation, while it in its turn found a spiritual basis for its own distinctiveness. Orthodoxy and Hellenism were united in a close mutuality, which is why the first began to be qualified by the second. And Christian Hellenism realized and developed this union precisely in a nationalist spirit. The religious aspect was a factor in national strivings and was subjected to it, and it was not only the Phanariots [the inhabitants of Greek Constantinople] who made it serve pan-hellenic dreams. These dreams were entwined into the religious, Orthodox element and gave it its colouring, enduing the Byzantine patriarch with the status and

48 Pavlenko, “The Heresy of Phyletism: History and the Present”, *Vertograd-Inform*, (English edition), September, 1999. The full report of the special commission can be found in Hildo Boas and Jim Forest, *For the Peace from Above: an Orthodox Resource Book*, Syndesmos, 1999; in “The Heresy of Racism”, *In Communion*, Fall, 2000, pp. 16-18.

49 See K. Dinkov, *Istoria na B'lgarskata Ts'rkva* (A History of the Bulgarian Church), Vratsa, 1953, pp. 80-96; D. Kosev, “Bor'ba za samostoyatel'na natsionalna tserkva” (The Struggle for an Independent National Church), in *Istoria na B'lgaria* (A History of Bulgaria), Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1987, vol. 6, pp. 124-188 (in Bulgarian); Fr. German Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “Novij podkhod k greko-bolgarskomu raskolu 1872 goda” (A New Approach to the Greco-Bulgarian Schism), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1987 (I), pp. 193-200.

50 Khomiakov, *Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost'* (Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality), Minsk: Belaruskaya Gramata, 1997, p. 19.

rights of "ethnarch" for all the Christian peoples of the East, and revering him as the living and animated image of Christ (Matthew Blastaris, in his 14th century Syntagma, 8). As a result, the whole superiority of the spiritual-Christian element belonged to Hellenism, and could be apprehended by others only through Hellenism. In this respect the enlightened Grigorios Byzantios (or Byzantijsky, born in Constantinople, metropolitan of Chios from 1860, of Heraklion in 1888) categorically declared that 'the mission of Hellenism is divine and universal'. From this source come the age-old and unceasing claims of Hellenism to exclusive leadership in Orthodoxy, as its possessor and distributor. According to the words of the first reply (in May, 1576) to the Tübingen theologians of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Jeremiah II (+1595), who spoke in the capacity of a 'successor of Christ' (introduction), the Greek 'holy Church of God is the mother of the Churches, and, by the grace of God, she holds the first place in knowledge. She boasts without reproach in the purity of her apostolic and patristic decrees, and, while being new, is old in Orthodoxy, and is placed at the head', which is why 'every Christian church must celebrate the Liturgy exactly as she [the Greco-Constantinopolitan Church] does (chapter 13). Constantinople always displayed tendencies towards Church absolutism in Orthodoxy and was by no means well-disposed towards the development of autonomous national Churches, having difficulty in recognising them even in their hierarchical equality. Byzantine-Constantinopolitan Hellenism has done nothing to strengthen national Christian distinctiveness in the Eastern patriarchates and has defended its own governmental-hierarchical hegemony by all means, fighting against the national independence of Damascus (Antioch) and Jerusalem. At the end of the 16th century Constantinople by no means fully accepted the independence of the Russian Church and was not completely reconciled to Greek autocephaly (from the middle of the 19th century), while in relation to the Bulgarian Church they extended their nationalist intolerance to the extent of an ecclesiastical schism, declaring her (in 1872) in all her parts to be 'in schism'. It is a matter of great wonder that the champions of extreme nationalism in the ecclesiastical sphere should then (in 1872) have recognized national-ecclesiastical strivings to be impermissible in others and even labelled them 'phyletism', a new-fangled heresy."⁵¹

Nevertheless, ecclesiastical nationalism, or phyletism, was a real problem that would get worse in the coming decades leading to the first world war. So to that extent the Greek anathema on phyletism was legitimate and necessary. Moreover, on the strictly canonical issue, the Bulgarians were in the wrong.

Perhaps the most balanced judgement came from the Philhellene Leontiev agreed. Although he supported the Greeks on the purely canonical issue, he thought that both sides were equally responsible for the schism: "Both you [Greeks] and the Bulgarians can equally be accused of *phyletism*, that is, of introducing ethnic interests into Church questions, and in the use of religion as a political weapon; but the difference lies in the fact that Bulgarian *phyletism* is defensive, while yours is offensive. Their phyletism

51 Glubokovsky, "Pravoslavie po ego sushchestvu" (Orthodoxy in its essence), in *Tserkov' i Vremia* (The Church and Time), 1991, pp. 5-6.

seeks only to mark out the boundaries of their tribe; yours seeks to cross the boundaries of Hellenism..."⁵²

May 11/24, 2015.
Saints Cyril and Methodius, Enlighteners of the Slavs.

⁵² Leontiev, "Panslavism i Greki" (Pan-Slavism and the Greeks), op. cit., p. 46.

7. THE SERBS GAIN INDEPENDENCE

The Greek revolution was to a large extent inspired by the ideology of the French revolution. This was not the case in Serbia, which had very few western-educated intellectuals infected by this ideology. But in both countries' liberation the Orthodox Church played an important role.

This was particularly the case in Montenegro, a tiny but completely independent Serbian principality on the Adriatic coast with a peculiar system of Church-State relations, as Adrian Fortescue writes: "In 1516, Prince George, fearing lest quarrels should weaken his people (it was an elective principedom), made them swear always to elect the bishop as their civil ruler as well. These prince-bishops were called Vladikas... In the 18th century the Vladika Daniel I (1697-1737) succeeded in securing the succession for his own family. As Orthodox bishops have to be celibate, the line passed (by an election whose conclusion was foregone) from uncle to nephew, or from cousin to cousin. At last, in 1852, Danilo, who succeeded his uncle as Vladika, wanted to marry, so he refused to be ordained bishop and turned the prince-bishopric into an ordinary secular principedom."⁵³

The greatest of the Montenegrin Vladikas was St. Peter of Cetinije, who became a monk at the age of twelve, and in 1782, at the age of twenty-three, succeeded Metropolitan Sabas. He brought peace to the land, defeated Napoleon's forces at the battle of Boka in Dalmatia, but always lived in a narrow monastic cell. He died on October 18, 1830. His incorrupt relics and many healings are a witness to his sanctity.

There were two Serbian Orthodox Churches: the Serbian metropolitanate of Karlovtsy in Slavonia, founded in 1713, which by the end of the nineteenth century had six dioceses with about a million faithful⁵⁴, and the Peć patriarchate, which was abolished by the Ecumenical Patriarch Samuel in 1766, but which recovered its autocephaly in the course of the revolution.⁵⁵ In spite of this administrative division, and foreign oppression, the Serbian Church preserved the fire of faith in the people. "For the Cross and Golden Freedom" was the battle-cry.

53 Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1920, p. 309.

54 Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1920, p. 308.

Originally, the Karlovtsy metropolitanate had jurisdiction over the Romanians of Hungarian Transylvania. However, in 1864 the authorities allowed the creation of a separate Romanian Church in Hungary, the metropolitanate of Hermannstadt (Nagy-Szeben) (Fortescue, *op. cit.*, p. 316). From 1873 there was also a metropolitanate of Černovtsy with jurisdiction over all the Orthodox (mainly Serbs and Romanians) in the Austrian lands (Fortescue, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-325). Significantly, when the Russian Church in Exile sought refuge in Serbia in the 1920s, their administration was set up in the former capital of the Serbian Church's exile, Karlovtsy.

55 The Serbian Peć Patriarchate was founded as an autocephalous archiepiscopate by St. Savva in 1218-19, raised to the rank of a patriarchate with its see in Peć in 1375, and abolished in 1766. It should not be confused with the Bulgarian Ochrid archiepiscopate, which was founded by Emperor John Tsimiskes in Preslava in 971, moved to Sophia, Voden, Prespa and finally Ochrid, and was abolished on January 16, 1767.

But the Serbian revolution was hindered by the rivalry of its two main peasant leaders, Karadjordje and Obrenović... Karadjordje took command of the first uprising in 1804, which paradoxically was fought by the Serbian peasants in the name of the Sultan against four *Dahi*, local Muslim lords who had rebelled against the Sultan's authority and had begun to oppress the Serbian peasantry. As a result of Karadjordje's victories over the *Dahi*, he was able to extract some concessions from the Sultan for the Serbian *pashalik*. But the Serbs could not hope to liberate their nation fully and permanently from the Ottomans without the active support of the Russians, who in 1806 declared war on the Porte. However, in 1812, the Russian Tsar Alexander was forced to sign the Treaty of Bucharest with the Sultan and withdraw his troops from the Balkan to face Napoleon's Great Army in Russia. And so in 1813 the Ottomans were free to invade Serbia, Karadjordje was forced to flee, and his rival Obrenović took over the leadership of the liberation movement.

"In 1817," writes Tim Judah, "Karadjordje slipped back into Serbia. Sensing danger for both himself and his plans, Obrenović sent his agents who murdered Karadjordje with an axe. His skinned head was stuffed and sent to the sultan. This act was to spark off a feud between the families which was periodically to convulse Serbian politics until 1903.

"Miloš Obrenović was as rapacious as any Turk had been in collecting taxes. As his rule became ever more oppressive, there were seven rebellions against him including three major uprisings between 1815 and 1830. In 1830 the sultan nevertheless formally accepted Miloš's hereditary princship."⁵⁶

Mazower writes: "The two new states [of Serbia and Greece] were impoverished, rural countries. Serbia was, in Lamartine's words, 'an ocean of forests', with more pigs than humans. Serbian intellectual life in the Habsburg lands was far more advanced than in Belgrade. Perhaps 800,000 Greeks inhabited the new Greek Kingdom, while more than 2 million still remained subjects of the Porte. No urban settlement in Greece came close to matching the sophistication and wealth of Ottoman cities such as Smyrna, Salonika and the capital itself. There were, to be sure, impressive signs of revitalization for those who wished to look: the rapidly expanding new towns built on modern grid patterns which replaced the old Ottoman settlements in Athens, Patras, Tripolis and elsewhere, for example, or the neo-classical mansions and public buildings commissioned by newly independent government. 'some barracks, a hospital, a prison built on the model of our own,' wrote Blanqui from Belgrade in 1841, 'announce the presence of an emergent civilisation.' In fact, similar trends of town planning and European architecture were transforming Ottoman cities as well.

"The inhabitants of the new states were as viciously divided among themselves in peace as they had been in war. In Serbia adherents of the Karageorge and Obrenović factions tussled for power, locals vied with the so-called 'Germans' (Serb immigrants from the Habsburg lands), Turcophiles fought Russophiles. In Greece there were similar struggles between regional factions, between supporters of the various

⁵⁶ Judah, *The Serbs*, London: Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 51-52, 52-54.

Powers, who each sponsored parties of their own, and between 'autochthones' and 'heterochthones'. These divisions embittered politics from the start..."⁵⁷

The early history of the Serbian principedom was not inspiring. Karadjordje had killed his stepfather before being killed by his godfather, and the pattern of violence continued. But "behind the drama of intrigue, shoot-outs and murder," writes Misha Glenny, "lay a serious struggle concerning the constitutional nature of the Serbian proto-state. Karadjordje wanted to establish a system of monarchical centralism while his baronial opponents were fighting for an oligarchy in which each leader would reign supreme in his own locality. A third, weaker force was made up of tradesmen and intellectuals from Vojvodina in the Habsburg Empire. They argued for an independent judiciary and other institutions to curb the power of both Karadjordje and the regional commanders. The modernizing influence of the Vojvodina Serbs was restricted to the town of Belgrade."⁵⁸

Gradually the monarchical idea prevailed. But somehow the idea of the sacred person of the monarch, and the sacred horror at the thought of regicide, never penetrated the Serbs... Thus when Karadjordje's son Alexander replaced Miloš's son Milan in 1842, he purged the Obrenović faction. But in 1858 the Obrenoviće's returned to power. Then in 1868 Prince Michael and his family were murdered...

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Many Serbs, including most of the intelligentsia, lived in the Austro-Hungarian empire under Hungarian rule. Therefore the Hungarian revolution of 1848 was bound to effect them closely. Eric Hobsbawm writes: "Unlike Italy, Hungary was already a more or less unified political entity ('the lands of the crown of St. Stephen'), with an effective constitution, a not negligible degree of autonomy, and indeed most of the elements of a sovereign state except independence. Its weakness was that the Magyar aristocracy which governed this vast and overwhelmingly agrarian area ruled not only over the Magyar peasantry of the great plain, but over a population of which perhaps 60 per cent consisted of Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, Rumanians and Ukrainians, not to mention a substantial German minority. These peasant peoples were not unsympathetic to a revolution which freed the serfs, but were antagonised by the refusal of even most of the Budapest radicals to make any concession to their national difference from the Magyars, as their political spokesmen were antagonised by a ferocious policy of Magyarisation and the incorporation of hitherto in some ways autonomous border regions into a centralised and unitary Magyar state. The court at Vienna, following the habitual imperialist maxim 'divide and rule', offered them support. It was to be a Croat army, under Baron Jellacic, a friend of Gay, the pioneer of a Yugoslav nationalism, which led the assault on revolutionary Vienna and revolutionary Hungary."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Mazower, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵⁹ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital*, pp. 31-32.

Misha Glenny explains what happened: "The initiative to appoint Jelačić [as Imperial Ban or Viceroy of Croatia] had originated in a petition to the [Austrian] Kaiser, signed jointly by representatives of Croatia's gentry and its aristocracy. They had been prompted to do so by the vigorous rebellion that swept through Croatia and Slavonia in March 1848. They saw Jelačić as a guarantor both of greater autonomy and of law and order against a restless peasantry, potentially the most powerful revolutionary force in Croatia in 1848. His appointment was also the first move in a complicated game played by the court in Vienna to set Hungarian and Croatian nationalism against each other. The resulting collision played a key role in the defeat of revolution in the Empire."⁶⁰

The Hungarian liberal revolutionaries led by Kossuth were prepared to make compromises with the Austrian monarchy (which it promised to recognize as their own), and with the Magyar peasantry (who were pacified by a land reform). But they were determined not to negotiate with the Slavic national minorities, Croat, Slovak, Slovene and Serb. And after they had proclaimed the union of Hungary with Transylvania, they also came into conflict with the Romanians of Transylvania.

An important role here was played by the Serbs of Novi Sad, who were much wealthier and savvier than their Free Serb brothers across the Danube. In March they "presented a petition to the Hungarian government, demanding the restoration of autonomy for the Orthodox Church and the recognition of Serbian as a state language. In exchange, the Serbs said they would back the Hungarian struggle against Vienna. Kossuth dismissed their demands with a brusque warning that 'only the sword would decide the matter'. In doing so he sealed the unspoken alliance between Serbs and Croats - the 'one-blooded nation with two faiths' - and, as a result, the fate of the Hungarian revolution.

"On 2 April, a Serb delegation in Vienna appealed for the unification of the Banat and Bačka (two provinces within Vojvodina) with Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. With the approval of Serbia's Prince Alexander Karadjordjević, who had come to power in 1842, and Ilija Garašanin in Belgrade, Serb leaders at Novi Sad decided to convene a Serb National Assembly. At the beginning of May, Serbs from all over the Banat streamed into Sremski Karlovci, the former seat of the Orthodox Church in the Habsburg Empire. Joined by Croats, Czechs, Poles and Slavs, they gathered in the streets and began chanting 'Rise up, rise up, Serbs!' Through popular acclamation, the government of the Serbian Vojvodina was proclaimed, headed by Colonel Josip Šupljikac, the supreme Vojvoda (Military Leader or Duke). Rajačić was named Patriarch of the restored seat in Karlovci. Conspicuously, the new assembly did not rescind allegiance either to Vienna or to the Kingdom of Hungary. But the concluding words of the proclamation breathed life into the Yugoslav idea for the first time: 'Before all else, we demand resolutely a true and genuine union with our brothers of the same blood and tribe, the Croats. Long Live Unity! Long Live the Triune Kingdom!'"⁶¹

60 Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, pp. 47-48.

61 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

Immediately, war broke out between the Hungarians and the Serbs... This was "the most curious of all wars, in which troops on both sides flew the same flag, claimed loyalty to the same ruler, and treated their opponents as traitors and rebels... Many officials believed sincerely that his majesty was on their side, others were Magyar or Serb nationalists; the majority were desperate and confused. The mutual reluctance of many combatants did not prevent the war in the South from deteriorating into general brutality. In the extraordinary ethnic mosaic of the Banat... where Serbian, Hungarian, Romanian, German, Slovak and Bulgarian settlers of the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant faiths *had lived in peace for centuries*, people were massacring one another in the name of nationality [emphasis added].'⁶¹ This was a modern conflict, triggered by imperial collapse and the nationalist rivalry of two liberal bourgeoisies. It was not an explosion of ancient tribal hatreds, as if so often claimed. And the Serbs and Croats, after all, were fighting side by side as brothers...

"The Hungarian forces drove the imperial forces out of the country. At this point in the summer of 1849, Tsar Nicholas I offered his services to Franz Joseph in the name of the Holy Alliance. Two Russian armies, one stationed east of the Pruth in Bessarabia, the other east of the Vistula in Russian-controlled Poland [300,000 troops in all], swept across and down into Hungary and finally smashed the revolution in August.

"Reaction had triumphed throughout the Habsburg Empire. In Hungary, the newly restored Austrian authorities exacted a terrible retribution against the rebels. Elsewhere in the Empire, the demands of other national communities, especially the Croats and Serbs, who had contributed significantly to the exhaustion of the Hungarian forces, were simply ignored by the Kaiser. Liberal nationalism had apparently suffered a catastrophic defeat."⁶²

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Thus towards the middle of the nineteenth century we see the appearance, in more than one Balkan country, of expansionist nationalist ideologies that were to have important political consequences as late as the end of the twentieth century. The main practical idea of these ideologies was that the national state had the right to extend its boundaries to include everyone of the same race within its territory, even if these ethnic enclaves had for centuries belonged to other states. Since no state was ethnically homogeneous, and since almost every nation had ethnic enclaves in more than one state, this was a recipe for almost permanent nationalist war and revolution throughout Europe, and especially in the bewildering patchwork of interwoven national enclaves that constituted the Balkans.

The most consistent advocates of a nationalist ideology were the Serbs. In 1844 Ilija Garašanin, Minister of Internal Affairs under Prince Alexander of Serbia, published his *Načertanije*, or "Blueprint". This was in effect a blueprint for a Greater Serbia that would include the Bosnian Croats, since they were considered to be Catholicized Serbs.

"Garašanin's project... was informed by a historicist approach, recalling the supposed halcyon days of Tsar Dušan's medieval Serbian empire, and by a linguistic-cultural criterion. The sentiment underlying the *Načertanije* seemed to imply that where there was any doubt, it could be assumed that a south Slav was a Serb, whether he knew it or not."⁶³

The *Načertanije*, according to John Etty, "was the main development in Serbian nationalism. Though concerned about upsetting them, this secret document identified Turkey and Austria-Hungary as obstacles to Serbian greatness and detailed, in order of ease of acquisition, the annexation of all Serbian-speaking regions. Although implementation was delayed by domestic disruption, such expansionist aspirations were significant. Before 1890, Nikolai Pašić (future Prime Minister) referred to the *Načertanije* when he explained 'the Serbs strive for the unification of all Serb tribes on the basis of tradition, memory and the historical past of the Serb race.'"⁶⁴

Garašanin looked to Russia as a likely patron of Greater Serbia; but Nicholas I's foreign minister Nesselrode was not interested in the idea of a Greater Serbia, which would inevitably drag Russia into yet another war with the Ottoman empire...

Serbian nationalism flourished especially in Montenegro, a tiny but completely independent Serbian principality on the Adriatic coast. It had a peculiar system of Church-State relations, as Adrian Fortescue writes: "In 1516, Prince George, fearing lest quarrels should weaken his people (it was an elective principedom), made them swear always to elect the bishop as their civil ruler as well. These prince-bishops were called Vladikas... In the 18th century the Vladika Daniel I (1697-1737) succeeded in securing the succession for his own family. As Orthodox bishops have to be celibate, the line passed (by an election whose conclusion was foregone) from uncle to nephew, or from cousin to cousin. At last, in 1852, Danilo, who succeeded his uncle as Vladika, wanted to marry, so he refused to be ordained bishop and turned the prince-bishopric into an ordinary secular principedom."⁶⁵

Danilo's predecessor was Bishop-Prince Petar Petrovic Njegoš⁶⁶. In view of the Serbian wars of the 1990s, it is important to note the long-term influence of his poem, *The Mountain Wreath*, which glorifies the mass slaughter of Muslims who refuse to convert to Christianity. The principal character, Vladika Danilo, says:

*The blasphemers of Christ's Name
We will baptize with water or with blood!
We'll drive the plague out of the pen!*

63 Misha Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 46.

64 Etty, "Serbian Nationalism and the Great War", *History Today*, February 27, 2014.

65 Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1920, p. 309.

66 He is not to be confused with St. Peter of Cetinje, Metropolitan-Prince of Montenegro, who died on October 18, 1830. He became a monk at the age of twelve, and in 1782, at the age of twenty-three, succeeded Metropolitan Sabas. He brought peace to the land, defeated Napoleon's forces at the battle of Boka in Dalmatia, but always lived in a narrow monastic cell. His incorrupt relics and many healings are a witness to his sanctity.

*Let the son of horror ring forth,
A true altar on a blood-stained rock!*

In another poem Njegoš writes that "God's dearest sacrifice is a boiling stream of tyrant's blood".⁶⁷ A defensive armed struggle against the infidel for the sake of Christ can be a good deed. But there is little that is Christian here. Even Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, an admirer of Njegoš, had to admit: "Njegoš's Christology is almost rudimentary. No Christian priest has ever said less about Christ than this metropolitan from Cetinje."⁶⁸

This bloodthirsty, nationalist and only superficially Christian tradition was continued by such figures as the poet Vuk Karadžić, who called the Serbs "the greatest people on the planet" and boosted the nation's self-esteem "by describing a culture 5,000 years old and claiming that Jesus Christ and His apostles had been Serbs."⁶⁹ This perverted tradition was to have profoundly damaging effects on the future of Serbia. But it must be remembered that the truly Christian tradition of St. Savva also continued to exist in Serbia.

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In 1867 the last Turkish soldiers left the Principality of Serbia, and it is at this time that we may talk about the completion of the revolution and the de facto independence of the country. Her de jure independence came a little later, after the rebellion of the Balkan Slavs against Turkish rule in 1876-77.

The conflict really began in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where, as Andrew Wheatcroft writes, "a series of disconnected incidents, beginning with strident Muslim resistance to the plan that a new Orthodox cathedral being built in Sarajevo would tower over the sixteenth-century Begova mosque, sparked violence. From 1872 onwards there was resistance to Ottoman tax-gatherers, with peasants arming themselves and taking refuge in nearby Montenegro. The local authorities responded, as they usually did, with a knee-jerk brutality: by 1876 hundreds of villages had been burned and more than 5,000 Bosnian peasants killed. Soon the contagion of rebellion began to seep into the Bulgarian provinces. The threat of a general uprising seemed imminent.

"Every piece of revolutionary propaganda and each intelligence report read served to bolster the fear. Was the government in Constantinople to disregard the terrorist threats made by the Bulgarian revolutionaries? The insurgents wrote: 'Herzegovina is fighting; Montenegro is spreading over the mountains and coming with help; Serbia is ready to put its forces on the move; Greece is about to declare war; Rumania will not remain neutral. Is there any doubt that death is hanging over Turkey?' In July 1875, at Nevesinje in Herzegovina, the clan chiefs had met and thrown down a challenge to the Turks. One declared: 'Ever since the damned day of Kosovo [Polje, in

⁶⁷ Quotations in Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia*, London and New York: New York University Press, 1999, pp. 51-52, 55.

⁶⁸ Velimirović, *Religija Njegoševa* (The Religion of Njegoš), p. 166, quoted in Anzulović, p. 55.

⁶⁹ Zamoyksi, *Holy Madness*, p. 318.

1389] the Turk robs us of our life and liberty. Is it not a shame, a shame before all the world, that we bear the arms of heroes and yet are called Turkish subjects? All Christendom waits for us to rise on behalf of our treasured freedom... Today is our opportunity to rebel and to engage in bloody fight.' This guerilla war, in Harold Temperley's view, led directly to the revolt in Bulgaria and all that followed. It was a cruel war on both sides. The first things that the British Consul Holmes [in Sarajevo] saw as he entered Nevesinje were a Turkish boy's head blackening in the sun, and a bloody froth bubbling from the slit throat of a young Turkish girl..."⁷⁰

The Turks replied in kind. When the Bulgars rebelled in the town of Panagyurishte the Turkish irregulars known as "Bashi Bazouks" unleashed a savage wave of reprisals that left about 12,000 dead. Many of the slain were martyred precisely because they refused to renounce their Orthodox faith for Islam.

For example, early in May, 1876, the Turks came to the village of Batak, and said to the second priest, Fr. Peter: "We'd like to say a couple of words to you, priest. If you carry them out, priest, we shall not kill you. Will you become a Turk [the word actually means: 'become a Muslim'], priest?" Fr. Peter boldly replied: "I will give up my head, but I will not give up my faith!" Then the Turks beheaded him. The other priest of the village, Fr. Nych, saw all of his seven daughters beheaded. "And each time he was asked: 'The turban or the axe?' The hieromartyr replied with silence. His last child having been put to death, the torturers plucked out the Priest's beard, pulled out his teeth, gouged out his eyes, cut off his ears, and chopped his body, already lifeless, into pieces..."⁷¹

In July, 1876 Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Turks... "'This time we have to avenge Kosovo!' said Montenegro's Prince Nikola. 'Under Murad I the Serbian empire was destroyed - now during the reign of Murad V it has to rise again.'"⁷²

Eventually, after the intervention of the Russians, the Balkan Slavs triumphed. At first, at the Treaty of San Stefano in 1878, they all acquired independence from the Turks, with a greatly enlarged state for Bulgaria. However, later in the same year, at

70 Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 260. As Noel Malcolm writes, "the basic cause of popular discontent was agrarian; but this discontent was harnessed in some parts of Bosnia by members of the Orthodox population who had been in contact with Serbia, and who now publicly declared their loyalty to the Serbian state. Volunteers from Serbia, Slavonia, Croatia, Slovenia and even Russia (plus some Italian Garibaldists, and a Dutch adventuress called Johanna Paulus) were flooding into the country, convinced that the great awakening of the South Slavs was at hand. The Bosnian governor assembled an army in Hercegovina, which acted with ineffective brutality during the autumn and harsh winter of 1875-6. The fiercer begs raised their own 'bashi-bazooks' (irregular troops) and, fearing a general overthrow in Bosnia, began terrorizing the peasant population. During 1876, hundreds of villages were burnt down and at least 5000 peasants killed; by the end of the year, the number of refugees from Bosnia was probably 100,000 at least, and possibly 250,000." (*Bosnia: A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1996, p. 132)

71 "Proslavlenie khristian iz Bataka, muchenich eski postradavshikh za sv. Pravoslavnuuiu veru v 1876 godu" (Glorification of the Christians from Batak who suffered martyrically for the holy Orthodox faith in 1876), http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=910; Rassophore Monk Euthymius, "The New Martyrs of Batak", *Orthodox Life*, no. 2, March-April, 2007, p. 8.

72 Tim Judah, *The Serbs*, London and New York: Yale University Press, third edition, 2009, pp. 66, 67.

the Treaty of Berlin, it was agreed that Greater Bulgaria should be cut down to two smaller, non-contiguous areas, the smaller of which, Eastern Rumelia, remained under Turkish suzerainty while the larger, the Kingdom of Bulgaria, was autonomous rather than fully independent. Meanwhile, Britain added Cyprus to her dominions; Serbia, Montenegro and Romania were recognized as independent States (on condition that they gave full rights to the Jews); the Greeks were given Thessaly; and Serbia gained Pirot and Niš. But the Russians were deeply unhappy...

The western powers' diktat imposed on the Orthodox at Berlin even succeeded in setting the Orthodox against each other. Thus southern Bessarabia was given to Russia as a kind of consolation prize, which angered the Romanians, who regarded it as theirs. Then the Romanians were given northern Dobrudja, which the Bulgarians regarded as theirs...

Still more importantly, writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, "Bosnia and Herzegovina [and the Panzhak] were for some reason handed over to Austria for her 'temporary' use in order to establish 'normal government'. In this way a mine was laid which, according to the plan of the Masons, was meant to explode later in a new Balkan war with the aim of ravaging and destroying Russia..."⁷³

73 Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 349.

8. THE ROMANIANS GAIN INDEPENDENCE

Romania, unlike the other Balkan Christian States, had never had a long spell as a unified, independent State. The reign of Stephen the Great in the fifteenth century was the nearest they ever came to it; but this brief moment of genuine Romanian Orthodox autocracy, sandwiched between the fall of the Byzantine autocracy and the rise of the Russian one, had been snuffed out by the Ottoman sultans, who handed over administration of Wallachia and Moldavia to rich Greek Phanariots from Constantinople. Closer to Russia than Bulgaria or Serbia, but without the Slavic blood ties that linked those States to Russia, Romania finally regained her unity and independence as a result of Russia's gradual weakening of Ottoman power in a series of wars between 1711 and 1829, seven of them were fought on the territory of Wallachia and Moldavia⁷⁴, and then through the power vacuum created by Russia's defeat in the Crimean War.

The Romanians' first bid for independence came during the Greek revolution of 1821, when "Tudor Vladimirescu, a minor boyar and a former soldier in the Russian army, led an uprising of militiamen whose primary aim was to depose the Greek prince, the hospodar, and banish Phanariot rule from the two Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia. Throughout the eighteenth century the hospodars had sucked the cultural and economic lifeblood out of the Principalities, as illustrated by the mutation of the Greek word *kiverneo*, meaning 'to govern', into its Romanian derivative *chiverniseala*, which means 'to get rich'. Subordinate to the Porte, the hospodars administered an economic region that forced Romania's indigenous aristocracy, the boyars, to sell a large part of their produce to Constantinople at prices fixed below the value of the goods in Western Europe. At a time when the Ottoman Empire's ability to harvest declining resources was under pressure, the hospodar system, which ensured the steady flow of annual tribute, commodities and tax revenue, was extremely useful."⁷⁵

That the Romanians should have placed their hopes of freedom from the Turks on the Russian tsar rather than on a Greek Phanariot was hardly surprising. Moldavia had been closely linked to Russia for many centuries, and in November, 1806, when the Russo-Turkish war began, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kostake) in his pastoral epistle wrote: "The true happiness of these lands lies in their union with Russia". And when Bessarabia, that is, the part of Moldavia east of the Prut, was united to Russia in 1812, there was great rejoicing among the people, and in five years the population of Bessarabia almost doubled through an influx from the lands west of the Prut.⁷⁶

"The Vladimirescu uprising was driven by hostility to Greeks. Herein lies a bizarre paradox: carried out by Romanians in the heart of Wallachia, the uprising was conceived and executed as the first act of the Greek Revolution. It was intended to soften up the Principalities' defences to facilitate Alexander Ypsilantis's invasion from

⁷⁴ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁷⁵ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁷⁶ Vladimir Bukarsky, "Moskovskij Patriarkhat pod udarom: na ocheredi - Moldavia", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 23 (1836), December 1/14, 2007, p. 4.

Russian into Moldavia. The affair was planned by the *Philiki Etairia* whose leadership hoped it would trigger a wave of instability throughout the Empire, leading to the eventual liberation not of the Romanians but of the Greeks.

“Vladimirescu and Ypsilantis failed to ignite a broader revolution because they did not receive the expected support from Russia...

“Disillusioned with Ypsilantis and the *Etairia*, Vladimirescu nonetheless found himself in control of Bucharest. Here he assumed the role of revolutionary Prince to replace the *hospodar* who had been poisoned by Vladimirescu’s co-conspirators. But Vladimirescu soon found himself in trouble with his own people. The peasants around Bucharest seized the revolutionary moment to make their own demands, mainly to abolish the hated feudal obligation, the *claça*, which obliged the peasant to work an unlimited number of days for his landlord every year. When the Turkish army crossed the Danube to restore order, the Romanian landowners were greatly relieved.

“The Turks did agree to do away with the hospodars, who had become too unreliable. The boyars were happy to continue collecting the tribute for the Porte while augmenting their economic power with political influence. For the peasantry, however, a greedy Romanian oligarchy had replaced a Greek kleptocracy. Landowners did not pay taxes, peasants did. In Greece and Serbia, the peasants had formed the backbone of the military force that shook Ottoman rule, and while this did not eliminate tension between the emerging elites and the peasantry, it did mean that peasant interest were not ignored. In Wallachia and Moldavia, it never entered the boyars’ heads that the peasants had any legitimate demands whatsoever.

“Nonetheless, French revolutionary ideas were transmitted to Romania more swiftly than to anywhere else in the Ottoman Empire because of the close linguistic affinity between Romanian and French. The sons of rich boyars, especially from Wallachia, were sent to study in Paris where they quickly adopted French political culture as their own. During the reign of the hospodars, the hitherto hereditary title of boyar had been devalued by regulations allowing its sale. The proliferation of noble titles created a new type of boyar, less wedded to the countryside but eager to exercise political influence. This urban boyar became first the agent of western ideas in the Principalities and later the backbone of the Liberal party, just as the landowning boyar would later support the Conservatives.

“The works of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau flooded into the private and public libraries of the Principalities, particularly Wallachia. Boyars, intellectuals, and merchants from Bucharest and Iași made the pilgrimage to Paris. The appearance of Romanian cities was transformed over a twenty-year period from the mid-1820s. The boyars embarked on the large-scale cultivation of wheat, which was sent up the Danube to western markets. The barges returned loaded with clothes, furniture and cigars. Fashion changed dramatically, as the Ottoman robes of the east were discarded in favour of the hats and suits of St. Petersburg and Vienna. One contemporary commentator noted in 1829 how Bucharest had been struck by ‘the disease of love’. Divorce, affairs, elopement and rape appear to have been part of the staple culture of the Wallachian capital’s nobility.

“With their awakened passion for national revival, the boyars established the principle of joint citizenship for the people of Wallachia and Romania. The idea of being Romanian, with a common heritage, was invented in its modern form. The demand for the unification of the Principalities was heard ever louder, especially in Bucharest where people regarded the city as the natural centre of power in a future Romanian state. Although dramatic, these changes affected a small proportion of society. As the leading historian of modern Romania puts it, the boyars had listened to only one part of the revolutionary message from France, ‘the foreign policy and the revival of nationalism, completely ignoring its democratic aspect, social equality’.

“Four peculiar circumstances – an absentee landlord, the Sultan; an indigenous landlord class; proximity to Russia and Austria; and the growing influence of Enlightenment ideas – allowed the Principalities to stumble into autonomy in the late 1820s. Unlike the Serbs and the Greeks, the Wallachians and Moldavians did not have to run the gauntlet of full-scale armed insurrection against the Muslim landlord. The boyars continued much as before, accommodating themselves to the vagaries of great-power politics.

“The decisive event came in 1829 with the Treaty of Adrianople, which concluded the Russo-Turkish war and drove the Ottomans from the Principalities in all but name. Although the Principalities were still obliged to pay an annual tribute to the Porte and recognize the Sultan as sovereign, Russia now dominated Wallachia and Moldavia, creating a quasi-constitution, known as the Organic Regulations, for each Principality. The boyars were no longer restricted to the Ottoman markets – they could sell their produce wherever they wanted.”⁷⁷

The period of the Russian protectorate was in general good for Romania, allowing both the economy (with some restrictions) and the political institutions (two assemblies composed of 800 boyars subordinated to an elected prince) to develop at a steady pace. At the same time, Tsar Nicholas I acted as a restraining power on the spread of revolutionary ideas... But then came the revolution of 1848. The tsar crushed the revolution in Hungary, thereby relieving the pressure of the Hungarian Catholics on the Romanian Orthodox of the Hungarian province of Transylvania. But when the Organic Regulations were burned in Bucharest, the tsar, ever the legitimist and enemy of revolution, joined with the Sultan to occupy the Principalities and suppress the revolution.

“A central goal of the revolutionaries had been unification of the two Principalities, but they faced internal opposition. A broad political division separated the Moldavian and Wallachian elites, symbolized by the different intellectual influences in their two capitals, Iași and Bucharest. Among intellectuals in the Moldavian capital, the influence of German Romantic nationalism, especially the ideas of J.G. Herder, was paramount. Herder’s work suggested that the essence of national identity was transmitted through popular language and culture. During the nineteenth century his theories were adopted by conservative nationalists who believed that national identity

⁷⁷ Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58, 58-60.

could not be learned, but only transmitted through blood. In contrast, the Bucharest intellectuals had imbibed the French conception of nationhood which saw commitment to a particular culture as the central requirement in establishing a person's national identity. (Everyone could be considered French provided they accepted French culture – unless, of course, they had yet to attain 'civilization', like the Algerians.) For this latter group, anyone, regardless of origin, could join the Romanian national struggle by accepting its goals (but... Romania's Jews were excluded from this liberal embrace).

"Bucharest intellectuals, like Ion C. Brătianu and C.A. Rosetti, who established the revolutionary government of 1848 and would later inspire the founding of the Liberals, were the first to advance the theory that Romanians formed the last outpost of western culture in south-eastern Europe. Their ethnic identity and autonomous traditions, they believed, meant that they shared much more in common with French and English culture than with the 'Asiatic' values of the other regions of the Ottoman Empire."⁷⁸

These anti-Orthodox ideas, if allowed to develop, would have been extremely dangerous for the future of Romania, and would have torn her away from the Orthodox Christian commonwealth. Not coincidentally, therefore, Divine Providence arranged for foreign intervention. First, in 1853 Tsar Nicholas occupied the Principalities in the opening stage of the Crimean War. "The two princes of Moldavia and Wallachia were forced out of office and fled to Vienna. The Russian authorities introduce a harsh military regime and suppressed political organizations."⁷⁹

However, the Russians were forced out by the Austrians and Ottomans, who occupied the country until the end of the war.

"Thereafter," writes Barbara Jelavich, "primarily with French aid, the Romanian leaders were able to secure the election of a single prince, Alexander Cuza, for both Wallachia and Moldavia. He then united the administrations and legislatures of the two provinces. During Cuza's reign important reforms to improve the condition of the peasants were introduced."⁸⁰

This was not what Romania's greatest saint, Callinicus of Cernica, had prayed for. "He took part in the sessions of the Parliament of 1857, as one of the deputies representing the clergy of Oltenia [of which he was bishop]. It was this Parliament which on 2nd November 1857 requested that those who should inherit the throne of the united Romanian lands would be of the Orthodox religion, and that the language to be written and spoken in Parliament should be that which 'the people understand'. On 12th December 1857 St. Callinicus was among those who declared that they would not participate in further sessions of the Parliament, until the great powers of Europe had accepted the desires of the Romanian nation for unity and national independence. During this time of struggle for the Romanian people he urged his clergy, through his

⁷⁸ Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

⁷⁹ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁸⁰ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*: vol. 2, Twentieth Century, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 4.

diocesan letters to pray in their churches 'for the union of the Romanians in a single heart and soul'. When, on 24th January 1859, Prince Cuza was elected as Prince of both the Romanian principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, St. Callinicus was one of the members of the Assembly. He was amongst those who signed the official statement sent to Cuza, at Iassy, informing him that he had been elected Prince of Romania. During the reign of this Prince, St. Callinicus was constantly at his side, supporting his measures of reform, and dissenting only in some of his ecclesiastical reforms. Prince Cuza for his part, as N. Iorga observes, 'knew how to honour this man of many qualities, even though so different from his own'. Cuza honoured and appreciated him, since he saw in him 'a true and holy man of God', declaring that 'such another does not exist in all the world'..."⁸¹

For a brief moment Romania had acquired something like that "symphony of powers" which is the only normal and Divinely blessed form of government for an Orthodox nation. But in 1866 a group of conspirators called "the monstrous coalition" forced their way into Prince Cuza's bedroom and forced him to abdicate – the revolution was underway again. Agents scoured Europe for a western prince that would be favoured by the western powers and came up with Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a member of the Catholic branch of the Prussian royal family. The Moldavian Orthodox hierarchy protested, and for half a day there were demonstrations in Iași with placards such as: "Revolution: Fear Not. Hold on a Few Hours, the Russians Are Coming to Our Aid".⁸² But the Russians didn't come, and all the great powers abstained from intervention. Romania was free.

But this was not what St. Callinicus had prayed for. Freedom from Ottoman rule – yes. Monarchy, albeit one limited by a parliament and constitution – yes. But a Catholic monarch, with all that that implied for the future penetration of Romania by western heresy – no. The saint died on April 11, 1868 standing, as if there was still an important job to be done, a vital war to be won...⁸³

81 Patriarch Justinian of Romania, "St. Callinicus: Abbot, Bishop, Man of God", in A.M. Allchin (ed.), *The Tradition of Life: Romanian Essays in Spirituality and Theology*, London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1971, p. 15.

82 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

83 Fr. Dumitru Staniloae, "St. Callinicus of Cernica", in Allchin, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

9. ROMANIA AND THE JEWS

The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 had been a triumph for Disraeli, the Jewish leader of the Western Christian world. He had succeeded in keeping the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans in bondage to the Muslim Turks, although that yoke was now weaker. And he had stipulated that no Balkan state should be given independence unless it emancipated the Jews...

Another arm of Jewish power was the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes that, "'insufficiently informed... about the situation of the Jews in Russia', the Alliance Israélite Universelle 'began to interest itself in Russian Jewry', and soon 'began to work for the benefit of the Jews in Russia with great constancy.' The Alliance did not have departments in Russia and 'did not function within her frontiers'. Besides charitable and educational work, the Alliance more than once directly addressed the government of Russia, interceding for Russian Jews, although often inopportunately... Meanwhile, the newly-created Alliance (whose emblem was the Mosaic tablets of the law over the earthly globe), according to the report of the Russian ambassador from Paris, already enjoyed 'exceptional influence on Jewish society in all States'. All this put not only the Russian government, but also Russian society on their guard. [The baptised Jew] Jacob Brafmann also agitated intensively against the Alliance Israélite Universelle. He affirmed that the Alliance, 'like all Jewish societies, has a two-faced character (its official documents tell the government one thing, but its secret documents another)', that the Alliance's task was 'to guard Judaism from the assimilation with Christian civilisation that was harmful to it'...

"Fears about the Alliance were nourished by the original very emotional appeal of the Alliance's organisers 'to the Jews of all countries, and by forgeries. With regard to Jewish unity it declared as follows: Jews,... If you believe that the Alliance is for you – good, and that in constituting a part of various peoples, you nevertheless can have common feelings, desires and hope... if you think that your disunited attempts, good intentions and the strivings of individual people could become a powerful force, uniting into a single whole and going in one direction and to one goal... support us by your sympathy and cooperation'.

"But later there appeared a secondary document which was printed in France – supposedly an appeal of Adolphe Crémieux himself 'To the Jews of the Whole World'. It is very probable that this was a forgery. It is not excluded that it was one of the drafts of an appeal that was not accepted by the organisers of the Alliance (however, it fell in with Brafman's accusations that the Alliance had hidden aims): 'We live in foreign lands and we cannot interest ourselves in the passing interests of these countries as long as our own moral and material interests are in peril... the Jewish teaching must fill the world...' A sharp controversy broke out in the Russian press, at the peak of which I.S. Aksakov in his newspaper *Rus'* concluded that 'the question of the inauthenticity... of the appeal does not in the present case have any particular significance in view of the authenticity of the Jewish views and hopes expressed in it'.

“The pre-revolutionary *Jewish Encyclopaedia* writes that in the 70s in the Russian press ‘voices in defence of the Jews began to be heard less frequently... In Russian society the thought began to be entrenched that the Jews of all countries were united by a powerful political organisation, the central administration of which was concentrated in the Alliance Israélite Universelle’. So its creation produced in Russia, and perhaps not only in Russia, a reaction that was the reverse of that aimed at by the Alliance.”⁸⁴

Another country in which the Alliance’s influence was felt was Romania. “At the beginning of the nineteenth century,” writes Barbara Jelavich, “the Danubian Principalities had no problem with minorities as such. Their population was in the vast majority Romanian in nationality and Orthodox in religion. This situation changed, however, in the second half of the century, when Russian Jews moved in ever-increasing numbers into the Habsburg Empire and the Principalities. In 1859 about 118,000 Jews lived in Moldavia and 9,200 in Wallachia. By 1899 the number had increased to 210,000 in Moldavia and 68,000 in Wallachia. They thus formed a minority of about a quarter of a million in a population of 6 million.”⁸⁵

According to David Vital, the Jews were in a worse situation in Romania than in Russia. “The Jews of Russia... were citizens. Theirs were diminished rights – as were, for different reasons and in different respects, those of the peasants of Russia as well. But they were not without rights; and both in theory and in administrative practice their legal situation and their freedoms were superior to those of the peasants... [However,] contrary to Russian practice, let alone that of the central and western European states, the new rulers of Romania set out not only to deny Jews ordinary civic rights, but to place them outside the law of the country altogether and to subject them to a system of arbitrary and punitive rule...”⁸⁶

The Convention of Paris in 1858 had stipulated, as a condition of Romania’s autonomy from Turkey, that “all Moldavians and Wallachians shall be equal in the eye of the law and with regard to taxation, and shall be equally admissible to public employments in both Principalities” (Article XLVI). However, under pressure from the Prince of Moldavia the Powers had agreed that only Christians in Moldavia and Wallachia should have political rights. And in 1866, as the central synagogue of Bucharest was being destroyed, the national parliament, led by Ion Brătianu, the minister of finance, enacted Article VII of the new constitution which declared that “only foreigners of the Christian religion may obtain the status of a Romanian”.

“Jews were also prevented from buying rural property. Because of these limitations, they tended to congregate in the large cities, particularly in Bucharest and Iași, where they took up occupations such as that of merchant or small trader. In the countryside they could be found as stewards on large estates, as owners of inns selling

84 Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti Let Vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, vol. 1, pp. 178-180.

85 Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, vol. 2: Twentieth Century, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 26.

86 Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 488.

alcoholic drinks, and as moneylenders – occupations that could bring them into conflict with the peasant population.”⁸⁷

At this point the Alliance became involved. “When a greatly agitated Adolphe Crémieux, now the grand old man of western European Jewry, turned to Napoleon III in 1867 to protest against [the Romanians’] conduct he was assured that ‘this oppression can neither be tolerated nor understood. I intend to show that to the Prince [Charles].’ As good as his word, the emperor telegraphed a reprimand to Bucharest, marginally softened by the ironic conclusion that ‘I cannot believe that Your Highness’s government authorises measures so incompatible with humanity and civilization’. The Hohenzollern prince, only recently installed as ruler of the country, still sufficiently uncertain of his status and throne not to be embarrassed by the image Romania and he himself might be presenting to ‘Europe’, took action. Bratianu was made to resign. Émile Picot, one of the prince’s private secretaries, was sent to Paris to meet the directors of the AIU in person (on 22 July 1867) and give them as good an account of the government’s position as he was able. Crémieux presiding, the meeting passed off civilly enough although, as Picot’s assurances of the good intentions of the Romanian government failed to correspond to what the AIU knew of the true conditions on the ground in Romania itself, the effort to mollify the Parisian notables failed. Crémieux then addressed himself directly to Prince Charles. Hardly less than imperious, his language speaks volumes both for the mounting indignation with which the condition of Romanian Jewry had come to be regarded by the leading members of the western European Jewish communities and for the historically unprecedented self-assurance with which many of them now approached their public duty. ‘The moment has come, Prince,’ Crémieux wrote, ‘to employ [your] legitimate authority and break off this odious course of events.’ Bratianu should be dismissed ‘absolutely’. The savage measures taken against the Jews should be annulled. The unfortunately who had been torn violently from their homes must be allowed to return. For the rest, ‘Inform [the country] that nothing will be neglected to erase the traces of this evil, pursue without respite the newspapers that have for the past year continually engaged in incitement to hatred, contempt, assassination, and expulsion of the Jews, dismiss all the cowardly officials who have lent a violent hand to this dreadful persecution and deal energetically with all violence directed at the Jews from this time on.’

“One may assume that this made unpleasant reading for Prince Charles, but it remained without real effect. Bratianu was not dismissed ‘absolutely’. He was, on the contrary, given a new post. The press was not restrained. Officials engaged in active persecution of Jews were not removed from office. And after 1870 and the plummeting of French prestige, Émile Picot, a Frenchman, was out of favour in Bucharest anyway and the channel he had opened to western Jewry collapsed – as, of course, did the political weight ascribed in Bucharest to the AIU itself.”⁸⁸

However, the French had another chance at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, demanding that the independence of Romania would be recognised on the same terms

⁸⁷ Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁸⁸ Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 495-496.

as that of Bulgaria and Serbia – that is, acceptance of Article XLIV, which guaranteed equality of treatment in all places and in all circumstances for members of all religious creeds. The Russian Foreign Minister Gorchakov “tried to block the move, arguing that the Jews of Russia and Romania were a social scourge, not to be confused with the fine merchants of London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna”.⁸⁹ But the French, supported by Bismarck and Disraeli, won the day...

Since Article XLIV contravened the provisions of the constitution of 1866, it “required a special act of the assembly. Most Romanian leaders regarded the measure as an unwarranted interference in their internal affairs, an issue on which they were particularly sensitive. In fact, the government never fully complied with the intent of the treaty. In 1879, under great pressure, it was agreed that Jews could become naturalized citizens, but special action would have to be taken on each individual case. The Jewish question was to remain controversial and to cause many problems in the future...”⁹⁰

This seemed to demonstrate the impotence of the Jews in one part of Europe to help their compatriots in another. On the other hand, “the campaign mounted on behalf of Romanian Jewry had been remarkably well organized and well supported... The exertions of the notables and philanthropic organizations of western and central European Jewry on behalf of the Romanian Jews added more than a mite to the mythology of the ‘international power’ of the Jews”⁹¹ – if it was only a myth...

89 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

90 Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

91 Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 504, 505.

10. RUSSIA AND THE BALKANS, 1878-1913

For both religious and historical reasons, Russia could never remain indifferent to, or detached from, events in the Balkans. In the tenth century Russia received her Orthodox faith from the Greeks of the New Rome of Constantinople. For nearly five hundred years, until the council of Florence in 1438-39 and the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the rulers of Russia, although *de facto* independent of, and much more powerful than, the Byzantine Emperor, considered themselves *de jure* only junior partners of the Emperor, while the huge Russian Church remained only a single metropolitan district of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. After the fall of Constantinople, the Balkan Slavs and Greeks looked to the Russians as potential liberators from the Turkish yoke, and in 1562 Tsar Ivan IV received a *gramota* from the Ecumenical Patriarch Joasaph calling him "*our* Tsar", ascribing to him authority over "Orthodox Christians in the entire universe", and applying to him the same epithets, "pious, God-crowned and Christ-loving" as had been applied to the Byzantine Emperors. Forty years later another Ecumenical Patriarch, Jeremiah II, confirmed this, and raised the Russian Church to patriarchal status: Moscow "the Third Rome" been born...

The idea of the Third Rome has been subjected to much mockery and revilement as if it were just an excuse for nationalist ambition. But exactly the reverse is true: in acknowledging themselves to be the successors of the Byzantines, "the Second Rome", the Russians took upon themselves an *internationalist obligation*: to fight for the protection of all Orthodox Christians throughout the inhabited world. This involved, on the one hand, defensive wars against aggressive powers that invaded her territory from the west, such as the Swedes, the Germans, the Poles and the French. On the other hand, since most non-Russian Orthodox lived within, or within the orbit of, the major Muslim powers of Ottoman Turkey and Persia, it also involved almost continuous war along her southern frontiers and, in some cases – Georgia, for example – the annexation of the threatened Orthodox land in order to protect it from the Muslims. In all cases, it involved the shedding of Russians' blood for their fellow Orthodox Christians with no real gain for Russia, as in the liberation of Bulgaria from the Turks in 1877. To a large extent the history of Russia from the fifteenth century onwards can be seen as a slow, painful but inexorable advance to the fulfillment of the ideal of Christian Rome: the liberation of all fellow Orthodox Christians living under the yoke of heretical or pagan rulers.

The cost was enormous. It has been calculated that, quite apart from losses in terms of men killed, Russians taken into slavery by the Turks from the 15th to the 18th century inclusive numbered between three and five million, while the population of the whole of Russia in the time of Ivan the Terrible (16th century) numbered less than five million souls.⁹² And yet losses of men killed or driven into slavery abroad were only the beginning of the cost. Both the institution of serfdom, which so upset the liberals, and that of military service from youth until (virtually) death, were the results, not of the despotic cruelty of the tsars, but of sheer military necessity...

92 I.L. Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia* (The People's Monarchy), Minsk, 1998, pp. 403-404. The slaves included some who have been numbered among the saints, such as St. John the Russian (enslaved in Turkey) and St. Paul of Cairo.

If the western nations' cynical attitude to Russian expansion was only to be expected, it was less to be expected, and harder to take, from the very Balkan Orthodox who benefited from this expansion through the gradual weakening of Ottoman power. None of them saw in Russia "the Third Rome", and so none of them felt obliged to coordinate their political and military initiatives with Russia, as the leader of the Orthodox world. Paradoxically, this was especially the case after the Russian advance to the gates of Constantinople and the Congress of Berlin in 1878, whose results, while in general galling to the Orthodox, and especially to Russia and Bulgaria, nevertheless established Serbia and Romania as independent states with increased territories.

The main problem with the Treaty of Berlin from the point of view of the Balkan Orthodox was that Austria-Hungary gained a protectorate in Bosnia, which infuriated the Serbs, and greater influence in the region as a whole. The Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Julius Andrassy, was fearful of Russia and had already tried, in earlier years, to draw Serbia away from the Russian sphere of influence. Now he employed bribery – the offer of increased territory for Serbia in the south-east, at Bulgaria's expense, – to draw Serbia into dependence on Austria.

As Ian Armour writes, Andrassy "would only promote Serbia's territorial claims at the Congress if [the Serbian Prime Minister] Ristic accepted his conditions. These were formalised in a preliminary convention on July 8th, 1878: Serbia agreed to complete a railway line to its southern frontier within three years; and to conclude a commercial treaty with the Monarchy.

"The realisation of these goals took somewhat longer. The railway treaty, for instance, came a year and a half later, largely because Ristic had to overcome heavy opposition in the national assembly. This was due to the understandable fear that, if Serbia were connected by rail to Austria-Hungary in advance of the commercial treaty, it would rapidly be made totally dependent on exports to the Monarchy. The railway convention was nevertheless ratified in the course of 1880.

"With the commercial treaty the determination of the Austro-Hungarian government to bend Serbia to its will became painfully apparent. Andrassy by this time had stepped down as foreign minister, but his successor, Baron Haymerle, was a colourless Austrian diplomat groomed in the Andrassy stable; and, as his right-hand man in the foreign ministry, Haymerle had the Hungarian, Kallay. Ristic's attempts to wriggle out of the terms they wanted now prompted Haymerle and Kallay to activate Austria-Hungary's secret weapon – Prince Milan. By threatening economic reprisals they had little difficulty in winning over the Austrophile Milan, and Ristic was forced to resign in October 1880.

"The commercial treaty was thus signed on May 6th, 1881. By this instrument, Austria-Hungary was given what amounted to preferential treatment in Serbia: the treaty assured Serbian produce of a readier market in the Monarchy, but it also ensured the domination of the Serbian market by Austro-Hungarian manufactured goods. The overall effect was to stunt Serbia's economic growth for a generation. With

the trade treaty went an even subtler form of control, a veterinary convention. Livestock, especially pigs, were Serbia's principal export, and the country possessed no processing plant of its own. Almost all these animals marched to their fate in Austria-Hungary. The veterinary convention contained a 'swine fever clause', which enabled the Monarchy to close the Hungarian frontier to Serbian oxen and swine on the slightest suspicion of infection. It was a powerful lever, to which the Austro-Hungarian government was to resort nine times between 1881 and 1906.

"The final touch was the secret political treaty of June 28th, 1881. This showed the extent to which the Hungarians' paranoia about Russian influence in Serbia had become the stock-in-trade of Habsburg policy since the Ausgleich [the creation of the Dual Monarchy in 1867]. As Haymerle put it to the Serbian foreign minister during the negotiations, 'we could not tolerate such a Serbia on our frontier, and we would, as a lesser evil, occupy it with our armies'. The treaty bound Serbia not to tolerate 'political, religious or other intrigues... against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy', including Bosnia. It obliged both states to observe benevolent neutrality if either was involved in war with a third party. Most startlingly, Serbia undertook, in Article IV, neither 'to negotiate nor conclude any political treaty with another government', unless Austria-Hungary approved..."⁹³

These restrictions grated on the increasing national feeling of the Serbs... Nevertheless, the international recognition of the independence of Serbia and Romania (with increased territory), together with the virtual independence of Bulgaria (even if shorn of much of her territory), was something to rejoice at. The Balkan Orthodox could now look forward to final liberation from the old enemy, Turkey, in the not so distant future. The question was: could they unite into some kind of federation or commonwealth that would bring that joyful event forward, and perhaps also help to reduce the power and influence of their other old enemy, Austria-Hungary?

There were several possibilities. One was "Yugoslavism", a federation of Slavic peoples stretching from the Croats in the West to the Bulgarians in the East, in which Serbia would serve as the geographical core and magnet, "the Piedmont of the South Slavs". Of course, this presupposed the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which Russia had opposed in 1848 even while rescuing the Habsburg Slavs from the Hungarian counter-revolution.

Another was "Illyrianism" – that is, Yugoslavism without Bulgaria. Surprisingly, perhaps, in view of later, twentieth-century history, there were many Catholic Croats and Slovenes – including the famous Catholic Bishop and opponent of papal infallibility, Strossmaier – who were enthusiastic about this option. Bulgaria was not part of the idea because of her frequent wars with Serbia over Macedonia.

93 Armour, "The Roots of Sarajevo: Austria-Hungary and Serbia, 1867-81", *History Today*, February 27, 2014.

A third possibility was Great Serbia, the union of all the South Slavs, including those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but excluding Bulgaria under the Serbian king.⁹⁴

In the long term, however, what mattered most was not the precise form of the relationship between the South Slav states as how truly Orthodox the resultant unitary state or confederation of states would be. And here the signs were not encouraging.

First of all, a truly Orthodox state required or a strong “symphony” between King and Church. But this was nowhere to be found in the Balkans, imbued as the region was increasingly becoming with western ideas of democracy and constitutionalism. Moreover, both Romania and Bulgaria were ruled by Catholic Germans imposed on them by the great powers, while the Greek King George was Lutheran – and there could be no symphony between them and the Orthodox Church. Thus Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov writes: “In Austria-Hungary the Orthodox Serbs and Romanians did not pray for their emperor Franz-Joseph, who was not Orthodox. In exactly the same way the names of King George, a Lutheran, and King Ferdinand, a Catholic, were not commemorated in Orthodox Greece and Bulgaria. Instead their Orthodox heirs to the throne were commemorated. This attitude to the authorities sometimes led to conflict with them. Thus in 1888 the Bulgarian Synod was dismissed by Ferdinand of Coburg, and the members of the Synod were expelled by gendarmes from the capital because they refused to offer prayer in the churches for the Catholic prince, who had offended the Orthodox Church by many of his actions. After this the government did not allow the Synod to assemble for six years...”⁹⁵

Serbia was the only Balkan state ruled by native Orthodox kings – but they had the unfortunate habit of being killed by rival dynastic factions...

Another major problem was the disunity among the Orthodox Balkan states, especially over Macedonia, where Serbs, Bulgars and Greeks fought for possession of the minds, hearts and territories of the native inhabitants. Peace could have been achieved between them if they had recognized Russia as mediator in their quarrels. But nationalist pride would not allow any of them to recognize the Russian tsar as having the status of the Pan-Orthodox Emperor.

The indiscipline of the Balkan Orthodox was illustrated in 1885, when a band of rebels seized control of Plovdiv, capital of Eastern Rumelia, thereby violating one of the articles of the Treaty of Berlin. Prince Alexander von Battenburg of Bulgaria, who had been threatened with “annihilation” by a Macedonian secret society if he did not support the coup, promptly marched into Plovdiv (Philippopolis), took credit for the coup, and proclaimed himself the ruler of a united North and South Bulgaria. Now from a narrowly nationalist point of view, this was a triumph – one of the most galling decisions of the Treaty of Berlin had been reversed, and Bulgaria, though formally still not completely free of Ottoman suzerainty, was now de facto independent and united (if we exclude the disputed territories of Northern Dobrudja and Macedonia).

94 Judah, *The Serbs*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, third edition, pp. 93-94.

95 Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, pp. 18-19.

However, from the point of view of the preservation of international peace, and still more of Pan-Orthodox unity, it was a disaster. The Bulgarians' violation of the Treaty of Berlin gave the Turks – still a formidable military power – a good legal excuse to invade Bulgaria, which would have dragged the Russian armies back into the region only eight years after the huge and costly effort of 1877-78, which in turn may have dragged other great powers into a major European war.

Seeing the dangers, Tsar Alexander III, - who is not undeservedly called “the Peacemaker”, - decided not to support his irresponsible nephew, Prince Alexander, and to withdraw the Russian officers from the army of his ungrateful ally. This was undoubtedly the right decision, but it cost him much - both in terms of an estrangement between Russia and Bulgaria, and in terms of his discomfiture at the hands of the British, who cynically decided to support the coup...

But this was not the end of the sorry story. The Serbian King Milan now invaded Bulgaria, boasting that he was going “on a stroll to Sofia”.⁹⁶ Barbara Jelavich explains why this conflict took place: “Since the unified Bulgarian state would be larger and more populous than Serbia, Milan felt that he was entitled to compensation. He thus launched an attack in November 1885. Despite widely held convictions that the Bulgarian army, deprived of its higher officers by the Russian withdrawal, would be crushed, it in fact defeated the invaders. The Habsburg Empire had to intercede to save Milan. Peace was made on the basis of the maintenance of the former boundaries; Serbia had to accept the Bulgarian unification. The entire episode was an enormous blow to the king's prestige.”⁹⁷

All this was caused by the Balkan States' refusal to accept the leadership of Russia, “the Third Rome”. This was, regrettably, to be expected of the Romanians, who resented the Russians' possession of Southern Bessarabia, and were always fearful of a return of the Russian protectorate. And it was to be expected of the Greeks, who accused the Russians, absurdly, of “Pan-Slavism”, and who in any case were dreaming of a resurrection of Byzantium... But it was less expected of the Slavic states, who, proud of their newly acquired independence, decided to have completely independent – that is, egoistic, short-sighted and foolish - foreign policies that completely ignored the existence of the “batyushka-tsar” to the north, who alone, among Orthodox leaders, had the interests of the Orthodox Christian commonwealth as a whole at heart. Their behaviour confirmed Leontiev's thesis that there was little to choose between Greek and Slavic nationalism, and Dostoyevsky's thesis that the Slavic states would continually intrigue against each other and hate each other, and seek recognition from Europe, ignoring Russia, but then, in their hour of need, they would turn for help to her, that “huge magnet, which inexorably drawing them all to herself, will thereby preserve their integrity and unity”.⁹⁸

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96 Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 175.

97 Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 2, p. 31.

98 Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer, Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), vol. 26, pp. 77-82.

In 1897 Russia and Austria-Hungary had come to an agreement to preserve the status quo in the Balkans. However, this agreement came under threat in 1903, when a group of military conspirators, upset at King Alexander of Serbia's pro-Austrian orientation and proposed cuts to the military budget, killed him and Queen Draga in Belgrade.⁹⁹ This murder brought the Karadjordjević dynasty back to power in the person of King Peter I, who had been in exile in France and Switzerland since 1858.

The reaction of the Serbs to the murder of the Lord's Anointed was extraordinarily indifferent. The day after the murder was celebrated as a holiday; the streets were decorated with flags. The conspirators were not only not prosecuted, but feted. They filled the senior posts in the new government, and their leader, "Apis" Dragutin Dimitrijević, was even thanked for his work by the parliament and became a national hero. The leader of the largest, Radical Party, Nikola Pašić, wanted to limit the influence of the regicides; but even he was forced to recognize the legitimacy of the coup and oppose efforts to bring the regicides to trial.¹⁰⁰

In fact, the murder, and the shameless reaction to it, was a symptom of a wider revolutionary malaise in contemporary Orthodox Christendom as a whole. This malaise took on a predominantly nationalist character in the Balkans, and an internationalist character in Russia. Soon it was soon to bring down upon it the wrath of God and the end of the whole "Sardian" period of the Orthodox Christian Empire from St. Constantine the Great to Tsar Nicholas II... For, as Rebecca West writes, "when Alexander and Draga fell from that balcony the whole of the modern world fell with them. It took some time to reach the ground and break its neck, but its fall started then..."¹⁰¹ The shots in Belgrade in 1903 led to the shots at Sarajevo in 1914, which led to the First World War and the Russian revolution. For God is not mocked; He does not allow anyone to touch His anointed.

The new King was surrounded by conspirators. Even if he had wanted to resist the irredentist mood in Serbia: it is doubtful that he could have done so. For he was not only surrounded by a nationalist coterie: he reigned but did not rule in a country ruled, not by the king, but by elected politicians.

This was evident from the very first day of his reign, when the Prime Minister Avvakumović pointedly introduced him to the Russian minister *before* the Austrian minister. "That formally signified," wrote the *Belgrade Daily Chronicle*, "that Austria-Hungary has no relations with the present cabinet."¹⁰² This was because under the old Obrenović dynasty Serbia had been in a subservient position to Austria, an economic colony of the great Catholic empire of the West. But introducing the king first to the Russian minister was equivalent to saying that the old pro-Austrian orientation of Serbian foreign policy was over, and that Serbia's Great-Power patron was now the

99 John Etty, "Serbian Nationalism and the Great War", *History Today*, February 27, 2014. For a description of the murder, and the circumstances leading up to it, see Christopher Clark, *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, pp. 7-13.

100 Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-20.

101 West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, p. 12.

102 Ulrick Loring and James Page, *Yugoslavia's Royal Dynasty*, London: The Monarchist Press Association, 1976, p. 60.

great Orthodox empire of the East. And this in turn signified that Serbia was no longer going to take such a passive attitude towards Austria's occupation of Bosnia with its large Serb population...

The next day the king swore an oath to "maintain inviolate the Constitution". And on June 25 he made a proclamation peppered with references to the Constitution: "I will be a true constitutional King of Serbia. For me all constitutional guarantees of freedom and popular rights, which are the basis of all regular and prosperous development as well as of all national progress and constitutional life, are sacred trusts which I will always carefully respect and guard. I expect everyone to do the same."¹⁰³ This meant that the real rulers of Serbia would remain the elected politicians... Then he went on: "Imbued with these sentiments, to the past I consign the past, and I leave it to history to judge each according to his deeds..." In other words, the murderers of the King Alexander would not be threatened by him. Nor would he undermine the policy of trying to gather all Serbs under one political roof...

Under the Obrenovićs a secret treaty had given Austria-Hungary a virtual veto over Serbian foreign policy. But now Serbia became more independent both politically and economically of her Catholic neighbour. Thus in 1904 Serbia signed a secret treaty with Bulgaria whose contents were communicated to the Russians, but not the Austrians.

Again, as Clark writes, "after the regicide of 1903, Belgrade stepped up the pace of irredentist activity within the [Austrian] empire, focusing in particular on Bosnia-Herzegovina. In February 1906, the Austrian military attaché in Belgrade, Pomiankowski, summarized the problem in a letter to the chief of the General Staff. It was certain, Pomiankowski declared, that Serbia would number among the empire's enemies in the event of a future military conflict. The problem was less the attitude of the government as such than the ultra-nationalist orientation of the political culture as a whole: even if a 'sensible' government were at the helm, Pomiankowski warned, it would be in no position to prevent the 'all-powerful radical chauvinists' from launching 'an adventure'. More dangerous, however, than Serbia's 'open enmity and its miserable army' was the 'fifth-column work of the [Serbian] Radicals in peacetime, which systematically poisons the attitude of our South Slav population and could, if the worst came to the worst, create very serious difficulties for our army...'"¹⁰⁴

"During 1905-6, a crisis unfolded in which trade policy, armaments orders, high finance and geopolitics were closely intertwined. Vienna pursued a threefold objective: to secure a commercial treaty with Serbia, to ensure that Serbian armaments orders would continue to be placed with Austrian firms, and to contract a major loan to Belgrade.

103 Loring and Page, *op. cit.*, p. 62. Evidence of this irredentist, revanchist mood is provided by Edith Durham, who records the following conversation among her companions in a railway carriage in December, 1903. Her companions "were all Serbs, young and aflame with patriotism... Talk all ran on unredeemed Serbia and King Peter who is to realise the national ideal. 'Now we have a King who is as good as yours,' they said, 'and Serbia will have her own again'." (*The Burden of the Balkans*, London, 1905, p. 86).

104 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

“The failure to achieve agreement on any of these questions produced a drastic cooling of relations between the two neighbours, and the outcome was an unmitigated disaster for Vienna. The Serbian armaments orders went to the French firm Schneider-Creusot instead of to the Austrian rival, Škoda of Bohemia. The Austrians reacted by closing the border to Serbian pork, triggering a customs conflict that came to be known as the ‘pig war’ (1906-9). But this was a counter-productive measure, since Serbia quickly found other export markets (especially in Germany, France and Belgium) and at last began to build slaughterhouses on a substantial scale, thus emancipating itself from its long-standing dependence on Austro-Hungarian processing facilities. Finally, Belgrade secured a major loan against not from Vienna, but from Paris (offered in return for the placement of armaments orders with French firms).”¹⁰⁵

As nationalist passions mounted in Serbia, the question arose: in their quest for a Greater Serbia on whom could they rely among the Great Powers now that Austria was no longer an ally? Possibly France, with whom the Serbs were now closely linked financially and militarily. Obviously Russia...

And yet there were two major problems with regard to Russia. First, Russia’s main client in the Balkans was Bulgaria, which she had liberated in 1877-78 – and the Bulgars were the Serbs’ fierce rivals for control over Macedonia, a situation not changed fundamentally by the secret treaty of 1904. Secondly, the Russians, always more conscious of the wider geopolitical picture than the other Orthodox states, did not support Serbia’s nationalist irredentism, which had its roots, not in Orthodoxy or Slavdom, but in the French revolution, and was abhorrent to the Tsar. As the leader of a multi-national empire, he resisted nationalism and irredentism both within Russia’s borders and outside them. The suspicion was, therefore, that Serbia now, under the Karadjordjevićs, would not so much *follow* Russia as the leader of the Orthodox world as *use* her to protect herself when her aggressive foreign policy would bring her into inevitable conflict with the more powerful states of Austria-Hungary or Ottoman Turkey...

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The year 1908 was a critical year because of two events: the revolution of the Young Turks in the Ottoman empire, and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that these two revolutionary events effectively cancelled the good work of the Russian counter-revolution and made world war much more likely. If the internationalist revolution had been checked, its terrible twin, the nationalist revolution, was now on the cusp of victory against the forces of law and order.

Important changes were taking place in the dominant great power in the Balkans – Turkey, where the old system of Islamic Sharia law combined with the Sultan’s personal decrees was being undermined by a new liberal legal system, introduced

¹⁰⁵ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

under pressure from the Western powers, whose main idea was the equality of all citizens, both Muslim and Christian. The liberal legislation, which was incorporated into the Constitution in 1876, was displeasing to Muslims and Christians alike. For, on the one hand, the Muslims felt that they were losing their superiority to the “infidel”. And on the other hand, the Christians were worried about losing some of the exemptions they enjoyed under the old millet system.

For “in some ways,” as Taner Akçam writes, “Christians were better off than the average Turkish peasant, given their exemption from military service, and often the support of a foreign consulate, which excluded them from Ottoman courts, protected their homes from being searched by the authorities and freed them from Ottoman taxes. ‘The maligned Turkish peasant, at the other end of the social scale, was generally no better off than the ordinary non-Muslim and as much oppressed by maladministration... He was as much in need of reformed government as the Church, but [h]e had neither treaty, foreign power, nor patriarch to protect him, and his lot was generally unknown in Europe.’”¹⁰⁶

Defeat at the hands of Russia in 1877-78, and the gradual liberation of their European Christian subjects, increased the sense of grievance and frustration among the Turks. Massacres of Christians began, notably of Armenians (200,000 in 1894-96, nearly two million in 1915). And a new nationalist ideology began to be worked out on the basis of the empire’s Muslim Turks being the “millet-i Hakime”, or “ruling nation”.

In 1908 a modernizing group called “The Committee for Union and Progress” (CUP), or “The Young Turks”, seized power in Constantinople. The CUP’s stronghold was the Army in Macedonia, which had learned much from the discipline and conspiratorial techniques of the Bulgarian and Macedonian guerrillas. In fact, some of the rebel soldiers in Macedonia formed pacts with the Albanians, and with the Bulgarian and Serbian guerrillas they were supposed to be fighting.¹⁰⁷

The result was a stunning victory for the revolution. On July 23, 1908 the Young Turks imposed a constitution on the empire. In 1909 the Sultan was deposed. And by 1913 the government had come under the complete control of the Committee of Union and Progress. The new government was Masonic, but at the same time nationalist at heart. Thus they declared: “We can compromise with the Christians only when they accept our position of dominance.” One of their leaders, Namik Kemal, spoke of the Turks as “occupying the pre-eminent position in the Ottoman collective... on account of their great numbers and abilities, excellent and meritorious qualities such as ‘breadth of intelligence’, ‘cool-headedness’, ‘tolerance and repose’”. Another leader, Ali Suavi, declared that “the Turkish race [is] older and superior... on account of its military, civilizing and political roles”.¹⁰⁸ However, at first they renounced nationalism so as to bring as many members of other nationalities of the multi-national

106 Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, London: Constable, 2007, p. 19.

107 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

108 Akçam, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

empire onto its side. Similarly, they were secularists at heart, but concealed this in order not to alienate the Turkish masses, who were fervently religious.

And so in Constantinople Muslims joined with Armenians in requiem services for the massacres of 1896. Again, on July 23, 1908, "Salonika's gendarmerie commander observed how '[o]n the balcony of the Konak [town hall], Greek and Bulgarian bishops and the mufti shook hands and then in the name of fraternity, they invited their co-religionists to follow suit... A cry of joy burst from every lung in the crowd and you could see Muslims, Greeks and Bulgarians, the old mortal enemies, falling into one another's arms. An indescribable delirium ensued as the reconciliation of the races and religions was consecrated underneath an immense flag emblazoned with the words 'Long Live the Constitution'..."¹⁰⁹

It was indeed an extraordinary moment, comparable only to the frenzied joy that accompanied the overthrow of the Tsar only nine years later in Petrograd. Like Herod and Pilate, bitter rivals abandoned their enmity in joy at the overthrow of their common enemy – one-man-rule that recognized its authority as coming, not from men, but from the One God. Instead, a new god, "the Constitution", was erected and worshipped by all. Meanwhile, the priests of the new religion, the Masons, took over the reins of government – men such as Mehment Talaat Pasha, Grand Master of the Turkish Grand Orient, and Kemal Ataturk, who had been initiated into an Italian lodge in Macedonia.¹¹⁰ On July 23, 1908, the same day as the celebrations in Salonika, they restored the Midhat constitution on the empire...

¹⁰⁹ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

¹¹⁰ Some words on the origin of Masonry in the Ottoman empire. As the Ottoman empire declined in power, it became more and more cosmopolitan, liberal and ecumenist, at least in the capital; and Freemasonry played no small part in this process. Thus Philip Mansel writes: "From 1884 the *Cercle d'Orient*, one of the main centres of news and gambling in the city, was housed in a magnificent building on the Grande Rue de Pera. It was open to men of every race and religion, and viziers were members *ex officio*. Freemasons had existed in Constantinople since the eighteenth century; the Bektashki order had remarkable, and remarked on, similarities with the Masons, perhaps due to contacts with France through Bonneval Pasha. The masonic message of universal fraternity and abolition of religious and national differences seemed especially appropriate to the Ottoman Empire. The lodge *Le Progrès*, founded in 1868, held meetings in Ottoman and Greek. It was joined by men of different religions... In another lodge called the *Union d'Orient*, in 1866, a French atheist cried, perhaps for the first time in Constantinople: 'God does not exist! He has never existed.'" (*Constantinople*, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 293)

An important member of *Le Progrès* was the wealthy Greek banker and believer in the Ottoman Empire Cleanti Scalieris (Kleanti Skalyeri in Turkish), who was born into a noble family in Constantinople in 1833. According to Jasper Ridley, he was "initiated in 1863 into a lodge which had been established in Constantinople by the French Grand Orient. He was friendly with Midhat Pasha, a high official in the Sultan's government who was secretly the leader of the Young Turks. Midhat Pasha had been initiated as a Freemason while he was a student in England. After he returned to Turkey he was appointed Governor of the Danube region, and established a regime in which there was no religious persecution. In 1872 he was for a short time Grand Vizier, the head of the Turkish government.

"Scalieris and Midhat Pasha were able to exercise their influence on Prince Murad, the nephew of the Sultan Abd-ul Aziz and the heir to the throne. Murad listened with sympathy to their progressive liberal views, and at their suggestion became a Freemason in 1872, joining a Greek-speaking lodge in Constantinople under the authority of the French Grand Orient. In 1876, while the Bulgarian revolt against Turkish rule was taking place and Russia was preparing to go to war with Turkey in support

However, it was not long before the new government cast off its liberal and cosmopolitan mask. "Over three years of counterrevolution and restoration, revolutionary idealism turned into a regime whose brutality surpassed that of [Sultan] Abdulhamid. 'The old espionage had returned, the extortion had never ceased, the oppression against non-Moslems had now acquired a fresher and more sinister vigour, for the measure of freedom that each nationality had once enjoyed was now being ruthlessly crushed by a heretofore unknown chauvinism.'"¹¹¹

For, as Glenny writes, "while the Young Turk revolution had temporarily spread the gospel of harmony among the Empire's constituent peoples, it had had no such effect on Macedonia's neighbours in the Balkans – Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. On the contrary, they saw the success of the revolution as a sign of the Empire's extreme weakness and it galvanized their expansionist ambitions. The most immediate blow to the movement for reconciliation in the Ottoman Empire was delivered by Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary and Greece. In October, Prince Ferdinand exploited the political chaos in the Ottoman Empire by declaring Bulgaria fully independent – until then it had been nominally under the suzerainty of the Empire. Within days, Austria-Hungary followed suit by announcing the full annexation of the occupied territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina and before long Greece proclaimed *enosis* with Crete. These events, in particular Vienna's annexation of Bosnia, set alarm bells ringing in the Ottoman military barracks, the real power behind the CUP. Henceforth, any Christian demands which smacked of secessionism would be rejected. In response, the guerrillas in Macedonia – Serb, Bulgarian, Greek and, significantly, Albanian – took to the hills once more. The military establishments of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire had taken their first steps along the road that ended with the First and Second Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913."¹¹²

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Tsar Nicholas II knew better than anyone the true significance of the events of 1908, and the great danger they posed for the whole of Orthodoxy. Basically, the whole vast region of the Ottoman Empire had fallen under the power of Orthodoxy's greatest enemy, *the revolution*, albeit in its *nationalist* rather than internationalist form. The Serbs, the Bulgarians and the Greeks, in spite of their recent rejoicing *with* the Turks

of the Bulgarians, Midhat Pasha carried out a coup, deposed Abd-ül Aziz, and proclaimed Murad as the Sultan Murad V.

"A liberal-minded Freemason was now Sultan of Turkey; but within a few months he was deposed after another coup which placed the tyrannical Abd-ül Hamid II on the throne. During his thirty-three-year reign he acquired international notoriety both by his despotic government and by the sexual excesses of his private life. At first he maintained Midhat Pasha as Grand Vizier, but then arranged for him to be assassinated. He kept Murad imprisoned in the palace. Scalieris tried to arrange for Murad to escape, but the rescue attempt failed. Murad died in 1904, having been kept as a prisoner in the palace for 28 years.

"Abd-ül Hamid continued to reign until 1909, when he was deposed and imprisoned after the revolution of the Young Turks." (*The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, pp. 216-217)

111 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

112 Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

over their revolution, were now gripped by a mad enthusiasm for war *against* Turkey that might well trigger a far wider war between the great powers.

The Tsar wanted to work with Austria in order to cool passions and avert world war; but his situation was made the more difficult in that Austria's annexation of Bosnia had involved a trick played by the Austrian Foreign Minister, Baron Aehrenthal, on the Russian Foreign Minister, A.P. Izvolsky, that humiliated Russia and stirred Serbian and Russian public opinion to a frenzy of anti-Germanism. The story is told by S.S. Oldenburg:- "On September 3/16, in Buchlow castle, A.P. Izvolsky met Baron Erenthal. There are various versions of the details of this meeting. The German State-Secretary for Foreign Relations, von Schen, referring to the conversation with A.P. Izvolsky, wrote to Bülow on September 13/26 that in Buchlow Erenthal had put forward the following plan: Austria would limit herself to annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, but would forbear from moving on Salonika and would take her armies out of the Novi-Pazar Šandjak and would support Russia's demand that her fleet be given free passage through the Straits. At the same time Turkey's sovereignty over Bulgaria, which had for long been a pure formality, would be proclaimed to be annulled.

"Izvolsky evidently approved this plan in its general form. We have to bear in mind that already in 1876, at the Reichstag agreement, and then in a special clause of the Austro-German-Russian agreement of June 18, 1881, Russia had declared her consent to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: 'Austro-Hungary,' declared this clause, 'retains for herself the right to annex both these provinces at a time when she considers it necessary'. So the hands of the Russian minister were tied, and it was a matter only of this or that compensation. A.P. Izvolsky thought that Austria's renunciation of the Šandjak, the freedom of travel through the Straits for Russia and the independence of Bulgaria (together with a profitable trade agreement for Serbia) represented enough compensation. Evidently he also counted on these changes to the Berlin congress agreement being accepted at the same time - perhaps with the help of a new international conference.

"But already on September 24 / October 7 Baron Erenthal told the delegations of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, explaining this step on the grounds of the necessity of giving these provinces representative organs, so that the local population should not turn out to be at a disadvantage by comparison with the Turkish domains.

"At the same time, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria proclaimed the complete independence of Bulgaria and took the title of tsar.

"Both these acts were undoubtedly a rejection of the obligations undertaken at the Berlin congress, although in essence they only confirmed a situation that had existed de facto for a long time.

"In international relations, '*c'est le ton qui fait la musique*', and public opinion in Russia and especially in Serbia reacted badly to these steps. In Belgrade they deemed Austria's declaration as the first step towards the establishment of her hegemony in the Balkans. Bulgaria's decision was seen as 'the acceptance of independence from the

hands of Austria', while the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – as Austria's self-willed appropriation of Slavic lands".¹¹³

"Since these two formally Ottoman provinces," writes Clark, "had been under Austrian occupation for thirty years and there had never been any question of an alteration of this arrangement, it might seem that the nominal change from occupation to outright annexation ought to have been a matter of indifference. The Serbian public took a different view. The announcement created an 'unparalleled outburst of resentment and national enthusiasm', both in Belgrade and in the provinces... The Russian liberal Pavel Miliukov, who visited Serbia in 1908, was shocked by the intensity of the public emotion. The anticipation of war with Austria, he recalled, became 'a readiness to fight, and victory seemed both easy and certain'. These views were universal and so unquestioned that 'to get into an argument over [them] would have been totally useless.'

"The mental maps that informed elite and popular understandings of Serbia's policy and purpose were once again in evidence. The only way to understand the intensity of the feeling aroused in Serbia by the annexation, the British minister in Belgrade explained in a report of 27 April 1909, was to recall that 'Every patriotic Servian who takes any interest or active part in politics, thinks of the Servian nation not as merely including the subjects of King Peter, but as consisting of all those who are akin to them in race and language. He looks forward, consequently, to the eventual creation of a Greater Servia, which shall bring into one fold all the different sections of the nation, at present divided under Austrian, Hungarian and Turkish dominion... From his point of view, Bosnia is both geographically and ethnographically the heart of Great Servia.'

"In an almost contemporary tract on the crisis, the celebrated ethnographer Jovan Cvijic, Nikola Pašić's most influential adviser on the nationality question, observed that 'it [was] plain that Bosnia and Herzegovina, by... their central position in the ethnographical mass of the Serbo-Croat race,... hold the key to the Serb problem. Without them, there can be no Great Serb state'. From the perspective of pan-Serb publicists, Bosnia-Herzegovina belonged to the 'Serb lands under foreign domination' – its population was 'entirely Servian in face and language', consisting of Serbs, Serbo-Croats and 'Serb-Mohammedans', except, of course, for the minority of 'temporary inhabitants' and 'exploiters' installed by the Austrians over the previous thirty years."¹¹⁴

It is striking that Orthodox Christianity here does not count as one of the criteria of Serbness, only race and language... This demonstrates the secularism of Serbian nationalism of the time.

Tsar Nicholas asked the Germans to mediate in the dispute. The Germans refused in a particularly blunt and offensive manner that stirred up a huge wave of anti-

113 Oldenburg, *Tsarstvoovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II* (The Reign of Emperor Nicholas II), Belgrade, 1939, vol. 2, pp. 36-37.

114 Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35.

German feeling in the two Slavic countries. Although the Russians were too weak, so soon after the Russo-Japanese war and the 1905 revolution, to take decisive action at this point, their humiliation strengthened their determination not to allow the Austrians to get away with it next time... Nevertheless, the Russians, while sharing the Serbs' frustration with Austria, did not share their nationalist frenzy. The Serbian minister in St. Petersburg was warned that they should in no way mobilize against Austria because nobody would help them – the world wanted peace, not war.¹¹⁵

The Serbs paid no attention. On March 31, 1909 the government was forced by the Great Powers officially to renounce her claims on Bosnia-Herzegovina. But that was only the official position. A new nationalist organization, *Srpska Narodna Odbrana* (Serbian National Defence), also known as "Black Hand", sprang up with hundreds of committees throughout Serbia and a network of auxiliaries within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Then, in March 1911 a group of seven veterans from the Macedonian struggle, five of whom were officer-regicides founded a new secret organization under the leadership of Apis. "The constitution of *Ujedinjenje ili smrt!* [Union or Death!] opened with the unsurprising declaration that the aim of the new association was the 'unification of Serbdom'. Further articles stated that the members must strive to influence the government to adopt the idea that Serbia was the 'Piedmont' of the Serbs, and indeed of all the South Slav peoples – the journal founded to expound the ideals of *Ujedinjenje ili smrt!* duly bore the title *Pijemont*. The new movement assumed an encompassing and hegemonic concept of Serbdom – Black Hand propaganda did not acknowledge the separate identity of Bosnian Muslims and flatly denied the existence of Croats. In order to prepare Serbdom for what would be a violent struggle for unity, the society would undertake revolutionary work in all territories inhabited by Serbs. Outside the borders of the Serbian state, the society would also combat by all means available the enemies of the Serbian idea.

"In their work for the 'national cause' these men increasingly saw themselves as enemies of the democratic parliamentary system in Serbia and especially of the Radical Party, whose leaders they denounced as traitors to the nation...

"The movement thrived on a cult of secrecy. Members were inducted by means of a ceremony devised by Jovanović-Čupa, a member of the founding council and a freemason. New recruits swore an oath before a hooded figure in a darkened room pledging absolute obedience to the organization on pain of death..."¹¹⁶

"Within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the networks of *Ujedinjenje ili smrt!* and *Narodna Odbrana* became interwoven with local groups of pan-Serb activists, of which the most important was *Mlada Bosna* ('Young Bosnia'). *Mlada Bosna* was not a unified organization, but rather an aggregation of groups and cells of revolutionary youth operating across the province from around 1904; its focus was less narrowly Serbian than that of the Black Hand or of *Narodna Odbrana*. Since they were operating under the eyes of the Austrian police, the Young Bosnians adopted a decentred, flexible structure based on small 'circles' (*kruzki*), linked only by designated

¹¹⁵ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹¹⁶ Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

intermediaries. Young Bosnia's great hour arrived in 1910, when one of their number launched a suicide attack on the Austrian governor of Bosnia. On 3 June 1910, on the occasion of the opening of the Bosnian parliament, Bogdan Žerajić, a Serbian student from Herzegovina, fired five shots at Governor Marijan Varešanin. When all his bullets went wide, Žerajić emptied the sixth and last round into his own head. He was buried anonymously in a section of Sarajevo cemetery reserved from criminals and suicides, but his grave soon became a shrine for the Serb underground movement and his deed was celebrated by the nationalist press in Belgrade..."¹¹⁷

At the same time, Greece proclaimed her annexation (*enosis*) of Crete. So in a very short time the *status quo* in the Balkans which Russia and Austria had pledged to preserve in 1897 had been blown apart. And now, with the prospect of a further disintegration of Turkish rule in the Balkans, the three Orthodox States of Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece began rapidly rearming themselves, as a result of which all were deeply in debt to western arms manufacturers - the Serbs to French ones, the Bulgarians to German ones.

The Bosnian crisis strengthened the alliance between Russia and France; for both countries were now more determined than ever to oppose any further gains for Austria in the Balkans. This in turn brought the British, who in 1904 had signed an Entente with the French, closer to the Russians. For since the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 and the abortive revolution of 1905, the Russian bear no longer looked so menacing to the British, whereas the Germans now came into the picture as their main rivals. Liberal England, strongly supported by Republican France, now sought closer relations with Autocratic Russia; and in 1907 the two countries signed an agreement on their respective spheres of influence in Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia. The agreement was sealed by a meeting in 1908 between King Edward VII and Tsar Nicholas in Revel and by visits to England by a parliamentary delegation and then the Tsar himself in 1909. Although this was not a formal alliance, it had an important psychological and political effect; people now saw Europe as divided into two alliance systems, with the central powers of Germany, Austria and (possibly) Italy on the one side, and England, France and Russia on the other...

*

The murder of Stolypin in September, 1911 introduced a dangerous element of instability and indecision into Russian foreign policy. Stolypin had stood for a policy of avoidance of war and the rapid building up of Russia's financial and economic resources. His successor as prime minister, Kokovtsev, followed the same line, but lacked Stolypin's authority in keeping his ministers in order - especially the War Minister Sukhomlinov, who, together with important military figures such as the Tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich, and diplomats such as the Russian ambassador in Belgrade, Hartwig, advocated a belligerent, anti-German and pro-Serbian foreign policy.

¹¹⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Between 1907 and 1914, writes Dominic Lieven, “the outlines of a coalition between sections of Russia’s economic, political and intellectual élites based on a combination of liberal and nationalist ideas [i.e. the internationalist and nationalist revolutions] began to emerge. It encompassed a number of leading Moscow industrialists, some of Russia’s greatest liberal intellectuals and many Duma leaders. By 1914 this shadowy coalition had important friends in both the army and the bureaucracy. Prince Grigori Trubetskoy, who ran the Foreign Ministry’s department of Near Eastern and Balkan affairs, was closely linked to the Moscow industrialists and to Peter Struve, the leading intellectual spokesman for the coalition of the liberal-conservative and nationalist elites. Even Alexander Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture, was a potential ally of this coalition. His ministry, and indeed he himself, maintained cordial relations with the Duma and the zemstva. On the whole, they enjoyed a good press. And Krivoshein was not merely inclined towards pro-Slav nationalist sympathies, he had also married a daughter of one of Moscow’s leading industrialist families [the Morozovs]. It needs to be stressed that this coalition was still in embryo in 1907-9 and that Germany’s own aggressive policies played a role in bringing it to life in later years. Nevertheless the Germans were not wrong to watch Russian domestic developments with great concern in the pre-war era. The idea that the liberal-nationalist, anti-German and pro-Slav coalition represented the wave of the future was not unreasonable and was widely believed both in Russia and abroad...”¹¹⁸

The Tsar himself, with his foreign minister Sazonov, wavered between the parties of peace and war (for that is what it amounted to). His sympathies were with Serbia, and the humiliation suffered at the hands of the Austrians in 1908 was still fresh in his mind. But he also recognized the enormous risks of allowing the extreme nationalism of the Balkan Orthodox to express itself unchecked.

In the same fateful month of September, 1911 the long-expected carve-up of the Ottoman empire, “the sick man of Europe”, began. Italy, which had resented Austria’s annexation of Bosnia, decided to claim her share by invading Libya and the Dodecanese islands. Encouraged by this, the Balkan Orthodox States began preparing for war by rapidly rearming themselves. As a result, all fell deeply into debt to western arms manufacturers - the Serbs to French ones, the Bulgarians to German ones. They also made several bilateral agreements amongst themselves - first of all, the Serb-Bulgarian alliance of March, 1912.

Insofar as we can speak of a unified Russian foreign policy, we can say that the Russians were prepared to support a defensive alliance among the Balkan states in order to prevent an Austrian advance towards Salonica, and in order to keep the Straits open for the Russian export trade. But they were not prepared to support an offensive alliance that would finally destroy the Ottoman empire and lead, in all probability, to a general European war (and probably a Middle Eastern one as well, if the Arabs also rebelled). The problem was, as Macmillan writes, that “politicians who had ridden to power by playing on nationalism and with promises of national glory found that they were in the grip of forces they could not always control. Secret societies, modelling themselves on an eclectic mix which included Freemasonry, the

118 Lieven, *Nicholas II*, pp. 191-192

underground Carbonari, who had worked for Italian unity, the terrorists who more recently had frightened much of Europe, and old-style banditry, proliferated throughout the Balkans, weaving their way into civilian and military institutions of the states. The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) talked about Macedonia for the Macedonians but was widely suspected of working with Bulgarian nationalists for a great Bulgaria which would include Macedonia. In Serbia, the government and the army were riddled with supporters of Narodna Odbrana (National Defence), which had been set up during the Bosnian crisis, and its even more extreme offshoot the Black Hand. In the First Balkan War, officers disobeyed their own government on several occasions, seizing, for example, the town of Monastir (which Serbia had promised to Bulgaria in a secret treaty) in the hopes that it would then be impossible to hand it over. Although the Ottoman and Austrian-Hungarian authorities did their best to suppress all revolutionary and indeed most political activity among their own South Slav or Albanian subjects, they faced an uphill battle, especially since much of the home-grown conspiracies and terrorism were supported from outside..."¹¹⁹

Not only the Balkan Orthodox, but also the Muslim Albanians, stirred by similar nationalist dreams, were now in more or less open rebellion against the Turks. Nor did they pay much attention to the Great Powers. "Balkan leaders complained openly that they could no longer trust the great powers to protect the Christians under Ottoman rule and hinted that they might have to take action. Why maintain the status quo in the Balkans, a leading politician in Serbia asked Trotsky. 'Where was the status quo when Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina? Why didn't the powers defend the status quo when Italy seized Tripoli?' And why should the Balkan states be treated as though they were somehow not European but like Morocco? There was the chance, the Foreign Minister of Serbia admitted to the British ambassador in Belgrade, that Austria-Hungary would intervene if any of the Balkan nations moved to seize Ottoman territory but, as far as he, Milovan Milovanović, was concerned, it was better for Serbia to die fighting. If Austria-Hungary itself expanded further southwards into the Balkans, Serbia was finished anyway as an independent kingdom..."¹²⁰

The coolest and wisest heads remained the emperors of the multi-national empires – Tsar Nicholas of Russia and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria, who, however, had to cope with some belligerent subordinates. On October 8, 1912, the Tsar persuaded all the European Great Powers to send a warning to the Balkan States and Turkey that if war should break out, the Powers would not agree to any change in the territorial status quo. But as if cocking a snook at all the Great Powers, tiny Montenegro under her warmongering King Nikolai declared war on Turkey the very next day! The Montenegrins invaded Albania, and besieged Shkodra (Scutari).

Edvard Radzinsky writes: "The tsar understood how that impudent disruption of the status quo in the Balkans would ignite an explosion of indignation among the great powers. The minister of foreign affairs was instructed to persuade Montenegro to end its occupation of the fortress. But [King Nikolai] knew of the bellicose mood in

119 Macmillan, *op. cit.*, pp. 439-440.

120 Macmillan, *op. cit.*, p. 441.

Petersburg and of the support of [his son-in-law] Grand Duke Nikolai, the 'dread uncle', and he callously continued the siege of Scutari."¹²¹

On October 18, Serbia and Bulgaria entered the war against Turkey; Greece joined them on October 19. The Orthodox forces outnumbered the Turks, and were soon advancing on all fronts. The Greeks got to Salonika before the Bulgarians, but Bulgarian forces were approaching Constantinople... There was wild rejoicing in Russia; the age-old dream that "Constantinople will be ours" and that the Cross would be raised over Hagia Sophia appeared close to fulfilment. There were calls for Russia to enter the war, including from M.V. Rodzianko, the president of the Fourth Duma.

However, Russia was determined to stop Bulgaria gaining too much. For, as Alexander Bokhanov writes, she "was not interested that Bulgaria, whose ruling classes supported a pro-German orientation, should take control of Stambul and the Black Sea straits. Petersburg demanded from Sophia in harsh expressions that she stop her advance. Austria and Germany, which stood behind her, refused to be reconciled with Serbia's increased strength, and Austrian armies began to concentrate on the frontier..."¹²²

For the Serbs, too, were making great gains – but also at great cost to their moral reputation. Misha Glenny writes: "As the Serb soldiery moved to Skopje and beyond, they visited destruction and murder on the local Albanian population. Fired by tales of atrocities committed on Christian peasants during the unrest in the Albanian territories, the Serbs unleashed the full force of nationalist hatred against defenceless villages. A Serb Social Democrat, serving as a reservist, described how 'the horrors actually began as soon as we crossed the old frontier. By five p.m. we were approaching Kumanovo. The sun had set, it was starting to get dark. But the darker the sky became, the more brightly the fearful illumination of the fires stood out against it. Burning was going on all around us. Entire Albanian villages had been turned into pillars of fire... In all its fiery monotony this picture was repeated the whole way to Skopje... For two days before my arrival in Skopje the inhabitants had woken up in the morning to the sight, under the principal bridge over the Vardar – that is, in the very centre of the town – of heaps of Albanian corpses with severed heads. Some said that these were local Albanians, killed by the *komitadjis* [četnijs], others that the corpses had been brought down to the bridge by the waters of the Vardar. What was clear was that these headless men had not been killed in battle.' In Skopje, the chief instigator of the massacres was the Black Hand, which set up its headquarters close to the Russian consulate in a building soon known as the Black House. The Black Hand, with its network of agents, had escaped the control of the military authorities and was increasingly assuming the role of an informal government of 'liberated Old Serbia'. After several weeks, the government in Belgrade started to appoint civilian administrators to these territories, but those who refused to submit to the demands of the Black Hand and the *četnijs* were scared. Branislav Nušić, the writer who had

121 Radzinsky, *The Last Tsar*, London: Hodder, 1992, p. 188.

122 Bokhanov, *Imperator Nikolaj II*, Moscow, 1998, pp. 319-320.

welcomed the war with such enthusiasm, resigned as governor of Bitola in fear and disgust at the activities of these units.”¹²³

On November 20, Austria-Hungary increased its war readiness in Bosnia and Dalmatia, and also on the border with Russia in Galicia. On November 22 Tsar Nicholas responded by ordering mobilisation in the Kiev district and preparations for mobilisation in the Odessa and Warsaw districts. The next day his ministers Kokovtsev and Sazonov persuaded him to shelve these plans, but the number of active troops was increased...

The Germans were also threatening the Russians. For, as Hew Strachan writes, they “saw it as a war fought by Russia by proxy, and on 2 December 1912 Bethmann-Hollweg announced in the Reichstag that, if Austria-Hungary was attacked by a third party while pursuing its interests, Germany would support Austria-Hungary and fight to maintain its own position in Europe. Britain responded on the following day: it feared that a Russo-Austrian War would lead to a German attack on France and warned the Germans that if that happened it would not accept a French defeat. The Kaiser was furious, and summoned a meeting of his military and naval chiefs on 8 December. He said that, if Russia came to Serbia’s aid, Germany would fight. He assumed that in such a war Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Turkey would all side with the Triple Alliance [Germany, Austria and Italy], and take the main role against Serbia, so leaving Austria-Hungary to concentrate against Russia...”¹²⁴

On December 3, an armistice between the Balkan states and Turkey was agreed; but the situation remained very tense. The British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey organized a conference of ambassadors in London, which continued until August, 1913. The main result was to legitimise the substantial territorial gains made by the Balkan Orthodox, while the Turks remained in control of only a small corner of Europe close to Constantinople. As for the other losers, the Albanians, on December 20, the Great Powers, under Austrian pressure, agreed to create an independent principality of Albania. The Russians accepted this only reluctantly, and in exchange secured most of Kosovo and its mixed Serb and Albanian population for Serbia. Later, in the spring of 1915 the government of Albania was entrusted to an International Commission of Control. They appointed the German Prince Wilhelm of Wied as ruler. But an uprising by the Muslims of Central Albania drove him out in September...¹²⁵

123 Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-234.

124 Strachan, *The First World War*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 42.

125 Meanwhile, on May 4/16, 1914 there took place, as N.Yu. Selischev writes, “the signing of the document widely known in Greece as ‘the Corfu protocol’. The Corfu protocol gave the Orthodox Greeks a broad autonomy and sealed their religious, civil and social rights. The international control commission of the great powers (Russia was represented by the consul-general M. Petriaev) acted as a mediator in the quarrel and became the trustee of the fulfilment of the Corfu accord. In Russia the Corfu protocol... was known as the ‘Epirot-Albanian accord’. That is, the question of Epirus was not reduced to the level of an ‘internal affair’ of the newly created Albania, but was raised to the significance of an international agreement when the Orthodox Greek Epirots and the Mohammedan Albanians were recognized as parties to the agreement having equal rights. Our [Russian] press at that time – *Pravitel’svoennij Vestnik*, *Sankt-Peterburgskia Vedomosti* and the conservative *Novoe Vremia* – looked at the events in Epirus in precisely this way.

But the Montenegrins were refusing to give up their corner of Albania – which placed the whole agreement in jeopardy. “And then,” writes Radzinsky, “the tsar suddenly demonstrated character: he resolutely moved against public opinion. He demanded that the minister of foreign affairs put pressure on Montenegro. And on 21 April 1913 the Montenegrin king, after many hours of persuasion, consented to withdraw from Scutari in return for monetary indemnification. And the Russian foreign minister, Sergius Sazonov, announced with relief, ‘King Nikola was going to set the world on fire to cook his own little omelette.’ This was in reply to the constant reproaches that Russia had once again betrayed its Balkan brothers.”¹²⁶

Radzinsky attributes the tsar’s sudden firmness to the fact that Rasputin and the Empress were against the war. “And the tsar was forced to submit,” he writes. But this is to ignore the fact that his behaviour was perfectly consistent with his expressed belief that it was not in Russia’s interests to go to war to defend the territorial ambitions of the Balkan Slavs. Only in 1914 would he be forced to submit to the call for war. But the situation then, as we shall see, was different: Russia was not called to help the Serbs in some madcap aggression, but to *defend* them from annihilation in a just war...

There was another problem... While the Bulgarians had been advancing on Constantinople, the Serbs had taken large areas in Macedonia, including Bitola (Monastir), that had been reserved for the Bulgarians in the secret Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of 1912. When the Bulgarians asked for these territories back, the Serbs refused. On June 30, 1913 Bulgaria suddenly attacked Greece and Serbia without declaring war. This led to the outbreak of the Second Balkan War, which ended on July 29 with the victory of Greece, Serbia, Romania and Turkey over Bulgaria.

The Treaty of Bucharest brought peace, but Bulgaria remained dangerously discontented... They had some cause: although they had fought well in the First War, suffering huge casualties, they ended up with little – thanks to the deception of the Serbs, the fears of the Russians, and the opportunism of the Romanians, their fellow-Orthodox. It has been customary to blame the Second War on the Bulgarian King Ferdinand, a wily and ambitious man¹²⁷, who was heartily disliked by his allies; but

“Unfortunately, to this day the protocol of Corfu has not been fulfilled and is not being fulfilled by the Albanian side, neither in the part relating to the religious, nor in the part relating to the civil and educational rights of the Greek Epirots. In this sense the unchanging character of Albanian hostility is indicative. In 1914 the Albanian prime-minister Turkhan Pasha declared to the Rome correspondent of *Berliner Tageblatt* that ‘there can be no discussion’ of the autonomy of Epirus, and ‘for us there are no longer any “Epirots”, but there are only the inhabitants of provinces united to us by the London conference.’ Decades later, in 1967, another Albanian tyrant, Enver Khodja, proclaimed Albania to be the first officially atheist country in the world, where the Orthodox Church was banned and destroyed. The Serbs talk about the destruction of 2000 Orthodox churches.” (“Chto neset Pravoslaviiu proekt ‘Velikoj Albanii’?”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, N 2 (1787), January 15/28, 2005, p. 11).

¹²⁶ Radzinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

¹²⁷ Barbara Tuchman writes that at the funeral of King Edward VII in 1910 Ferdinand had “annoyed his fellow sovereigns by calling himself Czar and kept in a chest a Byzantine Emperor’s full regalia, acquired from a theatrical costumer, against the day when he should reassemble the Byzantine dominions beneath his sceptre” (*The Guns of August*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1962, 1994, p. 3).

these allies must take at least part of the blame for the desertion of the Bulgarians to the Triple Alliance in the First World War...

Robert Cooper writes that "while the first Balkan war was mostly a military-to-military affair, in the second the target was often the civilian population. If you could establish that a piece of territory was inhabited by your people – Serbs, Bulgarians or Greeks, - then you could claim it as a part of your national territory. This was therefore a war about people as well as territory: whether a village was Serb or Bulgarian might decide whether its inhabitants lived or died..."¹²⁸

As Tim Judah, writes, "ethnic cleansing" was common during the Second War: "The Carnegie Endowment's account of the crushing of the Albanian revolt in Kosovo is also important because in 1913 as in 1941 or the 1990s it was quite clear to all involved what the purpose of ethnic cleansing was: 'Houses and whole villages are reduced to ashes, unarmed and innocent populations massacred *en masse*, incredible acts of violence, pillage and brutality of every kind – such were the means which were employed by the Serbo-Montenegrin soldiery, with a view to the entire transformation of the ethnic character of regions inhabited exclusively by Albanians.

"We thus arrive at the second characteristic feature of the Balkan wars, a feature which is the necessary correlative of the first. Since the population of the countries about to be occupied knew, by tradition, instinct and experience, what they had to expect from the armies of the enemy and from the neighbouring countries to which these armies belonged, they did not await their arrival, but fled. Thus generally speaking, the army of the enemy found on its way nothing but villages which were either half deserted or entirely abandoned. To execute the orders for extermination, it was only necessary to set fire to them. The population, warned by the glow from these fires, fled all in haste. There followed a veritable migration of peoples, for in Macedonia, as in Thrace, there was hardly a spot which was not, at a given moment, on the line of march of some army or other. The Commission everywhere encountered this second fact. All along the railways interminable trains of carts drawn by oxen followed one another; behind them came emigrant families and, in the neighbourhood of the big towns, bodies of refugees were found encamped.'

"Just as conversion had been accepted as a means to escape death in earlier times, in some places it once again became an issue. When the Montenegrins captured the village of Plav, Rebecca West, whose pro-Serbian bent somewhat undermines her otherwise masterly account of Yugoslavia in the 1930s, characteristically dismisses a major massacre as an 'unfortunate *contretemps*'. During this little misunderstanding a former Muslim cleric, now converted to Orthodoxy and a major in the Montenegrin Army, demanded that his former congregation convert. They refused and so 500 of them were shot. In another incident, some Macedonian villagers had their church surrounded by Serbian soldiers during the Sunday service. On emerging they found that a table had been set up on which was a piece of paper and a revolver. Either they

¹²⁸ Cooper, "Balkan Ghosts", *New Statesman*, October 4-10, 2013, p. 31.

could sign that they were Serbs rather than Bulgarians – or they could die. They chose the former option.”¹²⁹

This latter incident shows that rivalry and hatred among the Orthodox, especially in Macedonia and especially between Greeks and Bulgarians, had by no means been removed by their alliances against the Turks.

A Carnegie Endowment report describes the hatred between the Greeks and Bulgarians at this time:- “Day after day the Bulgarians were represented as a race of monsters, and public feeling was roused to a pitch of chauvinism which made it inevitable that war, when it should come, should be ruthless. In talk and in print one phrase summed up the general feeling of the Greeks towards the Bulgarians. ‘Dhen einai anthropoi!’ (They are not human beings). In their excitement and indignation the Greeks came to think of themselves as the appointed avengers of civilization against a race which stood outside the pale of humanity.

“... Deny that your enemies are men, and presently you will treat them as vermin. Only half realizing the full meaning of what he said, a Greek officer remarked to the writer, ‘When you have to deal with barbarians, you must behave like a barbarian yourself. It is the only thing they understand.’ The Greek army went to war, its mind inflamed with anger and contempt. A gaudily coloured print, which we saw in the streets of Salonika and the Piraeus, eagerly bought by the Greek soldiers returning to their homes, reveals the depth of the brutality to which this race hatred had sunk them. It shows a Greek *evzone* (highlander) holding a living Bulgarian soldier with both hands, while he gnaws the face of the victim with his teeth, like some beast of prey. It is entitled *Bulgarophagos* (Bulgar-eater), and is adorned with the following verses:

*The sea of fire which boils in my breast
And calls for vengeance with the savage waves of my soul,
Will be quenched when the monster of Sofia is still,
And thy life blood extinguishes my hate.”*¹³⁰

It is sometimes asserted that the Christian commandment to love our enemies cannot be applied in war. Certainly, it is necessary to obey lawful authorities and fight the enemies of the State. At the same time, personal hatred and unnecessary cruelty are forbidden both in war and peace. Even in the Old Testament, and even in relation to non-Jews, cruelty was forbidden: “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry, and My wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows, and your children fatherless” (Exodus 22.21-24).

In ten weeks’ fighting during the two Balkan wars of 1912-13 about 200,000 soldiers were killed, together with an unknown number of civilians. This constituted a political and military victory for the Balkan Orthodox, but a major spiritual defeat for

¹²⁹ Judah, *The Serbs*, pp. 85-86.

¹³⁰ Judah, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

Orthodoxy. Russia had managed to avoid a world war while not betraying her co-religionists; but internal as well as external factors were making it increasingly difficult for the Tsar to hold the twin monsters of revolutionary nationalism and internationalist revolution at bay.

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As Niall Ferguson writes, “in spite of the fact that the Balkan wars did not grow into a pan-European conflict, the tension in the international arena did not abate. Germany and France had already for several years been carrying out rearmament programmes. Russia was also drawn into this world arms race. Nationalist tendencies increased. In the spring of 1913 the German chancellor Bethmann-Holweg, while arguing in the Reichstag for the necessity of new credits for the army, declared that Germany was threatened by ‘a Slavic wave’. But he was only repeating his Kaiser, who declared after the First Balkan War that he thought ‘a struggle between the Slavs and Germans’ inevitable.

“By contrast with ‘dear Willy’, the Russian tsar was of another opinion and did not consider a large-scale military conflict to be inevitable. In May 1913 Nicholas II arrived in Berlin for the wedding of the Kaiser’s daughter, Princess Victoria-Louise, who was marrying the duke of Braunstein. The tsar was intending to come to an agreement with William II about improving Russian-German relations. He conducted negotiations with the Kaiser and told him that Russia was ready to renounce her claims on the Black Sea straits and agreed to leave Turkey in the role of ‘gate-keeper’ if Germany, on her part, would keep Austria from an expansionist policy in the Balkans. There was no reaction to these suggestions in Berlin, and William confined himself only to talking about generalities...”¹³¹

The Balkan Wars “had revealed both the strengths and the limits of Balkan nationalism. Its strength lay in its ferocity. Its weakness was its disunity. The violence of the fighting much impressed the young Trotsky, who witnessed it as a correspondent for the newspaper *Kievskaja mysl*. Even the peace that followed the Balkan Wars was cruel, in a novel manner that would become a recurrent feature of the twentieth century. It no longer sufficed, in the eyes of nationalists, to acquire foreign territory. Now it was peoples as well as borders that had to move. Sometimes these movements were spontaneous. Muslims fled in the direction of Salonika as the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians advanced in 1912; Bulgarians fled Macedonia to escape from invading Greek troops in 1913; Greeks chose to leave the Macedonian districts ceded to Bulgaria and Serbia by the Treaty of Bucharest. Sometimes populations were deliberately expelled, as the Greeks were from Western Thrace in 1913 and from parts of Eastern Thrace and Anatolia in 1914. In the wake of the Turkish defeat, there was an agreed population exchange: 48,570 Turks moved one way and 46,764 Bulgarians the other across the new Turkish-Bulgarian border. Such exchanges were designed to transform regions of ethnically mixed settlement into the homogeneous societies that so appealed to the nationalist imagination. The effects on some regions were dramatic. Between 1912 and 1915, the Greek population of (Greek) Macedonia increased by

131 Bokhanov, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

around a third; the Muslim and Bulgarian population declined by 26 and 13 per cent respectively. The Greek population of Western Thrace fell by 80 per cent; the Muslim population of Eastern Thrace rose by a third. The implications were distinctly ominous for the many multi-ethnic communities elsewhere in Europe..."¹³²

The major political result of the Balkan Wars was that the Balkan Orthodox states now regarded themselves as completely independent of their Russian protector. *Formally speaking*, this was certainly not envisaged by, for example, the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaty of 1912, which ascribed to Russia the role of arbiter in all disputes.¹³³ But the reality was quite different... As a French diplomat in St. Petersburg put it: "For the first time in the history of the Eastern question the small states have acquired a position of such independence of the Great Powers that they feel able to act completely without them and even to take them in tow..."¹³⁴ This independence was revealed in the way in which the Serbs remained on Albanian territory for a full six months after agreeing to withdraw from it, leaving only after the Austrians issued an ultimatum on October 17. But this independence came at a price – a price that would be paid in 1914. For it convinced the Austrians, first, that the only way they could exert influence over the Serbs was through ultimata. And secondly, "that Serbia would only ever ultimately understand force..."¹³⁵

Again, one Bulgarian statesman told Leo Trotsky soon after the First Balkan War: "We must, of course, say this in all politeness to all the other diplomats from Europe, as they labour in the sweat of their brows for our happiness. 'Neither honey nor thorns,' dear sirs! We ourselves will settle with Turkey, without any interference from Europe, and all the more firmly and satisfactorily. Europe puts on an air of being afraid that we shall be excessively demanding. And this from Europe – that is to say, from Austria-Hungary, who annexed Bosnia; from Italy, who seized Tripolitania; from Russia, who never takes her eyes off Constantinople... This is the Europe that comes to us preaching moderation and restraint. Truly, a sight for the gods on Olympus!... Your diplomats are sulking. They would not be averse to freezing the Balkans for another ten years, in expectation of better days sometime. How is it that they cannot understand that less and less is it possible in our epoch to direct the destinies of the Balkans from the outside? We are growing up, gaining confidence, and becoming independent... In the very first years of our present phase of existence as a state, we told our would-be guardians: 'Bulgaria will follow her own line.'... And so Messrs. Privy Councillors of all the diplomatic chanceries would do well to get used to the idea that the Balkan Peninsula 'will follow its own line'..."¹³⁶

This was the fundamental problem of Balkan politics, and the reason why it was precisely in the Balkans that the fuse was lit that led to the First World War. The Balkan States of Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania were Orthodox, but they did not recognize the guidance of Russia, the senior and most powerful Orthodox state. In spite of the fact that Russia, over the centuries, had expended millions of lives

132 Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 76-77.

133 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

134 Macmillan, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

135 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

136 Glenney, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

and vast financial resources in order to protect and eventually liberate the Balkans from the oppression of Muslim and Catholic powers, they did not feel obliged to show gratitude to “the Third Rome” or submit to her leadership in any way. They were determined to go their own, egotistical ways and expand their territories regardless of the consequences for world peace or the interests of the Orthodox commonwealth as a whole, let alone each other other’s interests.

Only the Russian tsar through his position as the Autocrat of the Third Rome and the protector of the whole of Orthodoxy could have the interests of the Orthodox commonwealth as a whole at heart. But he was faced with a very difficult dilemma. On the one hand, he wanted, in accordance with majority opinion in Russia, to be able to support the Orthodox Balkan states when they came into conflict with Ottoman Turkey or Austria-Hungary, which is why he tended to support the “war party” of the Defence Secretary Sukhomlinov in his requests for increased military spending, and was quick to order a partial mobilisation in November, 1912.¹³⁷ But on the other hand, he knew that defending the interests of one Balkan state risked alienating another - which is precisely what happened when he came down on the side of Serbia as against Bulgaria.¹³⁸ Still more serious, because of the new system of alliances in which the Entente supported Serbia while the Triple Alliance supported Bulgaria, any serious involvement on the side of Serbia threatened to ignite a wider conflict between the two alliance blocs which would most likely bring down Russia herself and with her the whole of the Orthodox commonwealth - which, again, is precisely what happened.

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“The Balkan wars of 1912-13,” writes Dominic Lieven, “had greatly enlarged Serbian and Rumanian territory, together with the ambitions and self-confidence of Serbian and Rumanian nationalists. The Habsburg Monarchy contained large and discontented Serbian and Rumanian minorities. In 1914 Vienna feared that it would soon lose all its influence over the independent Balkan states, which in turn would contribute to its inability to control the Slav and Rumanian populations of the Monarchy. In more general terms, the rulers of the Habsburg state believed that a reassertion of the empire’s power and vitality was essential in order to overawe its potential foreign and domestic enemies, and to contradict the widely prevalent assumption that the Monarchy was moribund and doomed to disappear in the era of nationalism and democracy.”¹³⁹

Relations between Vienna and Belgrade continued to be tense along the whole “southern front”. As Christopher Clark writes, “Austrian hostility to Belgrade’s triumphant progress was reinforced from the autumn of 1913 by dark tidings from the areas conquered by Serbian forces. From Austrian Consul-General Jehlitschka in Skopje came reports in October 1913 of atrocities against the local inhabitants. One

¹³⁷ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

¹³⁸ Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-282.

¹³⁹ Lieven, “Russia, Europe and World War I, in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914-1921*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 42.

such spoke of the destruction of ten small villages whose entire population had been exterminated. The men were first forced to come out of the village and shot in lines; the houses were then set on fire, and when the women and children fled from the flames, they were killed with bayonets. In general, the consul-general reported, it was the officers who shot the men; the killing of the women and children was left to the enlisted men. Another source described the behaviour of Serbian troops after the taking of Gostivar, one of the towns in an area where there had been an Albanian uprising against the Serbian invaders. Some 300 Gostivar Muslims who had played no role in the uprising were arrested and taken out of the town during the night in groups of twenty to thirty to be beaten and stabbed to death with rifle butts and bayonets (gunshots would have woken the sleeping inhabitants of the town), before being thrown into a large open grave that had been dug beforehand for that purpose. These were not spontaneous acts of brutality, Jehlitschka concluded, but rather 'a cold-blooded and systematic elimination or annihilation operation that appeared to have been carried out on orders from above.'

"Such reports, which accord... with those of the British officials in the area, inevitably affected the mood and attitude of the political leadership in Vienna. In May 1914, the Serbian envoy in Vienna, Jovanović, reported that even the French ambassador had complained to him about the behaviour of the Serbs in the new provinces; similar complaints were forthcoming from Greek, Turkish, Bulgarian and Albanian colleagues, and it was to be feared that the damage to Serbia's reputation could have 'very bad consequences'. The glib denials of Pašić and his ministers reinforced the impression that the government was either itself behind the atrocities or unwilling to do anything to prevent or investigate them. The Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade was amused to see leader articles in the Viennese press advising the Serbian government to go easy on the minorities and win them over by a policy of conciliation. Such advice, he observed in a letter to Berchtold, might well be heeded in 'civilised states'. But Serbia was a state where 'murder and killing have been raised to a system'. The impact of these reports on Austrian policy is difficult to measure – they were hardly surprising to those in Vienna who already subscribed to a grossly stereotypical view of Serbia and its culture. At the very least, they underscored in Vienna's eyes the political illegitimacy of Serbian territorial expansion.

"Nevertheless: a war between Austria and Serbia did not appear likely in the spring and summer of 1914. The mood in Belgrade was relatively calm in the spring of that year, reflecting the exhaustion and sense of satiation that followed the Balkan Wars. The instability of the newly conquered areas and the civil-military crisis that racked Serbia during May gave grounds to suspect that the Belgrade government would be focusing mainly on tasks of domestic consolidation for the foreseeable future. In a report on 24 May 1914, the Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade, Baron Giesl, observed that although Serbian troop numbers along the Albanian border remained high, there seemed little reason to fear further incursions. And three weeks later, on 16 June, a dispatch from Gellinek, the military attaché in Belgrade, struck a similarly placed note. It was true that officers on holiday had been recalled, reservists asked not to leave their current addresses and the army was being kept at a heightened state of

readiness. But there were no signs of aggressive intentions towards either Austro-Hungary or Albania. All was quiet on the southern front..."¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Clark, *Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, pp. 112-114.

11. SARAJEVO

By the summer of 1914 the Orthodox commonwealth of nations had reached its zenith from an external, political and economic point of view. The great Russian empire, in which the majority of Orthodox Christians lived, stretched from the Baltic to the Pacific, and its influence spread more widely still, from the protectorate it exercised over the Orthodox of the Balkans and the Middle East, to its important ecclesiastical missions in Persia, China, Japan, Alaska and the United State. It was making mighty strides economically, and was modernizing and strengthening its military capacity to a significant degree. Meanwhile, the Orthodox Balkan states had just driven the Turks out of Europe (almost), and Serbia, Romania and Greece had reached their greatest territorial extent since their foundation as states in the previous century. Serbia's population growth, in particular, was remarkable: from 2.9 million subjects before the Balkan Wars to 4.4 million after them.

However, this was a bubble that was about to burst. All the Orthodox states had very serious internal problems. Anti-monarchism had taken over the minds and hearts of the wealthier classes in Russia and other Orthodox countries, and western heresies, spiritualism and even atheism were making deep inroads into the Church. In the Balkans, the recent victories over the Turks caused over-confidence and an increase in militarism and nationalism, with the military establishments ascendant over the civil administrations. In Serbia, in particular, the military contested control with the government over the newly-acquired territories in Macedonia, and "Apis", Colonel Dragutin Dmitrijevič, the leading regicide of 1903 and inspirer of the terrorist "Black Hand" organization, was in charge of military intelligence...

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In June, 1914 the Austro-Hungarians were holding military manoeuvres in Bosnia, and Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who in addition to being heir to the Habsburg throne was also Inspector General of the Armed Forces of the Empire, came to observe them with his wife. "With overwhelming stupidity," as Noel Malcolm writes, "his visit to Sarajevo was fixed for 28 June, the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo and therefore the most sacred day in the mystical calendar of Serb nationalism."¹⁴¹

Christopher Clark writes: "The commemorations across the Serb lands were set to be especially intense in 1914, because this was the first St. Vitus's Day since the 'liberation' of Kosovo during the Second Balkan War in the previous year. 'The holy flame of Kosovo, which has inspired generations [of Serbs] has now burst into a mighty fire,' the Black Hand journal *Pijemont* announced on 28 June 1914. 'Kosovo is free! Kosovo is avenged!' For Serb ultra-nationalists, both in Serbia itself and across the Serbian irredentist network in Bosnia, the arrival of the heir apparent in Sarajevo on this of all days was a symbolic affront that demanded a response."¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1996, p. 155.

¹⁴² Clark, *Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, pp. 368-369.

Seven assassins from *Mlada Bosna* were waiting for the Archduke and his wife. The first attempt to kill them failed, but the second, by Gavrilo Princip, was successful. By an extraordinary coincidence, on the very same day Rasputin was stabbed in the stomach by a mad woman and so separated from the Russian Tsar for the rest of the summer. Thus were the two men who might have prevented their respective emperors from going to war removed from the scene. Evidently it was God's will: exactly one month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, followed soon after by Russia's mobilization in defence of her ally. And a few days after that, all the Great Powers of Europe were at war...

Many thought that war would be averted as it had been averted at similar moments of crisis several times in recent years. But it was different this time, because Austria-Hungary *wanted* war this time. As David Stevenson writes: "... Although in summer 1914 international tension was acute, a general war was not inevitable and if one had not broken out then it might not have done so at all. It was the Habsburg monarchy's response to Sarajevo that caused a crisis. Initially all it seemed to do was order an investigation. But secretly the Austrians obtained a German promise of support for drastic retaliation [on 7 July]. On 23 July they presented an ultimatum to their neighbour, Serbia. Princip and his companions were Bosnians (and therefore Habsburg subjects), but the ultimatum alleged they had conceived their plot in Belgrade, that Serbian officers and officials had supplied them with their weapons, and that Serbian frontier authorities had helped them across the border. It called on Serbia to denounce all separatist activities, ban publications and organizations hostile to Austria-Hungary, and co-operate with Habsburg officials in suppressing subversion and conducting a judicial inquiry. The Belgrade government's reply, delivered just within the forty-eight hours deadline, accepted nearly every demand but consented to Austrian involvement in a judicial inquiry only if that inquiry was subject to Serbia's constitution and to international law. The Austrian leaders in Vienna seized on this pretext to break off relations immediately, and on 28 July declared war. The ultimatum impressed most European governments by its draconian demands..."¹⁴³

The Serbs had some more or less plausible alibis. Though a Great Serbian nationalist, the Serbian Prime Minister Pašić, as Max Hastings writes, "was an inveterate enemy of Apis, some of whose associates in 1913 discussed murdering him. The prime minister and many of his colleagues regarded the colonel as a threat to the country's stability and even existence; internal affairs minister Milan Protić spoke of the Black Hand to a visitor on 14 June as 'a menace to democracy'. But in a society riven by competing interests, the civilian government lacked authority to remove or imprison Apis, who was protected by the patronage of the army chief of staff."¹⁴⁴

Although there is evidence that Pašić was trying to control the Black Hand, he had not succeeded by 1914. Moreover, being himself a Great Serbian nationalist, at no point in his career did he make a determined effort to quench that nationalist-revolutionary *mentality* which ultimately led to the shots in Sarajevo. The very fact

143 Stevenson, 1914-1918: *The History of the First World War*, London: Penguin, 2005, pp. 10-11.

144 Hastings, *Catastrophe: Europe goes to War 1914*, London: William Collins, 2014, p. xxxv.

that he warned the Austrians about the plot shows that he knew what Apis was planning. As for Apis himself, besides taking part in the regicide of 1903, he confessed to participation in plots to murder King Nicholas of Montenegro, King Constantine of Greece, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria!¹⁴⁵ That such a murderous fanatic should be in charge of Serbia's military intelligence tells us much about the influence within Serbia of the nationalist-revolutionary heresy. "In fact," as Stevenson writes, "Serbia's army and intelligence service were out of control"¹⁴⁶ – at least until 1917, when Apis was shot...

The terrorists were given four pistols and six bombs by Major Vojin Tankos of the Black Hand, and were guided into Bosnia by "a Serbian government informer, who passed word about their movements, and about the bombs and pistols in their luggage, to the Interior Ministry in Belgrade. His report, which the prime minister read and summarized in his own hand, made no mention of a plot against Franz Ferdinand. Pašić commissioned an investigation, and gave orders that the movement of weapons from Serbia to Bosnia should be stopped; but he went no further. A Serbian minister later claimed that Pašić told the cabinet at the end of May or the beginning of June that some assassins were on their way to Sarajevo to kill Franz Ferdinand. Whether or not this is true – no minutes were taken of cabinet meetings – Pašić appears to have instructed Serbia's envoy in Vienna to pass on to the Austrian authorities only a vague general warning, perhaps because he was unwilling to provide the Habsburgs with a fresh and extremely serious grievance against his country."¹⁴⁷

As Malcolm writes, while "many theories still circulate about Apis's involvement and his possible political motives, ... the idea that the Serbian government itself had planned the assassination can be firmly rejected.

"Even the Austro-Hungarian government did not accuse Serbia of direct responsibility for what had happened. Their ultimatum of 23 July complained merely that the Serbian government had 'tolerated the machinations of various societies and associations directed against the monarchy, unrestrained language on the part of the press, glorification of the perpetrators of outrages, participation of officers and officials in subversive agitation' – all of which was essentially true."¹⁴⁸

The Austrians saw the assassination as a good reason (some called it a pretext) for dealing with the Serbian problem once and for all. As Stevenson admits, "the summary time limit gave the game away, as did the peremptory rejection of Belgrade's answer. The ultimatum had been intended to start a showdown..."¹⁴⁹

145 West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, p. 369.

146 Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

147 Hastings, *op. cit.*, p. xxxvi. According to Margaret Macmillan, Pašić "got wind of what was up but was either unable or unwilling to do anything. In any case it was probably too late; the conspirators had arrived safely in Sarajevo and linked up with local terrorists..." (*The War that Ended Peace*, London: Profile, 2014, p. 515)

148 Malcolm, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

149 Stevenson, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

"The Serbian evidence," continues Stevenson, "confirms that Austria-Hungary had good grounds for rigorous demands. But it also shows that the Belgrade government was anxious for a peaceful exit from the crisis whereas the Austrians meant to use it as the pretext for violence. Austria-Hungary's joint council of ministers decided on 7 July that the ultimatum should be so stringent as to 'make a refusal almost certain, so that the road to a radical solution by means of a military action should be opened'. On 19 July it agreed to partition Serbia with Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece, leaving only a small residual state under Habsburg economic domination. Yet previously Vienna had been less bellicose: the chief of the general staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorff, had pressed for war against Serbia since being appointed in 1906, but his appeals had been rejected. The Emperor Franz Joseph was a cautious and vastly experienced ruler who remembered previous defeats. He and his advisers moved to war only because they believed they faced an intolerable problem for which peaceful remedies were exhausted."¹⁵⁰

Austria's aggressiveness was reinforced by Germany; on July 6 the Kaiser gave the Austrians the famous "blank cheque" promising them support whatever they did. As the German historian Fritz Fischer wrote: "The official documents afford ample proof that during the July crisis the emperor, the German military leaders and the foreign ministry were pressing Austria-Hungary to strike against Serbia without delay, or alternatively agree to the despatch of an ultimatum to Serbia couched in such sharp terms as to make war between the two countries more than probable, and that in doing so they deliberately took the risk of a continental war against Russia and France."¹⁵¹

On this reading, the *primary* responsibility for the outbreak of war would seem to belong to the two German-speaking nations, especially Germany. As David Fromkin writes: "The generals in Berlin in the last week of July were agitating for war – not Austria's war, one aimed at Serbia, but Germany's war, aimed at Russia... Germany deliberately started a European war to keep from being overtaken by Russia..."¹⁵² Malcolm confirms this verdict: "it is now widely agreed that Germany was pushing hard for a war, in order to put some decisive check on the growing power of Russia".¹⁵³

Again, J.M. Roberts points out, it was Germany that first declared war on France and Russia when neither country threatened her. And by August 4 Germany had "acquired a third great power [Britain] as an antagonist, while Austria still had none... In the last analysis, the Great War was made in Berlin..."¹⁵⁴

As for Russia, according to Dominic Lieven, her rulers "did not want war. Whatever hankering Nicholas II may ever have had for military glory had been wholly dissipated by the Japanese war. That conflict had taught the whole ruling elite that

¹⁵⁰ Stevenson, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁵¹ Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, 1961, chapter 2.

¹⁵² Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, London: Vintage, 2005, pp. 272, 273.

¹⁵³ Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹⁵⁴ Roberts, *The Penguin History of Europe*, London: Penguin, 1997, pp. 510-511. See also Keith Wilson, "Hamlet – With and Without the Prince: Terrorism at the Outbreak of the First World War", *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2007.

war and revolution were closely linked. Though war with Germany would be more popular than conflict with Japan had been, its burdens and dangers would also be infinitely greater. Russian generals usually had a deep respect for the German army, to which on the whole they felt their own army to be inferior. Above all, Russian leaders had every reason to feel that time was on their side. In strictly military terms, there was good reason to postpone conflict until the so-called 'Great Programme' of armaments was completed in 1917-18. In more general terms, Russia already controlled almost one-sixth of the world's land surface, whose hitherto largely untapped potential was now beginning to be developed at great speed. It was by no means only Petr Stolypin who believed that, given 20 years of peace, Russia would be transformed as regards its wealth, stability and power. Unfortunately for Russia, both the Germans and the Austrians were well aware of all the above facts. Both in Berlin and Vienna it was widely believed that fear of revolution would stop Russia from responding decisively to the Austro-German challenge: but it was also felt that war now was much preferable to a conflict a decade hence.

"In fact, for the Russian government it was very difficult not to stand up to the Central Powers in July 1914. The regime's legitimacy was at stake, as were the patriotism, pride and self-esteem of the key decision-makers. Still more to the point was the conviction that weakness would fatally damage Russia's international position and her security. If Serbia became an Austrian protectorate, that would allow a very significant diversion of Habsburg troops from the southern to the Russian front in the event of a future war. If Russia tamely allowed its Serbian client to be gobbled up by Austria, no other Balkan state would trust its protection against the Central Powers. All would move into the latter's camp, as probably would the Ottoman Empire. Even France would have doubts about the usefulness of an ally so humiliatingly unable to stand up for its prestige and its vital interests. Above all, international relations in the pre-1914 era were seen to revolve around the willingness and ability of great powers to defend their interests. In the age of imperialism, empires that failed to do this were perceived as moribund and ripe for dismemberment. In the judgement of Russian statesmen, if the Central Powers got away with the abject humiliation of Russia in 1914 their appetites would be whetted rather than assuaged. At some point in the near future vital interest would be threatened for which Russia would have to fight, in which case it made sense to risk fighting now, in the hope that this would deter Berlin and Vienna, but in the certainty that if war ensued Serbia and France would fight beside Russia, and possibly Britain and certain other states as well."¹⁵⁵

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Not only most European governments at the time, but also most historians, since then, have accepted the account outlined in the last section. But there are some "revisionists" who would spread the blame more evenly. Let us consider the alternative view of Professor Christopher Clark.

¹⁵⁵ Lieven, "Russia, Europe and World War I, in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *A Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914-1921*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, pp. 42-43.

Clark points out, first, that the news of the assassination was greeted with jubilation in Serbia. Nor did the Serbian government led by Pašić do anything to calm Serbian passions or reassure Austrian opinion – quite the reverse.¹⁵⁶ So whatever judgement one forms of the Austrian actions, there can be no question that they were sorely provoked... The Russians also incurred guilt at this point in that they did little to rein in the nationalist passions of the Serbs, but rather supported them...¹⁵⁷

Secondly, Clark demonstrates that the German decision to give the famous “blank cheque” on July 6 was based on the false assumption that the Russians would not intervene on the side of the Serbs - first of all, because they were not yet ready for war (their military programme was not due for completion until 1917), and secondly because, as the Kaiser repeatedly said, he could not imagine that the Tsar would side “with the regicides” against two monarchical powers. The other possibility considered by the Germans was that the Russians *wanted* to mobilize and start a European war. If that was the case, thought the Germans (there was some evidence for the hypothesis in the French and Russian newspapers), then so be it - better that the war begin now rather than later, when the advantage would be with the Russians.¹⁵⁸ So an element of miscalculation entered into the German decision of July 6.

Thirdly, the Germans blessed the Austrians to invade Serbia - but not start a world war. In fact, both of the German-speaking nations wanted to *localize* the conflict. This is not to deny the weighty evidence that the German military had been planning a preventive war against Russia and France for years. But in July, 1914, the German civilian leadership, and in particular the Chancellor Bethmann – and even the Kaiser himself – were counting on the Austrians dealing with the Serbs and leaving it at that. Only they wanted them to act *quickly* in the hope that a quick Austrian victory would present the other Great Powers with a *fait accompli* that would deter them from further military action. It was unfortunate that the Austrians were for various reasons not capable of acting quickly...

The fact that the Austro-Serbian conflict did not remain localized, but spread to engulf the whole of Europe was the result, according to Clark, of the structure of the alliance between Russia and France, in which an Austrian attack on Serbia was seen as a “tripwire” triggering Russian intervention on the side of Serbia, followed immediately by French intervention on the side of Russia. (Britain was also in alliance with France and Russia, but more loosely. For Britain, as it turned out, the tripwire was not Austria’s invasion of Serbia but Germany’s invasion of Belgium.) Clark produces considerable evidence to show that important figures in both the French, the Russian and the British leadership did not want the conflict to be localized, but wanted the trigger to be pulled because they thought war was inevitable and/or that this was the only way to deal with the perceived threat of German domination of Europe. This was particularly the position of the French President Poincaré, who travelled to Russia in the fourth week of July in order to stiffen the resolve of the Russians, but was also

156 Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-391.

157 Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-412.

158 Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 415-423.

true of Russian Agriculture Minister Krivoshein and British First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, who rejoiced on hearing that the Austrians had declared war on the Serbs on July 28.¹⁵⁹

In fact, Russia was not fully committed to the tripwire scenario. As recently as October, 1913 "St. Petersburg had been willing to leave Belgrade to its own devices... when the Austrians had issued an ultimatum demanding [the Serbs'] withdrawal from northern Albania."¹⁶⁰ However, some important changes had taken place in the intervening months in the Russian foreign policy establishment. First, Prime Minister Kokovtsev, an opponent of intervention in the Balkans, had been forced out by the nationalists in the government. Then, in January, 1914, when the Tsar offered the vacant post to Pyotr N. Durnovo, - in Clark's words "a forceful and determined man who was adamantly opposed to Balkan entanglements of any kind"¹⁶¹, - Durnovo turned it down, and the post passed to Goremykin, a much weaker character. With this change there probably also passed the last chance for the Russian government to abandon the "tripwire" policy of the nationalists.

One could argue that the Tsar should have imposed his will on the foreign policy establishment whether they liked it or not. But times had changed greatly since the reign of the absolutist Tsar Peter the Great. Tsar Nicholas, though far from being the weak man that western historians almost invariably make him out to be, was not in a position simply to ignore what his ministers thought and impose his will on them. In any case, he was running out of wise and loyal men to place in the higher reaches of government...

It must be admitted, moreover, that the Tsar himself coming closer to the nationalists' position; he probably now occupied a position somewhere in the middle between the nationalists such as Sukhomlinov, Krivoshein and Sazonov and the more cautious ministers such as Stolypin, Kokovtsev and Durnovo. He did not want war, and fully understood that it might destroy Russia in the end (which it did); but he was determined to defend the Serbs; and the other foreign policy considerations outlined by Lieven above probably also played their part in his thinking - especially, as we know for certain, his fears that the Dardanelles could be cut off for the Russian navy and Russian exports...

Proof of the Tsar's sincere desire to avert war by all honourable means is contained in the telegrams exchanged between Tsar Nicholas and the Serbian regent, Prince Alexander in the last days before the catastrophe. The prince, who had commanded the First Serbian Army in the Balkan wars and later became king, wrote to the Tsar: "The demands of the Austro-Hungarian note unnecessarily represent a humiliation for Serbia and are not in accord with the dignity of an independent state. In a commanding tone it demands that we officially declare in *Serbian News*, and also issue a royal command to the army, that we ourselves cut off military offensives against Austria and recognize the accusation that we have been engaging in treacherous

159 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

160 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

161 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 557.

intrigues as just. They demand that we admit Austrian officials into Serbia, so that together with ours they may conduct the investigation and control the execution of the other demands of the note. We have been given a period of 48 hours to accept everything, otherwise the Austro-Hungarian embassy will leave Belgrade. We are ready to accept the Austro-Hungarian demands that are in accord with the position of an independent state, and also those which would be suggested by Your Majesty; everyone whose participation in the murder is proven will be strictly punished by us. Certain demands cannot be carried out without changing the laws, and for that time is required. We have been given too short a period... They can attack us after the expiry of the period, since Austro-Hungarian armies have assembled on our frontier. It is impossible for us to defend ourselves, and for that reason we beseech Your Majesty to come as soon as possible to our aid..."

To this the Tsar replied on July 27: "In addressing me at such a serious moment, Your Royal Highness has not been mistaken with regard to the feelings which I nourish towards him and to my heart-felt disposition towards the Serbian people. I am studying the present situation with the most serious attention and My government is striving with all its might to overcome the present difficulties. I do not doubt that Your Highness and the royal government will make this task easier by not despising anything that could lead to a decision that would avert the horrors of a new war, while at the same time preserving the dignity of Serbia. All My efforts, as long as there is the slightest hope of averting bloodshed, will be directed to this aim. If, in spite of our most sincere desire, success is not attained, Your Highness can be assured that in no case will Russia remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia."

Although the Tsar knew that resisting popular national feeling could lead to revolution, as Sazonov warned, he also knew that an unsuccessful war would lead to it still more surely. So the decisive factor in his decision was not popular opinion, but Russia's ties of faith with Serbia. And if one good thing came out of the First World War it was the strengthening of that religious bond both during and after it, when the remnants of the White Armies and the Russian Church in Exile settled in Yugoslavia as the guest of King Alexander. For as Prince Alexander replied to the Tsar: "Difficult times cannot fail to strengthen the bonds of deep attachment that link Serbia with Holy Slavic Rus', and the feeling of eternal gratitude for the help and defence of Your Majesty will be reverently preserved in the hearts of all Serbs."

The Tsar proved to be a faithful ally. In 1915, after being defeated by the Germans, the Serbian army was forced to retreat across the mountains to the Albanian coast. Tens of thousands began to die. Their allies looked upon them with indifference from their ships at anchor in the Adriatic. The Tsar informed his allies by telegram that they must immediately evacuate the Serbs, otherwise he would consider the fall of the Serbs as an act of the greatest immorality and he would withdraw from the Alliance. This telegram brought prompt action, and dozens of Italian, French and English ships set about evacuating the dying army to Corfu, and from there, once they had recovered, to the new front that the Allies were forming in Salonika.

As the Serbian Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich) of Zhicha, wrote: "Great is our debt to Russia. The debt of Serbia to Russia, for help to the Serbs in the war of 1914, is huge

– many centuries will not be able to contain it for all following generations. This is the debt of love, which without thinking goes to its death, saving its neighbour. ‘There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his neighbour.’ These are the words of Christ. The Russian Tsar and the Russian people, having taken the decision to enter the war for the sake of the defence of Serbia, while being unprepared for it, knew that they were going to certain destruction. The love of the Russians for their Serbian brothers did not fear death, and did not retreat before it. Can we ever forget that the Russian Tsar, in subjecting to danger both his children and millions of his brothers, went to his death for the sake of the Serbian people, for the sake of its salvation? Can we be silent before Heaven and earth about the fact that our freedom and statehood were worth more to Russia than to us ourselves? The Russians in our days repeated the Kosovo tragedy. If the Russian Tsar Nicholas II had been striving for an earthly kingdom, a kingdom of petty personal calculations and egoism, he would be sitting to this day on his throne in Petrograd. But he chose the Heavenly Kingdom, the Kingdom of sacrifice in the name of the Lord, the Kingdom of Gospel spirituality, for which he laid down his own head, for which his children and millions of his subjects laid down their heads...”¹⁶²

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On July 28 the Austrians declared war on the Serbs. Sazonov immediately told London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and Rome that Russia would mobilize the districts adjoining Austria the next day. General mobilization duly took place on the evening of July 29. In fact, Russia had *already* begun military preparations for war on July 25, while Germany “remained, in military terms, an island of relative calm throughout the crisis”...¹⁶³

There was now only one hope for the prevention of war: that the Emperors of Russia and Germany would intervene and work out to some compromise. It nearly happened. For in 1914 Europe was a family of nations united by a single dynasty and a cosmopolitan elite confessing what most considered to be a single Christianity, albeit divided into Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant varieties.¹⁶⁴ The family was German in origin, being made up of branches of the Saxe-Coburg dynasty.¹⁶⁵ Thus even the matriarch of the family, Queen Victoria of England, once told King Leopold of the Belgians: “My heart is so German...”¹⁶⁶ For many generations, the Russian tsars and princes had taken brides from German princely families; Nicholas II, though thoroughly Russian in spirit, had much more German blood than Russian in his veins; and the Tsaritsa Alexandra and her sister Grand Duchess Elizabeth were Hessian

162 Victor Salni and Svetlana Avlasovich, “Net bol’she toj liubvi, kak esli kto polozhit dushu svoiu za drugi svoia” (There is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friend), http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page*pid=966.

163 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

164 Tsar Nicholas II became the godfather of the future King Edward VIII at his Anglican baptism (Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 137), and in 1904 Kaiser Wilhelm was invited to be godfather of the Tsarevich Alexis (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, p. 100).

165 Sophie Gordon, “The Web of Royalty”, *BBC History Magazine*, February, 2012, pp. 16-18. Victoria’s son, Edward VII, reacted against this Germanism by becoming very anti-German.

166 Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, p. 97.

princesses with an English mother.¹⁶⁷ However, a disunifying factor within the family was the fact that Alexandra and Minnie, the wives of King Edward VII of England and Tsar Alexander III of Russia, were sisters from the Danish dynasty; for the Danes nurtured an intense dislike of the Prussians, who had invaded their country in 1864, and so moved their husbands, and later their sons, King George V and Tsar Nicholas II, closer to each other and further away from Germany, thereby weakening the traditional hostility that existed between Russia and England and turning them against Germany. Meanwhile, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II reacted strongly against the liberalism of his English mother, and was attracted towards the militarist and fiercely anti-English monarchism of the Prussian aristocracy. In some ways, this also attracted him to autocratic Russia; but the developing alliance between Russia, Britain and France engendered in him and his circle a fear of “encirclement” and hostility against them all.

Nevertheless, in the summer of 1914 many hoped that the family links between the Kaiser and the Tsar would prevent war. For, as the London *Standard* had observed in 1894, “the influence of the Throne in determining the relations between European Power has never been disputed by those at all familiar with modern politics, it is sometimes lost sight of or ignored by the more flippant order of Democrats...”¹⁶⁸ And they did talk, even after the outbreak of war. But in this case the talking was to no avail. For in the last resort family unity (and the avoidance of world war) counted for less for the Kaiser than nationalist pride and solidarity with the Austrians, and less for the Tsar than solidarity in faith and blood with the Serbs...

On the morning of July 29 the Tsar received a telegram from the Kaiser pleading with him not to undertake military measures that would undermine his position as mediator with Austria. “Saying ‘I will not be responsible for a monstrous slaughter’, the Tsar insisted that the order [for general mobilization] be cancelled. Yanushkevich [Chief of the Russian General Staff] reached for the phone to stay Dobrorolsky’s hand, and the messenger was sent running to the telegraph to explain that an order for partial mobilization was to be promulgated instead.”¹⁶⁹

However, as Sazonov hastened to tell the Tsar, the reversal of the previous order was impractical for purely military and logistical reasons. (The Kaiser encountered the same problem when, to the consternation of the German Chief of Staff von Moltke, he tried to reverse German mobilization a few days later; this was the “railway

167 However, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) pointed out, the sisters were more English than German in their tastes and upbringing, taking after their English mother rather than their German father (“Homily on the Seventh Anniversary of the Martyric End of Emperor Nicholas II and the Entire Royal Family”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 31, no. 4, July-August, 1981).

168 Carter, *The Three Emperors*, London, 2010, p. 145. As Clark writes, “The European executives were still centred on the thrones and the men or women who sat on them. Ministers in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia were imperial appointees. The three emperors had unlimited access to state papers. They also exercised formal authority over their respective armed forces. Dynastic institutions and networks structured the communications between states. Ambassadors presented their credentials to the sovereign in person and direct communications and meetings between monarchs continued to take place throughout the pre-war years; indeed, they acquired a heightened importance” (*op. cit.*, p. 170).

169 Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 521.

timetables problem.”) Moreover, Sazonov advised the Tsar to undertake a full mobilization because “unless he yielded to the popular demand for war and unsheathed the sword in Serbia’s behalf, he would run the risk of a revolution and perhaps the loss of his throne”. The Tsar made one last appeal to the Kaiser: “I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure brought upon me and forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war.” On July 30 the Kaiser replied that he was neutral in the Serbian question (which he was not). And he reiterated the warning issued by the German Ambassador Pourtalès the previous day to the effect that “Germany favours the unappeasable attitude of Austria”. The Tsar now “abandoned any hope that a deal between the cousins could save peace and returned to the option of general mobilization...”¹⁷⁰

Grand Duchess Elizabeth said that the Tsar did not want war. She blamed her cousin, the Kaiser, “who disobeyed the bidding of Frederick the Great and Bismarck to live in peace and friendship with Russia.”¹⁷¹ However, if Clark is right, the situation was both more complicated and more finely balanced than that. In the last analysis, both monarchs had cold feet about war, but both were pushed into it by the pressure of their subordinates and the logic of the opposing alliances to which they themselves ascribed at least to some degree. This logic had been built up on both sides over the course of generations, and the monarchs were neither solely responsible for it nor able on their own to free themselves from its gravitational force... This is not to equate them from a moral point of view: they were far from equal in terms of moral stature. But it does help us to understand a little better why they both acquiesced in a war that was to destroy both their kingdoms and the very foundations of European civilization...

In any case, the die was now cast; war between Russia and Germany could no longer be prevented. The Tsar gave the order for general mobilization on July 31, and the Germans declared war on the next day, August 1, the feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov, the great prophet of the last times...

12. FROM SERBIA TO YUGOSLAVIA

The First World War began in the East with the Austrians attacking the Serbs and being defeated by them at the battle of Cer. Eventually, sheer force of numbers enabled the Austrians to conquer Belgrade. But in November, 1914 the Serbs drove the Austrians back – an extraordinary feat of arms. A stalemate now set in. “But [King] Alexander began to think of the disintegration of the Austrian Empire and the liberation of the Croats and Slovenes...”¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

¹⁷¹ Abbot Seraphim, *Martyrs of Christian Duty*, Peking, 1929; quoted in Lyubov Millar, *Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Publication Society, 1993, p. 176.

¹⁷² Stephen Graham, *Alexander of Yugoslavia*, Yale University Press, 1939, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Book, 1972, p. 95.

A lull in the fighting ensued. And a typhus epidemic took its toll of the troops. The Austrians sued for a separate peace. But in August, 1915 the Serb parliament in Niš voted to continue the war of liberation. The Austrian overtures were rejected...

In October, the Austrians advanced again, but now stiffened by German troops under General Mackensen and supported by the Bulgarians from the East. The Serbs were forced to retreat through Kosovo, and then over the Albanian and Montenegrin mountains to Durazzo on the Adriatic. Alexander led the terrible and heroic retreat, known as "the Serbian Golgotha". But when he arrived at Durazzo, the promised Allied help in the form of Italian supplies and transports were not to be seen...

Alexander "trusted Nicholas II and knew him to be a friend. So from his sick bed he dictated a letter to the Tsar: 'In hope and faith that on the Adriatic shore we should receive succor promised by our Allies, and the means to reorganize, I have led my armies over the Albanian and Montenegrin hills. In these most grievous circumstances I appeal to Your Imperial Majesty, on whom I have ever relied, as a last hope and I beseech Your high intervention on our behalf to save us from sure destruction and to enable us to recoup our strength and offer yet further resistance to the common enemy. To that end it will be necessary for the Allied fleet to transport the army to some more secure place, preferably Salonika. The famished and exhausted troops are in no condition to march to Valona as designated by the Allied higher command. I hope that this my appeal may find response from Your Imperial Majesty, whose fatherly love for the Serbian people has been constant and that You will intervene with the Allies to save the Serbian Army from a catastrophe which it has not deserved, a catastrophe otherwise inevitable.'

"No one stirred to save the Serbian Army till the Tsar got busy. The governments of the West paid little attention to the Serbian exploit, which only became famous after the war was over. It needed a sharp note from Sazonov to spur the Allies to activity.

"Tsar Nicholas replied: 'With feelings of anguish I have followed the retreat of the brave Serb troops across Albania and Montenegro. I would like to express to Your Royal Highness my sincere astonishment at the skill with which under Your leadership, and in face of such hardships and being greatly outnumbered by the enemy, attacks have been repelled everywhere and the army withdrawn. In compliance with my instructions my Foreign Minister has already appealed repeatedly to the Allied Powers to take steps to insure safe transport from the Adriatic. Our demands have now been repeated and I have hope that the glorious troops of Your Highness will be given the possibility to leave Albania. I firmly believe that Your army will soon recover and be able once more to take part in the struggle against the common enemy. Victory and the resurrection of great Serbia will be consolation to You and our brother Serbs for all they have gone through.'"¹⁷³

The Serbian retreat of 1915, heroic though it was, contained a message that few Serbs were ready to receive at that time. In 1912 Serbian troops had conquered Kosovo, and Montenegrin troops – Northern Albania, after inflicting terrible atrocities on the

¹⁷³ Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

Albanians. Now, three years later, they were retreating across the same territory – and the Albanians inflicted revenge. Was there not an element of Divine justice accompanying this all-too-human vengeance? For while not formally responsible for the assassination at Sarajevo in 1914, or of the retreat through Kosovo in 1915, in a deeper sense the Serbs had been responsible – not solely, but definitely in part – for the terrible cycle of vengeance that took over the whole region in these years, beginning with the struggle for Macedonia and continuing with the Balkan Wars and the First World War.

Since the mid-nineteenth century the Serbs had elevated the land and the battle of Kosovo to a mythic status that hardly accorded with Orthodox teaching. Thus in 1889, on the five-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Serbia's foreign minister, Ćedomil Mijatovic, told the Royal Academy that "an inexhaustible source of national pride was discovered on Kosovo. More important than language and stronger than the Church, this pride unites all Serbs in a single nation..."¹⁷⁴ That national pride should be considered "stronger than the Church" was a danger sign. Nothing on earth is stronger than the Divine-human institution of the Church, which, as the Lord says, "will prevail against the gates of hell", whereas national pride can be crushed, and nations themselves can disappear completely...

The true significance of the original Battle of Kosovo lay in Tsar Lazar's choice of a Heavenly Kingdom in preference to an earthly kingdom, heavenly rewards (salvation, Paradise, God's glory) over earthly ones (lands, power, vainglory). From the mid-nineteenth century the more nationalist among the Serbs completely turned round this message to read: the conquest of the earthly land of Kosovo (and other formerly Serbian lands) is worth any sacrifice and justifies almost any crime. Thus "Apis", besides taking part in the regicide of 1903, confessed to participation in plots to murder King Nicholas of Montenegro, King Constantine of Greece, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria!¹⁷⁵ That such a murderous fanatic should be in charge of Serbia's military intelligence tells us much about the influence within Serbia of the nationalist-revolutionary madness. "In fact," as Stevenson writes, "Serbia's army and intelligence service were out of control..."¹⁷⁶

It was greatly to the credit of Prince Alexander that he tried to bring these forces back under control. In 1917, in Salonika, Apis and two others were tried and executed, and two hundred of his leading followers imprisoned. The question was: was this enough to uproot the virus from the Serbian state and nation?...

But 1917, tragically, was also the year of the abdication of Tsar Nicholas and the Russian revolution. Now the Orthodox Emperor, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, is to be identified with the figure whom St. Paul calls "him who restrains" the coming of the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7). Without the support of "him who restrains", Alexander faced an uphill task in restraining the power of the revolution in his own land...

174 Tim Judah, *The Serbs*, Yale University Press, 1999, p. 68.

175 Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, p. 369.

176 David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War*, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 12.

In the spring of 1916 Prince Alexander and his 160,000 troops were gradually recovering on the Greek island of Corfu. He then decided to travel to Rome, Paris and London in order to convince the Allies to re-equip his army and transport them to Salonika to open up a new front. With difficulty, he succeeded in convincing them, and in the summer the Serbian army, together with French, British, Russian and Italian contingents, reassembled in Salonika in "the Army of the East". In September the Serbs advanced against the Bulgarians, and by November were in Monastir (Bitola). They dug in for the winter. The next year America entered the war, and thousands of Serb, Croat and Slovene immigrants joined the Army of the East. In June, Alexander signed a Corfu Declaration to the effect that he was fighting for a free Yugoslav state combining the three peoples, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in one.¹⁷⁷ In September, 1918 the great offensive began, and on October 29 Alexander entered in triumph into a ruined Belgrade, before taking possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slovenia and Voivodina...¹⁷⁸

On December 1, 1918, after national parliaments of the Croats and Slovenes had approved the idea, the old kingdom of Serbia was transformed into the new kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under Alexander's leadership. Immediately there was chaos... As Serbian police imposed iron discipline in Croatia and Slovenia, Italian troops poured into Istria and Dalmatia. Many now wondered whether the union had not been a huge, Mason-inspired mistake. And indeed, it was a huge, unprecedented and extremely risky political experiment: the merging of a well-established, highly centralised and militarised monarchy with two other South Slavic nations that had created de facto independent democratic states on the territory of the former Habsburg empire.

The politicians meeting at Versailles de facto recognized the new state, but had little or nothing to do with its formation, even if the ideals of Versailles – democracy and national self-determination – had inspired it.

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The first mistake was in the title: "the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" implied that only these three nations entered the new state on equal terms, while the others that found themselves, voluntarily or involuntarily, parts of it – Bosnian Muslims, Kosovan Albanians, Montenegrins (whose monarchy was abolished), Macedonians, Germans, Hungarians and Jews – were not even worth a mention.

Secondly, no constitution had been agreed, so for the first two and a half years, until the passing of the so-called Vidovdan constitution in 1921, the question of the rights of minorities could not be resolved, and was "solved" only by the army and police force of the old Serbian kingdom. No wonder that so many thought that this *was* no more or less than the old Serbian kingdom upgraded to the status of an

¹⁷⁷ The Corfu Declaration quite explicitly saw itself as "the first step toward building the new state of Yugoslavia" (http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/greaterserbia_corfudeclaration.htm).

¹⁷⁸ Graham, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

“empire”, and that the Croatian and Slovene lands had simply been annexed to it – albeit not by force, but by cunning diplomacy...

Thirdly, as a result of Italian aggression and Great-Power indifference, the new state did not have internationally agreed frontiers. We have seen how the Treaty of Rapallo (1920) gave much Slav land to the Italians. Later, “in March 1922,” writes Glenny, “a fascist coup overthrew [the Italian] government in a dress rehearsal for Mussolini’s seizure of power later that year. Italy then exerted immense pressure on Yugoslavia to concede Italian sovereignty over Fiume, and in January 1924, old Nikola Pašić, in his last spell as Prime Minister, travelled to Rome to sign away the city. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had been mutilated at birth. As Rijeka, Zadar, most of Istria and the islands of Lošinj, Cres and Lastovo slipped from Yugoslavia’s grasp into the bosom of revolutionary Italy, tensions between Serbs and Croats deepened. The ‘Vidovdan’ (St. Vitus’ Day) constitution, promulgated in 1921 on the sacred Serbian date of 28 June, which commemorated Kosovo Polje and, more recently, Sarajevo, was regarded by all Yugoslavs as a victory for the centralizing aims of the Serbs. In Croatia, it greatly compounded the profound sense of loss and alienation that Croats, and especially Dalmatians, had felt at Italy’s irredentist programme...”¹⁷⁹

Fourthly, while the smaller nations grumbled, the leaders of the largest parties of the two largest nations, Pašić for the Serbs and Radić for the Croats, were not present at the formation of the new state. And so as Pašić tacitly withdrew from the obligations he had undertaken in the Corfu Declaration, Radić rejected the legitimacy of the state and resorted to gross obstructionism – while Alexander desperately tried to keep the peace between them.

If this sounds as if Alexander was the righteous peace-maker amidst a bunch of self-interested and irresponsible politicians, this is true, but only partly true. For while Alexander’s intentions were pure, and probably purer than those of the politicians, the fact was that he was under an illusion that Pašić and Radić were not under. This was the illusion shared by most of western humanity at that time, that all that was needed to unite the nations in peace and brotherhood was goodwill and a common adherence to the ideal of democracy, regardless of different historical traditions, different political systems and, above all, different religious beliefs. Both Pašić and Radić, each in their own very different ways, understood that the idea of Yugoslavia as multi-ethnic yet Serb-dominated, democratic yet monarchical, multi-faith yet officially Orthodox state was an illusion; and while they can be blamed, as Alexander did blame them, for not trying a little harder to bridge the unbridgeable, they could not be blamed for believing that it could not work in the long run. However, while officially wedded to the Yugoslav idea, Alexander instinctively stepped back from taking the measures that would have brought it fully into being. Thus he 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...

¹⁷⁹ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

13. THE ROMANIAN CHURCH AND THE NEW CALENDAR

The Romanian Church had already been tempted by the new calendar in 1864, when Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza “convoked a Church Synod at which he recommended that the Romanian Orthodox Church change from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar. Also present at this Synod was Saint Calinic of Cernica (1787-1868), one of the most dauntless strugglers for the triumph of the truth and for the preservation of the True Faith. He was categorically opposed to the calendar innovation and exclaimed as he was leaving the hall in which the Synod was meeting: ‘I will not be reckoned with transgressors!’ Thus, the Prince did not succeed in implementing this recommendation, which had been imposed on him by Freemasons.”¹⁸⁰

However, Cuza succeeded in getting some leading hierarchs sent to foreign heterodox institutions for training. Among them was Metropolitan Miron (Cristea), a former uniate, who on December 17, 1923, as head of the Romanian Orthodox Church, wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople that the Romanian Church accepted the decision of the “Pan-Orthodox Council” on the change of calendar, and that it would be applied in 1924.¹⁸¹ And so in Romania, the new calendar was introduced in the same year as in Greece, October 1, 1924 becoming October 14. In reward for this, on February 4, 1925, the Romanian Church was proclaimed a patriarchate by Constantinople, and on November 1 Metropolitan Miron was enthroned as patriarch of Romania. Then he changed the date of Pascha in 1926 and 1929 to bring it into conformity with the western Paschalion.

The new calendar innovation was pushed through by Alexandru Lapedatu, the Minister of Cults. Nicolae Iorga, the future President of the Council of Ministers writes that it “did not bring about the expected results. People were beaten even in front of altars, and on the following day, after these desperate measures, the congregations were mostly empty, and the few people who were present – mainly clergy – were content to listen to proceedings of the driest imperial tradition.”¹⁸²

“These,” as Constantin Bujor writes, “were reports written in advance, in which the Faithful ‘begged’ for the use of the Gregorian Calendar in the Church, just as the peasants of Romania later ‘begged’ to enter en masse the collective agricultural cooperatives patterned after Soviet collective farms, according to the Congress of the Romanian Workers’ Party of February 18-20/March 3-5, 1949. Iorga continues: ‘Nevertheless, this decision to adopt the Western Calendar was taken too lightly and without recognition of the complex, conservative, and mystical psychology of the people, and it provoked a schism that still continues not only in Basarabia but also in the mountainous regions of old Moldavia.’ The population living in the extensive

180 Metropolitan Vlasie, preface to 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. 10.

181 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 1, p. 118.

182 Iorga, *The History of the Romanian Church*; cited in Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

mountain regions remained steadfast in the ancestral Orthodox Tradition, from one generation to the next, from great-grandparents to grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, and so on, by recounting stories about the sacrifices made in the past, in the hope that such sufferings would leave memories and kindle the flame of the traditional Orthodox Faith everywhere. The press of this period mentions an eloquent declaration in this regard from some of the Faithful living in the vicinity of Cluj: 'We, the whole village, will not abandon the Tradition and Faith into which we were born. It is up to the Priests to decide which religion they wish to join; we will have no part in this. But if we find that any of them want to introduce innovations here, such a one will no longer be our Priest.'"¹⁸³

In fact, only one hierarch rejected the calendar innovation - Metropolitan Visarion (Puiu) of Bucovina, who went into exile and died in Paris in 1964.¹⁸⁴

Resistance to the reform was particularly strong in Bessarabia, where, as we have seen, there had already been strong resistance to the union with Romania and the removal of Church Slavonic from the churches. "The patriotically minded Bessarabian population," writes Glazkov, "who took a very cautious attitude to any attempt by the Bessarabian authorities to liquidate the national particularities of the Moldavian people, met the reform with protests. 'The Union of Orthodox Christians' immediately condemned Metropolitan Gurias, who carried out the decision of the Synod, and began an active campaign against the new calendar style by publishing apologetic literature and conducting popular meetings and processions. Some of the Bessarabian priests who considered the reform of the calendar to be uncanonical supported the protests of the laity and rejected the Gregorian calendar. Around the churches where the Church Slavonic language and the Julian calendar were preserved (for example, the church of the Alexander Nevsky brotherhood), there gathered priests and laity. Thus in April, 1926 thousands of believers gathered at the church of St. Panteleimon in Kishinev for a pannikhida for Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II. Some priests openly celebrated all the feasts according to the old style in front of a large number of believers, which was defined by the authorities as rebellion, for many lay Old Calendarists were subjected to direct humiliations by the new style clergy. There was an attempt to build, in Kishinev, a church in direct submission to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had remained faithful to the old style. According to the police, the majority of the population resisted the ecclesiastical reform, only individual parishes passed over to the Gregorian calendar. It is noteworthy that if, at the beginning, the civil authorities were quite conciliatory towards the Old Calendarists, allowing them to celebrate Pascha and other Church feasts according to the old and new styles, the official Romanian Church authorities took upon themselves police-fiscal functions in exposing and repressing them..."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁸⁴ Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁵ K.V. Glazkov, "Istoricheskie prichiny nekotorykh sobytij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II mirovoj vojny" (Historical Reasons for Certain Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church up to the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), №№ 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 48-49.

In Bessarabia, the leadership of the movement against the new style had been taken up by the white clergy and the city intelligentsia. In other parts of Romania, however, the leaders were the monks. Out of the 14,000 parish priests, almost none stood up against the calendar reform.

The only exception to this, as Metropolitan Blaise writes, was "Archimandrite Galaction (Cordun), who at that time was serving as parish priest in the metropolitan cathedral in Bucharest and who used to preach there when there was no bishop.

"... Fr. Galaction, who later became our first metropolitan, fought against the reform, but was unable to do anything, since he was only an archimandrite. He was very capable, and had studied in Petersburg with the future Patriarchs Alexis of Moscow and Cyril of Bulgaria, graduating with the degree of doctor of theology. Later, in 1935, he was consecrated to the episcopate – they thought he had changed his views. Three bishops who had been consecrated before the change of calendar participated in the consecration, so [apostolic] succession was not broken...

"This is what happened, for example, in Neamț monastery, where St. Paisius Velichkovsky was once the abbot. When the reform took place there were about 200 monks in the monastery, 80 of whom were clergy. This was the biggest monastery in Romania. It was here that the strongest movement against the new style arose. Two months before the reform the abbot warned the brotherhood: be careful, reforms are coming, do not accept them. This was as it were a prophecy. But out of the 80 hieromonks only 30 (not counting the monks) were against the reform; and of these 30 only 6 stood out openly in opposition – the rest did not separate for material reasons. By a decree of the metropolitan of Moldavia all the clergy who did not accept the new style were threatened with deposition, exile from the monastery and confiscation of their property – the man would be outlawed. Then a small group of monks with the most devoted and zealous priests left the monastery, and it is from this group that our Church begins its history. Neamț monastery as a whole accepted the new style, later they also renounced St. Paisius' rule, for the keeping of which the monastery was renowned. Our monastery of Slatioara, which is not far from Neamț, inherited this rule and tradition.

"Here are the names of the (clerical) inhabitants of the monastery who resisted all their lives: Hieromonk Fr. Glycerius (later metropolitan)¹⁸⁶, Hierodeacon David (the first abbot of the monastery at Slatioara), Hieromonk Pambo, Fr. Baruch, Fr. Gimnasius, Fr. Zosima, Fr. Gamaliel, Fr. Damascene, who died in the woods near the monastery. We also know the names of other monks of Neamț who resisted the new style. There were also nuns: Mother Macaria, who was the helper of the abbess of the biggest women's monastery in the country, Agapia, which became new calendarist (it now has 450 nuns), and who with her nuns founded the first women's monastery in our Church.

186 Fr. Glycerie (Tanas) was superior of the Protection skete. When Abbot Nicodemus (Muntianu) of Neamț monastery offered to put him in charge of another skete if he changed calendar, Fr. Glycerie refused, and with Deacon David (Bidascu) left the skete (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 132). (V.M.)

“The small groups of clergy and monastics of these men’s and women’s monasteries – the purest, who had God in their hearts and not their property -- rejected the reforms and were driven out of the monasteries, being forced to live in the world. The pious laity who supported them became like bees constructing hives, the churches, while these clerics were like queen-bees. That was how our Church came into being.”¹⁸⁷

“Two months before the calendar change,” writes Metropolitan Blaise, “something very momentous happened in the great Church of the Neamț Monastery. It was on the Eve of the Dormition of the Mother of God. The Ecclesiarch went to the Church to prepare all that was needed and to light the candles and kandelaria for the Midnight Service. The weather was calm, with clear skies and numerous stars; no cloud was in sight. Suddenly, a great bolt of lightning came down from the heavens and, passing through a window in the dome of the Church, struck in front of the Miracle-working Icon of the Mother of God. It hit the stone floor, and a section of stone collapsed; from the impact, the candlestand that was affixed to this slab in front of the Icon was knocked over. [Cf. the words of the Lord in Revelation (2.5): “Repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place”]. When the Fathers and Brothers came to Church, the Priest who was serving told them what had happened; seeing the damage done by the lightning strike, they all concluded that it was a Divine sign.

“Here is another incident. When Father Glycherie reached the Coroi Ravine, a spiritual uneasiness overcame him. One night, after lengthy prayer, he was beset by heavy thoughts. ‘How is it possible,’ he said, ‘that in our country many Priests with advanced theological training, together with a large number of intellectuals, are leaving the Old Calendar, as it was bequeathed to the people by the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church, who have honoured it from times of old? Should I not abandon the Old Calendar and be one of these? Am I making a mistake before God by not changing?’ Late in the night, he had a beautiful vision: from the West, a dark cloud appeared; it tried to cover the whole world and was moving furiously towards the East, howling like a monster. In front of the cloud, a powerful storm formed, adorned with a chain as black as tar, on which black Crosses appeared. Everyone was frightened. But looking towards the East, he saw a snow-white cloud, glittering like gold; before it was a chain of gold, from which there were hanging Crosses of gold.

“A choir of Hierarchs also appeared – all with golden vestments, - walking towards the black cloud. In a designated place, the two clouds collided and the dark cloud fell; and in its place, a sea of water appeared, engulfing the earth...”¹⁸⁸

In 1926, two shepherds, Ioan and Mihail Urzică found Hieromonk Pamvu and Monks Galaction and Veniamin hiding in the Coroi Ravine. They then led them to Fr. Glycherie and Fr. David. The Old Calendarist monks were received with rejoicing by

187 Metropolitan Blaise, in *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (1479), 15/28 January, 1993, pp. 6-7.

188 Metropolitan Blaise, *The Life of the Holy Hierarch and Confessor Glicherie of Romania*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1999, pp. 24-25.

the faithful of Vânători, and it was decided to build a church. When it was built, Fr. Glycherie appointed Hieromonk Pamvu and his Monks Galaction and Veniamin to look after it.¹⁸⁹ In this way a beginning was made to the Old Calendarist movement in Romania. In spite of continual persecution by the police and the new calendarists, it flourished. By 1936 Fr. Glycherie had built about forty large churches, most of them in Moldavia.

Metropolitan Cyprian writes: "The Romanian Patriarchate, both in 1926 and 1929, celebrated Pascha with the Latins, constituting an infringement of the Orthodox tradition of centuries. Indeed, on the second occasion that this was done, Patriarch Miron, having the undivided support of the Uniate (Greek-Catholic) prime minister, Julius Maniu, and several others among the clergy, compelled all of the Romanian Metropolises to proceed with the common celebration of Pascha with the Papists, a fact which evoked great commotion in the ranks of the Romanian Church. Metropolitan Gurias of Bessarabia openly criticized Miron and, ignoring the Patriarchal decree, ordered his churches to celebrate with the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches (i.e. with the entire Orthodox world, with the exception of the innovative Church of Finland). Patriarch Miron's action also scandalized these other Orthodox Churches, many of which reacted in protest. As well, the White Russian clergy of Bucharest took a particularly strong position during those trying days, ignoring the Patriarchal order and celebrating Pascha in accordance with the traditional canonical decrees."¹⁹⁰

The Romanian monks on Mount Athos fully supported their co-religionists in the homeland. Two hieromonks returned from the Holy Mountain to support their co-religionists in the homeland. However, the new calendarists prepared counter-measures. Thus in 1930, "there arrived in the Moldavian skete [of the Forerunner] from Romania one of the skete's hieromonks, Simeon, a fifty-year-old who had been sent by Patriarch Miron to propagandise the new style on Athos. He brought with him a lot of money... from Romania. He also brought with him from Romania a lawyer, who was armed with an agreement obtained in Athens to conduct negotiations over the return of the metochion on the island of Thasos. The skete-dwellers received him with honour. They promised to gather the brotherhood and speak to them in the church about accepting the new style. But they prepared a trap for him. They summoned him to the hall, cut off his beard and pigtail, took the money sent for propaganda, put a jacket and hat on him and drove him out... He appealed to the police in Karyes for help, but they replied that this did not come within the compass of their responsibilities. This was the end of the propaganda for the new style on Athos. This was already the Romanians' second piece of trickery. The first time they had received a letter from the patriarch suggesting that they change to the new style. The skete-dwellers, on receiving this letter, served a triumphant all-night vigil, and, on the next day, a liturgy with a moleben, after which they pronounced an anathema on the patriarch, composing an official document which they sent on to him."¹⁹¹

189 Buzor, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

190 Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos, "The True Orthodox Christians of Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, № 1 (102), pp. 6-7.

191 Letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), in Glazkov, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

In the 1920s and 1930s many Romanians fled from the new calendarists in Romania and Bessarabia. They constituted the majority of the new postulants in the Russian monasteries of the Holy Land.¹⁹² Among these was the famous priest-hermit Fr. John the Romanian (+1960), who never concelebrated with the new calendarists and whose relics are still incorrupt...

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 to him the present king, Mihail.¹⁹³ In 1922, however, he took as his mistress the Jewess Magda Lupescu. This was a public scandal, and in 1925 he was obliged both to resign his right of succession (in favour of his son) and leave the country. From the death of King Ferdinand in 1927 until 1930, as the king was a small boy, the country was ruled by a regency council which included Patriarch Miron 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). During this period, Patriarch Miron used his power as temporary prime minister to persecute the True Orthodox Christians of Romania.

"The first and foremost problem" for the True Orthodox, 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. The organization of the Old Calendar Church started with the construction of the Church in Vânători, Neamț County, and afterwards in other places; and alongside this, religious assistance was provided for the Faithful in various localities in the houses of trustworthy Christians. In addition to Vânători and Rădășeni, Brusturi, Rășca, Slătioara, Cucova, and Anghelești were among the first places to oppose the calendar innovation, and strong communities of true believers formed in these localities. It was in Rădășeni that Hieromonk Glicherie first established himself. At the outset, the Divine services were held in the village Church, but this situation was not allowed to continue. In normal circumstances, the Church could have been used by both the Old and the New Calendarist communities, because all of the Faithful had contributed to its construction. However, Father Haralambie Teodorus, the Priest who served the New Calendarist community, locked the Old Calendarists out of the Church and removed the clapper from the bell so as to prevent them from holding services. He incited the locals to pelt the Old Calendarist Faithful with rocks, and on one particular day he told them, 'If you need a Church, go build your own.'

"This hatred was fomented by New Calendarist clergymen and subsequently degenerated into acts of violence and aggression. The celebration of Holy Pascha

192 "The Convent of the Ascension on the Holy Mount of Olives, 1906-2006", *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 2006, p. 21.

193 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!

according to the Gregorian Paschalion in 1926 and 1929¹⁹⁴ convinced the Faithful that the New Calendar was, in fact, just the first step in a process that had as its goal the destruction of the Orthodox ethos. In 1931, Hieromonk Glicherie came to Rădășeni and began to organize an Old Calendar parish in response to a decision made by the local Faithful. On May 8/21, 1932, he blessed the place where the new Church of Saints Peter and Paul was to be built and laid the foundation stone. The Church was built out of wood in twenty-eight days, covered with sheet metal, and then stuccoed in a single day. But in June of that same year, the local New Calendarist Priest sent two men under the cover of darkness to set the Church on fire. However, the Church was saved by the father of Father Nicolae Onofrei, Vasile Onofrei, who was alerted and awakened. Along with Nicolae (then a child) and his two sisters, by barking dogs. One of the malefactors, Teodor Sandu, fell very ill later on and was carried on a stretcher to Church to ask for forgiveness. On October 14/27, 1933, the Church was Consecrated.

“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 Nicolae 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.

“For the service of blessing the site for a new Church or of Consecrating finished Churches, the Faithful, dressed in festal attire, would come on pilgrimage from all over the country in convoys of carriages. Led by Father Glicherie and his Synodeia, journeys to these sites were permeated with spiritual joy. Father Nicolae Onofrei remembers that when he was a child, he and his brother Onofrei Onofrei (later to become Metropolitan Silvestru [1924-1992]) were taken by their father (who later became a monk at the Slătioara Monastery with the name ‘Varlaam’) on such pilgrimages when Churches or sites for Churches were to be blessed. While travelling towards Oglinzi, Neamț County, to bless the site for a new Church at Vadu in Moldavia, they met convoys of carriages from Mălini, Drăgușeni, and other places. Father Glicherie stood up and greeted the Faithful with ‘Christ is Risen!’, to which the crowd responded with ‘Truly He is Risen!’ so loudly that the entire Moldavian valley they were crossing echoed with the shouting. Because it was the Paschal season, the Faithful sang ‘Christ is Risen’ the entire way to the new Church. They were all overcome with spiritual joy and wanted to glorify God.

194 According to Stavros Markou (“The Legacy of ROCOR and Her Successors”), Patriarch Miron celebrated Pascha according to the papist paschalion “for the first three years (1924 to 1927)”.

“This unity displayed by the Old Calendarist Faithful, which lent a note of greater splendour to their religious celebrations, was not viewed favourably by the authorities or the representatives of the official Church. Thus, on June 29/July 12, 1932, the Old Calendar Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, strong action was taken to stifle the celebration and especially to discourage the organization of such events. At the end of the service, the mayor of Rădășeni, Costică Grigorescu, deceitfully and cunningly said, ‘All the men of your parish have to go to the Prefecture in Fălticeni in order to receive approval for the functioning of your Church.’ Since the people respected the mayor as being a sober individual, they joyfully left on foot for Fălticeni, a distance of two or three kilometres over a hill. Although Father Glicherie did not trust the mayor, he approved the departure of the people for Fălticeni, placing all his hope in God.

“After the Faithful had departed and had gone some distance, the Church was surrounded by forty gendarmes, all of them drunk, who had entered the courtyard in search of Father Glicherie. When he saw the danger, Father Glicherie ran into the backyard and hid among the potato plants. However, he was spotted by the gendarmes, who brutally pounced on him. They tried to haul him over the fence, but they were seen by a few nuns, who alerted Vasile Onofrei by their cries. Together with Toader Amariei and Anica Grecu, he sprang to Father Glicherie’s assistance and yelled at the gendarmes, ‘What are you doing in my backyard!’ One of the gendarmes answered with a warning shot; but as the gendarme tried to reload his gun, he lost his balance dodging Anica Grecu, who had lunged at him with a pitchfork. He was disarmed by Vasile Onofrei, who in turn freed Father Glicherie. During this vicious attack, the gendarmes brutally kicked Hieromonk Glicerie’s legs with their boots, leaving him with an incurable wound for the rest of his life. Vasile Onofrei hid the gun used by the gendarme and kept it for two weeks, intending to take it with him to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to denounce the abuses committed by the Gendarmerie.

“The Faithful who lived close to the Church made haste to alert the people by tolling the bells, and one of them went on horseback to catch up with the believers who had left for Fălticeni. Meanwhile, the Church was defended by women, who blocked the gate and prevented the gendarmes from entering the courtyard. The gendarmes withdrew only upon the return of those who had gone to the Prefecture and were now angry at having been deceived by the mayor. Later on, it turned out that the gendarmes had been hiding in the house of the New Calendarist Priest, Father Haralambie Teodoru, waiting for the Faithful to depart for Fălticeni. The same Father Teodoru had gotten the gendarmes drunk, thereby becoming an accomplice to their criminal action.”¹⁹⁵

There were other Old Calendarists in Romania besides Fr. Glycherie’s Church. Thus in Bessarabia there was Fr. Gamil Papil. After the war, his spiritual children joined Bishop Vasily-Victor (Leu), who had been consecrated by Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade) of ROCOR.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-60.

¹⁹⁶ Also, writes Glazkov, “the priests Fathers Boris Binetsky, Demetrius Stitskevich and Vladimir Polyakov were put on trial for serving according to the old style.” (*op. cit.*, p. 57)

14. THE DICTATORSHIP OF KING ALEXANDER I

On June 14, 1928 the Croat Peasant Party leader Radić died a few weeks after being shot in the Yugoslav *skupština* or parliament. Immediately, Croat representatives walked out of the *skupština* in protest and refused to return. The kingdom's politics became deadlocked.

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 paralyze the country still more in an age that placed freedom in the sense of unbridled self-will above everything...

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.

This act was not as unprecedented or radical as might at first appear, for the democratic tide in European politics was ebbing. As Niall Ferguson writes, "Of twenty-eight European countries... 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, as we have seen, 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 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..."¹⁹⁷

"Nearly all the dictatorships of the inter-war period," continues Ferguson, "were at root conservative, if not downright reactionary. The social foundations 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..."¹⁹⁸

But it is unjust to describe the intellectuals who were frustrated with democracy as "frivolous". For the post-war idols of democracy and national self-determination, proclaiming only the pseudo-"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. In the short to medium term, this could only benefit one power – the Soviet Union, the most voracious, God-hating and man-destroying state in history. Western historians routinely describe the dictators as vain, power-hungry men who overthrew the will of the people. Doubtless some, even the majority of them were vain and power-hungry – although by no means always more vain and power-hungry than the democratic politicians they replaced. But their basic aims of preserving order and unity in the state, and suppressing the extreme left whose overt aim was to destroy it, was laudable and necessary. As for the will of the people, this was usually on the side of the dictators: it was the "frivolous intellectuals" of liberal views (Lenin had called them "useful idiots") who preferred to fiddle and talk while Rome burned, moaning about the loss of their "human right" to pontificate from a public tribunal while the tribunal itself was being sawn apart from below...

King Alexander understood this as well as anyone, and his adoption of the dictator's path was certainly not born 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

197 Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 228, 229-230.

198 Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

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..."¹⁹⁹

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."²⁰⁰

"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.'"²⁰¹

Alexander 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 he "had opened the oak gates to Belgrade's royal residence on the night in May 1903 when Apis and his co-conspirators stormed the palace and murdered King Aleksandar Obrenović". Later, he turned against Apis. However, his appointment "was greeted with undisguised dismay not only in Croatia but also in Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Montenegro..."²⁰²

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

199 Ulrick Loring and James Page, *Yugoslavia's Royal Dynasty*, London: The Monarchist Press Association, 1976, p. 63.

200 "Alexander tells Yugoslavia's woes", *New York Times*, March 10, 1929, p. 3.

201 Brigit Farley, "Aleksandar Karadjordjević 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.

202 Misha Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, p. 429.

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 such 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. 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 America – a fact that later made the Germans imprison him in Dachau. But his political ideal was the Serbian Orthodox autocracy of the Nemanjas.

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 – or half-baked mixtures between them. 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.”²⁰³

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.

203 Farley, *op. cit.*, p. 76. 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 curtsying, said: ‘I am a Serb from Zagreb.’ And I,” replied the king with a gentle smile, ‘am a Croat from Belgrade...’” (T.V., “Svetloj pamiaty 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), № 24 (1765), December 15/28, 2004, p. 7)

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..."²⁰⁴

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".²⁰⁵ For, despite his efforts "to be a colorless Yugoslav, he was the symbol of the hegemony of the Serbs".²⁰⁶ And so, "whatever his intentions, Aleksandar's personal rule stripped Croats of what little influence they had had in the state".²⁰⁷

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 Stepinać, 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 Dositeus (Vasić) was appointed to the see of Zagreb. Alexis Geroovsky, the Carpatho-Russian political and religious activist, wrote: "Dositeus' appointment to Zagreb elicited great discontent among the Catholics. The name of Bishop Dositeus was already blacklisted because he 'by his propaganda has converted the Carpatho-Russians to Orthodoxy'... When some years before the Second World War Bishop Dositeus told me that 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] Stepinać, who was already famous for his religious intolerance, and I warned him that he would suffer many unpleasantnesses from him. 'Stepinać, 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 Stepinać. 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

204 Farley, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

205 Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe between the wars*, Cambridge University Press, 1945, p 226.

206 Stephen Graham, *Alexander of Yugoslavia*, Yale University Press, 1939, Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972, p. 169.

207 Farley, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

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.'"²⁰⁸

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 islamized 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 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

208 Andrew Shestakov, *Kogda terror stanovitsa zakonom, iz istorii gonjenij na Pravoslavnuuiu 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 20th 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.

boasted, one-third of them were to be slaughtered, one-third forcibly converted to Catholic Christianity, and the rest expelled from the country.”²⁰⁹

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 Italy, for his new organization, the UHRO [*Ustaše Hrvatska Revolucionarna Organizacija*].”²¹⁰

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.”²¹¹

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

209 Fox, “Ante Pavelić 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.

210 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

211 Fox, *op. cit.*

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."²¹²

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 democrats.

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...²¹³ 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...

212 Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 29. 213-220.

213 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 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.akademiasrbija.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=789:communist-crimes-against-serbs-and-russians&catid=45:english&Itemid=59)

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 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 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..."²¹⁴

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..."²¹⁵

As Italy fumed, Hungary, another 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 closed²¹⁶, and relations with Hungary developed well. By October, 1934 they appeared to have achieved a break-through.²¹⁷

214 Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

215 Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

216 Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

217 Anthony Komjathy, *Give Peace a Chance!*, University Press of America, 1992, p 127.

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...²¹⁸

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 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..."²¹⁹

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.²²⁰ 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..."²²¹

As the Germans had anticipated, Alexander's negotiations with the fascist powers began to alarm some of his allies in the "Little Entente", 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".²²² 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

218 Milan Banić, *Masonerija i Jugoslavija*, 1997.

219 Farley, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

220 Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

221 Glenny, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

222 <http://www.studiacroatica.org/jcs/28/2805.htm>

and his country's ambassador in London in 1933, in which Masaryk stormed 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".²²³

Although Alexander never broke with the masonic-democratic camp represented by Masaryk, his feelings against Masonry 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!"²²⁴

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. "His foreign policy was to create an anti-Hitler defense ring to be achieved by 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 for successful introductory talks regarding a Franco-Yugoslav alliance, and 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..."²²⁵

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."²²⁶

223 Mužić, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.

224 Banić, *op. cit.*

225 <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-bloggers/2360302/posts>.

226 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. However, 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 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 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 real cooperation impossible...

Already during the 1920s, Alexander was a marked man. 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!"²²⁷ 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 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, Alexander had refused to trample on the Cross in a Masonic rite...

It is true that security arrangements before the assassination appear to have been very weak, and that after the assassination, the French appeared to do everything

²²⁷ <http://forum.alexanderpalace.org/index.php?topic=2880.385;wap2>.

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.²²⁸

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. Why? Because the French Masonic politicians were trying to extend their anti-Hitlerite Little Entente or "Eastern Locarno" 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...

228 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*, izdanje radog komiteta antimasonske izložbe, 1941, pp. 71-72.)

15. THE ROMANIAN LEGIONNAIRE MOVEMENT

Like several Balkan countries, and indeed Europe as a whole, Romania during the 1930s was torn by the rivalry between the two totalitarian powers, Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. Romania was in a particularly vulnerable position because 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 Sturdza²²⁹, 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 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. Because of its pro-fascist, anti-semitic and occasionally violent nature, this, the Legionnaire or Iron Guard movement has had a bad press generally in the West.²³⁰ And there can be no doubt about its pro-fascism: documentary films show the Legionnaires making the fascist salute, and their leader, Corneliu 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

229 Sturdza, *The Suicide of Europe: Memoirs of Prince Michel Sturdza, Former Foreign Minister of Rumania*, Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1968.

230 See, for example, Michael Burleigh's assessment: "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. The Legion of the Archangel Michael was founded in 1927 in honour of the archangel, who had allegedly visited Corneliu Codreanu, its chief ideologist, while he was in prison. It was the only European Fascist movement with religion (in this case Romanian Orthodoxy) at its core. In 1930 the Legion was renamed the Iron Guard. While rivalling only the Nazis in the ferocity of their hatred of Jews, these Romanian Fascists were sui generis in their fusion of political militancy with Orthodox mysticism into a truly lethal whole. 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; son'. 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. But then few European Fascists were induced into an elite called the Brotherhood of Christ by sipping from a communal cup of blood filled from slashes in their own arms, or went around with little bags of soil tied around their necks. Nor did they do frenzied dances after chopping opponents into hundreds of pieces. Not for nothing was the prison massacre of Iron Guard leaders – including the captain Codreanu himself – by supporters of King Carol II known to local wits as 'the Night of the Vampires'. Although the Romanian elites emasculated the Guard's leadership, much of their furious potential was at that elite's disposal..." (*Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 270)

entering the line of its historical world-mission: the defense of the Cross, of Christian Culture and Civilization."

Nevertheless, in view of its political and religious importance, and its brave resistance to Soviet influence in Romania, for which Codreanu and several other legionnaires paid with their lives, it will be worth citing more positive estimates of its significance.

"The Legionary Movement," writes Thomas Haas, "was founded on June 24, 1927, under the name of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, by one of the truly great men of our era. Corneliu Codreanu was born on September 13, 1899 in Husi, a town in northern Moldavia, where his father was a teacher at the local lycee. He attended the famous military school Manastirea Dealului and the Infantry Officer's school. 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, a life entirely dedicated to the battle for the moral purity and the welfare and the glory of his nation, 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.”²³¹

Another positive assessment is provided by Monk Moise: “After wandering off in different directions, Codreanu and other young people, troubled by the need to do something for their country, realized that what was needed to instigate a profound change in society was not so much a new party or a new political program – as they themselves had been tempted to believe – but rather education of a Christian and national character leading to moral renewal. ‘This country [wrote Codreanu] is perishing from lack of people, not from a lack of programs. This is our opinion. It is not programs that we must create, but people, new people... Therefore the cornerstone from which the Legion sets out is humankind, not political programs. The reform of people, not the reform of political programs. Therefore, the Legion of the Archangel Michael will rather be a school and army than a political party. The Romanian people, at this point in its history, do not need a great politician, as some mistakenly believe, but a great educator and leader to vanquish the powers of evil and shatter the ranks of evildoers. In order to do this, however, he must first overcome the evil in himself and in his brethren.’

“In order to form a Legionnaire elite, the best from among the youth were selected, beginning with those of high school age. This organization of young men was named *Frația de Cruce* (FDC), the *Brotherhood of the Cross*. Those targeted were screened according to certain criteria: faithfulness and attendance at church, good academic achievement, respectfulness toward others, love of country, honesty, etc. Candidates were not admitted to the FDC automatically but in accordance with certain requirements. It set out to be an elite organization that would admit only the best.

“Those admitted found an atmosphere of love, seriousness, and enthusiasm highly suited to their spiritual growth. They received a primarily moral and spiritual education, along Christian lines; they were encouraged to participate in the sacraments of confession, to adhere to a prayer schedule, to fast, to avoid bodily sins, to be merciful, correct, punctual, sympathetic, ready to help others, obedient, and studious. Since work played an important role in Legionnaire training, work camps were organized in which, along with Legionnaires, *brothers of the cross* participated in

231 Haas, introduction to Sturdza, *op. cit.*, pp. xvii-xix.

the construction and repair of churches, schools, roads, bridges, levees, etc. They worked in an atmosphere of youthful enthusiasm, while the camps also provided an opportunity for the formation and strengthening of spiritual ties.

“Their meetings began with a prayer commemorating those who had died for the Legionnaire cause, followed by a reading from the New Testament. At every meeting, those present took turns introducing a theme having to do with faith, morality, national history, culture, etc. Legionnaire songs were sung and memorized; participants took turns reciting from Legionnaire writings, while the final portions of meetings were reserved for decision-making regarding new goodwill projects that needed to be undertaken such as help for someone in need, collection of assistance for the family of an arrested Legionnaire, or similar work for the benefit of their brethren.

“The young men who gathered together in the FDC made up a real family; they were taught to love one another and to help one another in time of need. The friendship that existed between them sprang from an impressive degree of love and sincerity. The most original part of the meetings was the moment of friendship or sincerity, a form of public ‘confession’ of all mistakes made since the last meeting. This did not replace the sacrament of confession – each of them also confessed to his spiritual father; rather, it was an expression of the trust and sincerity that united them. After they all confessed their mistakes, each of them reported what mistakes they’d noticed among the others who were present. Then each of them received a ‘penance’...

“In addition to educational activity, the *brothers of the cross* participated in the political activity of the Legion through the distribution of leaflets and posters and through occasional involvement in electoral propaganda. They also participated in the collection of funds for imprisoned Legionnaires and their families...

“The moral-spiritual component of this education was interwoven with a national-heroic component. The accent was placed on love of country and on knowledge of history and well-known Romanians. There was pronounced consideration of historical struggles and national heroes, the Legionnaires identifying with these heroes and looking to them as models. The intention was to cultivate the heroic and soldierly qualities of these young men: courage, strength of will, steadfastness, a spirit of sacrifice, discipline, the ability to confront danger, etc.

“The Legionnaires’ organization and discipline were of military inspiration, but this freely-assumed discipline did not have an air of dryness and barrack-like rigidity for those involved. The harshness was alleviated by their spiritual relationships and states of spirit. The conduct of a *brother of the cross*, like that of a Legionnaire, had to be dignified, firm, disciplined, and orderly, like that of a soldier...

“A very important trait for ... the Legionnaire ... was a sense of justice. While being obligated by their code of conduct not to do anything that would stain their sense of honor or that would prevent them from supporting any just cause, this very sense of honor also required them to react when anyone offended them. This kind of conduct is debatable from a Christian point of view, which advocates humility and requires that one turn the other cheek when struck. When the Legionnaire encountered

Christianity in all its profundity in the Communist prisons, this concept of honor turned out to be a source of great difficulty for them, as they realized that the passion of pride can lie behind it...

"Because measures were taken against the Legion such that they were almost constantly persecuted, the education of the *brothers of the cross* did not follow its natural course. Forced to meet in secret, sheltered from the far-reaching sight of the authorities, without experienced guides, these young men were not always able to benefit from a solid spiritual education. Borne along primarily by enthusiasm and sincerity, they nevertheless lacked a profoundly Christian vision, which most of them would acquire in prison. The seeds sown by training in the Brotherhood of the Cross, despite their shortcomings, were significant [and] important, for the young men received a spiritual foundation based on Christian principles that was much more solid than any training offered in traditional, academic milieus. The Christian conduct they later displayed in prison found its source in these principles that formed their characters, principles which cultivated the virtues of steadfastness, solidarity, and a spirit of sacrifice, while many non-Legionnaires, as Steinhardt noted, lost their balance, humanity, and self-control."²³²

Perhaps the finest fruit of the Legionnaire movement was a group of martyrs who suffered in Târgu-Ocna in the 1950s. Valeriu Gafencu was imprisoned by the communists precisely because of his training in the Legionnaire spirit. He was attracted to the religious rather than the political aspects of the movement, was opposed to its occasional violence and anti-semitism, and instilled in the quasi-monastic community that formed around him in the camp-hospital an Orthodox spirit of love and self-sacrifice. His group therefore represented Legionnairism purged of all dubious political elements and striving only to fulfil the commandments of God in the spirit of Orthodox Christianity.

The Legionnaires did not separate from the official, new calendar church. Nevertheless, in their own way they represented a separation from the spiritual deadness of that church, whose head, Patriarch Miron became prime minister in the cabinet of the "royal dictatorship" of King Charles II in February, 1938. Immediately there began a severe persecution of the Legionnaires. In April Codreanu was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison. In November he was killed...

Although the Romanian True Orthodox (Old Calendar) 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. Thus in 1938 the authorities decided to accuse the True Orthodox leader 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,

232 Monk Moise, *The Saint of the Prisons*, Sibiu: Agnos, 2009, pp. 28-32, 32-34, 34-35, 36-37. For another positive assessment of the Legionnaire movement, see Alexander Ronnett and Faust Bradescu, "The Legionary Movement in Romania", http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v07/v07p193_Ronnett.html.

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...”²³³

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.”²³⁴

On June 26, 1940, writes Ernest Latham, the Soviet Foreign Minister 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, 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

²³³ Bujor, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101.

²³⁴ 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), №№ 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 57-58.

Transylvania should be ceded to Hungary. The Vienna *Diktat* cost Romania 42,243 sq. km and 2,600,000 people 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 arguable the nadir of Romania’s history... [However,] on September 5, 1940, there stepped 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 Mihai for the second time became king of Romania...”²³⁵

Antonescu formed an alliance with the Legionnaires, whom King Carol had tried to crush. He “dubbed himself Conducător Statului, ‘Leader of the State’ [a title used by the murdered Legionnaire leader Codreanu]; 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 agendum. 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 Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), to suppress the Iron Guard, thereby consolidating his power as military dictator of Romania.”²³⁶

235 Latham, *Romanian Nationalism during the Reign of King Mihai I*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2010, pp. 10-11. 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. See

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A2nt%C3%A2na_Al%C4%83_massacre.

236 Bujor, *op. cit.*, p. 101, translator’s note.

16. THE SERBS AND THE CONCORDAT

In the last analysis, the Yugoslav kingdom foundered on the religious question, that of ecumenism between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Although King Alexander made many ecumenical gestures to his Catholic (Croat and Slovene) subjects, he was not prepared to abandon the 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, thereby determining his early demise...²³⁷

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."²³⁸

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 Stoyadinovič, 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 at the price of ecumenist lukewarmness. That was the truth that the idealists of the 19th century would have to learn from the harsh realities of the 20th...

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

237 Brigit Farley, "Aleksandar Karadjordjevič and the Royal Dictatorship in Yugoslavia", in Berndt J. Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Strongmen of South Eastern Europe*, London: Hurst & Company, 2006, p. 86.

238 Velimirović, *Dusha Serbii*, pp. 554-555.

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 Zhivanović from the village of Yanilo, Lyubomir Spassović from the village of Koračitsa, George Todorović from Bielina, Dragitsa Bostanović 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, Stoyadinović'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 23rd and 24th 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 Šakhovich. 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 Božovich, witnessed on the contrary that this statement of Professor Šakhovich 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.²³⁹ 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 Sergius, 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 has 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.”²⁴⁰

239 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 Zagreb. (V.M.)

240 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.

17. THE SERBIAN GENOCIDE IN CROATIA

Early in 1941 the Yugoslavs were negotiating a treaty with Germany in Vienna that was, according to 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.”²⁴¹

However, this judgment concerning the Vienna treaty was disputed by many Yugoslavs, and on March 27 the government was overthrown in a coup led by the head of the Yugoslav air force, General Dušan Simović. The new pro-Allied government 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.”²⁴²

While the coup was morally admirable (and was acclaimed as such 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 Radic. 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...²⁴³

“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 Balkan politics, the Führer exploded in fury on receipt of the news from Belgrade. Almost

241 Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 473-474.

242 Velimirović, *Pastirski glas*, no. 3, 1941; in *The New Chrysostom*, Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2011, p. 141.

243 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.

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..."²⁴⁴

Hitler invaded 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 Germans arrested Patriarch Gabriel 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 collaborate with them.²⁴⁵ 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." The two hierarchs' characterization of Fascism and Bolshevism as virtually equivalent forms of atheism was important. Its truth was witnessed by the later development of Serbian history, when Serbian communism easily developed into Fascism...

In neighbouring Czechoslovakia Bishop Gorazd of Moravia-Silesia, 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. However, in September, 1942 "after being tortured, he was shot. The Orthodox Church in Bohemia and Moravia was shut down and its priests sent to camps in Germany."²⁴⁶

But by far the worst atrocities were committed against the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia by the Ustaše and the Catholic Church. On April 28, 1941, the Catholic

244 Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp. 475-476.

245 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 20.

246 Monk Gorazd, "Sviashchenomuchenik Gorazd" (Hieromartyr Gorazd), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 12 (1465), June 15/28, 1992.

Archbishop Stepinac of Zagreb issued an appeal rapturously praising the Ustaše regime and calling on all Catholic priests to collaborate with it. Three days before, the government had issued a series of decrees banning the Cyrillic script, closing all Orthodox schools, imposing a special tax on the patriarchate, forcing all Serbs to wear coloured armbands with the letter "P" (for *Pravoslavac* – Orthodox) and banning the use of the term "Serbian Orthodox religion". 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 December 4, the Croats 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, on March 26, 1942, this request was granted. However, no Serb was allowed to visit the émigré services.²⁴⁷

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."²⁴⁸

According to Archbishop Stepinac's report to the Pope on May 8, 1944, 240,000 Serbs apostasised 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 from the Orthodox Serbs. According to German Nazi figures, about 750,000 Orthodox Serbs were killed, including five bishops and 177 other clergy.²⁴⁹ 200,000 of these perished in the notorious camp of Jasenovac alone in conditions of appalling brutality, 40,000 of them on the orders of the Franciscan Father Filipovich. Bishop Nicholas Velimirovic 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."²⁵⁰

247 M.V. Shkarovsky; in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 35.

248 Wertz, "On the Serbian Orthodox Martyrs of the Second World War", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, N 1, January-February, 1983, pp. 15-26.

249 The Germans knew what was going on. Thus on February 17, 1942 Heindrich, Hitler's right-hand man in his plan for the destruction of the Jews, 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." (Karlheinz Deschner, *With God and Fuhrer*, p. 282; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 38).

250 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

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'.

"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."²⁵¹

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,

killed." (Almond, *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 stanovnistva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu*, Zagreb: Jugoslavensko Viktimolosko Drustvo, 1989, pp. 61, 82).

251 "Holy New Martyr Vukashin", *Orthodoxy Canada*, N 114, May-June, 1986, p. 3.

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 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’.

“Horrrifying 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.”²⁵²

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.”

252 Quoted from 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.

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!

Another creation of the Ustashi was the so-called "Croatian Orthodox Church". On June 8, 1942, the Romanian Patriarch Nicodemus raised ROCOR's Archbishop Hermogen (Maximov) 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 Serbian Church and by ROCOR under Metropolitan Anastasy, who banned Hermogen. However, the Germans did not allow this ban to be published. Moreover, on July 27 the Ecumenical Patriarch, followed by most of the Orthodox Churches in the German orbit, recognized the Croat Church. But believers did not go to it.²⁵³ Metropolitan Hermogenes was killed by Tito's partisans in July, 1945.²⁵⁴

253 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.

254 However, according to another version, he was arrested and condemned together with the Catholic Cardinal Stepinac. But while Stepinac received sixteen years in prison, being released after only two years, Metropolitan Hermogen was executed (Ilya Goriachev, in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 89-90).

18. THE SERBIAN CHURCH UNDER THE COMMUNISTS

As a result of the occupation of Eastern Europe by the Red Army, and their attendance at the false council of Moscow in 1945, the official Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe were soon drawn into the communist orbit. In the cases of the Romanian and Bulgarian Churches, this happened after the fall of the Orthodox monarchy. Thus the communist penetration of the Romanian Church began shortly after the abdication of King Michael on December 30, 1947.

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The Serbian King Peter remained in exile in England after the war, trying to help the resistance to communism in his homeland from outside. Hieroschemamonk Akakije (Stankević) writes: "During the Second World War and until 1946, since the German Nazis had imprisoned the Serbian Patriarch Gabriel (Dočić) and later put him into the Dachau concentration camp because of his anti-Nazi statements, the administration of the Serbian Church was taken over by Metropolitan Joseph (Tsvijić) of Skopje, who was parted from his diocese after the Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia. Together with the Patriarch they imprisoned Bishop Nikolai of Žiča, who was the most respected and best loved Serbian bishop among the people, and whose opinion was considered important among the bishops, priests, monks and people. In that period, a number of Serbian hierarchs did not understand the real meaning of the evil of communism that was spreading fast throughout Serbia. Such a soft and inadequate attitude on the part of the Serbian Church towards communism is astonishing when we know that the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad had been in Sremski Karlovtsy even before the beginning of the war, for more than twenty years, and throughout that period it had been warning everyone, explaining the diabolical nature of the communist and sergianist hell... through which their country, Russia, had passed and from which they had been forced to flee for that reason. Also, those frightening warnings began to come true at the very beginning and during the war through all those monstrous evil deeds against the Serbian people, kingdom and Church that were committed by the communist bands in Serbia.

"At that time, the justified position existed that it was not necessary to waste strength and men by confronting the large power of Nazi Germany and her allies (let us remember that at that time there was an order that for every German soldier killed 100 Serbs be killed)..., but that we should turn ourselves exclusively to the internal problem of communism, which was coming over Serbia like a dark shadow. Inspired by this idea, at the beginning of the war, the prime minister of the Serbian government in occupied Serbia, General Milan Nedić, requested from the Synod of the Serbian Church to condemn in the name of the Church the communists and the leader of the liberation movement, the so-called Chetniks, Colonel Dragoliub Mikhailović, who

together with the communists started the guerilla struggle against the German occupation army. The Synod replied to this appeal of General Nedić: 'The Church is above parties, Dragoliub Mikhailović, Ljotić and the communists.' By the way, the unnatural companionship mentioned above was broken very soon because Mikhailović's national forces soon became completely at odds with the army organized by the communist party of Yugoslavia led by Joseph Broz Tito. Colonel, later General Mikahilović continued to fight the Germans, but on a much smaller scale, and he forced the communists to leave the territory of Bosnia, and because of that General Nedić was unofficially helping him.²⁵⁵

"Such a soft position was not only a result of a misunderstanding of the evil, God-fighting nature of communism, but in some places it was open sympathy with those forces, even communist bands, who were fighting against the Germans. The result of those positions was a very strong anti-German feeling, and contrary to that, great sympathy for the English side among many of the Serb hierarchs. How different was the position of the Russian Patriarch Tikhon towards the communists from the flexible position of the Serbian hierarchs. He was completely trapped by the Bolshevik revolution in 1918, but anathematized the communists and all those who cooperate with them.

"Most of the official church statements during the war were vague. For that reason in 1942 the Serbian patriot and politician Dmitrij Ljotić wrote in his article 'Neither Hot nor Cold': "We heard the message of our paternal hierarchs gathered in the Synod and around it. They call on the people to have peace, love and unanimity... They simply called the citizens to peace and unity and love, taking good care how to gain peace, unanimity and love. And to make that position even more visible, they cared very much not to use a single word to explain who are those people in our country who disturb peace, unanimity and love, who kill the priests and other peaceful citizens and insult the Church....

"... The communists, on account of Red Moscow, want sabotage, disorder, rebellion, which leads to national destruction. General Nedić doesn't want any of these three because if we avoid them then the Serbian people will live. Even those who were lucky enough to run away to London send us messages to preserve peace, and that people should keep away from sabotage and rebellion.

"Church representatives pass over all this and speak about peace, love and unanimity, not saying a single word about which course is better: that of General Nedić, or that of the communists. If the message were necessary, it would have been

255 Draza Mikhailović was executed by the communists on July 4/17, 1946. Some doubt whether Mikhailović was a true martyr, accusing him of practising "ethnic cleansing" against Muslims during World War II. See Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, Texas A&M University Press, 1995, pp. 18-19. However, Norman Malcolm argues (*op. cit.*, p. 179) that there is no definite evidence for this. Tim Judah agrees (*The Serbs*, London: Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 120-121). See also K. Glazkov, "K 50-letiu raspravy nad Dragoliubom-Drazhej Mikhailovichem" (To the 50th Anniversary of the Execution of Draza-Dragoliuboj Mikhailovich), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 17 (1566), 1/14 September, 1996, p. 5. (V.M.)

necessary to tell that, too, to the people. If they didn't want to say that, it would have been more glorious and wiser to keep silent.

“If our hierarchs could not choose which of these two courses is better, how could they find a way to move themselves from their God-saving dioceses and hide here in Belgrade? Why didn't they wait for the communists there?”

“By the end of 1944 Soviet troops started to come into Serbia, and in October, 1944 they entered Belgrade together with the Yugoslav communist army. Many of the national forces and the clergy who were aware of the hell awaiting them in Serbia under these rulers, left Serbia together with the defeated Germans, and retreated towards Slovenia. Bishop Nikolai Velimirović was the only one to understand how tragic the situation was, so in Slovenia he gave his blessing to the gathering of all the national anti-communist forces who were grouped there and were retreating before Tito's troops and the Red Army. Several hundred thousand Serb četniks, the Ljotić volunteers, the Nedić national guard, Slovenian nationalists loyal to the kingdom of Yugoslavia and some Russian White Guards were ready to stand together against oncoming communism. Even General Vlasov with his 400,000 soldiers headed towards Slovenia, as the only ray of hope, the last chance for the communists to be driven away from the borders of Yugoslavia, as they had been in neighbouring Greece. Unfortunately, the allies had the most important role. General Vlasov was stopped by the 'Allies' and handed over together with his army to be killed by the Soviets, while the national forces in Slovenia were cheated by the Americans and English, deprived of their arms, and handed over to Tito's partisans, who in a short period of time and in the most monstrous ways tortured, killed and burned bodies and put into mass graves several hundred thousand men. Just in one day, the partisans killed 62 Serbian priests from Montenegro, who found themselves in Slovenia with the leftovers of Djurishić's Montenegrin national forces, which had already been reduced to one tenth of their former number by the partisans and Croatian Ustaše while they were passing through Bosnia. A small number of nationalists succeeded in fleeing through Italy and so the killing by the communists did not affect them. In this way, again with the help of the 'Allies', Tito's assumption of power was guaranteed. Bishop Nikolai stayed firm in the United States, where he continued his fight for the liberation of the Serbian Church and State from the communists.²⁵⁶

“Some sources report that Metropolitan Joseph [Tsvijović] and the bishops who stayed in the country (Nectarije Krul, Jovan Ilić, Arsenije Bradvarević, Emilijan Piperković) openheartedly greeted the Soviet troops and Yugoslav partisan troops. In October, 1944 Metropolitan Joseph delivered a message to the people in which he called the liberation of Belgrade and Serbia the 'dawning'. On November 12, 1944 in the Saborna church in Belgrade a pannikhida was held for all those killed in the struggle for the liberation of Belgrade. The service was celebrated by Metropolitan Joseph... The priesthood of Belgrade was collecting donations for wounded Soviets and partisans. In the Nativity Epistle of the Holy Synod, they spoke with delight about

256 After being released from Dachau, Bishop Nikolai chose not to return to communist Yugoslavia, but emigrated to the United States. In 1951 he settled in the American Metropolia's St. Tikhon monastery, eventually becoming rector. He reposed in 1956 in very suspicious circumstances. (V.M.)

the new situation arising from the expulsion of the enemies from the country (the occupiers and the liberation of the country)...

"The next big deviation from the pre-war position was the relationship of the Serbian Orthodox Church towards the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate, with which the Serbian Church got in touch immediately after Soviet troops entered Serbia. A delegation from the Moscow Patriarchate headed by Bishop Sergius of Kirovgrad came to Belgrade in 1944.

"In March 1945 Metropolitan Joseph accompanied by Bishop Jovan of Niš and Bishop Emilian of Timočki travelled, at the request of the authorities, to Moscow, where they attended the false Council and the Soviet theatrical enthronement of the new patriarch, Alexis I.

"Tito's communists, taking over power with the help of America, England and the Soviet Union, at the very beginning showed their openly anti-Christian character. Very fierce anti-Church laws were enforced, and an agrarian reform was made whereby the Church was deprived, right from the beginning, of 70,000 hectares of land, 1,180 church buildings, a printing plant and a pension fund for the clergy. State donations to the Church were stopped, the catechism was thrown out of the schools, the authorities created big problems for the theological schools, the Church had to deliver all the registration books to the State registration offices, etc., etc.

"Right from the beginning, persecutions and killings of clergy began.²⁵⁷ The first martyr was Metropolitan Joanikije [Lipovac] of Montenegro, who was tortured by Tito's communists for several months in prison. Partisan Major Kovačević brought him a chalice filled with the fresh blood of murdered Chetniks (that's how he explained it), and he made the metropolitan commune in that blood. The metropolitan stayed firm, and was killed and burned in Arandzelovats during the night between the 8th and 9th of September, 1945. In this period of the consolidation of their revolutionary authority, the communists were helped by the 'Allies', English and Soviet. In 1944 and 1945 there were shootings without trial of all those priests who, as they believed, were unable to adapt to collaboration with the communists. According to incomplete information, the communists in those years killed 98 Serbian priests.²⁵⁸

"After all these events, and finally losing trust in the Allies, who at the end, on the orders of Tito, even bombed a lot of Serbian cities and turned them into ruins, Metropolitan Joseph finally took an openly anti-communist position. He started to criticise the actions of the communist authorities in public, but his acts did not influence other bishops to take the same position towards the new godless authorities.

257 Things got worse in 1947 when Tito placed a Catholic at the head of the Commission for Religious Confessions (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 122-123). (V.M.)

258 70 of his priests died with Metropolitan Joanikije (The Diocesan Council of the Free Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A. and Canada, *A Time to Choose*, Third Lake, Ill.: Monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God, 1981, p. 10). According to Norman Malcolm (*Bosnia. A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1996, p.193), up to 250,000 people [of all the nations of Yugoslavia] were killed by Tito's mass shootings, forced death marches and concentration camps in the period 1945-6. (V.M.)

“Since he took such a fearless position towards the communists, Metropolitan Joseph found himself in a very difficult position and he was under a number of pressures. Several times the new authorities organized ‘spontaneous demonstrations’ with red flags, banners and shouts of ‘Down with Joseph!’ During one such anti-religious event, when a large number of demonstrators stopped in front of the patriarchal building, and started to shout the well-known words, ‘Down with Joseph! Down with Joseph!’ the metropolitan came out onto the balcony and in the strong voice with which he usually spoke to thousands of the faithful, shouted as if he did not understand: ‘Down with Joseph? Which Joseph? Broz or Stalin?’²⁵⁹

“Just after the end of the war, he rejected the request of the federal minister of internal affairs, Vlade Zečović, to send a message to the clergy that they should not commemorate the king’s name in the Divine services. In rejecting this, he said: ‘The king’s name will be commemorated until the state organization is decided.’ Having seen the firm position of Metropolitan Joseph, the communists changed their threats and tactics. In 1946 he began to receive official delegations from the authorities, bringing him messages that ‘Tito is regretting that he didn’t have the honour of meeting the representative of the Serbian Church, and he is expressing his sincere wish to do this as soon as possible’. The same year Metropolitan Joseph delivered a speech in the patriarchal chapel in which he said: ‘Such a shame and disaster the Serbian people have not undergone since the Turks. Let everyone know that many have broken their teeth attacking the Church. So will the communist beast. Endure, Serb, and don’t be afraid.’ The Soviet Patriarch Alexis I, during his visit to Bulgaria (in June, 1946) expressed the wish to visit the Serbian Church. That message he sent through Bishop Irinaeus Čilić who was in Bulgaria attending the celebration of the 1000-year anniversary of the repose of St. John of Rila the Wonderworker. Metropolitan Joseph did not reply to Patriarch Alexis. After the war, while sending one of his priests to a parish in a village, he gave him a cross and asked him: ‘Do you remember how the Spartan mother saw off her son to the battle, giving him the spear? I give you the cross of Christ, and am sending you to the terrible war with the godless. Here, my son, is the cross and the vow with it or on it.’

“Metropolitan Joseph began to criticise the MP’s subordination to the communists. For example, in a conversation with the American ambassador Harold Schantz he declared that the MP was an extended arm of the Kremlin, which was trying to Bolshevize the Serbian Orthodox Church. {However,} he still did not completely understand the deep meaning of handing over the freedom of the Church to the militant godfighters, which is sergianism; he didn’t in the name of the Serbian Church stop giving the Soviet church communion in prayer and sacraments as well as other support for it.²⁶⁰

259 Archbishop Averky of Jordanville recounts the same anecdote in *Sovremennost’ v svete Slova Bozhia* (*The Contemporary World in the Light of the Word of God*), Sermons and Speeches, vol. I (1951-1960), Jordanville, 1975, St. Petersburg, 1995, p. 255. (V.M.)

260 Moreover, on May 19-20, 1946 a Hierarchical Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church allowed the Church in Czechoslovakia to enter the MP. This decision was confirmed on May 15, 1948 (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 110). (V.M.)

“The political orientation of the Serbian bishops at that time, from a strictly Orthodox point of view, was not equal to the seriousness of the historical situation in which Serbia and the Serbian Church found themselves. They didn’t attach enough importance to the political system in Serbia, such as the Orthodox autocracy-monarchy, but the tendency was towards modern political options, to the democratic organization of the State, which, as is well-known, is, together with communism, just one of the sides of the Judaeo-Masonic coin... In the early-mentioned discussion of Metropolitan Joseph with the American ambassador he made the contradictory declaration that Stalin had taken over the position of Tsar Nicholas II. According to him, it [communism] was the same type of rule – authoritarian and undemocratic – as tsarism was. He claimed that he was against every type of totalitarian regime, both right and left. Metropolitan Joseph, like all other Serbian bishops, was actually in favour of the system of the liberal democratic kingdom that was enforced in the kingdom of Yugoslavia before the war.

“In the Church and among the people everybody wanted Patriarch Gabriel to return to Yugoslavia, who had been released from German imprisonment [in Dachau] at the end of the war, and still did not come back. Since Metropolitan Joseph rejected many of their requests, the communists had the idea of inviting Patriarch Gabriel, who was temporarily in Italy, to come back to the country, to which, after a time, he agreed.²⁶¹ He adopted a more modest position than Joseph. He considered that, with the help of ‘diplomacy’, more coordination with the authorities and keeping away from conflicts, he would save the Serbian Church from total disaster, so he started to declare loyalty to the authorities, although he often criticised their representatives, even Tito himself, concerning their actions against the Church, always declaring he was against the actions, but not the authorities themselves. He managed to avoid enforcing many requests of the communists, likewise the recognition of the communist clergy association, the foundation of the so-called Macedonian Church, as well as the condemnation and defrocking of the hierarchs abroad whose removal was requested by the authorities.

“But he did partake in the Pan-Slavic Congress in Belgrade in 1946 in which he declared gratitude to ‘Mother Russia’ for preserving the unity of the Slavs, repeating

261 He had been waiting for the return to the country of King Peter. However, in the autumn of 1946 Archbishop Eleutherius (Vorontsov) of the MP persuaded Patriarch Gabriel to change his mind. In a report to the Central Committee on February 14, 1947, G. Karpov remarked that Archbishop Eleutherius ‘at the command of Patriarch Alexis has conducted a series of conversations with Gabriel and persuaded him of the necessity of returning to Yugoslavia and working with the democratic government of Tito, abandoning hopes of the restoration of the monarchy. In December, 1946 the Serbian patriarch declared that he remains faithful to the traditional friendship with Russia and categorically rejects an orientation towards the West. Patriarch Gabriel also expressed the thought of the necessity of the gathering in Moscow of representatives of all the Orthodox Churches. At the Pan-Slavic Congress in Belgrade in December, 1946, Patriarch Gabriel expressed that which we in Moscow have been impatiently waiting for him to say: ‘... he considers that the seniority in the Orthodox world should belong to the Moscow Patriarchate, and the Russian Church should become the Mother for the Slavic churches.’ Developing this thought and noting the anti-Slavic and anti-Soviet ‘undermining’ work of the Vatican, Patriarch Gabriel said: ‘That is why we need to be together with the Russian people and the Russian Church, in order to oppose all the snares and enemy intrigues of the whole of the West headed by the Pope of Rome and his supporters.’ (RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 125, d. 407, l. 27; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 114). (V.M.)

the words that Metropolitan Joseph had said at the liberation of Belgrade. On the same occasion he welcomed Tito and Stalin, whom he named 'the Great'.

"In the year 1948, at the request of the authorities, he attended, in the name of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the false council hosted by the MP in Moscow, even though before that he had for a long time tried not to do so. Still, he did not fulfil many requests of the MP and the communists by which they tried to subordinate the Serbian Church to the MP.

"When Patriarch Gabriel came back to Serbia in 1946, Metropolitan Joseph naturally became his closest associate in ruling the Serbian Orthodox Church. Regardless of the fact that he still openly criticised the communist authorities, he participated, together with Patriarch Gabriel, in all public events and in the MP council of 1948.

"After the repose of Patriarch Gabriel [in 1950], it was clear to all the faithful that the only natural heir should be Metropolitan Joseph. But of course, the godless authorities who were fighting with the Church all the time would not allow Metropolitan Joseph to be elected as Serbian patriarch. Before the election of the patriarch... the UDBA [Yugoslav secret police] arrested Metropolitan Joseph in Belgrade, beat him up, and forced him into a monastery in Bosnia, where they imprisoned him in order to stop his influence on the hierarchs. He was arrested several times, and was banned from living in Belgrade, so he found shelter sometimes in the monastery of Žiča, and sometimes in Ljubostinja. Each time he was arrested and banned from Belgrade, he was heavily beaten. In 1953 he was already very ill, so he was allowed to go back to Belgrade, to the monastery of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple, but without the freedom to go anywhere else. As a political prisoner, abandoned by his brother hierarchs, he reposed there on July 3, 1957."²⁶²

Some bishops thought that, besides, Metropolitan Joseph, "Metropolitan Nectarius Krulj of Dabro-Bosnia could have been chosen as patriarch. The vote was scheduled for June 10, 1950. The communist regime wanted as the candidate Bishop Vikentije Prodanov of Zleto-Strumička. The bishops' council rejected this candidate, so the communists used the special police to disable most of the members of the council, and in that way they blocked the worked of the council. The next meeting of the Council to elect the patriarch was scheduled for June 20, 1950. In the meantime the secret police removed the two candidates: Metropolitan Joseph was arrested and imprisoned in Žiča monastery, and Metropolitan Nectarius was pressured to withdraw his candidacy, which he finally agreed on. Frightened by such brutality on the part of the communist authorities, the other bishops in the list of candidates, along with two metropolitans: Damascene of Zagreb and Arsenije of coastal and inland Montenegro, put Bishop Vikentije on the list of candidates. And so with heavy pressure from the secret police, Vikentije Prodanov was chosen as patriarch by one episcopal vote only. Even though he was very obedient to the authorities, the newly chosen Patriarch

²⁶² Hieroschemamonk Akakije, in V. Moss, *Letopis Velike Bitke (The Chronicle of a Great Battle)*, Belgrade, 2008, pp. 339-345.

Vikentije resisted some of Tito's plans, for example, the forming of the Macedonian Church. So he didn't last long on the patriarchal throne. He died eight years later.

"After Vikentije, the communists needed a completely loyal person, who would bring the Serbian Church in service to the atheist regime. Such a candidate they found in the person of the widowed priest Chranislav Djorič, who became a monk with the name German and in 1951 became Vikentije's vicar-bishop. In the campaign electing German as patriarch, the communist regime did not hide its active participation. All the memories of the electing council were very thoroughly worked upon by the secret police. The boss of the Serbian secret police Milan Velić openly said to the members of the electoral council: 'We want German to be chosen, and he will be chosen, whether you vote for him or not. We want in the person of the patriarch to have a safe and sound friend, and with Vikentije we were too credulous.' Everyone received an envelope with money. One of the examples of various blackmailing and threats was Abbot Platon Milevoyevič of Studenitsa, to whom the bloody boss of the Belgrade secret police, Miloš Minić, came with one associate and told him he would be arrested for public immorality and misuse of money in selling the monastery's woods unless he voted for German. The secret police claimed that they had all the proofs of all his weaknesses, having mistresses in the monastery, several children born outside wedlock, and so on."²⁶³

"Father Macarius, abbot of the famed Dechani Monastery, was given 200,000 dinars (\$650) as payment for his coerced vote for Germanus. He came back to his monastery after the election and threw the money at his monks, telling them that he 'felt like Judas'.

"Many delegates to the Electorate were given a special pen and paper on which they were to cast their ballots, in order to show whether they had kept their promise to the agents of the Secret Police. (Two sworn statements by witnesses)."²⁶⁴

According to witnesses in the patriarch's house, he had a party card. And when he was once accused of embezzling a very large sum of money and was threatened with a court trial, the Serbian equivalent of the KGB saved him and paid the money themselves. Thereafter he was completely "their man".²⁶⁵

In 1960 Archimandrite Justin Popovich wrote: "... The atheist dictatorship has so far elected two patriarchs... And in this way it has cynically trampled on the holy rights of the Church, and thereby also on the holy dogmas."²⁶⁶

263 Hieroschemamonk Akakije, *op. cit.*, p. 395. According to a report dated October 18, 1961 and prepared by the United States Senate's Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, in 1950, on the death of Patriarch Gabriel, the communists "made certain that the new patriarch would be a 'cooperative' one, and forced the election of a weak man, Bishop Vikentije Prodanov, who became a manageable tool of communist propaganda." (*A Time to Choose*, *op. cit.*, p. 10). (V.M.)

264 *A Time to Choose*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

265 M. Atavina, personal communication.

266 Popovich, "The Truth about the Serbian Orthodox Church in communist Yugoslavia", translated into Russian in *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (*Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad*), NN. 2 and 3, 1992.

In this period, the communists tried to break down the resistance of all those bishops who opposed them. In most cases they succeeded. But there were some exceptions.

For example: "The Bishops' quarters in Novi Sad, in which Bishop Irenaeus (Tsilitis) of Bachka lived, became the target of 'national rage' – communist demonstrations that threw a large number of stones at the building with terrible exclamations. During a festal litia in 1946 in one village, when the bishop came out from the church in full vestments, the organized communist crowd threw a number of stones at him. Being hit on the back of his head, Bishop Irenaeus fell on the ground. The raging crowd attacked the bishop, and the priest who was trying to defend him was stabbed by knives. Severely hurt, all covered in blood, his beard pulled out, his vestments torn, spat upon and insulted, Bishop Irenaeus was taken to Novi Sad during the night. As a consequence of these heavy wounds, he spent the rest of his life mostly in his sickbed.

"Metropolitan Nectarius was lynched by the communists. In August 1953 a group of about 150-250 communists (including some women) arrived unexpectedly in the monastery of Osren. They forced their way into the monastery guest-house, and uttering terrible words they came to the bishop's cell, where they started to hit and push him until he fell to the ground. One of the women was pulling his beard. The calls for help of an old bishop, who was at that time 75 years old, were heard by nobody. They kept on tearing his ryasa, pushing and torturing him. Heavily wounded, he had to leave Tuzla, and go to Belgrade, where he lay in hospital for several months. Metropolitan Nectarius was the spine of the resistance to the communists in the Serbian Orthodox Church. Before the election of German as patriarch, the president of the socialist republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina – his name was Djuro Putsar, his nickname was "the old one" – said to Metropolitan Nectarius and Bishop Basil: 'The two of you represent 80% of the Council, and if German is not elected, we know who is responsible.' Metropolitan Nectarius called patriarch German 'Judas' son'.

"In 1944 Metropolitan Arsenije was condemned in Cetinje by the national court to ten-and-a-half years' hard labour for anti-state activities because he did not carry out various requests made by the communists and because he said in his sermons that the Catholic Church did very evil things to Orthodox people. Together with him, seven old Montenegrin priests were condemned too. In 1960, due to serious illness, he was released at the age of 77. Rejected by all, his last days were spent with his daughter and son-in-law. He reposed, humiliated and persecuted by Patriarch German, whom he cursed on the last day of his life. Up to his last hour he rejected the communists and German. Even on his deathbed, the communists asked him to sign a statement by which he approved of the official policy of Patriarch German. Under the pressure of the communists, his funeral was conducted in secret.

"Bishop Vasilije was forced to leave Banja Luka by the communists. At his question whether there was any written document by the state authorities about his ban from Banja Luka, the communists answered: 'The people does not give written decisions,

and it does not make any such decisions. The people has the right to make such decisions, because it is above the authorities, and each authority originates from the people.' After constant threats to lynch him, he decided to leave for Belgrade. On his way to the railway station, a lot of men and women ran after him, shouting: 'You wanted it written, here it is written, you will get it from the people, who are waiting for you. Down with the bearded man! Down with the people's enemies and the collaborators of the occupiers!' One of them attacked the car and started to curse God. When the bishop had hardly reached the station, an even larger mass of people were waiting for him there. They started to throw tomatoes and stones at him, and when they had surrounded him completely they started to spit at him, pull his beard and hit his head and body. The police was present all the time, but did not react to this public violence. One communist sub-officer kept on getting close to his face, and saying: 'We are materialists, we only believe in matter, and not in the immortality of the soul, as you priests teach. Confess that it is senseless. You collaborated with the occupiers, and you don't want to collaborate with today's authorities. That is why people are making you leave. Confess that you were wrong, and repent.' He was so badly hurt that he twice fell on the ground. Then they dragged him over the railway line and tore his sleeveless coat and his mandiya. In the train all the passengers kept on insulting him, and as he sat by the window it was broken from the outside. The reason for this lynching was his resistance to compromise with the godless authorities. Still, he couldn't withstand the communist tortures to the end, and under UDBA pressure he gave his support to Bishop German as candidate for patriarch.

"Bishop Varnava (Nastić) was condemned in 1948 by a communist court to ten years' hard labour for the 'crime of treason: he helped to weaken the economy and the military power of the state, he helped terrorist bands, he published enemy propaganda, and he was a spy for the Anglo-Americans.' He suffered his punishment in Zenitsa jail. All the time he was in total isolation in a dark and damp cell under the greatest affliction of soul and body. The communists immediately cut his hair off and shaved his beard to humiliate him and make him a laughing-stock. They made him do the hardest jobs because they knew he was physically sensitive and weak in health. They starved him of food and water, tortured him with loneliness and deprived him of information from books or newspapers, with no communication with the outer world, just in order to break down his morale and subject him to their godless commands. In reply to all those tortures, he chanted church songs in his cell. Since no torture could break his spirit, the spirit of Bishop Varnava, the UDBA planned his so-called transfer in 1949 and arranged a traffic accident by crashing a locomotive into a parked, locked railway car in which he and a number of other political prisoners were bound. The impact was so powerful that out of a full car only eleven prisoners survived. Bishop Varnava was thrown through the window while tied together with a Catholic priest who died immediately as they fell. Bishop Varnava stayed alive, but both legs and one arm were broken. People from the train station and other trains ran to help, but police surrounded the car and would not allow anyone to come close to the wounded, and one policeman even turned an automatic gun against the people. One hour later, the UDBA came and took all the wounded to the city hospital nearby, where the doctors immediately started to help. Suddenly an UDBA man came back to the hospital and ordered the doctors to stop helping the wounded and to take them off the operating tables. The protests of the doctors were not considered. Bishop

Varnava at that moment was on the operating table with a hole in his heel where a metal rod was to be inserted to help his broken leg heal. All the wounded were put in an army truck on wooden planks and they were driven at a horrific speed over very bad roads, so that two of them died during the trip. In 1960, after several transfers, from one prison to another, where he became severely ill, the much-suffering Bishop Varnava came to the end of his term of punishment. At that moment he submitted a plea to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church to be reactivated. Patriarch German did not take his plea before the Synod, but sent him a message: 'It is necessary that you first regulate your relationship with the authorities', which practically meant that he had to give a statement of loyalty to the communist regime. From that time the UDBA started to pressure him again. The boss of the religious section of the UDBA Milan Velić sent him a letter signed by about ten hierarchs recommending that he sign the statement of loyalty to the authorities and request that the Holy Synod retire him. Velić brought him the prepared text of his statement, a very cunning document prepared by Bishop Vissarion Kostić in which, among other things, they asked him to praise Tito's regime, be one with the official position of the Church and to fence himself off from the work of the emigration. When he strongly resisted, the UDBA officer told him: 'That means you are condemning Patriarch German and the other bishops who have already given such statements.' Bishop Varnava said: 'Everybody shall answer before the Last Judgement for his deeds on earth.' Then the UDBA officer said: 'You think Patriarch German will answer before the Last Judgement?' Bishop Varnava answered: 'The first and the hardest!'

"When Patriarch Vikentije went to Moscow and laid flowers at the tomb of Lenin, Bishop Varnava under his full signature from prison sent a letter saying: 'In whose name did you go, who did you represent, and who authorised you to put the flowers on the tomb of Lenin? From that wreath that you laid on Lenin's tomb, take off one leaf in the name of the Serbian priesthood, one leaf in the name of Serbian bishops, one leaf in the name of the Serbian people, and the remaining six leaves will represent you and the members of your delegation.' Because of this letter, the Hierarchical Synod gathered and pronounced him irresponsible and irrational. That was when his real spiritual torments began, because his brother hierarchs became his enemies. The notorious Bishop Vissarion led the systematic action against Bishop Varnava, who often used to say: 'Being imprisoned by the communists was sweet for me, but now it is not the communists who are persecuting me, but my brother bishops.' Lonely, and surrounded by the iron wall of the communist police, Bishop Varnava died in unexplained circumstances.

"During his ordination, on the Feast of the Transfiguration, 1947, in the Saborna church in Belgrade, the newly ordained Bishop Varnava uttered the following prophetic words: 'When our Lord Jesus Christ sent his apostles into the world, he put before them sacrifice as the programme and way of their lives. And only readiness for apostolic sacrifice made the Galilaean fishermen receive apostolic honour. Lofty honour in the Church of Christ means lofty sacrifice. The Holy Hierarchical Council led by the Holy Spirit chose my unworthiness as bishop of the Church of Christ. By that choice they condemned me to the sacrifice of Christ's Golgotha. And in condemning me to that highest sacrifice they gave me the loftiest honour that can be given to a mortal man. All I can say is that I shall gladly climb my Golgotha, and I

shall never trade that honour for any other under the sun of God. The bishop's position is a sacrifice on Golgotha because the bishop's service is apostolic service, and to the apostles the Lord said: "The cup which I am drinking you will drink, and the baptism which I am being baptised with you will be baptised with" (Mark 10.39). And the cup which our Lord drank and the baptism with which he was baptized, what else could it be but the cup of Golgotha and the bloody baptism in His own Blood?... And that is why, though I know the weaknesses of the soul, I am not afraid that my leg will shatter on the road of Golgotha strewn with thorns that I am today undertaking. Even if it wanted to shatter, the light and the warmth of innumerable examples of Christ's heroes will bring back to it firmness and might.' This sermon by Bishop Varnava was fulfilled completely through his much-suffering hierarchical service and struggle to defend Church freedom.

"This was the way they prepared the total collapse of the Serbian Church. First by removing unfitting [bishops], and then carefully choosing new bishops sympathetic to the regime, or at least those who would accept the new kind of situation. In the period after the war the existence of the Serbian Church depended on the way the patriarch and the bishops treated Tito's regime. In the time of Metropolitan Joseph, the patriarchal locum tenens, the Church still, regardless of external persecution, enjoyed internal freedom, because his firm position, if we exclude his lukewarm and flexible position towards the MP, let everybody know that he would firmly hold to the Church canons. And he succeeded. Much more modest, but still firm, was the position displayed by Patriarch Gabriel. The two of them represented the last defence of Church freedom.

"As we have seen, after the death of Patriarch Gabriel, the situation in the Church became more difficult. Using the UDBA, the communists choose Vikentije as patriarch, who did many favours for them. In 1958 the act of the destruction of the Serbian Orthodox Church came to its end when the UDBA imposed as patriarch German, who was an absolutely submissive tool, accepted all the requests of the regime. The first big concessions to Tito were the act of forming the Macedonian Autocephalous Church and the blessing of the pro-communist association of priests (partisans), through which the possibility of total control of the Church was created. Patriarch German told the priesthood in Belgrade: 'Whichever priest insults Tito, insults me.' Really the position of the Serbian patriarchate was harder than at any time in its long-lasting history, because for the first time its patriarch and bishops joined the enemies of the Church. In the years after the war most of the Serbian bishops obviously had no ecclesiological consciousness, which is a confessing position of struggle for the purity of the Orthodox faith, which was best illustrated by the presence of the Serbian Church at the councils of Moscow in 1945 and 1948, as well as the fact that not a single bishop or clergyman – though many of them were against the communists and criticised the behaviour of Patriarchs Vikentije and German, - never thought of stopping communion with the red patriarch in Belgrade, which all this time was in full eucharistic communion with the new calendarists..."²⁶⁷

267 Hieroschemamonk Akakije, op. cit., pp. 345-350.

19. THE FALL OF THE SERBIAN CHURCH

From the time of the election of Patriarch German in 1958, and with the exception of a very few clergy, the communists were in complete control of the Serbian Patriarchate.

Archimandrite Justin Popovich wrote on the catastrophic situation of the Church at this time: "The Church is being gradually destroyed from within and without, ideologically and organisationally. All means are being used: known and unknown, open and secret, the most subtle and the most crude... And all this is skilfully dissolved, but in fact it is the most deadly of poisons with a sugar coating... The most elementary and rudimentary logic demonstrates and proves: cooperation with open atheists, the cursed enemies of Christ and the Orthodox Church of Christ, is illogical and anti-logical. We ask those who seek such cooperation, or already cooperate, or – terrible thought! – compel others to cooperate, with the words of Christ: 'What communion can there be between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what is there in common between light and darkness? What agreement can there be between Christ and Belial?' (II Corinthians 6.14-15). Do you not hear the Christ-bearing Apostle, who thunders: 'If we, or an angel from heaven begins to preach to you that which we have not preached to you, let him be anathema!' (Galatians 1.8). Or have you, in the frenzy of the atheist dictatorship, gone completely deaf to the Divine truth and commandment of Christ: 'You cannot serve God and Mammon' (Matthew 6.24)?"²⁶⁸

The result of the subjection of the Serbian Church to the communists was predictable: "an alarming tendency on the part of the hierarchy of the 'Mother Church' to abandon true Orthodoxy and embrace heresy... the worst heresy that has ever assaulted the Orthodox Church – the heresy of 'ecumenism'."²⁶⁹ In 1965 the Serbian Church entered the World Council of Churches. In September, 1966, two inter-Orthodox Commissions were established in Belgrade to negotiate with the Anglicans and the Old Catholics. In 1967 Patriarch German said to the Roman Catholic bishop of Mostar: "The times are such that our sister Churches have to lean on each other, to turn away from that which divided us and to concentrate on all that we have in common."²⁷⁰ The next year he recognized Catholic marriages, and became one of the

268 Popovich, in *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad), № 3, 1992, pp. 15, 16.

269 *A Time to Choose*, Libertyville, Ill.: Free Serbian Orthodox Archdiocese, 1981, p. 43.

270 Joachim Wertz has provided another possible motive for the Serbian Church's entry into the WCC. He considers that "the main 'practical' reason why the Serbian Orthodox Church joined the WCC was that that body would provide the Serbian Church with visibility in the West and thus forestall any liquidation of the Church by Tito. Also the WCC would contribute to the rebuilding of many of the churches destroyed by the Croatian Ustasha in WWII. The rebuilding of these Churches was very high on the agenda of the Serbian Church. The Croatians wanted to erase the presence of Orthodoxy. The Serbian Church felt it imperative to bring back that presence and VISIBILITY. Similarly the WCC, and individual Western protestant Churches contributed to the building of the new Theological Faculty in the Karaburma section of Belgrade. This can be viewed as a posthumous slap in the face of Tito, who forbade the construction of any church in that neighborhood. He wanted it to be an ideal progressive, socialist community of ugly high rise apartments with no trace of the Church." ("Re: [orthodox-synod] Strange letter", orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com, 26 February, 2003).

presidents of the WCC. In 1985, at a nuns' conference, he welcomed two Catholic bishops "with special honour" into the sanctuary, and then all the conference members (Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants) recited the Creed together in the Liturgy.²⁷¹ In 1971 he signed the following WCC statement in Geneva: "The powerful Breath of renewal will blow into the mighty arena of the Church, as well as into each of her communities; for these are not simple administrative units, but they all constitute a part of the one great Christian Church."

Patriarch German liked to justify his ecumenism by quoting the Serbian proverb: Drvo se na drvo naslanja; a Čovek na Čoveka – "Tree leans on tree and man on man." But the Free Serbs had an answer to this. "We can also quote the proverbs of our people: S'kim si, onaki si. – 'You are like those with whom you associate.' If you find your fellowship with heretics, you begin to share their erroneous thinking and eventually become a heretic. As an American proverb goes: 'Birds of a feather flock together.'"²⁷²

Commenting on the decision of the Orthodox Churches to become "organic members" of the WCC, Fr. Justin wrote: "Every true Orthodox Christian, who is instructed under the guidance of the Holy Fathers, is overcome with shame when he reads that the Orthodox members of the Fifth Pan-Orthodox Conference in Geneva [in June, 1968]... on the question of the participation of the Orthodox in the work of the World Council of Churches, considered it necessary 'to declare that the Orthodox Church considers itself to be an organic part of the World Council of Churches.'

"This assertion is apocalyptically horrifying in its un-orthodoxy and anti-orthodoxy. Was it necessary for the Orthodox Church, that most holy Body of the God-Man Christ, to become so debased to such a pitiful degree that its theological representatives – some of whom were Serbian bishops – have begun to beg for 'organic' participation and membership in the World Council of Churches, which will supposedly become a new 'Body' and a new 'Church', which will stand above all other churches, in which the Orthodox Churches and the non-orthodox churches will appear only as parts. God forbid! Never before has there been such a betrayal and abandonment of our holy Faith!

"We are renouncing the Orthodox Faith of the God-Man Christ, and organic ties with the God-Man and His Most Holy Body: we are repudiating the Orthodox Church of the holy apostles, the Fathers, and the Ecumenical Councils – and we wish to become 'organic members' of a heretical, humanistic, humanized and man-worshipping club, which consists of 263 heresies – every one of which is a spiritual death.

"As Orthodox Christians we are 'members of Christ.' 'Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?' (I Corinthians 6.15). We

271 John Chaplain, "[paradosis] Re: Serbian Church – another item", orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com, 26 May, 2004.

272 *A Time to Choose*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

are doing this by our organic union with the World Council of Churches, which is nothing other than the rebirth of atheistic man, of pagan idolatry.

“The time has finally come for the patristic Orthodox Church of Saint Sabbas, the Church of the holy apostles and Fathers, of the holy confessors, martyrs and new-martyrs, to stop mingling ecclesiastically and hierarchically with the so-called ‘World Council of Churches’, and to cast off forever any participation in joint prayer or services, and to renounce general participation in any ecclesiastical dealings whatsoever, which are not self-contained and do not express the unique and unchangeable character of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church – the Orthodox Church – the only true Church that has ever existed.”²⁷³

The attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) towards the Serbian Church now began to change. Thus on September 14/27, 1967, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville wrote to Metropolitan Philaret: “With regard to the question of the Serbian Church, whose Patriarch German is a stooge of the communist Tito, as the Serbs themselves are convinced, calling him ‘the red patriarch’. We have heard this from many clergy and laity who have fled from Serbia. How can we recognize, and have communion in prayer with, ‘the red patriarch’, who maintains the closest friendly relations with red Moscow? Cannot our Hierarchical Council make erroneous decisions? Do we in the Orthodox Church have a doctrine about the infallibility of every Council of Bishops?”

Archbishop Averky’s attitude to the Serbs was confirmed by the ROCOR Council of Bishops in 1967, which resolved to annul the resolution of the Council of Bishops in 1964 on the preservation of prayerful communion with the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church.²⁷⁴ Metropolitan Agathangelus of Odessa writes: “Already on May 19 / June 1, 1967 the following resolution marked “Top Secret” was accepted by our Hierarchical Council in connection with [the Serbian Church’s] ecumenical activity: ‘In addition to the resolution of the present Council of Bishops on relations with the Serbian Orthodox church, the suggestion of his Eminence the First Hierarch and President of the Council of Bishops Metropolitan Philaret has been accepted and confirmed, that all the Reverend Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad should refrain from concelebration with the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church.’ As far as I know, this resolution has never been repealed in a council.”²⁷⁵ Again, in 1970 Metropolitan Philaret of New York announced to the members of the ROCOR Synod that since the Serbian Patriarch German had chosen to serve as Chairman of the World Council of Churches, ROCOR should avoid joint prayer and service with him, while at the same time not making a major demonstration of the fact.²⁷⁶

273 *A Time to Choose*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

274 Andrei Psarev, “The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia’s Attitude Towards Other Local Orthodox Churches”, http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 4.

275 Metropolitan Agathangelus, August 21, 2007, <http://guest-2.livejournal.com/294723.html>.

276 Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Nevertheless, communion between ROCOR and the Serbs continued. For many hierarchs and priests of ROCOR had been brought up in Serbia, and out of gratitude felt that the Serbs should not be condemned or excommunicated. To what extent this attitude was truly motivated by gratitude, and to what extent simply by fear of ROCOR's losing its last friends in "World Orthodoxy", is a moot point. In any case, it was contrary to the canons of the Church, which require the breaking of communion with all those in communion with heresy. Such an act would have been truly loving, for true love for the Serbs dictated that it should be pointed out into what an abyss their ecumenism was leading them, an exhortation which would have acquired greater weight by a full break in communion...

Did any of the Serbs break from the now definitely heretical patriarchate? Inside Serbia, nobody broke completely, although in 1971 Archimandrite Justin broke off relations with the Serbian patriarch, while retaining contacts with the other bishops.²⁷⁷ In the Serbian emigration, there was a bigger rebellion in 1963, when Germanus and his Synod decided to divide the diocese of Bishop Dionysius of America and Canada into three. Claiming to see in this a communist plot, Dionysius refused to accept the decision, announced that he was making his diocese autonomous and broke communion with the patriarch and his synod. On March 27, 1964 the Serbian Synod defrocked Dionysius. Then three pro-Belgrade priests were ordained bishops -in his place. Dionysius and his supporters refused to recognize these acts, for which the patriarchate condemned them as graceless schismatics.

However, this rebellion was not all that it seemed. Fr. Joseph of Avila writes: "In 1963 the American-Canadian diocese left the patriarchate of Belgrade. The American-Canadian diocese headed by Bishop Dionisije (Milivojević) belonged to the Serbian Church in the United States. Besides Bishop Dionisije, since 1946 in the US there lived the Serbian Bishop Nikolai Velimirović. Several years after the war, he was active in events in the Serbian emigration in the USA, he was rector of the theological school at Libertyville, and associate lecturer at the Academy of St. Vladimir and at the theological school in Holy Trinity monastery in Jordanville. In the 50s Bishop Nikolai withdrew from public life and he started living in the Russian monastery of St. Tikhon in Pennsylvania, where in the monastery theological school he lectured Pastoral and Dogmatic Theology and Homiletics, and later in 1955 he became rector of the theological school.

"Several Serbs at that time went to the Russian Church Abroad, among them former judge of the church court of the diocese of Žiča Jovan Saračević. Under the name of Savva he was made a monk by Archbishop Leonty of Chile, was ordained as hieromonk in Argentina and later was chosen as a bishop of ROCOR in Edmonton, Canada.

"At the beginning of the 1950s, because of the bad situation in the Serbian Church, Michael Tošović joined the Russian Church Abroad. He was one of the important

²⁷⁷ *Orthodoxos Typos (Orthodox Press)*, № 144, June 15, 1971, page 4; Hieromonk Sava of Dečani, personal communication. When Fr. Justin died on March 25, 1979, the patriarch did not attend his funeral...

people in Serbian True Orthodoxy. In the year 1952 he was chosen as teacher and lecturer of the Holy Bible and Greek language in the Russian seminary of Holy Trinity in Jordanville. In Jordanville he became a monk with the name Arsenije. Later he became a hieromonk and after that an archimandrite. In the middle of the 50s, with the blessing of Metropolitan Anastassy, he began to publish the theological journal, *Srpski misionar*, in which he revealed the falling away of the Serbian Church, the Moscow Patriarchate and World Orthodoxy. Fr. Arsenije tried to convince the Serbs that since the Serbian patriarchate was enslaved by the communists, it was necessary to separate from the patriarchate and was in favour of founding a Serbian Church Abroad like the Russian Church Abroad.²⁷⁸ Bishop Nikolai Velimirovič supported this idea of Fr. Arsenije, but in 1956 he reposed. Bishop Nikolai died under very suspicious circumstances, and there is very serious supposition that he was killed.²⁷⁹

“In 1963 the American-Canadian diocese with Bishop Dionisije left the Serbian patriarchate. The direct cause for the split was Bishop Dionisije’s suspension in May, 1963 because of moral and disciplinary transgressions. Dionisije claimed that he was suspended because he was anti-communist and that all the accusations were made up by the communist authorities, who were aiming to remove him and enslave the Serbian Church in the States using bishops loyal to the communists.

“In August, 1963 the clergy-laity assembly of the American-Canadian diocese refused obedience to the Serbian patriarchate. The followers of Dionisije claimed that the guilt of their bishop was invented, and they themselves brought up several accusations against the patriarchate, such as accepting Patriarch German from the communist authorities and his submission to those authorities, the foundation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the splitting of the American-Canadian diocese into three parts and the enthroning of three new bishops, all at the orders of the communists, as well as the accusations that the new bishops were loyal to the communists, etc.

“Although most of the accusations against the patriarchate were well-founded, and for that reason Dionisije had more than enough reasons to separate, many facts indicate that his sincerity was questionable.

“In 1963 Djoko Slijepčević, a Church historian with an anti-communist orientation, but at the same time the follower of Patriarch German, wrote: ‘Dionisije is trying to defend himself by his anti-communism, which was quite problematic for a long time, and later nothing else but a pile of empty phrases. What is really anti-communist about Bishop Dionisije?’ On June 28, 1962, *Srpska Borba*, Bishop Dionisije’s main ally and defender today, stated several of his ‘anti-communist’ slips. These are: in his article on November 7, 1957 but published in *Amerikansky Srbobran* on January 16, 1959, Bishop Dionisije was telling the chetniks about Karl Marx’s example of unity. The newspaper *Srpska Borba* explains: ‘Maybe there is some logic in this act of Bishop

278 Hieromonk Arsenije, “Slobodnim Srbima – slobodna i normalizovana Crkva”, *Srpski misionar*, N 19, 1964. (V.M.)

279 *The New Chrysostom*, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovič, St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2011, pp. 106-117. (V.M.)

Dionisije, because even the manner in which he led the action for a 'Serbian gathering' and the ideas that he disclosed in his article on the foundation of the Association of Ravnogortsy, really are much closer to Karl Marx and his proletarians than to the holy things and interests of the Serbian nation and Serbian Orthodox Church.

“It could be said that in this case Bishop Dionisije was a victim of confusion both in a logical and an ideological sense: he was confused, but later 'he gained his eyesight and found the right way'. The facts tell a completely different story: Bishop Dionisije sent his regards to Stalin, praised and glorified Tito and his People's Liberation Army, and of course was for a long time on the payroll of Tito's embassy in New York.

“*Glas Kanadskih Srba* twice, on July 25 and September 12, 1963, openly stated that Bishop Dionisije “in the autumn of 1944 through Dr. Šubšić greeted Marshal Tito and his courageous People's Liberation Army in a telegram. He was on the payroll of the Yugoslav communist embassy in Washington until the leaders of Serb nationality in the US promised that they would give him financial support. He was the only one of the Serbian bishops who, on October 23, 1958, delightedly greeted the foundation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church as 'a grand act and very useful for our Church' (*Glas Kanadskih Srba*, September 12, 1963).

“In the same article in which he revealed this opinion, and which is entitled 'His Holiness Kir German, the fifth patriarch of the renewed patriarchate of Peč' (*Glas Kanadskih Srba*, October 23, 1958) Bishop Dionisije had this to say in trying to praise the new patriarch: 'The first great act of the new patriarch, which is perhaps of ultimate importance for the whole of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was the satisfactory solution of the question of the so-called Macedonian Church'. At that time, Bishop Dionisije had not the slightest doubt as regards the regularity of the election of Patriarch German, because he wrote this as well: 'And so the Holy Spirit and the electoral council of the Serbian Orthodox Church has decided that on the throne of the Serbian patriarchs should come Bishop German of Žiča, indisputably a very capable and gifted man, active and full of every virtue' (*Glas Kanadskih Srba*, October 23, 1958).'²⁸⁰

“Slobodan Drašković, who in 1963 was one of the main followers of Dionisije and played a major role in the National Church Council of the American-Canadian diocese at which this diocese decided to disobey the patriarch, wrote in 1967: 'There is no need to talk a lot about Bishop Dionisije. His policy, not only until May, 1963, but later as well, was marked by a policy of co-existence with the hierarchy of the enslaved and enchained Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia, in contrast with the very clear and strong decisions of the National Church Council. On March 1966, after almost four years of struggle against the Joseph Broz's Patriarch German, he complained against German to the notorious Soviet agent, the 'Russian Patriarch' Alexis, and sought justice from him.'²⁸¹

280 Slijepčević, "Ogreshena vladike Dionisija", Iskra, Munich, 1963, pp. 13-14 (V.M.).

281 Drašković, "Kojim putem? Poruka mladom srpskom narashtaju koji Broz nije uspeo da prevaspita", Chicago, 1967, p. 60 (V.M.).

“The fact that Dionisije split from the Church only for personal reasons is shown by the fact that he several times stated he was against any split from the Mother Church - until he was suspended and understood that he would be condemned.

“Besides this, it was not only the anti-communism of Bishop Dionisije that was problematic. In 1957 the American-Canadian diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church headed by Bishop Dionisije became a member of the heretical church organization, the National Church Council of America. Dionisije did not stop at that, but already then (in the 50s) he started to practise the most extreme ecumenism.

“In *Orthodox Russia* (no. 17, 1959) the following note was printed: ‘On Sunday, 15/28 August in Buffalo (Lakavana) there took place the consecration of the newly built Serbian church of St. Stefan. The all-night vigil was served by the parish priest Miodrag Djurič, accompanied by two Serbian priests and one Anglican priest. In the morning the triumphant reception of Bishop Dionisije and Anglican Bishop Scafe took place. 15 priests were serving, among them Serbs, Anglicans, Belorussians, Ukrainian samosviaty and Ukrainians under Archbishop Palladius. Besides Bishop Dionisije, as the oldest hierarchy, Bishop Scafe also took part in the service. He made some exclamations in the service, kissed Bishop Dionisije, and they said: ‘Christ is among us, He is and will be’. He communed together with Dionisije in the Holy Gifts, and after that Bishop Dionisije gave communion to all the serving priests. At the banquet Bishop Scafe spoke of his admiration for Orthodoxy and how happy he was that America was having a chance to see beautiful Orthodox services on its land. He stated that in accordance with his abilities he was making a donation of \$2500.

“‘... Just before the consecration of the church Bishop Scafe called Bishop Dionisije and the local priest of Lacavan to his side and showed them that the Episcopalians had sent \$75,000 to our church in Yugoslavia. At this point Bishop Scafe showed pictures of those in the Orthodox world with whom he had communed before: the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, as well as our Vikentije. As he was going to commune with Bishop Dionisije the next day, at the banquet he gave a gift of \$2500 for the church in Lacavan.’²⁸²

“Concerning the Church situation among the Serbs abroad, Fr. Arsenije Tosovich wrote in 1964: ‘Bishop Dionisije recently for the first time referred positively to *Misionar* for its writing about separating from the enslaved patriarchate in Yugoslavia and for the letter Bishop Nikolai.’ And then he condemned Hieromonk Arsenije as the one who was ‘for the separation from the patriarchate’. And it was only when he was suspended and it was clear that he would be condemned, that he reminded us that the Church in Yugoslavia was not free and that he was being persecuted not only because he was guilty but because the communists wanted it. To tell the truth, nobody did more for the communists and for dissolving the Serbs in America than that same great Serb and great anti-communist Dionisije. If Tito was looking all over the world for a man for this job, he could not find a better one than this Dionisije, even if we don’t mention his blessing telegrams on the occasion of the liberation of Belgrade ‘to the father of the people, Stalin’....

282 *Srpski misionar*, NN 9-10, 1959 (V.M.)

“... And so if Bishop Dionisije was wrong, it doesn't mean that the patriarchate was right and that the Serbian Church in Yugoslavia was free and that we should unconditionally submit to its decisions. On the contrary. Everything was said about that in the above-mentioned article of 1954, including the fact, for example, that all candidates for the hierarchy had to be approved by the communist central committee. The central committee of course would approve only of those candidates who were theirs or at least did not have any dispute with them. We, who are free, and who don't want to put our necks under the communist yoke, cannot and should not accept in any way the communist choice of hierarchs. That would mean those candidates first have to receive Satan's blessing and seal, and then be consecrated as hierarchs!...

“So far the American diocese and the whole emigration has had one unsuccessful bishop, Dionisije Milivojević, and now there are five of them: three sparrows and two Dionisijes. Stefan, Firmilian and Grigorije, because of their dependence on the enslaved patriarchate, and his dependence on the communist godless authorities, will be obliged, whether willingly or not, 'to fly over the sea', keep in touch with the patriarch, and through him with the religious commission and communist authorities...

“.... Since these three hierarchs are willingly going into communist enslavement, and thereby have to submit to the godless authorities, there arises the question of their grace and the question of our submission to them. Of course, the answer to both questions can be only no. 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' (II Corinthians 6.14-15).

“We have two Dionisijes, that is, Dionisije Milivojević and Irinej Kovačević, who are both illegal and graceless. The first was condemned by the authority that enthroned him and which he constantly acknowledged. It is understandable that now he is trying to deny the right of that authority to condemn him, but that does not save him. Irinej Kovačević was consecrated by Ukrainian samosvyaty, who themselves are not lawful and have no grace, so they could not give him what they themselves did not have. In his message for the Nativity of the Lord Dionisije has promised us more of these samosvyaty hierarchs. For this consecration Bishop Dionisije turned to the ROCOR and American Metropolia, but only the samosvyaty accepted.

“With regard to that subordination of the official church to the godless authorities, we should do as the Russians did in the same case. Will we found a Catacomb Church, as it was in Russia, which will not acknowledge the official Serbian Church and its capitulation before the godless authorities? We don't know. But we know what the emigration should do, it is the foundation of the Serbian Church Abroad. What Bishop Dionisije is doing now is nothing, since he is under suspension and he is guilty of many things and should have been defrocked long ago. For two decades he has been leading the American-Canadian diocese, and now we see her pitiful end. And the same thing would have happened with the Church Abroad if he had been the leader. But will the Serbian emigration do something in this direction, or will it go on

following the leader without a head? We cannot tell for sure. In any case, honourable and God-loving Serbian emigrants, who have God and faith in the Church in the first place in their lives, should remember that each hierarch who comes to freedom but out of submission of Patriarch German and in connection with the godless communist authorities and their representatives, is not a real hierarch and has no grace of God in him. In the same way, the suspended Bishop Dionisije and his samosvyat Irinej and all the others whom he may invent are not real and have no grace. To the Serbian God-loving emigration it is left that until the foundation of the Serbian Church Abroad the Serbian God-loving emigration should turn for their spiritual needs to the representatives of our sister Church, the Russian Church Abroad. She is the only one in the world that has remained faithful and undefiled as the Bride of Christ.²⁸³ 284

283 *Srpski Misionar*, N 19, 1964, pp. 3-9 (V.M.)

284 Monk Joseph of Avila, Serbia, in Moss, *Letopis Velike Bitke*, op. cit., pp. 399-404. Joachim Wertz (private e-mail communication, February 4, 2001) writes: "You ask me about my attitude toward the 'Free Serbs', by which I understand what has become the New Gračanica Metropolis. The schism has been overcome, but the healing continues. Therefore I am reluctant to speak on this matter (and also because I do not have first-hand experience of that tragic time). Nevertheless it is something that needs to be discussed, especially for the benefit of non-Serbian Orthodox. I have read on the matter, but much of what I know comes from others who were either involved in the issue or who were witnesses. Most of these people were very close to Vladika Nikolai [Velimirovich]. And I personally trust them. Complaints were made against Bishop Dionisije to the mother Church in Belgrade long before the events of 1963. He was accused of conduct unbecoming of a Bishop. People are willing to suggest financial misconduct, but certainly moral misconduct is implied (one of these areas where Serbs are not too open). Dionisije had successfully established for himself his own domain in North America 'from the Atlantic to the Pacific' that was untouchable. Perhaps much like Archbishop Iakovos did. No one doubts the sincerity of his anti-fascism or his anti-communism. During WWII he did much to publicize the plight of the Serbs. But he had his 'own little thing going' and no one could intrude. Problems began happening after the war when the Serbian émigrés, including Bishop Nikolai, started to arrive. Many of these émigrés, several of whom I know or knew personally, had various levels of theological education. Their services were not welcomed by Dionisije. Neither was Vladika Nikolai. He was treated rudely and often ignored. Dionisije perceived him as a threat, though Nikolai always deferred to him as the ruling Bishop. Eventually Vladika Nikolai accepted the offer of the rectorship of St. Tikhon's Seminary and virtually 'retired' from American Serbian Church life. In short, Dionisije was threatened by the potential for spiritual and ecclesiastical 'revival' that came with the émigrés. (Please bear in mind that Vladika Nikolai, while in exile, was still the ruling bishop of the diocese of Zhicha. He remained such until his repose. He could not have been a canonical threat to the bishop of another diocese). In a remarkable example of bad timing, the complaints to the Patriarchate against Bishop Dionisije reached a crescendo at the very time Dionisije was most vocally anti-communist. Pressure on the Patriarchate to remove him came from two sources: his own flock and the Tito regime. Several bishops were sent to investigate him and they were treated not in a dignified manner. Dionisije refused to cooperate. There was no choice but to remove him. (Note this happened in 1963, Bishop Nikolai having died in 1956). Dionisije wrapped himself in anticommunism to conceal other matters. This is my understanding and opinion. Left on his own, at one point he even applied to be accepted by the Moscow Patriarchate! He was refused, as he was by the Synod Abroad. To create a hierarchy, he resorted to uncanonical Ukrainian bishops. Fortunately his successor, Bishop Irinej (Kovachevich), later Metropolitan of the New Gračanica Metropolis, was a much more Church centered man. Later when the diocese became 'the Free Serbian Church' and he had contacts with the Greek Old Calendarists (at that time it was with Paisios of Astoria and whatever Synod he was part of), and also with the anti-ecumenist Patriarch of Alexandria Nicholas VI (under whose jurisdiction he was for a brief time), he and some of the clergy became more traditionalist (although I can't say how well this trickled down). It does seem that Metropolitan Irinej did leave a traditionalist legacy. As I said above, the schism is over, but is still healing. All of the antagonism now revolves around property claims and money. I should point out that I believe it is true that Fr. Justin Popovich truly

Cast out in this way, three dioceses and about forty parishes of the Free Serbs, as they now called themselves, applied to join ROCOR. Two archbishops – Averky of Jordanville and John (Maximovich) of San Francisco – supported them. However, other bishops, including Archbishop Vitaly of Canada, were opposed, and the Free Serbs' petition was rejected. The quarrel was so heated that two Russians were excommunicated.²⁸⁵ After being rejected by ROCOR, the Free Serbs then briefly came into communion first with two Ukrainian bishops of the Polish Orthodox Church and then with the Patriarchate of Alexandria. Fleeing the Ecumenism of the latter, they briefly found refuge with the "Florinite" Greek Old Calendarists led by Archbishop Auxentius, on September 11/24, 1981.

Whatever their canonical status, the Free Serbs did oppose ecumenism – until their reabsorption into the patriarchate in 1991. Moreover, not all the Free Serbs joined the patriarchate, and some parishes remain independent to this day.

Moreover, there were some anti-ecumenists in the patriarchate. Thus in November, 1994 Bishop Artemije of Raska and Prizren, in a memorandum to the Serbian Synod, said that ecumenism was an ecclesiological heresy, and that the Serbs should withdraw from the WCC.²⁸⁶

More recently, he wrote: "The result of this participation [of the Serbs in the WCC] was reflected in certain material aid which the Serbian Orthodox Church periodically received from the WCC in the form of medicine, medical care and rehabilitation of some individuals in Switzerland, student scholarships, and financial donations for certain concrete purposes and needs of the SOC, such as the construction of a new building by the Theological School. We paid for these crumbs of material assistance by losing, on the spiritual plane, the purity of our faith, canonical consistency and faithfulness to the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church. The presence of our representatives (and Orthodox representatives in general) at various and sundry ecumenical gatherings has no canonical justification. We did not go there in order to boldly, openly and unwaveringly confess the eternal and unchangeable Truth of the Orthodox Faith and Church, but in order to make compromises and to agree more or less to all those decisions and formulations offered to us by the non-Orthodox. That is how we ultimately arrived at Balamand, Chambésy and Assisi, which taken as a whole represent infidelity and betrayal of the Holy Orthodox Faith."²⁸⁷

believed that Bishop Dionisije was being persecuted because of his anti-communism. I feel he only knew, or was willing to believe, only one aspect of the story."

285 Joseph Legrande, "Re: [paradosis] July 2001 Sobor", orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, September 16, 2002.

286 "The arrangements were made by Bp. Paisius of Astoria acting as Auxentius' representative... The decision is signed by Abp. Auxentius, Metr. Paisius of North and South America and Metr. Euthymius of Thessalonica" (George Lardas, "The Old Calendar Movement in the Greek Church", Holy Trinity Monastery, Jurdanville, 1983 (unpublished thesis), p. 22).

287 Bishop Artemije, Statement to the Thessalonica Theological Conference, September, 2004; in *The Shepherd*, June, 2005, p. 11.

Logically, in order to make his actions conform with his words, Bishop Artemije should have left the Serbian Synod. Nevertheless, his words remain true, and constitute a clear condemnation of the position of the Serbian Church since its entry into the WCC in the 1960s. At the present time, Bishop Artemije is in schism from the official Serbian patriarchate, but not for reasons of ecumenism; and he claims to be still in communion with the rest of World Orthodoxy...

20. THE FALL OF THE BULGARIAN CHURCH

During the war, King Boris III of Bulgaria had tried to preserve his country's neutrality between Hitler and Stalin, and, persuaded by Metropolitan Stefan of Sophia, had refused to allow the Bulgarian Jews to be taken to Hitler's death-camps. For this he was killed in 1943. Professor Ya.Ya. Etinger writes: "Hitler demanded from his ally Bulgaria the despatch of all the Jews of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Thrace to Auschwitz – about 48,000 people were subject to deportation. The head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Stefan of Sophia, on learning from the chief rabbi Asher Khamanel, the president of the capital's Jewish community, that 'the Commissariat for Jewish questions' had already prepared the first lists of eminent Jews subject to deportation to Hitler's death camps, openly declared: 'I will conceal all the Jews in the churches and monasteries, but I will not hand them over for reprisals.' He personally demanded that Prime-Minister Filov revoke the arrests of Jews in a series of cities in the country. The metropolitan also sent a letter to Tsar Boris, in which he wrote: 'Let us not commit abominations, for which our good-hearted people will sometime have to feel shame, and perhaps other misfortunes.' The metropolitan promised that he himself would remain under house arrest until the arrested Jews were released. For this he was accused by the local fascist organizations of 'betrayal of the race and treachery'. Rabbi Khamanel, whom the police were hunting, was hidden by the metropolitan in his own podvorie. On May 24, the day of the national feast of SS. Cyril and Methodius, thousands of people came out onto the streets of the capital declaring that they would not tolerate the murder of their fellow citizens. Another highly placed clergyman, Metropolitan Cyril of Plovdiv, later patriarch of Bulgaria, also sent an epistle to the tsar. In his letter he demanded that the tsar immediately revoke the barbaric order. Otherwise, declared the metropolitan, he would not answer for the actions of the people and clergy. According to the reminiscences of eye-witnesses, he warned the local police authorities that he had said to the Jews of one of the poorest quarters of the city: 'I present you my house. Let us see whether they will be able to get you out of there.' And in a letter to Filov he said that he would go with a cross in his hands to the death camp in Poland ahead of the convoys with the Jews. These many protest actions attained their goal and the deportation was stopped. 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 head-quarters on August 28, 1943, Tsar Boris very soon died. There are grounds for supposing that he was killed by the Hitlerites for refusing to carry out the will of the Fuhrer."²⁸⁸ After the death of Tsar Boris, his brother, Prince Cyril, became regent and continued the same policy. But after the Soviet troops entered Bulgaria he was arrested and shot on "Bloody Thursday", February 3, 1945.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Etinger, *Spasennii v Kholokoste* (The Saved in the Holocaust); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 52-53.

²⁸⁹ Tsankov, Protopriest S. "Pokojnij Tsar Boris, kak religiozno-nravstvennaia lichnost'" (The Reposed Tsar Boris as a Religio-Moral Personality), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 18 (1495), 15/28

So-called associations of priests controlled by the communists were infiltrated into the Church of Bulgaria, as into neighbouring Serbia. "After assuming power," writes 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."²⁹⁰

The Russian Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Boguchar, who had looked after the parishes of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR) in Bulgaria between the wars, now joined the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) – although, according to his spiritual daughter, Abbess Seraphima (Lieven), he continued to call the Soviet power "satanic" and to oppose the infiltration of communist influence into the Bulgarian Church.

In 1968 the Bulgarian Church adopted the new calendar. The change was imposed, according to one account, at the insistence of the WCC, which in 1965-66 had sent letters on the subject to the churches; but according to another account – on orders from the Moscow Patriarchate, which wished to see how the people reacted to the change in Bulgaria before proceeding with the same innovation in Russia.²⁹¹ In the event, only the Russian Women's Monastery of the Protecting Veil in Sophia refused to accept the change.

Bishop Photius of Triaditza writes: "For some months before the introduction of the reform, *Tserkoven Vestnik* informed the astonished believing people that the reform was being carried out 'in accordance with the ecumenist striving of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church...' The Bulgarian clergy and even episcopate were completely unprepared to resist the calendar innovation, while the people, suspecting something amiss, began to grumble. The calendar reform was introduced skilfully and with lightning suddenness by Patriarch Cyril – an ardent modernist and 'heartfelt' friend of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras! Everyone knew that the patriarch was on good terms with the communist authorities (for his 'services' to it he received the title of 'academic' – member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences!) Everyone also knew of his despotic temperament: he did all he could to persecute and annihilate his ideological opponents."²⁹²

In fact, the Bulgarian Church's change to the new calendar had been dictated by the Russian communists, who wanted to introduce the innovation into the Russian Church, too, but wanted to "test the waters" by trying it out on the Bulgarians first.²⁹³

September, 1993; David Horbury, "Prince Kyril - Time to Restore History's Victim", *Royalty*, 1996, vol. 14, N 5, pp. 64-71.

290 Marchevsky, in *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), N 1 (1454), January 1/14, 1992, p. 15.

291 *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. II, № 3, Spring, 1969, p. 335.

292 *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), № 21 (1522), November 1/14, 1994, pp. 8, 9.

293 Archimandrite Porphyrius of Sofia, personal communication, February, 1981. This was confirmed by Bishop Sergius of Loch Lomond, who writes: "In 1971 Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad visited Alaska in order to venerate the relics of St. Herman. In an effort to distance itself from the MP, the then-new OCA had not invited the MP hierarchs to participate in the August, 1970 canonization of that Saint. Metropolitan Nikodim (and his OCA guide, Father Kyril Fotiev) spent 5 days in Sitka en route to Kodiak and I was the local host. During several long conversations, Metropolitan Nikodim

But when the only Orthodox in Bulgaria who rejected the innovation turned out to be the *Russian* women's monastery at Knyazhevo, Sophia, the Russians decided to hold back from introducing it in Russia...

However, while deciding not to adopt the new calendar, the MP had already, in 1967, declared: "Bearing in mind the practice of the Ancient Church, when East and West (Rome and the Asian bishops) celebrated Pascha at different times, while preserving complete communion in prayer between themselves, and taking into account the experience of the Orthodox Church of Finland and our parishes in Holland, as also the exceptional position of the parishioners of the church of the Resurrection of Christ amidst the heterodox world, [it has been resolved] to allow Orthodox parishioners of the Moscow Patriarchate living in Switzerland to celebrate the immovable feast and the feasts of the Paschal cycle according to the new style."²⁹⁴

In 1964, some parishes of the Bulgarian patriarchate in the USA petitioned ROCOR to ordain their leader, Archimandrite Cyril (Ionchev), to the episcopate. The petition was granted, and in August Metropolitan Philaret and four other bishops ordained him. However, in 1968 the Bulgarian patriarchate adopted the new calendar, and soon the Bulgarian parishes began to agitate that they be allowed to use the new calendar. In 1971 Bishop Cyril gave a report on this subject to the Hierarchical Council in Montreal, and in 1972 he and his parishes joined the American Metropolia with the permission of ROCOR.²⁹⁵

mentioned that he was intent on adopting the civil calendar for the MP, and as a test case, had brought about Bulgaria's switch from the patristic to the civil calendar."

294 *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1967, № 8, p. 1; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 36.

295 *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 16 (1829), August 15/28, 2007, pp. 14-15.

21. THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION OF THE ROMANIAN OLD CALENDARIST CHURCHES

There are two Romanian Old Calendarist Synods. The first, popularly known as “Slatioara” after its main men’s monastery, has in recent decades spread all over the country from its original homeland in Moldavia, and represents the largest True Orthodox Church in the world. The second, popularly known as “Tekuci” after the village in which its main monastery is situated, is smaller and concentrated mainly in Eastern Romania. The Apostolic succession of the Slatioara Synod has recently come under scrutiny since the claim by the Old Calendarist Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens that in about 1980 the “Kallistite” Synod to which he then belonged administered the rite of cheirothesia (laying on of hands) to the Slatioara bishops – a claim that the Slatioara Synod vehemently denies. In this article the present writer proposes to examine this claim, before going on to discuss the apostolic succession of the other, “Tekuci” Synod.

In 1924 the Romanian state church under its former uniate Patriarch Miron adopted the new, papal or Grigorian calendar. Immediately a resistance movement grew up in Moldavia under the leadership of Hieromonk Glycherie of Neamts monastery. For the next thirty or so years, several hundred thousand Old Calendarists maintained their faith in spite of severe persecution, first from the new calendarist Church and State, and then, after the war, from the communists. Twice their churches were destroyed, and twice they rebuilt them. In the whole of this period, they had no native bishops and were not in official communion with any other Church, although some support came from the Old Calendarist zealots of Mount Athos.

However, the need for a hierarch became pressing; and so the distinguished traditionalist theologian Bishop Galaction (Cordun) of Silistrie (in Bulgaria), who was living in virtual retirement in Bucharest, was approached by leaders of the Old Calendarists and was asked to join them. He agreed to do so when the time was ripe. And so on April 5/18, 1955 he publicly declared in a letter to the newcalendarist synod that he had accepted to be the head of the Old Calendarist Church. On May 8/21 he arrived in Slatioara Monastery, where the people greeted him with the cry: “Axios!”, “He is worthy!” Thus was fulfilled a prophetic vision that Hieromonk Glycherie had had during the war, while in a forest being pursued by enemies: “It was night. Before him, he saw a beautiful Church. Metropolitan Galaction (Cordun)... appeared. Vladyka was holding Icons and a Cross in his hands, and he was giving each believer in the Church an Icon. When he reached the pious Father Glycherie, he gave him the Cross.”²⁹⁶

In November Metropolitan Galaction and Fr. Glycherie were summoned to the police to register and legalise the Church. The faithful were against them going, sensing a trap, but the metropolitan insisted. The result: he was placed under house arrest in the monastery of St. Callinicus at Cernica, while Fr. Glycherie was exiled.

²⁹⁶ Metropolitan Blaise, *The Life of the Holy Hierarch and Confessor Glycherie of Romania*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Studies, 1999, p. 50.

However, under the pretext of visiting his doctor, the metropolitan went several times to Moarea Domneasca, which belonged to the Old Calendarists, and consecrated two bishops (Evloghie and Meftodie²⁹⁷) and several priests. When this was discovered, about a year later, he was placed under stronger observation in a monastery. But on Good Friday, 1959, Metropolitan Galaction was abducted by Pavel Mogârzan, Georghe Hincu and the advocate Albu, disguised as Securitate agents. He went the next day to Slatioara... "When, two or three hours [later], the patriarch phoned to find out what the metropolitan was doing, they told him that two officers of the security police had taken him. The patriarch shouted: 'I didn't send any officers!' But the metropolitan was already far away..."²⁹⁸

This was not the first dramatic abduction carried out by the Romanian Old Calendarists in this period... Metropolitan Blaise, the present leader of the Church, writes: "During the night of November 17, 1956, Archimandrite Glycherie, who had been abducted [by the believers] from his forced labour, was secretly consecrated a bishop [in Moara Domneasca]. Then they hid in our monastery [of Slatioara], where every day ordinations took place. A year later they were again arrested."

Metropolitan Galaction died in 1959; but the Slatioara Church was now firmly established with a Synod of bishops under the inspired leadership of Metropolitan Glycherie. However, they were still completely isolated from other Orthodox Churches, and there was a canonical question mark over the hierarchy. For its founder, Metropolitan Galaction, had been consecrated by new calendarist bishops in 1935, and his consecration of Bishop Evloghie had been single-handed...

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Let us put the problem in historical and canonical perspective. Without entering in detail here into the reasons why the new calendar was rejected, we need note only that it was anathematized by three Pan-Orthodox Councils of the Eastern Patriarchs (attended by a plenipotentiary of the Russian Church) in 1583, 1587 and 1593. Then, in 1924, it was introduced almost simultaneously into the State Churches of Romania and Greece. In 1935 three bishops of the State Church of Greece joined the Greek Old Calendarists, and promptly declared the Greek new calendarists to be schismatics and without the Grace of sacraments. No such decision was made in relation to the Romanian new calendarists at that time for the simple reason that the Romanian Old Calendarists did not yet have any bishops who had the canonical right to bind the new calendar church. So the question was: was the consecration of Metropolitan Galaction by new calendarist bishops valid or not?

297 Bishop Evloghie was consecrated in 1955 and died in 1978. He had previously spent seven years in prison after declaring his adherence to the True Orthodox Church, and spent 14 years in prison in all. Bishop Meftodie was consecrated in 1956 and died in 1977.

298 Metropolitan Blaise, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 2 (1479), 15/28 January, 1993, pp. 8-9; 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, pp. 126-127; Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili, "The True Orthodox Christians of Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, N 1 (102), pp. 8-9; Stefan and Girgiu Hincu, personal communication, September, 1994; Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, May, 2006.

The rigorist position, which is maintained by the minority of the Greek Old Calendarists called the “Matthewites” and the Romanian “Tecuci” Synod, is that all the new calendarists, both in Greece and Romania, immediately and automatically lost Grace in 1924, and so were unable to consecrate true, Grace-filled bishops. It follows that Metropolitan Galaction’s consecration in 1935 was invalid, as were his consecrations of the Slatioara bishops from 1955 onwards. So from 1924 Romania was completely deprived of true bishops and churches, with the single exception of the founder of the “Tekuci” hierarchy, Bishop Victor-Vasile (Leu), of whom we will speak in more detail later.²⁹⁹

However, the rigorist position has several serious flaws that make it untenable. First, while the adoption of the new calendar was undoubtedly a most serious sin which led subsequently to the falling away of the new calendarists from the Church, it cannot be considered to be more serious than the pan-heresy of ecumenism, which was officially proclaimed in an Encyclical by all the bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1920. And yet, to the writer’s knowledge, while the fateful significance of the 1920 encyclical has been widely recognized, no Orthodox bishop of any jurisdiction, even the most rigorist, has ever declared that the Ecumenical Patriarchate lost Grace immediately and automatically when it proclaimed heresy in 1920.

Secondly, if the adoption of the new calendar immediately and automatically leads to the loss of the Grace of sacraments, then we should have to conclude that Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow lost Grace in 1923, when he adopted the new calendar. True, this lasted for only three months, after which the patriarch, impressed by the almost unanimous refusal of the people to obey his decree, realized his mistake and returned to the Old Calendar. However, the rigorist position, if followed through consistently, must lead us to conclude that Patriarch Tikhon fell away from the Church in 1923. Moreover, to the present writer’s knowledge, since no Synod of bishops ever received his repentance or received him back from “schism” into Orthodoxy, the rigorists must also declare that he died in schism in 1925. And yet no Orthodox zealot, even the most fanatical, has ever made such a shocking declaration, knowing that it runs completely counter to the conscience of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Thirdly, if the Greek new calendarists lost Grace immediately and automatically in 1924, then the three bishops who returned to the Old Calendar in 1935 were not in fact bishops, and all their acts as “bishops”, not only between 1924 and 1935, but also thereafter, were invalid... The rigorists may retort that two out of the three bishops who returned to the Old Calendar had been consecrated before 1924, and so had at least had true consecrations. All they needed to do was repent of their newcalendarism before the Old Calendar clergy and laity, after which they could exercise the functions of true, canonical hierarchs in the Old Calendar Church... But if, as the rigorists insist, the acceptance of the new calendar was not simply a serious

299 “Bishop Victor-Vasile (Vasile Leu) of the Romanhttp://www.rocorstudies.org/church-people/lives-of-bishops/2010/01/16/bishop-victor-vasile-vasile-leu-of-the-romanian-orthodox-episcopate-of-western-europe/ian Orthodox Episcopate of Western Europe”, *ROCOT Studies*, January 16, 2010.

mistake, but a falling into schism from the Church and deprivation of their episcopal rank, then in order for the bishops to be restored to their episcopal rank, they needed not simply absolution from their sin, which could be given them by a simple priest: they needed the Grace of the episcopate to be restored to them. But only a Synod of bishops can bestow the Grace of the episcopate. No group of clergy or laity, however large or Orthodox, can take the place of a Synod here.

If this reasoning is correct, then the three Greek bishops who returned to the Old Calendar in 1935 were still bishops at that time, and did not need to have their episcopate restored by re-ordination, cheirothesia or any other means. They only needed, before beginning to act as bishops in the Old Calendar Church, to receive forgiveness for the blot on their conscience caused by their (unwilling and temporary) acceptance of the new calendar. This they received...

Having been received back into the Old Calendar Church, the three bishops proceeded to condemn the new calendarists as true schismatics, invoking the anathemas of 1583, 1587 and 1593. This already changed the status of the Greek new calendarists, making it less excusable and more serious; for now, for the first time, a living Synod of canonical, Old Calendar bishops declared that the new calendarists from now on fell under the anathemas against the new calendar. However, it should be emphasized that this decision of the Greek Old Calendar Synod, declaring the new calendarists to be outside the Church, applied only within the bounds of the Church of Greece...

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Returning now to Romania, we may apply the same logic to the question of Metropolitan Galacteon's consecration. When he returned to the Old Calendar in 1955 he did not need to receive re-ordination, cheirothesia or any such thing. For when he was ordained to the episcopate in 1935, no living Synod of Romanian bishops had yet condemned the Romanian new calendarists in the way that the Greek Old Calendar Synod condemned the Greek new calendarists in 1935.

Some years later, this was confirmed by the Greek Old Calendarist Synod under the presidency of Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth. On October 30, 1979, they decided "to recognise the episcopal consecrations performed by Metropolitan Galaction Cordun through concelebration of the Romanian and Greek hierarchs, in agreement with the divine and holy canons and the order of the Orthodox Church...

"Our Holy Synod, having full knowledge of the circumstances, and of its historical responsibilities before God and men, decides to recognise the ordinations of the Romanian Church of T.O.C., which are dogmatically and sacramentally (mystiriakos) valid, but uncanonical, as having been performed single-handedly (Bishop Galaction Cordun alone ordained Bishop Evloghie). This recognition and the consequential settling (taktopoiisis) of the existent anticanonicity will be realised through a simple concelebration of our bishops of the Greek Church of T.O.C. with their Romanian brothers in Christ; this will signify the establishment of spiritual-ecclesiastical intercommunion between the two sister Churches."

The decision was signed by ten bishops: Kallistos of Corinth, Anthony of Attica and Megara, Kyprianos of Oropos, Maximos of Magnesia, Kallinikos of Achaia (the present archbishop of the True Orthodox Church of Greece), Matthew of Oinoe, Germanos of Aiolia, Kalliopios of Pentapolis, Merkourios of Knossos and Kallinikos of the Dodecanese.³⁰⁰ It is in Greek and Romanian, and also contains the signature of the emissary of the Romanian Synod, Bishop Silvestru. A photocopy of this document was supplied to the present writer by Bishop Ambrose of Methone, who was at that time interpreter for the Greek and Romanian bishops.

In accordance with this decision, in April, 1980 the Kallistite Synod entered into official communion with the True Orthodox Church of Romania under the presidency of Metropolitan Glycherie.³⁰¹

A few years later, the Kallistite Synod collapsed and most of its bishops (with the major exception of Metropolitan Kyprianos) joined a new union of the Greek Old Calendarists under Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) of Athens.

However, in recent years a completely new version of this story has been put forward by one of the bishops who signed this document – Metropolitan Kallinikos of Achaia, who is now Archbishop of Athens in succession to Archbishop Chrysostomos. According to his version, as recounted by the Secretary of the Synod, Bishop Photius of Marathon, in 1981 Metropolitan Kallistos, together with Metropolitans Kallinikos of Achaia and Kyprianos of Oropos, went to Romania and performed the act of cheirothesia on the Romanian bishops in order to regularize their position. Later, when the Kallistites united with the other Old Calendarist “Florinites”, this act was recognized by the united Church.³⁰²

Since Archbishop Kallinikos’ version of history is flatly contradicted by the document just cited, by the whole of the Slatioara Synod³⁰³ and by eye-witnesses such as Bishop Ambrose, it can be safely rejected. We shall not speculate here why Archbishop Kallinikos has been “economical with the truth” in this instance... The important point is that no cheirothesia took place because, as Kallinikos’ own signature under the 1979 document witnesses, none was necessary...

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300 The document is headed *Elliniki Ekklesia Gnision Orthodoxon Khristianon, Iera Synodos*, protocol no. 37, giving as office address: Koumoundourou 25, Athens.

301 "Panigyrikon Sulleitourgon Ellinon kai Roumanon G.O.X." (Festive Concelebration of Greek and Romanians of the True Orthodox Christians), *Phylakes Orthodoxias* (Guardians of Orthodoxy), N 9, November, 1979, pp. 72-74; Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, December 24, 2009.

302 Bishop Photius of Marathon, personal communication, March 18, 2010.

303 The cheirothesia was officially denied by the Romanian Synod in 2010. See <http://mitropoliaslatioara.ro/stire.php?id=91>.

There is another Old Calendar hierarchy in Romania; its origins go back to the immediate post-war period.³⁰⁴ In 1948, at the request – more precisely, order - of the Soviets, the new calendarist Romanian Church was obliged to surrender its parishes in the diaspora and let them come under the jurisdiction of the Moscow patriarchate. Worried by the danger this posed for their flock, several bishops, foremost among them Grigorie Leu of Husi and Chesarie of Tomis, decided to send the priests Florian Galdau and Vasile Leu, the son of Bishop Grigorie, to help the aged and sick Metropolitan Visarion Puiu in Western Europe.

Metropolitan Visarion was the last surviving independent Romanian bishop. “On 21 Feb 1946, a ‘Romanian People’s Tribunal’ (an arm of the Romanian Communist Party and Soviet occupation forces) [had] convicted Metropolitan Visarion of ‘war crimes’ for his activities in Transnistria, and sentenced him to death in absentia. [In the same year,] after leaving Croatia, Metropolitan Visarion communicated with the Romanian Patriarchate about establishing an autonomous Romanian Orthodox Diocese in Western Europe, free from the communist domination that the Patriarchate and Metropolitan Visarion knew was coming to Romania. Patriarch Nikodim (Munteanu) requested that should Metropolitan Visarion indeed begin such a Diocese, he should place it under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, as Patriarch Nikodim explained, ‘to protect its canonical independence.’”³⁰⁵

On August 21, 1948 the two priests left Romania, and after jumping from the train at Isanova railway station, entered Yugoslavia, where they were arrested and interrogated by Yugoslav security. They succeeded in escaping and reached Austria. There, after staying for a time in a camp, they were set free by the Allied Forces and began to serve in a church in Salzburg. Eventually, after a meeting of Romanian exiles from all over the diaspora, the Autonomous Romanian Orthodox Archiepiscopate of Western Europe was set up. Since Metropolitan Visarion was ill and paralysed in a sanatorium in Switzerland, Fr. Vasile was sent, with Visarion’s blessing, to the Russian Church Abroad (ROCORA) in Munich to be consecrated to the episcopate. (Since Fr. Vasile’s wife had died, he had been tonsured on the day he left Romania in preparation for consecration to the episcopate with the name Victor.)

ROCORA had already had some dealings with the True Orthodox in Romania. Thus in the early 1930s ROCORA appealed to the Serbian Church on behalf of Russian Orthodox Christians persecuted in Romania. Moreover, Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) of Vienna was sent to Bessarabia to minister to Russian Old Calendarists led by Hieromonk Gamaliel of Niamets monastery, and ordain priests there.³⁰⁶

304 Most of the following information comes from an English summary, by Fr. Anthimus Bichar, of a book written by Corneliu Leu and entitled *The Life and Sufferings of the First Bishop of the Exile: Victor Leu* (Bucharest: Bishop Grigorie Leu Foundation).

305 “Metropolitan Visarion (Puiu) of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Western Europe”, *ROCORA Studies*, June 29, 2009, <http://www.rocorstudies.org/church-people/lives-of-bishops/2009/06/29/metropolitan-visarion-puiu-of-the-romanian-orthodox-episcopate-of-western-europe>.

306 Andrew Psarev, “The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia’s Attitude Towards Other Local Orthodox Churches”, http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 2; Kovalevsky, “Tragicheskaya smert’ mitr. Serafima (Lyade)” (The Tragic Death of Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade), *Russkaya Mysl’* (*Russian Thought*), October 4, 1950; quoted by Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Bezobrazniki: K

Now, at the request of representatives of the Romanian Archiepiscopate, Seraphim (now Metropolitan of Berlin) joined Bishop Stephen (Sevbo) of Vienna and (according to one version) Bishop Philip (Gardner) of Potsdam in consecrating Fr. Vasile in Munich in December, 1949, giving him the new name Vasile-Victor. However, the files of the German diocese of ROCOR reveal no record of this consecration, and Philip Gardner had ceased from being a bishop at that time...³⁰⁷

Even before his consecration Bishop Vasile-Victor had been founding Romanian Orthodox parishes on the basis of a strong anti-communist position. He met King Michael in Switzerland, broadcast in Romanian from the BBC in London and several radio stations in Austria, as well as Paris Radio. He issued thousands of certificates to Romanian refugees to enable them to obtain visas in western countries.

In Romania, meanwhile, Bishop Victor-Vasile's father, Bishop Grigorie, had suffered the abolition of his diocese of Husi, and on February 25, 1949 was summoned to Bucharest for discussions. Being a strong anti-communist who had warned about the transformation of the Romanian Church into a "Sovrom patriarchy", he was not allowed to return a healthy man. Three days later he died, probably from poisoning.

On August 16, 1952 Bishop Victor-Vasile was arrested in Vienna, injected with some substance, and kidnapped. Three days later he woke up in a Soviet prison. He was transported to the Lubyanka in Moscow, where he was interrogated for seven months and charged with working for the English and American secret services. Beria himself sometimes took part in the interrogations. Bishop Victor-Vasile refused to ask for a pardon, and also refused to delegate anyone to make such a request on his behalf. "I consider communism to be the main enemy of the Christians," he said, "and that is why this is the goal of my life." At the Bucharest District Law Court on November 16, 1954 he declared: "I realize that you want to find out whether I collaborated with the English information service. I said and I repeat that I haven't spied for anybody. I am an enemy of this Romanian regime, which has turned the country into a kind of prison. I carried out this activity because the communist regime is a straitjacket for the soul and essence of the Romanian people. The only decision that would honour me and the law court would be my condemnation to death."

On November 20, 1954 he was condemned to death for treason (resolution N 2417). However, he was not executed, but passed through all the prisons of Romania. In 1964

sobtytiam v RPZTs 1945-55gg." (Hooligans: Towards Events in the ROCOR from 1945 to 1955), *Russkoe Pravoslavie (Russian Orthodoxy)*, N 2 (16), 1999, p. 17; Fr. Anthimus (Bichir), "Re: [True-Faith] New Romanian OC Synod?", True-Faith@yahoogroups.com, February 3, 2002.

307 An attempt was made to verify the fact of the consecration through Archimandrite Anthony (Grabbe) of Jerusalem. He contacted his father, Protopresbyter George Grabbe, who said that he had never heard of it (personal communication).

A recent ROCOR-MP source (*Voprosy Istorii Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi*, December, 2009, <http://rocorstudies.org/index.php?part=publications&aid=10865>) appears to accept that Fr. Vasile was consecrated by Metropolitan Seraphim and Archbishop Stefan, but not by Bishop Philip.

he was released. His file in the security archives is 300 pages long and reveals that he made no compromise with the authorities.

After his release, Bishop Victor-Vasile refused to join the Romanian patriarchate, but instead set off for the monastery of the Old Calendarists at Slatioara in Moldavia, where he was accepted as a bishop at first (he served with them for seven years, according to one account). However, canonical differences with the other Old Calendarists forced him to return to Bucharest. It appears that Bishop Victor-Vasile took a stricter attitude towards the Romanian new calendarists, rebaptising and remarrying them, and also could not recognize the validity of the consecration of Metropolitan Galaction, since it had been carried out in 1935, after the calendar change. On the other hand, the Old Calendarists did not accept Victor-Vasile's consecration because he did not have ordination papers, and because ROCOR had no records of his consecration.³⁰⁸

On leaving Slatioara, Bishop Victor-Vasile joined the followers of Fr. Gamaliel, who, like St. Glicherie, was a hieromonk of Neamt and rejected the calendar change, but who differed from Glicherie from the beginning over the baptism issue as also over beards (he regarded men who shaved as automatically excommunicated). Nifon Dobrogeanul and Mina were his followers, and Bishop Victor now ordained Niphon to the episcopate single-handedly.

308 Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*; Bishop Ambrose of Methone, private communications, August 23, 2005 and December 22, 2009.

Stavros Markou writes: As for Bishop Victor Leu's consecration, there actually is documentary evidence. In a biography of Fr. Constantin Moraitakis (the author of the biography is Fr. Constantin's son), it is mentioned quite clearly that Fr. Constantine met an old friend of his in Istanbul, namely, Bishop Victor Leu. Among the documents in Fr. Constantin's archive was a letter written by Bishop Victor Leu to Fr. Constantin Moraitakis in which Bishop Victor Leu write "Please find my attached consecration certificate" and "Please translate it into Greek for me." In the writings of Fr. Constantine Moraitakis it is also related that Bishop Victor Leu was consecrated by "two White Russian Bishops" to serve as "Exarch of the Bessarabians in Exile" and Fr. Constantin criticizes this consecration as "uncanonical" and calls Bishop Victor Leu a "pseudo-bishop." Of course, Fr. Constantin held these opinions because he was a member of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whereas Bishop Victor Leu was consecrated by Metropolitan Seraphim Lade and Archbishop Stephan Sevbo, who were not recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

"This evidence provided in the biography and personal archive of Fr. Constantine Moraitakis (including the letter of Bishop Victor Leu to Fr. Constantine, and the written accounts of Fr. Constantine himself about Bishop Victor Leu and the consecration certificate he had been presented with to translate) clears up all of the speculations about the consecration. For instance, now we know the consecration DID actually take place. Now we know that the consecration took place by TWO bishops (Seraphim and Stephan) and that there was not a third bishop. This makes perfect sense now, since the third bishop that the Communist archives cited as having taken part (Bishop Philip von Gardner) had already been defrocked from the episcopate three years prior to Bishop Victor's consecration date. Now we know that a consecration certificate WAS actually issued, and that it was printed in three languages (Russian, Romanian and German) and that Bishop Victor Leu was seeking for Fr. Constantine to also make a Greek translation. Now we know that consecration date is also true too, because it is in December 1949, and Fr. Constantine Moraitakis's diary claims that he met with Bishop Victor Leu in Constantinople in 1950. So everything falls in place, there are no discrepancies. The fact the original consecration certificate was lost is because it was confiscated and burned by the Communists when Bishop Victor Leu was arrested." (personal communication, June 17, 2010).

Later Bishop Niphon, also single-handedly, but with the agreement of Bishop Victor, consecrated Bishops Clement and Cassian. Victor's activity was confined to his flat in Bucharest because the communists placed him under virtual house arrest in order to restrict his contact with the faithful. That is why, when he died in 1978, he was taken to Cernica monastery and buried by the new calendarists there. Only a few laymen from his flock, and no priests, were present.

The "Tekuci" Church is now led by Bishops Gherontie of Vrancea and Cassian of Moldavia, and has between 8000 and 12,000 believers, according to one account, about 4000 according to another. It has ten priests, three deacons and three monasteries. On April 19 / May 2, 2008 it officially entered into communion with Metropolitan Kyrikos of Mesogaia and Lavriotiki, the most rigorist of all the Greek Old Calendarist bishops who is recognized by no Greek Synod.

The union took place through simple concelebration of the Greek and Romanian bishops, which would seem to suggest that Kyrikos recognized the apostolic succession of the "Tekuci" church. In a joint statement, all the other Greek Old Calendarists were condemned, and the union between ROCOR and the Greek Old Calendarists in 1971 was declared to be a Masonic plot.

However, in an apologia reproduced in English on the "Kyrikite" website the "Kyrikites" declared: "According to the writings of St. Theodore the Studite, whose canon is quoted in the Synodal Decision, the bishops of the Romanian Catacomb Church were accepted based on their Confession of Faith, and their Apostolic Succession *was sealed by the Act itself*, which Metropolitan Kyrkos read out aloud during the Divine Liturgy, just prior to entering into communion with them. The Decision states "By this act we RECOGNIZE, SEAL AND APPROVE your Apostolic Succession, *asking the Holy Spirit to fill anything that may be lacking, and known only to God.*" The last phrase in italics is an exact quotation from the prayer for ordination of bishops. So Metropolitan Kyrikos appears to have tried to *re-ordain* the Romanian bishops – evidently without their knowledge.³⁰⁹

In the present writer's opinion, while Bishop Victor-Vasile may have been validly ordained by ROCOR bishops, the "Tekuci" church he founded cannot be considered to have apostolic succession for the following reasons: (i) there is no documentary evidence of his ordination, which according to Apostolic Canon 33 means that it should be rejected; (ii) the Tekuci Synod rejects all other True Orthodox jurisdictions, which makes it schismatic; and (iii) its official communion with the schismatic Metropolitan Kyrikos deepens its schismatic status.

May 2/15, 2012; revised June 17/30, 2015.

309 http://genuineorthodoxchurch.com/apologia_Met_Kirikos.html. The Greek text of this "apologia", as reproduced here: <http://www.churchgoc.org/pnoi/181/1.html> does *not* contain the phrase from the prayer of ordination.

22. THE ALBANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Albania had been guaranteed her independence by the Great Powers in 1912; and although overrun by several foreign armies during World War One, she still managed – just – to retain that independence. But national unity was a big problem. The lack of literacy, and of a tradition of statehood, meant that rivalries between clans, and the refusal of certain religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities to accept incorporation into the new State continually undermined its unity.

In 1913 about 4.7% of the population was Greek-speaking, and considered themselves to belong to the Greek province of Northern Epirus, not Albania. There were also some Serbian Orthodox in the north-east around Shkodra, both Slavs and Albanians, who looked towards Yugoslavia, and whose needs had been served, since 1912, by Archimandrite Victor (Mikhailovich), a Montenegrin appointed by the Metropolitan of Cetinje as Administrator of the Vicariate of Shkodra. According to Adit Bito, the Metropolitan claimed that Albania's liberation from the Ottoman Empire implied that the Ecumenical Patriarchate had been expelled from the region, and so the Orthodox communities of Shkodra region should not be part of the Prizren diocese, which was still under the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but under the Cetinje metropolia.³¹⁰

At the end of the world war the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognized the Serbian Patriarchate's jurisdiction over the Prizren diocese, and therefore over Northern Albania, in a special *Tomos*. However, in 1922, in order to discourage separatist tendencies on the part of the Greek and Serbian minorities, Ahmet Bey Zogolli, successively interior minister, prime minister and first king of Albania, decreed that all clergy in the country (of all three religions: Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox) should be native Albanians.³¹¹ He also encouraged the creation of an autocephalous Albanian Orthodox Church. In order to prevent this move, however, the Patriarchate of Serbia under its new Patriarch Demetrius consecrated Victor in June, 1922 as Vicar-Bishop of Scutari for the Serbian Orthodox living in Albania - which had the result of pitting the Serbian and Ecumenical Patriarchates against each other in a struggle for jurisdiction in Albania.³¹²

"This move," writes Bito, "was coordinated with [the] Albanian authorities, through the mediation of a central figure of [the] Albanian Orthodox Movement, Archimandrite Visar Xhuvani. Yugoslav officials had promised to help him in the process of [the] Albanian Church's Autocephaly recognition, in exchange [for] privileges [for] the Orthodox community in Shkodra. The Albanian Autocephalous

310 Bito, "The Church Issue of Shkodra between Albania and Yugoslavia in its Initial Phase (1912-1923)", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 4, No. 12; October 2014, p. 118.

311 In 1923, a congress in Tirana "declared that Albanian Islam should be independent of the caliphate. Asked if his regime was Muslim and willing to work in close accord with Turkey, Zogu replied that secular Albania intended to progress on occidental lines." (Jason Tomes, *King Zog, Self-Made Monarch of Albania*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007, p. 57)

312 Fr. Srboliub Meletich, "Behind the Sourozh Phenomenon: Spiritual Freedom or Cultural Captivity? Meletios Metaksakis, Metropolitan, Archbishop, Pope and Patriarch", hocna@yahoogroups.com, July 5, 2006.

Orthodox Church was declared in September 1922 in the Congress of Berat. Bishop Viktor entered Albania in December 1922, being permitted by the Albanian Authorities. However, the newly established High Church Council, which provisionally governed the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, rejected his installation as a local bishop. [The] Albanian Church's Statute sanctioned that a bishop had to be Albanian citizen of two generations, as well as [that he] should have been elected [by] the High Church Council. Protests from [the] Albanian Orthodox media and the suspicion that [the] Serbian Patriarchate [had] acted in cooperation with its Ecumenical counterpart made [the] Albanian Authorities order Bishop Viktor [to] halt his activity in Shkodra. This development triggered a diplomatic conflict between Albania and Yugoslavia. [The] Yugoslav authorities deemed the Albanian act as illegal, as long as the Albanian Church had yet not been recognized as Autocephalous by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, an argument considered void by Tirana."

Eventually, after the intervention of Italy, France and Great Britain, the Yugoslav authorities proposed that Bishop Victor "be aligned with the Albanian Orthodox Church. [The] Albanian authorities counter-proposed that Viktor could be accepted as a nonresident temporary visiting bishop. This proposal was refused [by] Italy, France and Great Britain, [and the] Yugoslav Government stated that the Church issue of Shkoder was between the Serbian and Albanian churches and not between the two governments. After a second intermediation from Archimandrite Visar Xhuvani, [the] Albanian Government and Church agreed to provisionally allow Bishop Viktor mass in Shkodra for his personal religious needs, but gradually he gained control of the local church, giving an end to the first phase of conflict between Albania and Yugoslavia on the Church issue of Shkodra."³¹³

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At this point one of the most colourful figures in the history of twentieth-century Orthodoxy appeared on the scene. On November 21, 1923 Archimandrite Theophan (Noli) was consecrated to the episcopate of the Autocephalous Church of Albania as Bishop of Durres. In 1924 he began official negotiations with the patriarchate of Constantinople restricting himself at first to demanding only Church autonomy. The patriarchate did not object to this in principle, but demanded that the language of Divine services in the Albanian Church should remain only Greek. The Albanians categorically rejected this, and relations with Constantinople worsened.³¹⁴

However, Bishop Theophan was much more than a church figure. He was also, according to Tomes, "leader of the Democratic Party, League of Nations delegate, Bachelor of Arts, biographer of Skanderberg, translator of Stendhal, Maupassant and Molière, liturgist, composer and orator. A stocky Tosk with a big beard jutting above his clerical collar, Bishop Noli had been an actor in Athens, a schoolmaster in Egypt, a lumberman in Buffalo, a canning-factory worker in New York, a cinema organist in Boston, and a student at Harvard before settling in Albania in 1921 at the age of thirty-nine. He was Orthodox purely in the confessional sense, and even that was

³¹³ Bido, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

³¹⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 118, 119.

questionable. Ordained a deacon by the Russian Orthodox archbishop of New York in 1908, Noli founded an Albanian Orthodox Church in the USA with himself as its sole priest. Privately, meanwhile, he claimed to be a Nietzschean and, at various times, labelled Christianity a capitalist instrument of enslavement and stated that the whole truth was in Omar Khayyam. He admitted submitting religion to politics in the best Albanian tradition. His church was intended to promote national consciousness among Christian Turks hitherto attached to Greek Orthodoxy. He translated the liturgy and made himself a bishop by persuading an assembly of Albanian-Americans to acclaim him as such in 1919. Despite his pioneering work, it was only with reluctance that the new native Albanian Orthodox Church accepted him. Some fanciful critics even alleged that he wore an artificial beard in order to look more Episcopal.

“During fourteen years in the USA, Noli had won pre-eminence within the Albanian community there, which numbered over twenty thousand. He went to London in 1913 to lobby for independence and campaigned for international recognition after the World War. It delighted foreigners to engage in intellectual discourse with an Albanian bishop. He was a complex man whose style was often self-mocking. Sometimes he sounded sure of his messianic significance; moments later, his tone might be flippantly cynical.”³¹⁵

In 1924 Noli led a successful insurrection against Zogu, who fled the country. Supported politically and financially by thousands of American Albanians, for émigré writers “Bishop Noli symbolised enlightenment, democracy and progress, while Zog connoted ignorance, autocracy and reaction”.

However, once in power, he “established a mixed military-civilian cabinet without reference to Parliament, and seemed in no hurry to hold elections. England was the curse of Europe, he said, as free institutions copied from Westminster were nothing but ‘a bloody farce’.”³¹⁶

Moreover, he made contact with the Soviets, who sent a mission to Tirana in December disguised as choristers! Noli continued to prove his communist credentials when, at the end of World War Two, he urged the Americans to recognize the communist Hoxha regime...³¹⁷ This flirting with the Soviets enraged foreign governments, especially the Yugoslav King Alexander. And so with Yugoslav and White Russian backing Zog returned to power. Bishop Theophan was forced to flee to America, where he became the leader of the Albanian Orthodox in that country.³¹⁸

Zog controlled the new government, which came to resemble an Italian protectorate (the Italians paid more than the Yugoslavs). In 1928 he was proclaimed king of “a democratic, parliamentary, hereditary monarchy”. (Predictably this was denounced by Bishop Noli as “an odious crime against the Albanian people” and “a

315 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

316 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

317 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

318 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

farce prepared at Rome and played at Tirana".³¹⁹) "A cult of the Pelasgians and assertions that ancient Macedonia, Epirus and Illyria were all Albanian states enabled nationalistic historians to provide Zog with a list of precursors that included Achilles, Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus of Epirus, Queen Teuta of Illyria, Diocletian, Constantine the Great and Justinian..."³²⁰

In 1925, the Albanian Archimandrite Vissarion (Govanni), who had been elected in 1922 during a "Great Albanian Orthodox Church Council", was consecrated as the first national bishop of Albania by two hierarchs of ROCOR, Michael of Stavropol and Germogen of Yekaterinoslav in the monastery of St. Savvas. This probably took place with the knowledge of the Serbian Church authorities.³²¹

In February, 1929, Bishop Vissarion together with Bishop Victor (Mikhailovich) of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who had been living in Albania for several years, without any prior agreement with Constantinople, consecrated three bishops, all Albanians. These four bishops then formed a Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church, which immediately elected Bishop Vissarion as its president and the archbishop of All Albania. Immediately after receiving confirmation from King Zog, the Synod proclaimed the Albanian Church autocephalous, of which event its first-hierarchy promptly informed the other Orthodox Churches.

The Albanian Synod then accepted a constitution according to which "the official language of the Albanian Church is Albanian... The archbishop, bishops, regional hierarchal representatives, the great mitre-bearing econom, the chief secretary of the Holy Synod, and also the clergy that are the assistants and deputies of the Archbishop and bishops must be Albanians by blood and language and also Albanian subjects... All clergy mentioned in article 16 who are now in service with the Autocephalous Church of Albania, if they do not have the properties mentioned in the above-mentioned article, are deprived of their Church rank immediately the present Constitution comes into force."³²²

King Zog himself, though formally Muslim, was interested in religion only from a political point of view. The Roman Church worried him "because of his foreign connections, especially after the rapprochement between Mussolini and the Vatican. Italy did indeed subsidise Albanian Catholicism, and [the Italian diplomat Baron] Aloisi inspired a move to bring the Albanian Orthodox Church into communion with Rome: a Uniate church opened at Elbasan on 21 September, 1929. The same day, the King proclaimed a law on religious communities giving him control over appointments and finances."³²³

319 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

320 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

321 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

322 Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1928-1938)*, (Chronicle of Church Events, 1928-1938), part 2, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, p. 6.

323 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

The Greek Albanians, meanwhile, were feeling aggrieved because the 1914 treaty on the status of Northern Epirus had not been fulfilled, and schools for Greek-speakers were being nationalised.

“Athens accused Tirana of violating minority rights and appealed to the League of Nations. Zog made concessions in 1934 but failed to halt the bitter war of words. At one point, he threatened to dismiss every Greek-Albanian in public service, and there was also talk of swamping the Greek minority district with refugees from Kosovo.

“When, eventually, the Permanent Court of International Justice gave its advisory opinion in favour of Greece, Albania complied in full and Greek private schools reopened. ‘A death blow’ to national unity, grumbled Zog.”³²⁴

In April, 1937 the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognized the autocephaly of the Albanian Church, with certain qualifications.³²⁵ This was surprising in view of the anti-Greek bias of this Church. Quite apart from its illegal autocephaly and introduction of the new calendar, the blatant phyletism (nationalism) of this new Albanian Church would be sufficient to demonstrate its heterodoxy...

In 1948 the head of the Albanian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Christopher of Tirana, was deposed and imprisoned by the communist government for “hostile activity in relation to the Albanian people”.³²⁶ Then, from February 5 to 10, 1950, a Local Council of the Albanian Church took place in Tirana. A new constitution was worked out in which it was declared that the elections of the clergy should take place with the participation of the laity.

A pseudo-patriotic note was sounded in article 4: “Parallel with the development of religious feeling, the Orthodox Autocephalous Albanian Church must instil into believers feelings of devotion to the authorities of the people of the People’s Republic of Albania, and also feelings of patriotism and of striving for the strengthening of national unity. Therefore all the priests and co-workers of the Church must be Albanian citizens, honourable, devoted to the people and the Homeland, enjoying all civil rights.” The episcopate had to pronounce the following oath: “I swear by my conscience before God that I will preserve the faith and dogmas, canons and Tradition of the Orthodox Church, and faithfulness to the people of the Albanian People’s Republic and its democratic principles, as prescribed by the Constitution.”³²⁷

On March 5 the new head of the Albanian Church, Archbishop Paisius, gave a speech in front of the All-Albanian conference in defence of peace in which he said: “In agreement with the great ideals of love, brotherhood and peace throughout the world on which the Church is based, we will struggle for the holy affair of the liberation of the whole of mankind from hostile encroachments on its peaceful life. This task must be unanimously accomplished by all our clergy, as preachers of peace

324 Tomes, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

325 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 59.

326 Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 141.

327 K.E. Skurat, *Istoria Pomestnykh Pravoslavnykh Tserkvej* (A History of the Local Orthodox Churches), in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 1.

who are bound to direct the will of the flock to the struggle for peace... We preach peace, but we know that peace is not given gratis, therefore we bless the struggle for the final victory over those who are stirring up war..."³²⁸

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It is only in the most recent period, since the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, that the Albanian Church may be said to have established itself, thanks largely to the missionary activities of the Greek Archbishop Anastasios. According to the Church, as much as 24% of Albania's population is now Orthodox; other estimates put the figure considerably lower. Although still on the new calendar, the Church appears to have shed its phyletistic tendency, and now has services in both Albanian and Greek.³²⁹

Philip Jenkins has written that the Archbishop's tenure in Albania represents one of the greatest success stories of any religious leader in the modern-day Balkans: "When he took office in 1992 he faced a nightmare situation. His see had been vacant since 1973, and virtually all its institutions formally closed. Albanian Orthodoxy survived in a diasporic existence, with its overseas capital in Boston. The country's Orthodox Church, claiming the loyalty of perhaps 15 percent of the population, faced extinction.

"First and foremost, Anastasios is a polymath scholar, with interests in history, linguistics, and comparative religion, but it is difficult to imagine any religious leader accomplishing so much practical real-world good in such a short time. In 20 years he reorganized several hundred parishes, a process that often demanded whole new buildings. Monasteries flourish once more. The archbishop restored the theological academy and seminary and ordained hundreds of new priests. A whole range of Orthodox media now operate, including newspapers and radio stations.

"The church's social outreach and charitable works have been spectacular. The results include new schools and medical clinics, which serve people without regard to religious affiliation. When the wars in former Yugoslavia drove thousands of refugees into Albania, the Orthodox Church took the lead in humanitarian efforts, with Muslims the main beneficiaries. Anastasios works for harmony with the country's other faiths, including its majority Muslim population and its crucial Sufi orders."³³⁰

328 *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), N 8, 1951; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 2.

329 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Autocephalous_Church_of_Albania

330 Jenkins, "Revival in the Balkans", *The Christian Century*, June 27, 2014, <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2014-06/revival-balkans>.

23. THE MYTH AND THE REALITY OF KOSOVO

We used to hate and destroy one another and refused to associate with people of another race or country. Now, because of Christ, we live familiarly with such people and pray for our enemies.

St. Justin the Martyr, *First Apology*, 14.

1. Avenging Kosovo Field

The genuinely Christian, martyric spirit of the Battle of Kosovo Field in 1389 strengthened the Serbian people during their sufferings under the Turks. However, during the nineteenth century, as the spirit of revolutionary “freedom” let loose by the French revolution infected almost the whole of Europe, Serbia, too, began to fall ill with this terrible spiritual disease. As a consequence, the true meaning of Kosovo was distorted and inverted in their minds: the earthly Serbian kingdom now became more important than the Heavenly...

One major cause appears to have been race-hatred against the Albanians who gradually, after the Turkish conquest of the whole region, became dominant in Kosovo. The Serbs have claimed that the land was theirs originally, and that the numerical dominance of Albanians in recent times was the product of trickery and violence. This is disputed by Albanian scholars. And western scholars also recognize an early origin to the Albanians: “The Albanoi tribe,” writes Rhys Griffiths, “are first mentioned, by Ptolemy in the second century AD, as residing in a town called Albanopolis, believed to be modern Zgërdhesh, near Krujë. In the twelfth century the region around Krujë in north-central Albania was the site of the first autonomous Albanian principality, Arbanon.”³³¹

The foremost western scholar on the subject, Noel Malcolm, has come to the following conclusions:

- i. Both Serbs and Albanians have lived in Kosovo for a long time: the Serbs – since at least the sixth century, and the Albanians – even earlier if we accept their self-identification with the ancient Illyrians, which is possibly true.
- ii. During the thirteenth century, the Serbian Nemanja dynasty, spreading southwards from their homeland in Rascia, gained control over Kosovo and became the dominant race, both politically and numerically.
- iii. In spite of that, there was no special enmity between Serbs and Albanians at that time. When the most powerful Serbian ruler, Tsar Dušan, invaded Greece in the fourteenth century, the majority of his soldiers were Albanian, and there were Albanians in Tsar Lazar’s army at Kosovo Field.³³²
- iv. After the battle of Kosovo, the Serbian leaders, with the blessing of the Church, became vassals of the Turks in exchange for protection against the King of Hungary. Thus in 1396 the troops of St. Stephen Lazarević fought on

³³¹ Griffiths, “National Gallery Albania”, *History Today*, June, 2017, p. 80.

³³² Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1998, pp. 48, 62.

the side of the Sultan against a combined Christian army in the battle of Nicopolis, which opened up the rest of the Balkans to Turkish rule. And in 1453 Despot George Branković, the last independent Serbian ruler, contributed 1500 Serbian cavalry to the last Turkish assault on Constantinople.³³³

- v. After the Turkish conquest, for various reasons, the Albanian proportion of the population (mainly Muslims and Catholics) gradually increased, especially after the Ottoman-Austrian war which led to the “great emigration” of Patriarch Arsenije and many thousands of Serbs to what is now Vojvodina. Towards the end of the eighteenth century many Catholic Albanians from Northern Albania were emigrating to Kosovo and converting (at least officially) to Islam, although Serbs were also coming to Kosovo from Montenegro and other areas. This was a time of lawlessness, when, as one Catholic bishop wrote, all the villages, “Catholic and Orthodox and Muslim, have indeed been exterminated and depopulated”.³³⁴
- vi. In the nineteenth century, the increasing power of the newly independent state of Serbia to the north of Kosovo increasingly made its presence felt, spreading Great Serbian nationalist ideas among the Serbs of Kosovo. By the 1870s the proportion of Muslims (including some Muslim Slavs) to non-Muslims (mainly Orthodox Serbs, but including about 11,000 Catholics) was about 60:40.³³⁵

Up to this point, the relations between the Serbs and Albanians of Kosovo had been, if not good, at any rate not genocidal. But as a result of the Slav-Ottoman war of 1876-78, Serbia extended her territory to include the Niš region. The Albanian quarter of the city and the surrounding Albanian villages were burned down.³³⁶

At the same time, writes Tim Judah, “fearing the imminent loss of Albanian-inhabited lands to the new Christian states, including Bulgarian and Montenegro, [Albanian] intellectuals mobilised to call a meeting of Albanian leaders in Prizren in June 1878. Some wanted to defend Muslim and Albanian traditions, which they felt were being threatened by modernising reformers. Some wanted a fully autonomous Albanian state, including of course Kosovo, to be set up within the empire. Others were simply keen to fend off the encroachments of the Christian and Slavic states. By 1880, thanks to deteriorating relations between the politicians of the League and the Porte (the traditional name of the Ottoman government), the League in effect took over the running of the Kosovo and some of its leaders, notably Abdyl Frashëri, began to think in terms of independence. The spring of 1881, however, saw the insurrection crushed by Turkish troops...”³³⁷

Now a major deterioration in relations between the Serbs and Albanians of Kosovo took place. “The prime cause of this was the mass expulsion of Muslims from the lands taken over by Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro in 1877-78. Almost all the

333 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 81-91.

334 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 178.

335 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 194.

336 Judah, *Kosovo*, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 12.

337 Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 12; Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 219-228.

Muslims... were expelled from the Morava valley region: there had been hundreds of Albanian villages there, and significant Albanian populations in towns such as Prokuplje, Leskovac and Vranje. A Serbian schoolmaster in Leskovac later recalled that the Muslims had been driven out in December 1877 at a time of extreme cold: 'By the roadside, in the Gudelica gorge and as far as Vranje and Kumanovo, you could see the abandoned corpses of children, and old men frozen to death.' Precise figures are lacking, but one modern study concludes that the whole region contained more than 110,000 Albanians. By the end of 1878 Western officials were reporting that there were 60,000 families of Muslim refugees in Macedonia, 'in a state of extreme destitution', and 60-70,000 Albanian refugees from Serbia 'scattered' over the vilayet of Kosovo. Albanian merchants who tried to stay on in Nish were subjected to a campaign of murders, and the property of those who left was sold off at one per cent of its value. In a petition of 1879 a group of Albanian refugees from the Leskovac area complained that their houses, mills, mosques and tekkes had all been demolished, and that 'The material arising from these demolitions, such as masonry and wood, has been sold, so that if we go back to our hearths we shall find no shelter.'

"This was not, it should be said, a matter of spontaneous hostility by local Serbs. Even one of the Serbian army commanders had been reluctant to expel the Albanians from Vranje, on the grounds that they were a quiet and peaceful people. But the orders came from the highest levels in Belgrade: it was Serbian state policy to create an ethnically 'clean' territory..."³³⁸

Hardly surprisingly, the Muslim refugee victims of Serbian ethnic cleansing, on arriving in Kosovo, were hostile to the local Serbs; and "all those who wrote about Kosovo in this period noted that these were bad times for its Serbs".³³⁹ Now for the first time the Albanians began to believe "that Serbia – and the Serbs of Kosovo who were claimed as an 'unredeemed' part of the Serbian population – represented a threat to their existence".³⁴⁰

So Serbs began to emigrate from the province: by 1912 the Serbian proportion of the population had dropped to about 25% or less...³⁴¹

Meanwhile, the Kosovo myth in its modern, revanchist form was being born in Serbia. From about the 1860s Serbian poets and politicians began to put forward the ideology of a Greater Serbia, a unitary state that included all the lands populated by Serbs, even if they were in a minority. In their sights were Kosovo, on the one hand, and the Serb-populated lands of Austro-Hungary, on the other. Not in vain did a Habsburg diplomatic circular of 1853 declare: "The claim to set up new states according to the limits of nationality is the most dangerous of schemes. To put forward such a pretension is to break with history; and to carry it into execution in any part of Europe is to shake to its foundations the firmly organized order of states, and to threaten the Continent with subversion and chaos..."

338 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 228-229.

339 Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 14.

340 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. xlv.

341 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 230.

In 1889, on the five-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Serbia's foreign minister, Čedomil Mijatović, told the Royal Academy that "an inexhaustible source of national pride was discovered on Kosovo. More important than language and stronger than the Church, this pride unites all Serbs in a single nation..."³⁴² That national pride should be considered "stronger than the Church" was a danger sign. Nothing on earth is stronger than the Divine-human institution of the Church, which, as the Lord says, "will prevail against the gates of hell", whereas national pride can be crushed, and nations themselves can disappear completely... To say that any person or nation or institution is "stronger than the Church" is equivalent to idolatry...

Pride goes before a fall, and now the Serbs suffered a most serious fall in 1903, when a group of over one hundred military conspirators, upset at King Alexander of Serbia's pro-Austrian orientation and proposed cuts to the military budget, killed him and Queen Draga, her two brothers, the prime minister and the war minister in a particularly brutal manner in Belgrade.³⁴³

This murder brought the Karadjordjević dynasty back to power in the person of King Peter I, who had been in exile in France and Switzerland since 1858.

The reaction of the Serbs to the murder of the Lord's Anointed was extraordinarily indifferent. The day after the murder was celebrated as a holiday; the streets were decorated with flags. The conspirators were not only not prosecuted: they were fêted. They filled the senior posts in the new government, and their leader, Dragutin Dimitrijević, nicknamed "Apis" (after the Egyptian god), was even thanked for his work by parliament and became a national hero. The leader of the largest, Radical Party, Nikola Pašić, wanted to limit the influence of the regicides; but even he was forced to recognize the legitimacy of the coup and oppose efforts to bring the regicides to trial.³⁴⁴

According to Rebecca West, "when Alexander and Draga fell from that balcony the whole of the modern world fell with them. It took some time to reach the ground and break its neck, but its fall started then..."³⁴⁵ The shots in Belgrade in 1903 led to the

³⁴² Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 2, p. 21.

³⁴³ John Etty, "Serbian Nationalism and the Great War", *History Today*, February 27, 2014. For a description of the murder, and the circumstances leading up to it, see Christopher Clark, *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London: Penguin, 2013, pp. 7-13. There were other reasons for the murder. Thus the Interior Minister Djordje Genčić "objected to the king's marriage to Draga..., whose reputation in society was so bad that the entire Cabinet resigned when the couple became engaged. 'Sire,' Genčić told the king, 'You cannot marry her. She has been everybody's mistress - mine included.' The king's response - a slap in the face - was enough to drive Genčić into the arms of Apis's conspiracy" (Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 691).

³⁴⁴ Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-20.

³⁴⁵ West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006, p. 12.

shots at Sarajevo in 1914, which led to the First World War and the Russian revolution.³⁴⁶

For God is not mocked; as Holy Scripture says, He does not allow anyone to touch His anointed.

The murder brought the Karadjordjević dynasty back to power in the person of King Peter I, who had been in exile in France and Switzerland since 1858. The crime was neither repented of, nor investigated sufficiently so as to bring the killers to justice. For, as West writes, the new King Petar "was entirely surrounded by the conspirators whose crime he abhorred, and he could not dismiss them, because... with these fierce critics all about him perfectly capable of doing what they had done before, he had to keep order in a new and expanding country, vexed with innumerable internal and external difficulties."³⁴⁷

Even if the new king had had the desire to resist the irredentist mood in Serbia, it is doubtful that he would have been able to do so, because Serbia was not an autocracy, but a constitutional monarchy, and so was ruled, not by the king, but by elected politicians. Thus on June 25 the king made a proclamation peppered with references to the Constitution: "I will be a true constitutional King of Serbia. For me all constitutional guarantees of freedom and popular rights, which are the basis of all regular and prosperous development as well as of all national progress and constitutional life, are sacred trusts which I will always carefully respect and guard. I expect everyone to do the same."³⁴⁸ This indicated that the real rulers would remain the elected politicians...

Then he went on: "Imbued with these sentiments, to the past I consign the past, and I leave it to history to judge each according to his deeds..." In other words, the murderers of the previous king would not be threatened by him. Nor would he seek to undermine the policy of trying to gather all Serbs under one political roof...

In 1911 there was widespread unrest in the Albanian-populated lands of the Ottoman empire, and serious clashes between the Albanians and the Turkish authorities. At the same time, the Balkan Orthodox nations of Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania were secretly preparing a coordinated war of liberation against the Turks. One might have expected that the Orthodox would seek to cooperate with the anti-Turkish Albanians in this venture; and the notorious Serbian military intelligence chief Colonel Dragutin Dmitrievich ("Apis", as he was known), head of the "Black Hand" nationalist movement, who had taken part in the regicide of 1903, was among those sent to negotiate with, and arm, the pro-Serb Albanian leader Isa Boletin, hoping that he would be their tool in the coming war.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ "The assassination not only set Serbia on a new path of confrontation with Austria-Hungary, it helped to build the chain of events which led to the summer of 1914" (Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace*, London: Profile Books, 2014, p. 388)

³⁴⁷ West, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³⁴⁸ Ulrick Loring and James Page, *Yugoslavia's Royal Dynasty*, London: The Monarchist Press Association, 1976, p. 62.

³⁴⁹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 250.

But Boletin was unsure about joining the Serbs wholeheartedly. He feared that the Christian nations were preparing first to drive out the Turks and then to carve up the Albanian-populated lands among themselves. His fears turned out to be justified...

Tsar Nicholas II, a firm opponent of Balkan revanchism, desperately tried to prevent war. But it was too late: on October 8, 1912, King Nicholas of Montenegro, attacked the Turks in Albania. "Most Albanians reacted to this with a dramatic about face. They had just been fighting the Turks themselves to block unwelcome reforms. Now they had to fight 'liberation' by Greeks and Slavs. Serbia was demanding access to the sea, which could only mean part of Albania. Greece said that the south was 'Northern Epirus' and claimed all its Christians as Greeks. King Nicholas of Montenegro swore that Shkodra was the sacred burial place of his forefathers. Under simultaneous attack from north, south and east, Albanians could scarcely stay neutral. [Ahmed Bey] Zogolli [the future King Zog of Albania] sent a request to the Prefect of Dibra for arms and ammunition. In return, he rallied Mati [his clan in Northern Albania] in defence of the Ottoman Empire."³⁵⁰

Tim Judah writes: "As the Serbian and Montenegrin armies swept into Kosovo in 1912 and consolidated their rule, any attempt at resistance by the Kosovo leaders who had taken on the Turks earlier in the year was crushed with the utmost brutality. As many as 20,000 may have been killed and tens of thousands fled. Horrified by events, including those of the Second Balkan War of 1913, which saw the erstwhile allies fall out and fight over their spoils, the American Carnegie Endowment organized a commission to visit the Balkans and report back... 'Houses and whole villages reduced to ashes,' it reported, 'unarmed and innocent populations massacred *en masse*, incredible acts of violence, pillage and brutality of every kind - such were the means which were employed by the Serbo-Montenegrin soldiery, with a view to the entire transformation of the ethnic character of regions inhabited exclusively by Albanians.'"³⁵¹

Lev Trotsky, a correspondent for a Kievan newspaper, came to the same conclusion: "The Serbs in Old Serbia, in their national endeavor to correct data in the ethnographical statistics that are not quite favourable to them, are engaged quite simply in systematic extermination of the Muslim population." However, "one soldier, talking about the war in general, told him that 'responsibility for atrocities lies... only to a minor extent with the regular forces'. He explained that 'as a general rule' they only destroyed the houses of the *kaçaks*, the name for Albanian rebels, but that then 'the reserves came up, and did their bit. And after them came the militiamen and *komitadjis* to finish the job.' Today the word *komitadji* would translate as a paramilitary force. 'The *komitadjis* were worse than you can possibly imagine,' he explained to Trotsky: 'Among them were intellectuals, men of ideas, nationalist zealots, but these were isolated individuals. The rest were just thugs, robbers, who had joined the army for the sake of loot. They sometimes came in handy, because they held life cheap - not only the enemy's but their own as well. At the village of

350 Jason Tames, *King Zog: Self-Made Monarch of Albania*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007, p. 19.

351 Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 18.

Nagorican, near Kumanovo, no fewer than two hundred of them fell, fighting bravely. But in the intervals they were just out and out brigands.' The parallels between the *komitadjis* of Trotsky's time and the paramilitaries of today are striking. Now, one of the most vexed questions when it comes to atrocities is just how high up the chain of command the orders come from. As far as Trotsky was concerned, there was little doubt. He recounts this episode which he says had become well known. Serbia's King Petar was on his way to Kumanovo where he met a party of Albanian prisoners under escort. He 'stood up in his car, in all his little height, and shouted: 'What use are these men to me? They should be killed – not by shooting, that would waste ammunition, but with clubs.'"³⁵²

Misha Glenny writes: "In Skopje, the chief instigator of the massacres was the Black Hand, which set up its headquarters close to the Russian consulate in a building soon known as the Black House. The Black Hand, with its network of agents, had escaped the control of the military authorities and was increasingly assuming the role of an informal government of 'liberated Old Serbia'. After several weeks, the government in Belgrade started to appoint civilian administrators to these territories, but those who refused to submit to the demands of the Black Hand and the *cetniks* were scared. Branislav Nuai, the writer who had welcomed the war with such enthusiasm, resigned as governor of Bitola in fear and disgust at the activities of these units."³⁵³

A particularly sinister aspect of the situation was the attempt to convert non-Serbs to Orthodoxy by force. "The Austrian consul in Prizren reported that 2,000 families in the town of Peć had been converted, and that those who refused were tortured or shot... By late March 1913 [the Catholic] Archbishop Mjeda [of Skopje] was complaining that 1,200 of his flock there had been forcibly converted to Orthodoxy."³⁵⁴ Forcible conversion is alien to the Orthodox tradition. The only other example in Orthodox history known to the present writer is the Emperor Charlemagne's forcible "conversion" of the Saxons in the eighth century. It is ironic that the Serbs, who later, in 1990-91, came to see the Germans as their chief enemies in Europe, should have been imitators of the First Reich....

[2. Kosovo Reconquered: 1912 to 1987](#)

The Serbs had avenged Kosovo Field. But at what a price, not only in lives, but, still more importantly, in favour before God and men! However, Divine Providence was about to teach them a very sharp lesson. On June 15/28, 1914, the anniversary of St. Lazar's death at Kosovo Field, a plot organized by "Apis" and carried out by a man nourished on Serbian revanchist dreams for Bosnia assassinated Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo, thereby igniting World War One. Late in 1915 the Serbian army was retreating under heavy Austrian and German pressure across the same lands in Kosovo and Albania they had conquered only three years before. The local Albanians refused to give them food, and sometimes killed stragglers: the desire for revenge rarely fails to be reciprocated in the hearts of the victims... In all, Serbia lost one sixth

³⁵² Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 19.

³⁵³ Glenny, *The Balkans, 1804-1999*, London: Granta Books, 2000, pp. 233-234.

³⁵⁴ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 255.

of her population in World War One, many through disease – the highest proportion of any of the combatants...

"By 1918," writes Judah, "the pendulum had swung back again. Driving northwards with the allies, Serbian troops reoccupied Kosovo. On 1 December 1918 the new Yugoslav state, called, until 1929, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, came into being. Again, the Serbs, or rather the new authorities, were resisted. Bands of guerilla kaçaks, many of whom had fought the Turks and Serbs in 1912 and 1913, and then the Austro-Hungarians and Bulgarians, carried on fighting. The crushing of the revolt was bloody. Thousands died. Banac, citing Albanian sources, writes that in November 1918 'the Serbian army ravaged the area of Podgor Metohijski (near Peć), massacring women and children and destroying 138 houses. The army massacred 700 Albanians in Rožaj (Sandžak) and 800 in the region of Djakovica and in mid-February used cannon fire to destroy fifteen villages in the Rugovo Gorge. Still the kaçak brigand-cum-freedom-fighter rebellions lingered on for years... First and foremost the kaçaks resisted the reimposition of Serbian or Yugoslav rule because they did not want Kosovo to be part of Yugoslavia. It was, after all, a state of the south Slavs, as its name suggested, and the Albanians are not Slavs. That aside, the antipathy that Albanians felt towards the new state was now fuelled by the fact that Albanian language schools were closed and, in an effort to redress the ethnic imbalance, the Serbian-dominated authorities encouraged Serbian and Montenegrin settlers to come to Kosovo..."

"Some 70,000 colonists were brought to Kosovo, and although dispossessed Albanians were supposed to be compensated for confiscated land, this in fact rarely happened. In some places Albanians lost their land or were restricted to tiny plots. This helped prod thousands into emigrating and some 150,000 people are believed to have left for Turkey in the years between 1910 and 1920."³⁵⁵

As for the period 1918-41, Malcolm estimates that between 90,000 and 150,000 Albanians and other Muslims emigrated from Kosovo...³⁵⁶ "From 1935 onwards, a wave of confiscations of land from Albanians built up, on the basis of a new rule that all land should be treated as state property unless the farmer had a Yugoslav document to prove his ownership – something that had hardly ever been issued to Albanians. In just one example of this process, the entire Albanian population of twenty-three villages in upper Drenica (6,064) was dispossessed in 1938. The official policy was to allow such people only 0.4 hectares per family member. As a Serbian policy document of the previous year noted: 'This is below the minimum for subsistence. But that is and has been our aim: to make their life impossible, and in that way force them to emigrate.'

"Such ideas were in keeping with the ideas of many officials and intellectuals. During the years 1937-9 there were frequent discussions on this topic among senior civil servants at the 'Serbian Cultural Club' in Belgrade. According to the minutes of these debates, the head of the Yugoslav statistical service declared that although the Albanians were 'passive' now, they could become 'an active national group,

³⁵⁵ Judah, *Kosovo*, pp. 21-22.

³⁵⁶ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 285-286.

extraordinarily dangerous for our national and state interests'; he demanded that an 'effective plan' to deal with them must be formed. One member of the club, Orestije Krstić, proposed: 'The land must be bought from the Albanians, but of course only when it cannot be taken from them without compensation'; another, Djoka Perina, thought it necessary to create 67.5 per cent majority of Serbs in 'Southern Serbia', for which purpose he advocated introducing 470,000 colonists and expelling 300,000 Albanians. One of the most distinguished members of this club was Vas Čubrilović, a former member of the 'Mlada Bosna' group of young terrorists who planned the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914; he was now a respected historian at Belgrade University. His own contribution to this debate took the form of a long policy paper which he submitted to the Yugoslav government in 1937. Recognizing the limitations of the colonization programme, he wrote: 'If we assume that the gradual displacement of the Albanians through our progressive colonization is ineffective, then we are left with only one course – that of their mass emigration.' As he pointed out: 'At a time when Germany can expel tens of thousands of Jews... the shifting of a few hundred thousand Albanians will not lead to the outbreak of a world war.'" 357

Kosovo was not a major theatre of the Second World War, and the fact that Serbian royalist (četnik) forces under Mikhailović, collaborationist forces under Nedić and communist (partisan) forces under Tito were concentrated in other parts of the country meant that the sufferings of the Kosovans were caused more by the foreign occupying powers (Germans and Italians) than by the Serb-Albanian hatred. A few thousand Albanians moved from Albania into Kosovo, and about 40,000 Serbs and Montenegrins were expelled from Kosovo during the war. In the spring of 1945 an Albanian uprising against the Yugoslav communists in the Drenica region was crushed... War losses were about 12,000 Albanians and 10,000 Serbs and Montenegrins. "Compared to most other areas of Yugoslavia, this represents an unusually low proportion of the population; indeed, Macedonia and Kosovo were the only parts of Yugoslavia to register a slight rise in population between 1940 and 1948." 358

The foundations of the new communist state of Yugoslavia "were laid in Jajce, in Bosnia, in November 1943 at a meeting of the Second Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, known by its initials as AVNOJ. It stated that the new Yugoslavia was founded 'on the basis of the right of every people to self-determination, including the right to secede or unite with other peoples, and in conformity with the true aspirations of all the peoples of Yugoslavia.' No Kosovo Albanians participated in the meeting, and... later constitutional refinements meant that the right of self-determination, meaning the right to secede from Yugoslavia, did not apply to Kosovo. In July 1945 Kosovo was formally annexed to Serbia..." 359

Kosovan Albanian fortunes under the communists were mixed. On the one hand, their wishes on the land question were partly met: nearly 16,000 hectares were given

357 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 283-284.

358 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 312.

359 Judah, *Kosovo*, pp. 30-31.

back to them, and about 4000 colonist families settled in other parts of Yugoslavia. Moreover, "another of the main demands of the Kosovo Albanians in the inter-war years, the free use of the Albanian language in official life and education, would eventually be more fully satisfied... In theory, Albanian was given equal status with Serbo-Croat in official and legal matters; but since most of the key officials and judges were Slavs, there was little immediate change in practice. In the sphere of education, however, there was some progress. Before the war there had been just 252 schools in Kosovo, teaching only in Serbian. By the end of 1945 there were 392, containing 357 classes in Serbian and 279 in Albanian..."³⁶⁰

On the other hand, conditions for the Albanians worsened after Tito's split with Moscow in 1948, when the leader of communist Albania, Enver Hoxha, took Stalin's side. The mainly Serbian secret police (UDBA) began to harass the Albanians, and Islam was also persecuted.

"While these changes were happening," writes Noel Malcolm, "the Yugoslav authorities took unusually active measures to enable and encourage people in Kosovo and Macedonia to identify themselves as 'Turks' by nationality: given the traditional overtones of the word 'Turk' in the region (where it had been used as a general term for Muslims), this move may have held a special attraction for the more devout elements of the Muslim Albanian population. As a result, the number of people registered as 'Turks' in Kosovo jumped from 1,315 in the 1948 census to 34,583 in 1953. Strong pressure was put on the Kosovo authorities by Belgrade in 1951 to encourage this process by declaring the Turks a national minority there and opening new Turkish schools. To some extent this may have been merely an application of the principle of 'divide and rule'. But in 1953, when Yugoslavia signed a new treaty with both Turkey and Greece and large-scale emigration of Yugoslav 'Turks' to Turkey was permitted, it began to seem that a long-prepared policy had been at work, aimed at the complete removal of large numbers of Albanians.

"The leading advocate of such a policy in the pre-war period, Vasa Čubrilović, had made a seamless transition in his own career from Serbian nationalist to Communist adviser, and had submitted another report to the Communist leadership in November 1944 urging that 'The only correct solution of the question of minorities for us is emigration.' Large-scale emigration began in 1953 with, according to some reports, 13,000 'Turks' leaving Yugoslavia for Turkey. It has been estimated that between 1945 and 1966 roughly 246,000 people emigrated to Turkey from the whole of Yugoslavia. More than half of that total was probably from Macedonia (where the recorded population of 'Turks' had jumped from 95,940 in 1948 to 203,000 in 1953); some of those who left may have been Muslim Slavs, and some, indeed, may have been ethnic Turks. Detailed figures for Kosovo are not recorded, but a total in the region of 100,000 for the whole of that period may not be an unreasonable guess..."³⁶¹

In 1966 Tito sacked his security chief, Alexander Ranković, who had ruled Kosovo with a rod of iron, and things began to get a little better for the Albanians. In 1967 Tito

³⁶⁰ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 318.

³⁶¹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 322-323.

visited Kosovo and said: "One cannot talk about equal rights when Serbs are given preference in the factories... and Albanians are rejected although they have the same or better qualifications."

Concessions now began to be made for the Albanians. In 1969 the University of Priština was founded, with teaching in both Albanian and Serbo-Croat. This helped in time to produce a newly educated Albanian professional class.

In 1974 Kosovo was given the status of an autonomous province with direct representation on many federal bodies.

3. The Rise of Milošević

Tito died in 1980... Dejan Djokic writes: "As Yugoslavia entered the post-Tito era, there were increasing calls for the pursuit of the... ideal of finding what really happened in Yugoslavia in the Second World War. The official history [which minimised the ethnic elements and called it a 'national liberation war and a socialist revolution'] was bound to be challenged in the more relaxed political atmosphere which eventually emerged following the death of Tito in 1980, when the so-called 'hidden', unofficial, accounts of the war years began to appear. During what one Serbian weekly described as 'the burst of history', the official interpretation of Yugoslavia's recent past was questioned by every engaged intellectual. To many observers in the late 1980s, it must have seemed that the Second World War had broken out for the second time in Yugoslavia – verbally, for the time being..."

"The most controversial and most debated issue was that of Croatian genocide against Serbs during the Second World War. Both the Ustaša-directed project to rid the Independent State of Croatia of its almost two million Serbs (and also Jews and Roma) and the nature and scope of the genocide have been the subject of scholarly works. The issue remains a bone of contention between Serbs and Croats... Moreover, some Serbs argue that anti-Serbianism has always been present among Croats and that the Ustaša genocide was merely the last phase of a long process..."

"The nationalist discourse in Yugoslavia, but especially in Serbia and Croatia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sought a reconciliation between victors and losers of the Second World War who belonged to the same nation; between Partisans and Cetniks in the case of Serbs, and Partisans and Ustašas in the case of Croats. In Yugoslavia at the time 'reconciliation' meant a homogenisation of the nation by reconciling ideological differences within the nation..."³⁶²

Reconciliation between communists and anti-communists also took place in the ecclesiastical sphere. In 1991, communion was restored between the Serbian

362 Djokic, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Former Yugoslavia", *History Today*, vol. 54 (6), June, 2004, pp. 18-19.

Patriarchate and the Free Serbs.³⁶³ The great majority of the Serbs were now nationalists.

This process also affected the Communist Party, up to then a bastion of internationalism...

From 1985, as *perestroika* began in Russia, the writing was on the wall for the old-style communists throughout Eastern Europe. They had a choice if they wanted to stay in power: either become European-style democrats, or take the nationalist road. In practice they adopted a mixture of both courses. However, in some countries, such as Russia, democracy was the preferred option (later, under Putin, the nationalist option was adopted), whereas in Serbia it was nationalism.

At the same time, the democratization process that was affecting all the countries of Eastern Europe at this time stimulated nationalism. As Samuel P. Huntington writes, "The first fairly contested elections in almost every former Soviet and former Yugoslav republic were won by political leaders appealing to nationalist sentiments and promising vigorous action to defend their nationality against other ethnic groups. Electoral competition encourages nationalist appeals and thus promotes the intensification of fault line conflicts into fault line wars. When, in Bogdan Denitch's phrase, 'ethnos becomes demos,' the initial result is *polemos* or war" ³⁶⁴

"Balkan communist regimes," writes Bernard Simms, "co-opted nationalism as a new legitimating ideology. In Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu sought confrontation with the substantial Hungarian minority, whose Transylvanian and Banat villages were singled out for particular attention in the campaign of rural 'systematization'. In Bulgaria, the regime turned on the local Turkish population in late 1984 and forced them to change their names, restricted their use of the Turkish language, and closed down mosques, all in the name of stamping out an alleged 'fifth column' of 'terrorists' and 'separatists'. In Yugoslavia, the Serb leader, Slobodan Milošević, rose to power through the articulation of a Serb nationalist agenda." ³⁶⁵

As Niall Ferguson writes, "it is clear that Milošević's principal motive in playing the Serbian nationalist card was to avoid the fate of Communist leaders in other East European countries. While they had been swept away by the post-1989 wave of nationalism. Milošević was able to ride it; indeed, to whip it up. And for ten years his strategy worked..." ³⁶⁶

As ever, the main focus of Serbian nationalism was the province of Kosovo, which had been part of Serbia for about 140 years in the late Middle Ages, but whose majority population since the Turkish conquest was Albanian. The aim of the nationalists was

363 *Pravoslavlje*, June 1, 1991; *Keston News Service*, № 379, 11 July, 1991, p. 4; *Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*, December, 1991, pp. 29-31.

364 Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Touchstone Books, 1998, p. 262.

365 Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy*, London: Allen Lane, 2013, pp. 481-482.

366 Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 630-631.

to destroy the Albanian majority, by violent means if necessary – expulsion and/or slaughter. With the rise of Milošević, this aim became a practical possibility...

Before Milošević, nationalism had been kept in check in Kosovo. As Misha Glenny, the Serbian British journalist, writes, “The atmosphere in Kosovo in the early eighties was heavy with tension, secret policemen were ubiquitous. Nonetheless, the local state apparatus, including the police force, was staffed mainly by Albanians, and they had no interest in provoking the Kosovars. Life was not easy, but it was free from nationalist violence. A minority of communists in Serbia, aided at times by the Belgrade media, claimed that the Serb and Montenegrin minority in Kosovo (roughly 10 per cent of the population) were subjected to systematic terrorism at the hands of the Albanian ‘irredentists’. They based these claims on the number of Serbs moving from the province to Serbia proper. There was an indeed an exodus of Serbs in the early eighties, but they were economic migrants, not refugees. The stories of rape, murder and intimidation were without foundation.”³⁶⁷

However, an economic crisis in the mid-1980s coincided with important political changes inside the country... In the autumn of 1985, writes Malcolm, a local Kosovan activist, Kosta Bulatović, who was originally from Montenegro, organized a petition “which became known as ‘petition 2,016’, after the number of signatures it attracted: the text contained not only demands for protection, but also a gross historical claim about the presence of 300,000 Albanians who had crossed into Kosovo from Albania since 1941 (the implication being that they should all be sent back). In February 1986 a group of 160 Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo presented their complaints to the federal assembly in Belgrade...

“In April 1987 news came from Kosovo that the group of Serb and Montenegrin activists round Bulatović was intending to bring another large protest in Belgrade. They asked the Serbian Party president, Stambolić, to come and speak to them first in the town of Kosovo Polje; reluctant to enter such a hostile bear-pit (he had already made several speeches criticizing Serbian nationalism), he sent his deputy, Slobodan Milošević, instead. As Stambolić later recalled, Milošević had never shown any interest in Kosovo, and had even said to him on one occasion: ‘Forget about the provinces, let’s get back to Yugoslavia’. But the events in Kosovo Polje on 24 April 1987 were to change all that. While Milošević listened to angry speeches by local spokesmen in the ‘House of Culture’, fighting broke out between the large crowd of Serbs outside and the police, who responded with their batons. The fighting had been carefully planned by one of the local Serb leaders, Miroslav Šolević (local, at least, in the sense that he lived there: he had moved to Kosovo from the Serbian city of Niš): as he later admitted, he had arranged for a truck full of stones to be parked outside the building, to give the Serbs a copious supply of ammunition. Milošević broke off the meeting and came out to speak to the crowd, where he uttered – luckily for him, on camera – the words on which his entire political future would be built: ‘No one should dare to beat you!’ The crowd, enraptured by these words, began chanting ‘Slobo, Slobo!’ With a skill which he had never displayed before, Milošević made an

³⁶⁷ Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999*, pp. 624-625.

eloquent speech in defence of the sacred rights of the Serbs. From that day, his nature as a politician changed; it was as if a powerful new drug had entered his veins.

“By exploiting the issue of Kosovo Milošević quickly turned himself into a ‘national’ leader, a role which enabled him to quell all opposition to his takeover of the Communist Party machine...”³⁶⁸

“The situation in Kosovo... became the main focus for the revival of Serbian nationalism. As early as 1968, Serbian nationalist Communists such as Dobrica Ćosić were complaining about the reversal of policy in Kosovo after Ranković’s fall. ‘One could witness even among the Serbian people a re-ignition of the old historical goal and national idea – the unification of the Serbian people into a single state,’ he said. This statement, phrased as a warning but issued in the spirit of a threat, caused Ćosić to be expelled from the Central Committee... The Serbian Orthodox Church also saw its opportunity to revive the sense of religious identity in the literary and political culture of the country; and the Serbs’ obsessively possessive claims about Kosovo were indeed partly based on the fact that some of the Serbian Orthodox Church’s oldest monasteries and church buildings, including the patriarchate itself [at Peć], were located in the province.

“Together with a revival of [ecumenist] Orthodoxy, there was also a revival of interest in the forbidden topic of the Četniks during the second world war. And just as – indeed, because – the Communist policy had been to damn all the Četniks uncritically as fascist collaborators, so now the reaction of Serb nationalists was to praise them almost equally uncritically. The regime would have reason to regret its long-lasting suppression of objective historical studies of the war. Dobrica Ćosić published a novel in 1985 which featured a sympathetic portrait of the Četnik ideologist, Dragiša Vasić; and in the same year a book about the Četniks by the historian Veselin Djuretić was launched at a party hosted by the Serbian Academy of Sciences. This event was an important turning-point, a signal that Serbian nationalism could now be openly embraced by the intellectual establishment in Belgrade. In January of the following year two hundred prominent Belgrade academics and writers signed a petition which referred in hysterical terms to the ‘Albanian aggression’ and ‘genocide’ in Kosovo. All the old Serbian resentments now came to the surface: ‘a rigged political trial of the Serbian nation and its history has been going on for decades’, it complained.

“Later in 1986 a ‘Memorandum’ was drawn up by the Serbian Academy of Sciences (or at least, by a committee of it, whose membership is known to have included Ćosić), in which grievances about Kosovo were combined with the open accusation that Tito’s policies had aimed at the weakening of Serbia. ‘Nationalism’, it complained, had been ‘created from above’. This was a reference not to Serbian nationalism, of course, which these writers were busily helping to create from their own vantage-point, but to the national identities of Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Bosnian Muslims. The Memorandum claimed that a sinister programme of assimilation was under way in Croatia, designed to turn the Serbs there into Croats, and it also

368 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 339, 341-342.

complained that ethnic Serb writers in places such as Montenegro and Bosnia were being described as writing not Serbian literature but 'Montenegrin' or 'Bosnian' literature instead. The fundamental argument of the Memorandum was that the 'Serb people' throughout Yugoslavia was a kind of primary entity, possessing a unitary set of rights and claims which transcended any mere political or geographical divisions: 'The question of the integrity of the Serb people and its culture in the whole of Yugoslavia poses itself as a crucial question for that people's survival and development.' It was the pursuit of that 'integrity' which would eventually destroy Yugoslavia..."³⁶⁹

Vasa Čubrilović, a member of the Academy, had been acting and speaking in the cause of Serbian revolutionary nationalism since 1914. As Mark Almond writes, he "complained that the Serb authorities had been too weak and 'Western'. Serbia ought to learn from her old enemy: 'Turkey brought to the Balkans the customs of the Sheriat... Even the Balkan Christians learned from the Turks that not only state power and dominion, but also home and property are won and lost by the sword.' He argued that since the Albanians still outbred the effects of Serbian recolonisation, 'the only way and the only means to cope with them is the brute force of an organized state, in which we [Serbs] have always been superior to them.' The necessary precondition for a mass expulsion of Albanians from their ancestral homes was 'the creation of a suitable psychosis'.

"In order to create an atmosphere of fear and a willingness to leave, the Serbian state ought to use very un-Balkan tactics: 'The law must be enforced to the letter... fines and imprisonments, the ruthless application of all police dispositions, such as the prohibition of smuggling, cutting forests, damaging farmland, leaving dogs unchained, compulsory labour and any other measures that an experienced police force can contrive.' In addition, property titles should be questioned and business permits withdrawn. Islam should be harassed and the daughters of Muslims forced into school with boys. But all of these measures were only the background to state-sponsored terror: 'We should distribute weapons to our colonists. The old forms of Chetnik action should be organized and secretly assisted.' The Montenegrins should be unleashed on the Albanians - 'This conflict should be prepared by... our trusted people' - and then once the Albanians replied to force with force, 'the whole affair should be presented as a conflict between clans.' Čubrilović recognized the need to pacify Western opinion with the argument that any violence was just an old-fashioned tribal war. He therefore preferred to keep the Serbian Army out of action except when it was 'secretly burning down Albanian villages and city quarters'. Chetniks should be used to suppress the Albanians whenever the action was under scrutiny so that the tribal nature could be emphasized."³⁷⁰

Čubrilović's remarks about the need to copy the Turks were both cynical and insightful. As Almond comments, "in order to rid oneself of the domination and even the legacy of the hated 'Turk', his worst features must be assimilated into the Serbian character. Ottoman brutality had to be matched or even surpassed in order to save

369 Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 205-207.

370 Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, London: Mandarin, 1994, pp. 195-196.

Serbdom from the Turkish legacy of an Albanianised Kosovo.”³⁷¹ Moreover, Ćubrilović was prescient in seeing how useful the argument that “any violence was just an old-fashioned tribal war” would be to Serbian politicians. It was used for years by western diplomats as an excuse for their inactivity in relation to what may have been tribal in a sense, but was also ideological – the implementation of the ideology of Greater Serbia.

The Serbian nationalists gave wildly exaggerated figures for the supposed emigration or expulsion of Serbs from Kosovo. In this they were supported by the Serbian Church, notably the leading archimandrite (now metropolitan), Atanasije Jevtić. The nationalists claimed that the main reason for Serbian emigration from Kosovo was Albanian atrocities, particularly, according to Atanasije Jevtić, the rape of girls and old women in villages and convents...

“As one Albanian writer later noted, the impression given by many Serbian publications was ‘that Albanians rape anyone they can get hold of, old women, children, married women, teenagers, and that they rape them in houses, in public places, in the street...’ The only serious study of this issue was carried out by an independent committee of Serbian lawyers and human rights experts in 1990. Analysing all the statistics on rape and attempted rape for the 1980s, they found first of all that the frequency of this crime was significantly lower in Kosovo than in other parts of Yugoslavia: while inner Serbia, on average, had 2.43 cases per year for every 10,000 men in the population, the figure in Kosovo was 0.96. They also found that in the great majority of cases in Kosovo (71 per cent) the assailant and the victim were of the same nationality. Altogether the number of cases where an Albanian committed or attempted the rape of a Serbian woman was just thirty-one in the whole period from 1982 to 1989; an average of fewer than five per year...”³⁷²

In fact, the main cause of emigration was economic. “Official reports on the reasons given for emigration from Kosovo by the 14,921 Serbs who left in the period 1983-7 present a very different picture. In 95 per cent of all cases the emigrants cited either economic or family reasons; in only eleven individual cases (less than 0.1 per cent) were pressures from Albanians given as the main cause of emigration.”³⁷³

By 1991 the Serb-Montenegrin element in the Kosovan population had dwindled to 11 per cent, while the Albanian proportion had risen to 82 per cent. It would rise still further to 90 per cent before the Kosovan war of 1999.³⁷⁴ But the main reason for this was neither Serbian emigration nor Albanian immigration, but “the very high rate of abortion among the Serbs. By 1994 it was reported that Serbia had the highest abortion rate in the whole of Europe. For every 100 live births in inner Serbia there

371 Almond, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

372 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 339.

373 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 331.

374 Anatol Lieven, “Divide and Survive”, *Prospect*, May, 1999, p. 26. Lieven continues: “In Bosnia, the Muslim proportion rose from 31 per cent in 1948 to 43.7 per cent in 1991, while the Serbs fell from 44 per cent to 31 per cent. In both cases, the nations concerned resorted to arguments about which community had been there first and had originally been the largest. In these circumstances, trying to solve ethnic disputes by majoritarian democracy at a given moment is inadequate”.

were 214 abortions; the equivalent figure for the whole population of Kosovo... was just twenty. While Albanian women were hostile on religious and cultural grounds to abortion, it had become an accepted part of cultural normality among the Serbs. On this point, at least, it could be said that they had only themselves to blame..."³⁷⁵

On June 28, 1989, the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, a jamboree was held at the Gazimestan shrine near Pristina, at which Milošević observed that "the current anniversary was being held at a time when Serbia had finally regained its 'state, national, and spiritual integrity', and that the Serbian defeat of the fourteenth century, as well as later Serbian failures including those during the Tito period, had occurred owing to discord within the ranks of the Serb elite and political compromises by Serbia's leaders. 'Six centuries ago,' Milošević pointed out, Serbia had fought the Turks and served as a 'bulwark defending European culture, civilization and religion.' Alluding to a perennial theme of Serbian culture, Milošević observed that although some might claim the Serbian nation had been defeated at the Battle of Kosovo, the episode could also be regarded as 'heroic' because of the Serbs' valiant performance, and the fact that the victorious Turkish Sultan had been stabbed to death – the first Ottoman ruler to be killed in war – by a Serbian commander. Milošević was well aware that, although the 1389 battle had been technically a military defeat, most Serbs regarded the event and its aftermath as emblematic of how such a defeat can engender a stubbornness and fortitude to struggle against non-Serb control. He left it to his audience to ponder over the clear implication that perhaps the very traits that had allowed Serbs to overcome the tribulations of Ottoman rule might also assist them in dealing with their current concerns regarding Kosovo. Tactfully in view of his position as a high official in a multinational federation, Milošević urged toleration among the various nations and nationalities of socialist Yugoslavia, and also carefully avoided referring by name to the Albanians of Kosovo (who had boycotted the ceremony) or any other specific ethnic group. But near the end of his speech he reminded the gathering that six centuries after the Battle of Kosovo Serbs were 'again today engaged in battles and facing battles'. Indeed he observed ominously that although the struggles presently involving the Serbs were 'not armed battles... such things cannot be excluded. But no matter what their character, battles can't be won without decisiveness, bravery and a readiness to sacrifice.' Milošević had put his fellow Serbs on notice regarding what measures he might take, and what might be expected of them. In the excitement of the historical celebration, his audience appeared wildly eager to follow their determined new leader. Milošević's remarks were made two years before socialist Yugoslavia's disintegration and the warfare that would soon follow in its wake..."³⁷⁶

4. Kosovo, 1999

Milošević's wars against the Croats and Bosnian Muslims did not directly affect Kosovo. But few doubted that the Kosovans' turn would come – unless Milošević fell

375 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. 333.

376 Leonard J. Cohen, "The Milošević Dictatorship: Institutionalizing Power and Ethno-Populism in Serbia", in Bernd J. Fischer, *Balkan Strongmen*, London: Hurst, 2006, pp. 429-430.

from power. Indeed, after the Bosnian War and the Dayton Accords of 1995, there was some hope that communism would finally be driven out of Serbia. Demonstrations began in 1996 and continued into January, 1997. On January 4, Belgrade "was brought to a halt when more than 100,000 anti-government protesters took place. Eight days later, 400,000 Serbs packed the streets, demanding reform..."³⁷⁷

However, Milošević reasserted his grip over Serbian society. But not entirely: the owner and editor of the Belgrade *Dnevni Telegraph*, Slavko Ćuruvija, wrote an open letter to Milošević in October, 1998, in which he said: "Everything that the Serbs have created in this century has been thoughtlessly wasted... The nation has developed a complex as a vanquished, genocidal aggressor as well as being the last bastion of European communism. The merit and worth of Serbian institutions have been destroyed in a systematic manner. You have brought a university and a local farmers' collective to the same level, equated the Academy of Arts and Sciences with a nursing home, you have degraded the church, the legislature, the media, parliament and the government... Nowhere in today's Europe are criminals and the state wedded in such a harmonious marriage as here in Serbia. Organised gangs control the circulation of key goods and services. Paramilitary formations still operate. Street violence and murders are a daily occurrence and the state has in practice abandoned its responsibility for the safety of its citizens and their property... A psychosis of a permanent state of emergency has been imposed on society, in addition to the fear generated by omnipotent police and your henchmen, who boast that they can order executions of the people they dislike. Absolute obedience is demanded from the population. Hysterical, choreographed outpourings of support are set up after every victory that contributes to our decline. Your excellency, your country, your people and your compatriots have been living for years in a state of fear, of psychosis, with nothing but death, misery, terror and despair around them... Hungry and humiliated, your citizens have exhausted their spirits and have no strength to make even verbal protests. Our letter to you is our modest contribution to the struggle against fear..." The next day an Information Law was passed. Ćuruvija was tried and fined \$100,000. In April, 1999, two masked assassins fired eleven shots into him at close range, while his wife was clubbed...

The 1990s were characterized by great unrest among the Albanian population, and the beginning of an underground movement for an independent Kosovo. "On 24 May 1992," writes Noel Malcolm, "Kosovo-wide elections were held, using private houses as polling-stations under the noses of the Serbian authorities, to create a new republican assembly and government." Most members of this assembly came from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), whose leader, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova became elected president of the Kosovan "republic". 378

The Serbs treated all Albanian activism as "terrorism". But in truth it is more accurate to say that the Albanians rather than the Serbs who were the victims of terrorism. And even though, towards the end of the 1990s, some real Albanian

377 Martin Gilbert, *Challenge to Civilization: A History of the Twentieth Century, 1952-1999*, London: HarperCollins, 1999, p. 834.

378 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 347, 348.

terrorism in the form of KLA activity did emerge, what state (unless it is a communist one) deals with terrorists on its own territory by persecuting the whole population, the innocent with the guilty, women with men, children with adults?

For “every aspect of life in Kosovo has been affected,” wrote Malcolm in 1998. “Using a combination of emergency measures, administrative fiats and laws authorizing the dismissal of anyone who had taken part in a one-day protest strike, the Serb authorities have sacked the overwhelming majority of those Albanians who had any form of state employment in 1990. Most Albanian doctors and health workers were also dismissed from the hospitals; deaths from diseases such as measles and polio have increased, with the decline in the numbers of Albanians receiving vaccinations. Approximately 6,000 school-teachers were sacked in 1990 for having taken part in protests, and the rest were dismissed when they refused to comply with a new Serbian curriculum which largely eliminated the teaching of Albanian literature and history. In some places the Albanian teachers were allowed to continue to take classes (without state pay) in the school buildings, but strict physical segregation was introduced – with, for example, separate lavatories for Albanian and Serb children – and equipment or materials, including in one case the window-glass, was removed from the areas they used. For both health-care and education the Albanians have organized their own ‘parallel’ system of clinics and schools, mainly in private premises; the doctors and teachers are paid by the ‘Republic’ (in practice, by the LDK) out of an income tax of three per cent levied, on a voluntary basis, in the diaspora. In this way teaching is arranged for more than 400,000 children; the teachers and organizers are, however, frequently subjected to arrest, intimidation and beatings by the Serb police.

“Arbitrary arrest and police violence have become routine. Serbian law allows the arrest and summary imprisonment for up to two months of anyone who has committed a ‘verbal crime’ such as insulting the ‘patriotic feelings’ of Serbian citizens. It also permits a procedure known as ‘informative talks’, under which a person can be summoned to a police station and questioned for up to three days: in 1994 15,000 people in Kosovo were questioned in this way, usually without being told the reason for the summons. Serbian law does not, of course, permit the beating up of people in police custody; but many graphic testimonies exist of severe beatings with truncheons, the application of electric shocks to the genitals, and so on. Also widely violated in Kosovo are the official rules for the lawful search of people’s houses: homes are frequently raided without explanation, and goods and money confiscated (i.e. stolen) by the police. In 1994 alone the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms in Kosovo recorded 2,157 physical assaults by the police, 3,553 raids on private dwellings and 2,963 arbitrary arrests.

“Such methods were already being applied before the outbreak of the war in the former Yugoslavia in the summer of 1991. At first the war had little direct effect on conditions in Kosovo apart from increasing the reluctance of young Albanians to do their military service in the Yugoslav – now, in practice, Serbian – army. The most important effect of the outbreak of the war was on the thinking of Albanian political circles in Kosovo: it was the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991 that led the LDK to change its aims from republican status within

Yugoslavia to full sovereignty and independence. But in terms of practical life, the only group that felt immediately affected by the Serbian-Croatian war was the small population of so-called 'Kosovo Croats', the Catholic Slavs who lived in Janjevo and a small group of villages to the south of that town. More than half of the Janjevo Catholics fled to Croatia (mainly to Zagreb) by the end of 1991, and the inhabitants of villages such as Letnica followed in 1992..."³⁷⁹

After the end of the war in Bosnia in 1995, there was only one direction in which the still-unspent energy of Serbian revanchism could turn – southwards, to Kosovo... But the Serbs needed an excuse in order to unleash the full weight of their army on the province. Such an excuse was armed resistance by the Albanians. But the peaceful policy of their unofficial leader Rugova restrained the Albanians from taking that fatal step.

And yet, as Norman Cigar wrote in 1995, "many Serbian hard-liners no doubt seek to spark just such a reaction so that the state will have a rationale to launch full-scale repression. As the leader of one of the most extreme parties, Jović – whose militia had been marauding in Kosovo – admitted, his objective was specifically to provoke such an Albanian reaction. He stated: 'The issue of the occupation of Kosovo and Metohija cannot be solved except by inducing the Shiptars [a pejorative Serbian term for the Albanians] to start an uprising.'"³⁸⁰

The rationale the Serbs were looking for appeared in the next year with the first news of a shadowy Albanian guerrilla force, the KLA. "At this early stage, however, [the Kosovar leader] Rugova's own attitude to the KLA was quite uncomprehending: when the first KLA attacks on Serb policemen had taken place in 1996 and 1997 he had become convinced that the whole thing was a chimera, invented by Serb *agents provocateurs*. It would be well into 1998 before he changed his mind."³⁸¹

Meanwhile, his popularity slipped. "Among the general Albanian population Rugova's personal standing remained high; at unofficial elections for the self-styled Kosovo government on 22 March, 1998, he was returned unopposed as President. But among the political class the growing dissatisfaction with his policy was evident, with several prominent defections from his party; and the reason why he was elected unopposed was that opposition parties boycotted the election, arguing that it was inappropriate at such a time of political crisis.

"What had caused that crisis was a huge escalation in the use of military force by the Serbian authorities. Attacks by the KLA on the Serbian police and other targets had continued during the winter of 1997-8, but on a very limited scale: in the two years up to mid-January 1998, the KLA claimed to have killed five policemen, five other Serbian officials and eleven Albanian 'collaborators' with the Serbian regime. Other European countries had experienced similar small-scale campaigns of politically motivated violence, and had dealt with them using normal police methods. But the

³⁷⁹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 349-350.

³⁸⁰ Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, Texas A & M University Press, 1995, p. 195.

³⁸¹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. xxix.

response of the Serbian authorities in this case was hugely disproportionate; and it was the nature of this response which, more than anything else, pushed Kosovo into war...

"By means of random shootings and artillery bombardments the Serb forces emptied village after village of their inhabitants; the houses were then looted and burnt, and in many cases livestock were killed and crops destroyed in the fields. Over a period of six months, from April to September 1998, more than 300 Albanian villages were devastated in this way; aid agencies estimated that between 250,000 and 300,000 people were driven from their homes. The majority moved to the major towns, while some left Kosovo altogether and others (up to 50,000) sought refuge on hillsides. From the nature of the systematic destruction of houses and livelihoods, it was clear that the main purpose of this entire campaign was not military but demographic: nothing less than the permanent uprooting of a significant proportion of the rural population of Kosovo..."³⁸²

In October, there was an agreement between the US and Milošević, and "the next two months did see a major reduction in the fighting. Many Serb units were withdrawn at the end of October, and thousands of Albanians were able to return to the burnt-out shells of their homes (which, in some cases, were found to have been booby-trapped with grenades by the Serb forces as they left). The Verification Mission began to operate, though the number of 'Verifiers' fell far below the total of 1,800 agreed in October: there were only 600 of them in Kosovo by the end of the year. During the last week of December, however, the Serb military forces launched a new offensive against KLA positions near the north-eastern town of Podujevo; the battle group used in this attack then remained in place, in further breach of the October agreement, and during the next few weeks an additional force of 15,000 Serbian troops assembled at staging-posts just outside the Kosovan border. Western monitors concluded that the Serbs were preparing for a new spring offensive against the KLA – which, for its part, had also been re-arming and training since October. However, other evidence suggested that the Serbian authorities were preparing a campaign of destruction and expulsion against the local Albanian population that would be even more far-reaching than the scorched earth policy of the previous summer: in January and February, for example, it was reported that they were seizing official documents and land-ownership registers from Albanian villages, and removing Serbian Orthodox icons and artefacts from museums in Kosovo for 'sake keeping' in Belgrade..."³⁸³

A last attempt by the West to negotiate peace at Rambouillet failed, and "on 24 March, after the failure of one more attempt at negotiation by Holbrooke and a final rejection of the Rambouillet proposals by the Serbian parliament, NATO forces began their campaign of air strikes against strategic targets inside Yugoslavia...

"During the first few days of the air-strike campaign, while NATO confined itself to the use of cruise missiles and high-altitude bombing, the Serbian forces inside

³⁸² Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. xxix-xxx, xxxii.

³⁸³ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. xxxiv.

Kosovo embarked on a massive campaign of destruction, burning down houses and using tanks and artillery to reduce entire villages to rubble. At first their actions were concentrated in three areas: in the north-eastern corner of Kosovo (securing a wide corridor for the introduction of more forces into the province), in the Drenica region (where the KLA had its main strongholds), and in a broad stretch of south-western Kosovo, near the Albanian border. The significance of this third target soon became obvious: the strategy was to clear a path for the mass expulsion of the Kosovo Albanian population. Two days after the air strikes began, the first waves of deported people began flooding over the southern borders of Kosovo, into Albania and Macedonia. Most had similar stories to tell, of a coordinated operation of 'ethnic cleansing' on a hitherto unprecedented scale. Armed men had arrive at their houses – sometimes special police, sometimes paramilitary gangsters, in many cases accompanied by local Serbs – and had ordered them to leave within minutes. An atmosphere of terror was created by random killings of civilians in the streets; some houses were set on fire as the population was leaving, and the rest would be first looted and then demolished when they had gone. As they left the village they would be funneled through a cordon of troops, who would rob them of their money and possessions. Finally they would be told which route to take to the border. In many cases, however, not all the inhabitants were allowed to leave: in a development chillingly reminiscent of the seizure of Srebrenica in 1995, men were separated from their families and taken away by Serb forces. By the third week of April the US government was reporting that it had satellite images of many newly dug mass graves; the American diplomat with special responsibility for war crimes issues, David Scheffer, calculated that up to 100,000 men were unaccounted for. Some of these, no doubt, had managed to flee to the hills, where pockets of heavily outgunned KLA fighters were putting up a limited resistance.

"The scale of this cleansing operation, and the coordination it displayed between Serbian military and police forces, indicated a high degree of planning. This was clearly not a spontaneous response to the NATO bombardment – though the air strikes may well have given Milošević a welcome opportunity to accelerate and extend the actions he had already planned. The main way in which this campaign of expulsion went beyond the ethnic cleansing of the previous year was in its application to the major towns: the inhabitants of cities such as Prishtina and Mitrovica, whose lives had been largely untouched by the 1998 campaign, were now subjected to the same methods of intimidation and deportation. Thousands of people were forced to board trains at Prishtina, which then took them to the Macedonian border; they were packed so tightly into the wagons that several elderly people died during the journey. By 20 April 1999 it was calculated that nearly 600,000 refugees had left Kosovo in the previous four weeks: 355,000 were in Albania, 127,500 in Macedonia, 72,500 in Montenegro and 32,000 in Bosnia. This was in addition to an estimated 100,000 who had left during 1998. And inside Kosovo, according to NATO spokesmen, there were five large pockets of 'displaced' Albanians, representing a total of 850,000 people."³⁸⁴

On March 23, the Synod of the Serbian Church declared: "In the name of God, we demand and beseech that all conflict in Kosovo and Metohija immediately cease, and

³⁸⁴ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

that the problems there be resolved exclusively by peaceful and political means. The way of non-violence and co-operation is the only way blessed by God in agreement with human and Divine moral law and experience. Deeply concerned about the threatened Serbian cradle of Kosovo and Metohija and for all those who live there, and especially by the terrible threats of the world's armed forces to bomb our Homeland, we would remind the responsible leaders of the international organisations that evil in Kosovo or anywhere else cannot be uprooted by even greater and more immoral evil: the bombing of one small but honourable European people. We cannot believe that the international organisations have become so incapable of devising ways for negotiation and human agreement that they must resort to ways which are dark and demeaning to human and national honour, ways which employ great violence in order to prevent a lesser evil and violence..."³⁸⁵

The Synod's calling for peace must be commended (after so many years of calling for war. Unfortunately, however, it continued to betray Orthodoxy through its ecumenical activities with Catholic and Muslim leaders...

According to NATO figures, "by the end of May, 1.5 million people, i.e. 90% of the population of Kosovo, had been expelled from their homes. Some 225,000 Kosovar men were believed to be missing. At least 5000 Kosovars had been executed."³⁸⁶ Can such barbarism be considered a "lesser evil" than a war undertaken to defend the victims and restrain the aggressors? Whatever one's judgement on NATO's actions from a political point of view, from a *moral* point of view, its aims were surely better than those of the Serbs.

Pro-Serbian commentators argued that the West was the victim of anti-Serb propaganda. The present writer is an Orthodox Christian. He watched many programmes on the Serbian wars on British television in the course of the war. No anti-Serb bias was evident in them. Detailed and generally accurate documentaries were shown on the sufferings of the Serbs at the hands of the Croats in 1941 and on the significance of Kosovo for the Serbs. Serb representatives were invited to express their point of view in all debates on the Serbian wars. No "hatred" of Serbia was shown at any time... On the other hand, Russia's NTV station seemed to be the only media outlet in Serbia or Russia that reported "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo.³⁸⁷

The war ended on June 10, 1999 with the victory of NATO over the Serbs. On the same day, "the UN Security Council passed a resolution ([UNSCR 1244](#)) welcoming the acceptance by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles on a political solution to the Kosovo crisis, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid

385 Translated in *The Shepherd* (Brookwood, Surrey), vol. XIX, № 8, April, 1999, pp. 18-19.

386 "NATO's role in relation to the conflict in Kosovo", <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm>. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen writes: "The Serbs forcibly expelled 1.5 million people, almost all Kosovars, from the country. The Serbs also selectively slaughtered approximately 10,000 mainly military-age men, which diminished the Kosovars' capacity to resist [the] Serbian onslaught. Serbs burned and destroyed at least 1,200 Kosovar residential areas, including 500 villages, and tens of thousands of homes, in the ultimately failed attempt to obliterate the Kosovar presence" (*Worse than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Onslaught on Humanity*, London: Abacus, 2012, p. 46).

387 Anna Blundy, "Russian Viewers finally see case for Nato", *The Times* (London), April 7, 1999, p. 2.

withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces. The Resolution, adopted by a vote of 14 in favour, none against and one abstention (China), announced the Security Council's decision to deploy international civil and security presences in Kosovo, under United Nations auspices.

“Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council also decided that the political solution to the crisis would be based on the general principles adopted on 6 May by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Seven industrialised countries and the Russian Federation - the Group of 8 - and the principles contained in the paper presented in Belgrade by the President of Finland and the Special Representative of the Russian Federation which was accepted by the Government of the Federal Republic on 3 June. Both documents were included as annexes to the Resolution.

“The principles included an immediate and verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo; the withdrawal of the military, police and paramilitary forces of the Federal Republic; deployment of effective international and security presences, with substantial NATO participation in the security presence and unified command and control; establishment of an interim administration; the safe and free return of all refugees; a political process providing for substantial self-government, as well as the demilitarisation of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA); and a comprehensive approach to the economic development of the crisis region...”³⁸⁸

“Within twenty-four hours of entering Kosovo, British and German troops found mass graves of victims of ‘ethnic cleansing’ at Kacanik, Glagovac, Kusaj, Mali Krusa and Korenica. Shocking scenes of these were shown on television. Within a week a further fifty mass murder sites had been located. Even while the war was being fought the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague had indicted Milosevic as a war criminal...”³⁸⁹

Conclusion: The Lessons of Kosovo

Kosovo is now, in 2017, an independent, legally sovereign country in the eyes of most other countries – but not in the eyes of Serbia, Russia and some others. Everything is possible, and it is not excluded that Kosovo will again become part of Serbia one day. However, for the Serbs to continue with their revanchist dreams even now, after the crushing and completely decisive defeat of 1999, must be considered not only politically and militarily foolish, but also, from a religious point of view, *evident refusal to accept the judgement of God and to repent in the face of His manifest wrath*. The judgement of God is against all evildoers, even – indeed, especially, those who call themselves Orthodox Christian; and only stubborn prejudice or atheism can fail to see God’s judgement on Serbia in their loss of Kosovo. St. Savva prophesied that the Serbs would lose territory if they betrayed the faith, and so it has turned out.

³⁸⁸ “NATO’s role in relation to the conflict in Kosovo”, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm>.

³⁸⁹ Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 907.

Indeed, if we look over the last 150 years of Serbian policy in Kosovo, and in particular the cruel policy of ethnic cleansing of Albanians, then we must conclude not only that the policy has been a massive failure (the population of Kosovo is now over 98% Albanian), but also that it has been immoral.

The Serbs have failed to heed the warning of their most recent saint, Bishop Nikolai Velimirović, against perpetuating racial hatred: "We sin if we see it as an obligation to hate those whom our relatives hate. This hatred passes into us like a family disease."³⁹⁰ And again he wrote: "When our nation is at enmity with neighbouring peoples, we as men dare not extend this enmity to every man from that nation, but it is our duty, in a given situation, to help every man in need, with no consideration of whether he belongs to our nation or not."³⁹¹

Bishop Nikolai's famous disciple, Archimandrite Justin Popović, rightly said: "Real Orthodox can never be chauvinists..."

"The Russian, Serbian, and Bulgarian nations can be great only if the goal of their existence be the collective realization of the commandments of the Gospel. Otherwise, 'Serbianism', 'Russianism', and 'Bulgarianism', are reduced to senseless and pernicious chauvinism. If 'Serbianism' flourishes not by the power of evangelical podvigs and not to Orthodox Catholicity, then it will choke in its own egoistic chauvinism.

"What is profitable for Serbdom is profitable for other nationalities as well. Nations pass, the Gospel is eternal. Only in so far as a nation is filled with the eternal evangelical truth and righteousness, does it exist, and itself becomes and remains eternal. Only such patriotism can be justified from an evangelical point of view."

"This is the patriotism of the holy apostles, the holy martyrs, the holy fathers." ³⁹²

Nor have they heeded the implicit warning of the Serbian lay prophet of the nineteenth century, Mitar Tabarić (1829-1899): "On our borders and over them a new nation will appear. They will grow like grass after a deluge, they will be good and honest, and they will answer our hatred with reason. They will take care of each other like brothers. And we, because of our madness we shall think that we know everything and that we can do anything, and we shall baptize them with some new fate of ours, but all that will be in vain. Because they will believe only in themselves and in nobody else. Big trouble will come of it, because this nation will be brave. Many summers this trouble will last, and nobody will be able to stop it, because that nation will grow like grass..."

This is not to say, of course, that all the evil has been on one side, nor that the Serbs do not have legitimate grievances. Since 1999 several Orthodox churches have been

³⁹⁰ Velimirović, *Okhridski Prolog*, Shabats-Valjevo, 2009, June 9, p. 476.

³⁹¹ Velimirović, *Homily on the Fourth Sunday after Pascha*.

³⁹² Popović, "On Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)".

destroyed by Albanians in Kosovo (over a hundred on March 17, 2004 alone), and grievous crimes have been committed against local Serbs. Moreover, some of the bombs dropped by NATO were uranium-tipped, causing numerous cancers... However, if we weigh these considerations against 150 years of Serbian persecution of Albanians there can be no question: the balance of evil is overwhelmingly on the Serbian side...

Perhaps the greatest evil engendered by the Yugoslav wars was the terrible image of Orthodoxy Christianity that it conveyed to the world. Of course, as we have seen, the official Serbian Church had ceased to be truly Orthodox already in the 1960s. But this was not known to the world: they looked at the externals and said "this is Orthodoxy" – and were horrified by what they saw. The Lord accused the Israelites of profaning His name among the nations (Romans 2.24; Ezekiel 36.22). The same accusation could be levelled against the Serbs, including the Serbian Church.

Under Milošević, the Church cooperated willingly in the betrayal of Serbia and Orthodoxy through spreading the Gospel of hate. "Thus many of [Vuk] Drašković's most inflammatory articles," writes Norman Cigar, "appeared first in *Glas Crkve*, an official Church journal. The Church subsequently also co-published his collected works, which were promoted in *Glas Crkve* with testimonials in the accompanying ads, proclaiming his books to be 'literature which gives birth to the great spiritual movement of renewal and rebirth among the Serbs'." Again, shortly before the outbreak of war in Bosnia, "an article in *Pravoslavlje*, an official Church publication, seemed to encourage the Serbs to view conflict in positive terms and took a clear stand against what it condemned as pacifism and defeatism. Stressing that the Serbs were engaged in a veritable struggle between good and evil, the author of the article argued that 'such partisans of peace help the evil forces that are opposed to God (and by the same token to humanity), and they are the champions of treason and defeat. In our present Armageddon, they are on the side of the destructive Gog and Magog... *The basis for such a practice and theory of peace most often is cowardly egoism*' [emphasis in the original]. Summing up his exhortations, he portrayed war as a religious experience for the Serbs, assuring his audience that 'self-sacrificing struggle for the purpose of bringing about this [state of] righteousness is a highly creative impulse and a contribution to the fulfilment of God's and mankind's goals against evil and oppression as part of the universal plan of salvation.'" ³⁹³

The Church actively supported the worst war-mongers – and not only in words. Thus Željko Ražnatović (Arkan), "whose gunmen were later accused of some of the worst war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina, received initial help 'above all', as he acknowledged subsequently, from the Serbian Orthodox Church in organizing, financing, and arming his militia...

"Notwithstanding general condemnations of violence by Patriarch Pavle, the Serbian Orthodox Church continued to lend its mantle of respectability to even the most extreme nationalist elements. Arkan provided bodyguards for the Serbian Orthodox metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro, who has reportedly used them to

³⁹³ Cigar, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

intimidate dissidents. In July, 1993, on the occasion of the city of Belgrade's holy day, Arkan marched prominently beside Patriarch Pavle in solemn procession through the city streets. In that same month, Patriarch Pavle himself led an official delegation to Bosnia, where he presided over widely publicized religious ceremonies with the participation of the top Bosnian Serb government and military leaders."³⁹⁴

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen writes: "Orthodox leaders supported the Serbs' eliminationist assaults against Muslims during the 1990s, even opening their churches to the perpetrators for planning and organizing local eliminationist campaigns. The Orthodox Bishop Vasilije of Tuzla-Zvornik in Bosnia, an area of intensive killings and other brutalities, was one of Arkan's more impassioned supporters. Several Orthodox bishops from Croatia and Bosnia presided over Arkan's wedding in 1994, two years after he initiated the eliminationist assaults in Bosnia."³⁹⁵

The tragedy of the Serbian Church and people lay in the fact that their only real claim to lordship over the non-Orthodox peoples of Yugoslavia, their possession of the true, Orthodox faith, was fatally undermined by their anti-Orthodox and anti-Christian behaviour. Even if they had been truly Orthodox from a dogmatic point of view – which, as we have seen, they are not – they had shown themselves very far from true Orthodoxy from a moral point of view. For their hatred of their neighbours and fellow-citizens, their desire to wreak horrific vengeance on whole peoples, shows that they did not understand, and did not wish to understand, the central tenet of Christian morality: love for enemies. It is the Christian's love of his enemies that places him immeasurably higher from a moral point of view than the Muslim, who does not have this conception. But a Christian who hates rather than loves his enemies becomes like his enemies – but with much less excuse, since he, unlike them, knows the Law of God, – and is no better than a pagan in the words of Christ Himself.

Some Serbs (and other Orthodox) appear to think that since Orthodoxy is the true faith, and since Kosovo once belonged to Serbia, the Serbs have an inalienable right to possess it to all eternity, and to employ whatever methods are necessary in order to keep it in their possession, including mass murder and ethnic cleansing. But this attitude is materialist, and closer to Judaism or Islam than to true Christianity. Money, goods, lands are all material things that will perish with the rest of the material world. God forbid that we should cling on to them at the cost of our immortal souls. For "what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his soul" (Matthew 16.26, cf. Hebrews 10.34). Of course, there are holy objects that the Orthodox will seek to preserve and defend from desecration. Serbs regard the whole of Kosovo as one such holy object, since it has been sanctified by the blood of St. Lazar and his army. But is a holy land preserved from desecration by acts of murder, pillage and rape such as the Serbs have committed against the Albanians? Is it not the case rather that what the martyrs of Kosovo sanctified by their blood, more recent generations of Serbs have defiled and desecrated?

³⁹⁴ Cigar, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 67-68.

³⁹⁵ Goldhagen, *Worse than War*, London: Abacus, 2012, p. 140.

Having the true faith imposes obligations, not privileges, in relation to unbelievers. This was so even in the Old Testament. For example: "Ye shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22.21). And again: "Would you kill those you have taken captive? Set bread and water before them they may eat and drink and return." (II Kings 6:22) God rewarded such generosity: after Israel's kindness to a captured invading foe, "marauding bands of Arameans did not come again into the land of Israel."

In the New Testament our obligations are much greater: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5.16).

But if the unbelievers see, not light but darkness, not love but hatred, not the freedom of the Spirit but satanic oppression and violence, how can they come to the true faith and glorify God? Is it not the case here that "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you?" (Ezekiel 16.27)?

Have the Serbs learned from their crushing defeat in 1999? The evidence is ambiguous. On the one hand, an increase in religiosity has been discernible among them: a poll carried out in 2002 by the Ministry for religious affairs of the republic of Serbia indicated that 95% of the population (excluding Kosovo) considered itself to be believing and only 0.5% - atheist. Out of a population of 7,498,001, 6,371,548, or 85%, called themselves Orthodox. On the other hand, the Serbs have remained blind to their responsibility for the catastrophe that had overtaken them, blaming in all things outsiders - NATO, the Americans, the European Union, the Muslims, any other force but not themselves. Neither State nor Church has seen the supposedly Orthodox Serbs' loyalty to their Communist past, and refusal to repent of it, as the real cause of their woes.

The official church appeared to have learned nothing, remaining stubbornly faithful to the false ideals of Titoism. Thus on November 29, 1999 Patriarch Paul took part in a festival organized by the communists celebrating the day of the foundation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945. He was strongly criticized for this by Bishop Artemije, who called it "the feast of the annihilation of the monarchy of the Serbian people", and called for "the reestablishment of the monarchy in Serbia and the return of its lawful rights to the House of the Karageorgieviches, of which they were deprived by the decision of the godless communist authorities."³⁹⁶

As the Milošević regime began to fall apart, the patriarch again returned to an anticommunist position. But by this time it was clear that he was no different from his ally, the Moscow patriarch, in always following the dominant political currents, which is the essence of sergianism. And also in relation to ecumenism, the patriarch could only be described as the opposite of a confessor, declaring that the Christians and the Muslims had the same God, while allowing his bishops, especially Laurence of Sabać, to take prominent roles in the World Council of Churches.

³⁹⁶ "Episkop ofitsial'noj serbskoj tserkvi oblichaiet svoego patriarkha" (Bishop of the Official Serbian Church Reproaches His Patriarch), *Vertograd-Inform*, № 1 (58), January, 2000, p. 13.

It was inevitable that Yugoslavia should fall apart after Tito's death. Every Communist federation is an enemy of God, an artificial creation held together by violence and lies. The only possible condition for preserving Yugoslavia intact would have been for the Serbs first to repent of their own sins as a nation and then to take advantage of their leadership position and the weakening of the communist ideology in order to convert their fellow Yugoslavs in the other republics to the Orthodox Faith. But they improved incapable of that for the simple reason that, as we have seen, they themselves had fallen away from the true faith, and showed no signs of being conscious of that fact and returning to God. A less good course, but still better than the one they actually adopted would have been for them to allow the republics to separate from each other in a peaceful and orderly way, each republic being allowed to choose its own path freely and without coercion in the manner of, for example, the peaceful break-up of Czechoslovakia between Czechia and Slovakia, or (in general) that of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev...

But Milošević chose another course: the path of Great Serb Nationalism, and the forcible prevention, first of non-Serbian Communist Parties, and then of the non-Serbian Republics themselves, from liberating themselves from Serbian and Communist domination. Yugoslavia was the first state that chose to make the transition out of Communism, not to Democracy (and still less Orthodox Autocracy), but to another, closely related form of Despotism, a kind of "Orthodox Fascism" sponsored by atheist ex-Communists.

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Milošević was finally overthrown in October, 2000.³⁹⁷ A few hours later, Zoran Djindjic, the main organizer of the coup, who subsequently became the first genuinely democratic Prime Minister of Serbia until his assassination in March, 2003, said of Milošević: "He built a web of wickedness. He manipulated us for thirteen years. He starved the whole country with his madness for war, and turned the rest of the world against us... Under a bad leadership Serbs are capable of committing the most terrible atrocities; under good leaders we can do great deeds. It's like a field – if it's not cared for, the weeds will take over. But if you tend it, water and feed the seeds, you will reap a bountiful harvest. Serbs are lazy, we lack discipline and have no capacity for self-criticism. Our primary flaw is that we believe we are stronger and better than anyone else."³⁹⁸

These remarks by the leader of the country say it all: it is the pride of the Serbs, and their inability to criticize themselves, that has brought them to this impasse. "For if we

³⁹⁷ Having finally been driven from office, Milošević died in prison in The Hague in 2006. As David Halberstam wrote, he "had managed to retain the view of many a totalitarian figure before him. He believed that if democracies were slow to act, it was a sign of weakness; if they were affluent, then they were also decadent. In addition, because their politicians and their citizens feared paying the price of war, they could be bullied. He once told the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer: 'I can stand death – lots of it – but you can't.'"

³⁹⁸ Djindjic, in Åsne Seierstad, *With their Backs to the Wall. Portraits from Serbia*, London: Virago, 2005, pp. 4-5.

would judge ourselves, we would not be judged" (I Corinthians 11.31). Of course, they are not alone in this: all the Orthodox nations of Eastern Europe that fell under the communist yoke in punishment of their sins have failed to repent, which is why their torments continue even after the communist yoke, at any rate in its old-style, Soviet form, has been removed from them...

However, now that True Orthodoxy has a foothold in Serbia, we must hope that the Serbs will at last see their error, and begin to fight the heretical West and Islam, not physically but spiritually, not by returning evil for evil, but by confessing both the truth and the love of Orthodox Christianity in word and deed. For, as Tim Judah writes, "Milošević had spun the Serbs' dreams of the Empire of Heaven and clothed himself in the glory of the Kosovo myth. Unlike Lazarus, however, he chose a kingdom on earth, which is not the kingdom of Lazarus's truth and justice."³⁹⁹

August 2/15, 2017.

³⁹⁹ Judah, *The Serbs*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997, p. 309.

24. MILOŠEVIĆ'S WARS

From Communism to Nationalism

One of the few plusses of communist rule had been its suppression, by a mixture of force and guile, of outright war, not only between Serbs and Albanians, but also between Serbs and Croats and other nationalities. "Until 1987," writes Misha Glenny, "the Titoist balance went through a variety of modifications, substantial and superficial, but its fundamental premise was the maintenance of a relatively weak Serbia at the expense of autonomous republican centres. Despite this, Tito could not afford Serbs to feel excluded. This imperative ensured the relative strength of Serb politicians in Croatia, Bosnia, Vojvodina and Kosovo, as well as at the federal level. As a whole, the system could only function with two absolute political taboos; overt nationalism and the active participation of the masses in politics. It was these two taboos which Milošević smashed in 1987..."⁴⁰⁰

Milošević acted in the way he did because, as perestroika began in Russia, he could see that the writing was on the wall for old-style communists throughout Eastern Europe. They had a choice if they wanted to stay in power: either become European-style democrats, or take the nationalist road. In Russia, they chose democracy (until the rise of Putin in 2000). In Serbia, they chose the path of nationalist revanchism,...⁴⁰¹

As Niall Ferguson writes, "it is clear that Milošević's principal motive in playing the Serbian nationalist card was to avoid the fate of Communist leaders in other East European countries. While they had been swept away by the post-1989 wave of nationalism. Milošević was able to ride it; indeed, to whip it up. And for ten years his strategy worked..."⁴⁰²

Of course, there was another possible exit from communism: a return to the Orthodox monarchy of the inter-war years. But in spite of the fact that the Serbian media began to glorify the Orthodox royalist *četniks* of the Second World War, it was not for their Orthodoxy, nor even for their monarchism, that the *četniks* were now being honoured, but exclusively for their Serbian patriotism. Indeed, the word "*četnik*" now began to undergo a startling change of meaning which would have made Draža Mihailović turn in his grave: communist thugs and atheist nationalists now began to call themselves "*četniks*".

400 Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, London, 1996, p. 32.

401 At the same time, the democratization process that affected all the countries of Eastern Europe at this time stimulated nationalism. As Samuel P. Huntington writes, "The first fairly contested elections in almost every former Soviet and former Yugoslav republic were won by political leaders appealing to nationalist sentiments and promising vigorous action to defend their nationality against other ethnic groups. Electoral competition encourages nationalist appeals and thus promotes the intensification of fault line conflicts into fault line wars. When, in Bogan Denitch's phrase, 'ethnos becomes demos,' the initial result is *polemos* or war" (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Touchstone Books, 1998, p. 262).

402 Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin, 2007, pp. 630-631.

"For the fact was that the Serbs as a whole, and especially the intelligentsia, had long ago abandoned true Orthodoxy and monarchism; they had no intention of repenting of their adherence to the Titoist state – and the official church was far too corrupt and entwined with the communist system to call anyone to repentance. Of course, now that Titoism was weakening, they could afford to be openly critical of it in a way they had never been able to do under Tito. But their main criticism of it had to do with the fact that Tito had not given enough power to the Serbs...

Dejan Djokić writes: "As Yugoslavia entered the post-Tito era, there were increasing calls for the pursuit of the... ideal of finding what really happened in Yugoslavia in the Second World War. The official history [which minimised the ethnic elements and called it a 'national liberation war and a socialist revolution'] was bound to be challenged in the more relaxed political atmosphere which eventually emerged following the death of Tito in 1980, when the so-called 'hidden', unofficial, accounts of the war years began to appear. During what one Serbian weekly described as 'the burst of history', the official interpretation of Yugoslavia's recent past was questioned by every engaged intellectual. To many observers in the late 1980s, it must have seemed that the Second World War had broken out for the second time in Yugoslavia – verbally, for the time being...

"The most controversial and most debated issue was that of Croatian genocide against Serbs during the Second World War. Both the Ustaša-directed project to rid the Independent State of Croatia of its almost two million Serbs (and also Jews and Roma) and the nature and scope of the genocide have been the subject of scholarly works. The issue remains a bone of contention between Serbs and Croats... Moreover, some Serbs argue that anti-Serbianism has always been present among Croats and that the Ustaša genocide was merely the last phase of a long process...

"The nationalist discourse in Yugoslavia, but especially in Serbia and Croatia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sought a reconciliation between victors and losers of the Second World War who belonged to the same nation; between Partisans and Četniks in the case of Serbs, and Partisans and Ustašas in the case of Croats. In Yugoslavia at the time 'reconciliation' meant a homogenisation of the nation by reconciling ideological differences within the nation..."⁴⁰³

Reconciliation between communists and anti-communists also took place in the ecclesiastical sphere. In 1991, communion was restored between the Serbian Patriarchate and the Free Serbs. However, many Free Serb parishes rejected this decision and remain independent to this day.⁴⁰⁴

And so a "red-brown", "cross-and-red-star" coalition of communists and nationalists, believers and atheists, propelled both Serbs and Croats along the path to

403 Djokić, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Former Yugoslavia", *History Today*, vol. 54 (6), June, 2004, pp. 18-19.

404 *Pravoslavlje*, June 1, 1991; *Keston News Service*, № 379, 11 July, 1991, p. 4; *Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*, December, 1991, pp. 29-31.

destruction... It is this similarity in the Serbian and Croatian nationalisms of the late 1980s, and their common origin in the decaying communism of the Titoist era, - or, going further back, in the decaying imperialism of the Austro-Hungarian empire, - that makes it difficult - and pointless - to attempt to decide which was worse. While despising each other for being supposedly so different from, and inferior to, themselves, they only showed close they were in their irrationality, their hatred and their cruelty...

The Bosnian War

The Serbian wars began in the spring of 1991. The general feeling then among the Serbs, a feeling supported by the Church, was that what was taking place was a repeat of 1941, when hundreds of thousands of Orthodox Serbs were martyred by Catholic Croats for refusing to renounce Orthodoxy. And it cannot be denied that in that theatre of war similarities existed between the present and the past cannot be denied. Thus in 1991, as in 1941, the Vatican backed Croatia, being the first state to recognise its independence out of the wreckage of Yugoslavia. It was reported that the Catholic Church itself purchased weapons and ammunition that it sent to the Croats.⁴⁰⁵ And the Pope chose this time to call the bloody murderer of Serbs in 1941, Cardinal Stepinac, "undoubtedly the most prominent martyr in Croatia's history".⁴⁰⁶

However, if the Croats exceeded all in their murderous nationalism in 1941, the Serbs had caught up with them fifty years later. The Croats were reviled by for separating from Yugoslavia, even though it was their right under the Yugoslav Constitution, which the Serbs claimed to be upholding. And while the new Croat government under Tuđman (a partisan during the war) was not at all sensitive to the fears of the Serbian minority in the new state, and should have taken more account of these fears before declaring independence, it was the Serb Milan Babić's provocative creation of an independent Serbian state of Krajina within Croatia in 1990 - a move strongly supported by Milošević - that really triggered the war...

Christopher Bennett writes: "The tactics pursued towards Serb communities outside Serbia during the 1980s and early 1990s were essentially identical to those pursued by Hitler towards the German diaspora across eastern and central Europe in the 1930s. In the same way that Nazi Germany alleged that the German minorities of Czechoslovakia and Poland were being persecuted by their Czech and Polish governments, Serbia alleged that Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were victims of Croat and Muslim oppression. However, in both instances the plight of the respective minorities was simply a pretext for intervention. Milošević aimed to destabilise both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and had no regard for the long-term interests of the Serb communities in the two republics. Had the conflict in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina really been a question of Serb rights, Milošević had ample opportunity to resolve it. Moreover, given the imbalance in firepower between Serbia and the rest of Yugoslavia and the desperation of the Croatian and Bosnian

405 Antonios Markou, "On the Serbian Question", *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XI, № 4, 1994, p. 16.

406 "'World Orthodoxy's' Sister Church to canonize murderer of the Serbian Orthodox people", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, September 12/25, 1994, p. 2. Stepinac was beatified in 1998.

authorities, he could easily have obtained a settlement which was extremely generous to the Serb position. However, the conflict was not a question of Serb rights, and Milošević had no desire to see it resolved."⁴⁰⁷

Who committed the worst atrocities in Milošević's wars is an historical question that cannot be settled here. For every claim of atrocities by one side there have been counter-claims of atrocities on the other.⁴⁰⁸ One thing is certain: no side emerged in a good light from a Christian point of view.

So powerful was the nationalist demon stirred up by Milošević that even the politicians who marched against him in the 1990s, such as Vuk Drašković, agreed with his plans for a Greater Serbia. That is why they were so easily outmanoeuvred by him...

And yet there were dissenters against Milošević's policies among the Serbs. One was the owner and editor of the Belgrade *Dnevni Telegraph*, Slavko Curuvija, who wrote an open letter to Milošević. The following is an extract from his letter: "Everything that the Serbs have created in this century has been thoughtlessly wasted... The nation has developed a complex as a vanquished, genocidal aggressor as well as being the last bastion of European communism. The merit and worth of Serbian institutions have been destroyed in a systematic manner. You have brought a university and a local farmers' collective to the same level, equated the Academy of Arts and Sciences with a nursing home, you have degraded the church, the legislature, the media, parliament and the government... Nowhere in today's Europe are criminals and the state wedded in such a harmonious marriage as here in Serbia. Organised gangs control the circulation of key goods and services. Paramilitary formations still operate. Street violence and murders are a daily occurrence and the state has in practice abandoned its responsibility for the safety of its citizens and their property... A psychosis of a permanent state of emergency has been imposed on society, in addition to the fear generated by omnipotent police and your henchmen, who boast that they can order executions of the people they dislike. Absolute obedience is demanded from the population. Hysterical, choreographed outpourings of support are set up after every victory that contributes to our decline. Your excellency, your country, your people and your compatriots have been living for years in a state of fear, of psychosis, with nothing but death, misery, terror and despair around them... Hungry and humiliated, your citizens have exhausted their spirits and have no strength to make even verbal protests. Our letter to you is our modest contribution to the struggle against fear."

Curuvijas was first fined \$100,000, and then two masked assassin fired 11 shots into him at close range, while his wife was clubbed with a gun...

407 Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, London: Hurst & co., 1998, pp. 243-244.

408 See, for example, George Bogdanich, "Srebrenica and the Politics of War Crimes", *Defense & Foreign Affairs Analysis*, vol. XXIII, no. 62, June 17, 2005, <http://www.srebrenica-report.com/defense.htm>. And also Carl Savich, "Srebrenica: The Untold Story", <http://www.pogledi.co.yu/english/srebrenica1.php>.

The Fall of the Serbian Church

What, it may be asked, was the Serbian Orthodox Church doing in this period? Certainly not guarding either the faith or the morals of the Serbian people... After an initial resistance to communism and the martyrdoms of several bishops and priests, by the 1960s the Serbian Church had been broken as a bastion of true Christian spirituality.⁴⁰⁹ Patriarch German was well-known in diplomatic circles to be a communist party member⁴¹⁰, and in 1965, almost certainly at the behest of the communists, he took his Church into the pan-heretical World Council of Churches. Archimandrite Justin Popović lamented the Church's fall, but he and his disciples remained in communion with the heretics. By 1966 the famous zealot of the Russian Church Abroad, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville, was calling for a break of communion with the "red" Serbian Church.

The sad fact is that by the time Tito died in 1980 communism had done its work: as in Russia, but more quickly and more completely, the people in Serbia had been corrupted and secularized. As the Orthodox writer Jim Forest pointed out in 1995, "Serbia is one of Europe's most secularised societies. Tito's anti-religious policies were more effective than those of Stalin, Khrushchev or Brezhnev. Few Serbs are even baptized (the usual estimate is five per cent) and far fewer are active in church life."⁴¹¹ As for marriages, in the diocese of Rashka and Prizren, "for 50 long years almost no one was married and all those families lived in a state of adultery", until the appointment of Bishop Artemije, when "very slowly and with difficulty, people got used to this requirement of the Church and the amount of those who marry increases with each year."⁴¹²

From a spiritual point of view the Serbs were no longer the same people as in the time of St. Savva, or even of their most recent saint, Bishop Nikolai Velimirović (+1956). Many might still describe themselves as Orthodox, but the reality was very different. Whereas in 1931 barely 0.1% of the population of Yugoslavia declared itself to be without religious affiliation, and only about 12.5% in 1953, the figure was 31.6% in 1987. The phenomenon of religious non-affiliation was particularly striking precisely in the Serb territories. For example, 54% were non-affiliated in Montenegro.⁴¹³ One 1985 survey put the proportion of believers in Bosnia at 17 per cent...⁴¹⁴ But the war increased "religious" passion on all sides. According to Srdan Vrcan, the Bosnian war was a political conflict that had been given a religious colouring by the warring leaders in order to gain the support of their peoples.⁴¹⁵

409 See V. Moss, *Letopis Velike Bitke* (Chronicle of a Great Battle), Belgrade, 2008. Pp. 394-407.

410 E.H.St.G. Moss, first secretary, British embassy in Belgrade during the 1950s, personal communication.

411 Forest, "An Orthodox Response to the War in Former Yugoslavia", *Orthodox Outlook*, vol. VIII, № 6, 1995, p. 32. Baptisms in the Serbian Church are now very often only pourings, not full immersions.

412 *Church News* (the English translation of *Tserkovnie Novosti*), vol. 9, № 8 (64), August, 1997, p. 7.

413 Sergej Flere, "Denominational Affiliation in Yugoslavia, 1937-1987", *East European Quarterly*, XXV, № 2, June, 1991, pp. 145-165.

414 Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History*, London: Papermac, 1996, p. 222.

415 Vrcan, "The War in Former Yugoslavia and Religion", *Religion, State and Society*, 22/4, 1994, pp. 374-75. This is also the opinion of Samuel Huntingdon, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

The attitude of the Serbian Church in this conflict was highly ambivalent: sometimes it criticised the Serbian communist government for having brought so much suffering upon the Serbian people, at others it criticised it for not fighting hard enough, and even blessing the activities of some of the most criminal elements in the Serbian forces. Thus the Swiss Orthodox analyst Jean-François Meyer wrote: "The Church has assumed a vocation of guarding 'Serbness' and preserves a lively consciousness of this mission. Thus she has always adopted uncompromising positions with regard to the Kosovo question and energetically defends [Kosovo's] remaining a part of Serbia. As for the Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, since the massacres carried out in the zones under Croat control during the Second World War were also anti-Orthodox operations, the Church has not hidden her sympathy for their worries and their political objectives. Certain Serbian Orthodox circles were able for a time to believe that they had found in Milosevic a politician who shared the general preoccupations in this respect, but the Church was not slow to distance herself on experiencing the chicaneries of the regime. Thus in 1993 one could see the minister responsible for religious affairs in Belgrade accusing the Church of getting involved in political affairs and certain bishops of wanting to 'stir up the people against the government', while the patriarchate replied by describing the minister as a 'servant of the communist ideology'. At least one part of President Milosevic's entourage continues to cultivate the anti-religious heritage of the communist regime, beginning with the president's wife herself, Mira Markovic (ex-president of the 'Federation of communists - Movement for Yugoslavia', then founder in 1995 of a new party, the UYL, that is, the 'United Yugoslav Left'), who deplors the importance of religion in Serbia and considers that the country 'has already reverted spiritually to the Middle Ages'; the tendency of the regime to retrieve Serb nationalist symbols does not prevent the wife of the president from criticising the cult of Saint Sabbas, which is very important in the Serbian Orthodox tradition. Wishing to be a guarantor of the unity of all Serbs, the Serbian Church has again reasserted her opposition to the Belgrade regime when the latter tried to distance itself from the Bosnian Serbs so as to obtain a lifting of the embargo imposed by the international community. When the Serbs fled from Krajina in August, 1995, the leaders of the Serbian Church again published a solemn declaration sharply criticising the 'incapacity' of the 'neo-communist' Belgrade regime, which has led to 'a total impasse' and is preventing 'the spiritual, moral and political recovery' of the Serbian people."⁴¹⁶ This gesture of defiance towards the communist government was a welcome change from the Serbian Church's "sergianism" in relation to the communists over the previous forty years.⁴¹⁷

416 Jean-François Meyer, *Religions et Sécurité Internationale (Religions and International Security)*, Berne, Switzerland: Office Central de la Defense, 1995, pp. 24-25.

417 "Comparing the position of the Orthodox Church under the power of communism in Russia and in Yugoslavia, one can say that in the first years of the establishment of the godless power in Russia Patriarch Tikhon anathematized the godless and all their co-workers, and as soon as the betrayal of church liberty by Metropolitan Sergius was comprehended, almost immediately an elemental movement against was formed, under the leadership of the greater and best part of the Episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church, which later received the name of the Catacomb or Tikhonite Church. Unfortunately, nothing similar took place in the composition of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

"The Serbian Church, which was far from being as cruelly persecuted by the godless as the Russian, made no protest against the participation of their own Patriarch German in the ecumenical movement and even his position as one of the presidents of the WCC. The hierarchy of the Serbian Church did not find in itself enough spiritual strength, as did the Russian Church, to create in its

However, it did not last; Patriarch Pavle never made a clean break with communism. As late as November 29, 1999 he took part in a festival organised by the communists celebrating the day of the foundation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945. He was strongly criticised for this by Bishop Artemije of Kosovo, who called this day "the feast of the annihilation of the monarchy of the Serbian people", and called for "the reestablishment of the monarchy in Serbia and the return of its lawful rights to the House of the Karageorgieviches, of which they were deprived by the decision of the godless communist authorities."⁴¹⁸

Nor, in spite of the war with the Croat Catholics, whom the Pope supported, did Patriarch Pavle cease from pandering to him. Thus in a letter to the Pope dated January 17, 1992 he asked for "a true ecumenical dialogue between our two sister Churches".⁴¹⁹

A year later, while continuing to incite his flock against the Catholics of Croatia, he wrote to him again: "We sincerely rejoice that this joint prayer... (with) representatives of other Christian churches and confessions in Europe, as well as representatives of Islam and other great religions,... will take place in Assisi, the homeland of that righteous one and true servant of God, whose spiritual legacy and teachings have made him an apostle of humility, repentance, peace and love. He has built a real bridge between Christians of the West and East. You may rest assured, Your Holiness, that on this day, as well as on every day given us by God, we are in communion with you in prayer for peace and the salvation of all. This is so, although the undersigned... is regrettably unable to be able personally and physically at the concelebration in Assisi. We ask you to do us a favour and receive our delegation as soon as possible in spite your enormous volume of work and all your great difficulties. This delegation will be instructed to cooperate with these organisations which you appoint for the preparation of our meeting with Your Holiness. If God is merciful, and the meeting takes place in the not so remote future, this will be the first meeting between the Pope of Rome and the Serbian Patriarch. We once more thank Your Holiness for the invitation, attention and love which you have shown us. We assure you that on the 9th and 10th of January, during the prayer in Assisi, we 'with one mouth and one heart' will offer up to the Throne of our Lord and Saviour, together with Your Holiness and all the Bishops and believers of your Holy Church, our sincere prayers for peace in the whole world and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina."⁴²⁰

The Serbian Church cooperated willingly in the betrayal of the Christian Gospel through spreading the gospel of hate. "Thus many of Drašković's most inflammatory articles," writes Norman Cigar, "appeared first in *Glas Crkve*, an official Church

depths an anti-communist and anti-ecumenist popular movement, although individual true holy new martyrs were found in it. For a little more than fifty years of communist dominion in Yugoslavia, not one courageous speech of members of the Serbian hierarchy against godlessness and ecumenism was known abroad." (*Tserkovnie Novosti (Church News)*, June-July, 1999, № 4 (80), p. 4.

418 "Episkop ofitsial'noj serbskoj tserkvi oblichaet svoego patriarkha" (Bishop of the Official Serbian Church Reproaches His Patriarch), *Vertograd-Inform*, № 1 (58), January, 2000, p. 13)

419 Florence Hamlish Levinsohn, *Belgrade: Among the Serbs*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994, p. 238.

420 *Russkaia Mysl' (Russian Thought)*, January 22, 1993.

journal. The Church subsequently also co-published his collected works, which were promoted in *Glas Crkve* with testimonials in the accompanying ads, proclaiming his books to be 'literature which gives birth to the great spiritual movement of renewal and rebirth among the Serbs'.

"The Church, in its own way, also contributed to making force a morally acceptable means to use in Bosnia-Herzegovina in rejecting peaceful solutions. Shortly before the outbreak of violence there, for example, an article in *Pravoslavlje*, an official Church publication, seemed to encourage the Serbs to view conflict in positive terms and took a clear stand against what it condemned as pacifism and defeatism. Stressing that the Serbs were engaged in a veritable struggle between good and evil, the author of the article argued that 'such [Serbian] partisans of peace help the evil forces that are opposed to God (and by the same token to humanity), and they are the champions of treason and defeat. In our present Armageddon, they are on the side of the destructive Gog and Magog... *The basis for such a practice and theory of peace most often is cowardly egoism*' [emphasis in the original]. Summing up his exhortations, he portrayed war as a religious experience for the Serbs, assuring his audience that 'self-sacrificing struggle for the purpose of bringing about this [state of] righteousness is a highly creative impulse and a contribution to the fulfilment of God's and mankind's goals against evil and oppression as part of the universal plan of salvation.'"⁴²¹

Nor did the Church support the war-mongering revanchists with words only. "In practical terms, for example, warlord Željko Ražnatović (Arkan), whose gunmen were later accused of some of the worst war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina, received initial help 'above all', as he acknowledged subsequently, from the Serbian Orthodox Church in organizing, financing, and arming his militia...

"Notwithstanding general condemnations of violence by Patriarch Pavle, the Serbian Orthodox Church continued to lend its mantle of respectability to even the most extreme nationalist elements. Arkan provided bodyguards for the Serbian Orthodox metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro, who has reportedly used them to intimidate dissidents. In July, 1993, on the occasion of the city of Belgrade's holy day, Arkan marched prominently beside Patriarch Pavle in solemn procession through the city streets. In that same month, Patriarch Pavle himself led an official delegation to Bosnia, where he presided over widely publicized religious ceremonies with the participation of the top Bosnian Serb government and military leaders."⁴²²

The tragedy of the Serbian Church and people lay in the fact that their only real claim to lordship over the non-Orthodox peoples of Yugoslavia, their possession of the true, Orthodox faith, was fatally undermined by their anti-Orthodox and anti-Christian behaviour. Even if they had been truly Orthodox from a dogmatic point of view – which, as we have seen, they are not – they showed themselves to be very far from truly Orthodox from a moral point of view. For their hatred of their neighbours and fellow-citizens, their desire to wreak horrific vengeance on whole peoples, showed that they do not understand, and do not wish to understand, the central tenet

421 Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia*, Texas A & M University Press, 1995, pp. 31-32.

422 Cigar, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 67-68.

of Christian morality: love for enemies. It is the Christian's love of his enemies that places him immeasurably higher from a moral point of view than the Muslim, who does not have this conception. But a Christian who hates rather than loves his enemies is becoming like his enemies – but with much less excuse, since he, unlike them, knows the Law of God, - and is no better than a pagan in the words of Christ Himself.

As Roger Scruton writes, “there is no coherent reading of the Christian message that does not make forgiveness of enemies into a central item of the creed. Christ even commanded us, when assaulted, to turn the other cheek. Pacifists take this remark to mean that we should not defend ourselves, but overcome violence as Christ did, by example. But it is possible to accept the Christian doctrine and yet to stop short of pacifism. Christ suffered the most violent death, not in order to recommend defenselessness, but in order to redeem mankind. At the same time he bore witness to the fact that it was not through *him* that evil had entered the world. In enjoining us to turn the other cheek he was setting before us, as always, a personal ideal, not a political project. If I am attacked and turn the other cheek, then I exemplify the Christian virtue of meekness. If am entrusted with a child who is attacked, and I then turn the *child's* other cheek, I make myself party to the violence...

“The Christian injunction to forgive is therefore compatible with defensive warfare. But it is incompatible with terrorism, and inimical to those visceral antagonisms that lead one group into a war of extermination with another...”⁴²³

The Kosovan War

The 1990s were characterized by great unrest among the Albanian population, and the beginning of an underground political movement in Kosovo. “On 24 May 1992 Kosovo-wide elections were held, using private houses as polling-stations under the noses of the Serbian authorities, to create a new republican assembly and government.” The majority of elected members in this underground assembly came from the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), whose leader, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, a specialist in literary history, became elected president of the Kosovan “republic”.⁴²⁴

The Serbs treated all such Albanian activism as “terrorism”. But in truth the situation of the Albanians was wretched; in general they were the victims rather than the perpetrators of violence. And even though, towards the end of the 1990s, some real Albanian terrorism in the form of KLA activity did emerge, what state deals with terrorists on its own territory by persecuting the whole population, the innocent with the guilty, women with men, children with adults? The answer is: a communist or fascist one...

For “every aspect of life in Kosovo has been affected,” wrote Noel Malcolm in 1998. “Using a combination of emergency measures, administrative fiats and laws authorizing the dismissal of anyone who had taken part in a one-day protest strike, the Serb authorities have sacked the overwhelming majority of those Albanians who

⁴²³ Scruton, *The West and the Rest*, London: Continuum, 2003, pp. 38, 39.

⁴²⁴ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 347, 348.

had any form of state employment in 1990. Most Albanian doctors and health workers were also dismissed from the hospitals; deaths from diseases such as measles and polio have increased, with the decline in the numbers of Albanians receiving vaccinations. Approximately 6,000 school-teachers were sacked in 1990 for having taken part in protests, and the rest were dismissed when they refused to comply with a new Serbian curriculum which largely eliminated the teaching of Albanian literature and history. In some places the Albanian teachers were allowed to continue to take classes (without state pay) in the school buildings, but strict physical segregation was introduced – with, for example, separate lavatories for Albanian and Serb children – and equipment or materials, including in one case the window-glass, was removed from the areas they used. For both health-care and education the Albanians have organized their own ‘parallel’ system of clinics and schools, mainly in private premises; the doctors and teachers are paid by the ‘Republic’ (in practice, by the LDK) out of an income tax of three per cent levied, on a voluntary basis, in the diaspora. In this way teaching is arranged for more than 400,000 children; the teachers and organizers are, however, frequently subjected to arrest, intimidation and beatings by the Serb police.

“Arbitrary arrest and police violence have become routine. Serbian law allows the arrest and summary imprisonment for up to two months of anyone who has committed a ‘verbal crime’ such as insulting the ‘patriotic feelings’ of Serbian citizens. It also permits a procedure known as ‘informative talks’, under which a person can be summoned to a police station and questioned for up to three days: in 1994 15,000 people in Kosovo were questioned in this way, usually without being told the reason for the summons. Serbian law does not, of course, permit the beating up of people in police custody; but many graphic testimonies exist of severe beatings with truncheons, the application of electric shocks to the genitals, and so on. Also widely violated in Kosovo are the official rules for the lawful search of people’s houses: homes are frequently raided without explanation, and goods and money confiscated (i.e. stolen) by the police. In 1994 alone the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms in Kosovo recorded 2,157 physical assaults by the police, 3,553 raids on private dwellings and 2,963 arbitrary arrests.

“Such methods were already being applied before the outbreak of the war in the former Yugoslavia in the summer of 1991. At first the war had little direct effect on conditions in Kosovo apart from increasing the reluctance of young Albanians to do their military service in the Yugoslav – now, in practice, Serbian – army. The most important effect of the outbreak of the war was on the thinking of Albanian political circles in Kosovo: it was the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991 that led the LDK to change its aims from republican status within Yugoslavia to full sovereignty and independence. But in terms of practical life, the only group that felt immediately affected by the Serbian-Croatian war was the small population of so-called ‘Kosovo Croats’, the Catholic Slavs who lived in Janjevo and a small group of villages to the south of that town. More than half of the Janjevo Catholics fled to Croatia (mainly to Zagreb) by the end of 1991, and the inhabitants of villages such as Letnica followed in 1992...”⁴²⁵

425 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. 349-350.

After the end of the war in Bosnia and the Dayton Agreement in 1995, the still-unspent energy of Serbian revanchism turned – to Kosovo... But an excuse was needed in order to unleash the full weight of the Serbian army on the province. Such an excuse would have been armed resistance by the Albanians. But the peaceful policy of Rugova restrained the Albanians from taking that fatal step. And yet, as Norman Cigar wrote in 1995, “many Serbian hard-liners no doubt seek to spark just such a reaction so that the state will have a rationale to launch full-scale repression. As the leader of one of the most extreme parties, Jović – whose militia had been marauding in Kosovo – admitted, his objective was specifically to provoke such an Albanian reaction. He stated: ‘The issue of the occupation [by the Albanians] of Kosovo and Metohija cannot be solved except by inducing the Shiptars [Albanians] to start an uprising.’”⁴²⁶

The excuse for invasion that the Serbs were looking for appeared in the next year with the first news of a shadowy Albanian guerrilla force, the KLA. “At this early stage, however, Rugova’s own attitude to the KLA was quite uncomprehending: when the first KLA attacks on Serb policemen had taken place in 1996 and 1997 he had become convinced that the whole thing was a chimera, invented by Serb *agents provocateurs*. It would be well into 1998 before he changed his mind.”⁴²⁷

Rugova argued that it was useless to oppose Serbian tanks with bare hands. However, the collapse of neighbouring Albania suddenly made Kosovan Albanians able to buy Kalashnikovs (useless though they were against tanks). And so the possibility of armed resistance presented itself, and Rugova’s popularity slipped.

“Among the general Albanian population Rugova’s personal standing remained high; at unofficial elections for the self-styled Kosovo government on 22 March, 1998, he was returned unopposed as President. But among the political class the growing dissatisfaction with his policy was evident, with several prominent defections from his party; and the reason why he was elected unopposed was that opposition parties boycotted the election, arguing that it was inappropriate at such a time of political crisis.

“What had caused that crisis was a huge escalation in the use of military force by the Serbian authorities. Attacks by the KLA on the Serbian police and other targets had continued during the winter of 1997-8, but on a very limited scale: in the two years up to mid-January 1998, the KLA claimed to have killed five policemen, five other Serbian officials and eleven Albanian ‘collaborators’ with the Serbian regime. Other European countries had experienced similar small-scale campaigns of politically motivated violence, and had dealt with them using normal police methods. But the response of the Serbian authorities in this case was hugely disproportionate; and it was the nature of this response which, more than anything else, pushed Kosovo into war...

⁴²⁶ Cigar, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁴²⁷ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. xxix.

“By means of random shootings and artillery bombardments the Serb forces emptied village after village of their inhabitants; the houses were then looted and burnt, and in many cases livestock were killed and crops destroyed in the fields. Over a period of six months, from April to September 1998, more than 300 Albanian villages were devastated in this way; aid agencies estimated that between 250,000 and 300,000 people were driven from their homes. The majority moved to the major towns, while some left Kosovo altogether and others (up to 50,000) sought refuge on hillsides. From the nature of the systematic destruction of houses and livelihoods, it was clear that the main purpose of this entire campaign was not military but demographic: nothing less than the permanent uprooting of a significant proportion of the rural population of Kosovo...”⁴²⁸

In October, there was an agreement between the US and Milošević, and “the next two months did see a major reduction in the fighting. Many Serb units were withdrawn at the end of October, and thousands of Albanians were able to return to the burnt-out shells of their homes (which, in some cases, were found to have been booby-trapped with grenades by the Serb forces as they left). The Verification Mission began to operate, though the number of ‘Verifiers’ fell far below the total of 1,800 agreed in October: there were only 600 of them in Kosovo by the end of the year. During the last week of December, however, the Serb military forces launched a new offensive against KLA positions near the north-eastern town of Podujevo; the battle group used in this attack then remained in place, in further breach of the October agreement, and during the next few weeks an additional force of 15,000 Serbian troops assembled at staging-posts just outside the Kosovan border. Western monitors concluded that the Serbs were preparing for a new spring offensive against the KLA – which, for its part, had also been re-arming and training since October. However, other evidence suggested that the Serbian authorities were preparing a campaign of destruction and expulsion against the local Albanian population that would be even more far-reaching than the scorched earth policy of the previous summer: in January and February, for example, it was reported that they were seizing official documents and land-ownership registers from Albanian villages, and removing Serbian Orthodox icons and artefacts from museums in Kosovo for ‘sake keeping’ in Belgrade...”⁴²⁹

A last attempt by the West to negotiate a peace deal between the two sides at Rambouillet failed, and “on 24 March 1999, after the failure of one more attempt at negotiation by Holbrooke and a final rejection of the Rambouillet proposals by the Serbian parliament, NATO forces began their campaign of air strikes against strategic targets inside Yugoslavia...

“During the first few days of the air-strike campaign, while NATO confined itself to the use of cruise missiles and high-altitude bombing, the Serbian forces inside Kosovo embarked on a massive campaign of destruction, burning down houses and using tanks and artillery to reduce entire villages to rubble. At first their actions were concentrated in three areas: in the north-eastern corner of Kosovo (securing a wide

⁴²⁸ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. xxix-xxx, xxxii.

⁴²⁹ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, p. xxxiv.

corridor for the introduction of more forces into the province), in the Drenica region (where the KLA had its main strongholds), and in a broad stretch of south-western Kosovo, near the Albanian border. The significance of this third target soon became obvious: the strategy was to clear a path for the mass expulsion of the Kosovo Albanian population. Two days after the air strikes began, the first waves of deported people began flooding over the southern borders of Kosovo, into Albania and Macedonia. Most had similar stories to tell, of a coordinated operation of 'ethnic cleansing' on a hitherto unprecedented scale. Armed men had arrive at their houses – sometimes special police, sometimes paramilitary gangsters, in many cases accompanied by local Serbs – and had ordered them to leave within minutes. An atmosphere of terror was created by random killings of civilians in the streets; some houses were set on fire as the population was leaving, and the rest would be first looted and then demolished when they had gone. As they left the village they would be funnelled through a cordon of troops, who would rob them of their money and possessions. Finally they would be told which route to take to the border. In many cases, however, not all the inhabitants were allowed to leave: in a development chillingly reminiscent of the seizure of Srebrenica in 1995, men were separated from their families and taken away by Serb forces. By the third week of April the US government was reporting that it had satellite images of many newly dug mass graves; the American diplomat with special responsibility for war crimes issues, David Scheffer, calculated that up to 100,000 men were unaccounted for. Some of these, no doubt, had managed to flee to the hills, where pockets of heavily outgunned KLA fighters were putting up a limited resistance.

"The scale of this cleansing operation, and the coordination it displayed between Serbian military and police forces, indicated a high degree of planning. This was clearly not a spontaneous response to the NATO bombardment – though the air strikes may well have given Milošević a welcome opportunity to accelerate and extend the actions he had already planned. The main way in which this campaign of expulsion went beyond the ethnic cleansing of the previous year was in its application to the major towns: the inhabitants of cities such as Prishtina and Mitrovica, whose lives had been largely untouched by the 1998 campaign, were now subjected to the same methods of intimidation and deportation. Thousands of people were forced to board trains at Prishtina, which then took them to the Macedonian border; they were packed so tightly into the waggons that several elderly people died during the journey. By 20 April 1999 it was calculated that nearly 600,000 refugees had left Kosovo in the previous four weeks: 355,000 were in Albania, 127,500 in Macedonia, 72,500 in Montenegro and 32,000 in Bosnia. This was in addition to an estimated 100,000 who had left during 1998. And inside Kosovo, according to NATO spokesmen, there were five large pockets of 'displaced' Albanians, representing a total of 850,000 people."⁴³⁰

On March 23, one day before NATO intervened, the Synod of the Serbian Church declared: "In the name of God, we demand and beseech that all conflict in Kosovo and Metohija immediately cease, and that the problems there be resolved exclusively by peaceful and political means. The way of non-violence and co-operation is the only

430 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

way blessed by God in agreement with human and Divine moral law and experience. Deeply concerned about the threatened Serbian cradle of Kosovo and Metohija and for all those who live there, and especially by the terrible threats of the world's armed forces to bomb our Homeland, we would remind the responsible leaders of the international organisations that evil in Kosovo or anywhere else cannot be uprooted by even greater and more immoral evil: the bombing of one small but honourable European people. We cannot believe that the international organisations have become so incapable of devising ways for negotiation and human agreement that they must resort to ways which are dark and demeaning to human and national honour, ways which employ great violence in order to prevent a lesser evil and violence..."⁴³¹

Leaving aside the hypocrisy involved in the Synod's calling for peace when, as we have seen, it had for so long been calling for war, the statement must be commended at least for calling the actions of the Serbs in Kosovo "evil". But in its main import it was both factually and morally wrong. After all, is the uprooting of a whole people, accompanied by the cruellest of tortures and rapes, a "lesser evil" than a war undertaken to defend the victims and restrain the aggressors? (According to NATO figures, "by the end of May, 1.5 million people, i.e. 90% of the population of Kosovo, had been expelled from their homes. Some 225,000 Kosovar men were believed to be missing. At least 5000 Kosovars had been executed."⁴³²)

After all, if NATO had not acted, there is no question about it: the death toll among the Albanians would have been much higher. Moreover, if unchecked, the war in Kosovo could well have spread to neighbouring countries such as Albania and Macedonia, and even to Greece and Turkey – both NATO countries. It might even have led to world war...⁴³³

World war was precisely the outcome the British General Michael Jackson feared when he refused to obey his American superior's order to seize Priština airport in order to pre-empt the arrival of a Russian brigade...

The war ended on June 10, 1999 after the victory of NATO over the Serbian forces (although it was not called that in order to spare Serbian sensibilities). On the same day, "the UN Security Council passed a resolution (UNSCR 1244) welcoming the acceptance by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles on a political solution to the Kosovo crisis, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces. The Resolution, adopted by a vote of 14 in favour and none against, with one abstention (China), announced the Security Council's decision to deploy international civil and security presences in Kosovo, under United Nations auspices.

431 *The Shepherd* (Orthodox Monastery of St. Edward, Brookwood, Surrey), vol. XIX, № 8, April, 1999, pp. 18-19.

432 "NATO's role in relation to the conflict in Kosovo", <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm>. The immediate post-war British estimate was of 10,000 dead (Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 310). By July, 2013, there were still 1,700 people missing from the war. See "Albanian and Serb united to find Kosovo missing", *Balkan Transitional Justice*, July 29, 2013, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanian-and-serb-unite-to-find-kosovo-missing>.

433 Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 284.

“Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council also decided that the political solution to the crisis would be based on the general principles adopted on 6 May by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Seven industrialised countries and the Russian Federation - the Group of 8 - and the principles contained in the paper presented in Belgrade by the President of Finland and the Special Representative of the Russian Federation which was accepted by the Government of the Federal Republic on 3 June. Both documents were included as annexes to the Resolution.

“The principles included, among others, an immediate and verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo; the withdrawal of the military, police and paramilitary forces of the Federal Republic; deployment of effective international and security presences, with substantial NATO participation in the security presence and unified command and control; establishment of an interim administration; the safe and free return of all refugees; a political process providing for substantial self-government, as well as the demilitarisation of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA); and a comprehensive approach to the economic development of the crisis region...”⁴³⁴

The Kosovo Syndrome

Why is Kosovo so dear to Serbian hearts that they are prepared to ignore both the spiritual commandments concerning love, mercy and the forgiveness of enemies, and the purely materialist arguments relating to national interest, in order to reconquer it at almost any cost?

This is not an easy question to answer. And yet some attempt must be made to answer it. For as revenge killings by returning Albanians began in the early 2000s, and a Serbian campaign against the international acceptance of a sovereign Kosovo gathered pace, the possibility of yet another Serbian invasion, perhaps with Russian backing, was not excluded. Of course, says the Serbian Harvard analyst Aleksa Djilas, “I would not support such a thing, but the Serbs are not exactly a ‘forgive and forget’ nation. If they have remembered the 1389 defeat for 610 years, why not this one?”⁴³⁵

To this alarming and rather cynical question we reply: their own history should make the Serbs pause before plunging into the abyss again. For twentieth-century Serbian history is similar to a Greek tragedy, or medieval morality play. Beginning with a most serious unrepented-of crime (the killing of the king in 1903), the Serbs at first were on an upward curve, defeating the Turks at Kumanovo and retaking Kosovo – but with a cruelty that was also not repented of. The upward curve seemed to continue with victory in World War One and the establishment of the Orthodox kingdom of Yugoslavia. But the kingdom was short-lived: punishment for hubris began with the terrible internecine blood-letting of World War Two and the establishment of the communist tyranny after it. The fall of the Serbian Church in the 1960s was a still greater tragedy. And the terrible, failed, wholly inglorious wars of

⁴³⁴ “NATO’s role in relation to the conflict in Kosovo”.

⁴³⁵ Djilas, in Judah, *Kosovo*, p. 312.

the 1990s under the communist-fascist leadership of Milošević sealed the fall of a formerly great nation. The tragedy came round full circle with the signing of the Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and the Serbs on June 9, 1999 at Kumanovo – the scene of their greatest victory but now also of their most abject defeat...

Thus the Serbs took Kosovo in 1912, lost it again in 1915, took it again in 1918 and lost it in 1941, took it again (under Tito) in 1945 and lost it again (under Milošević) in 1999. The policy of ethnic cleansing has been a massive failure – now no less than 98% of the population of Kosovo is Albanian! For one who believes in Divine Providence, there must be a lesson here...

That lesson must be that if God allowed the land to be conquered by unbelievers because of the sins of the Christians, it does not please Him if the Christians reconquer it before they have repented of their sins. A truly Christian nation, instead of jumping for the sword at the first opportunity, will first examine themselves, repent of their sins, and wait until God returns the land to them at the time and in the manner that He chooses. After all, did not the Lord say through the first and perhaps the greatest of all revanchist leaders, King David: "If My people had heard Me, if Israel had walked in My ways, Quickly would I have humbled their enemies, and upon their oppressors would I have laid My hand..."? (Psalm 80.12-13)

But the Serbs have evidently not learned this lesson. This refusal to learn the lessons of history, or to perceive the hand of the God of justice in their national humiliation, brings to mind the words of the Lord through the Prophet Isaiah: "Alas, sinful nation, a people full of sins, an evil seed, lawless children. They forsook the Lord; they provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel. Why should you continue to be struck as you continue in lawlessness?" (1.4-5) The Lord strikes sinful nations in order to bring them to their senses; but if they continue in lawlessness He abandons them to their demons – a much worse outcome...

As we look for historical parallels in our search for understanding, perhaps the closest is the Greek attempt to recapture Anatolia from the Turks in 1922-23. It ended in bloody disaster, and the destruction of almost the whole of Greek civilization in the region. Now the Greeks have come closer than the Serbs to coming to terms with the loss of their former lands in Anatolia. And yet in their refusal to recognize that Slavic and Albanian Macedonia is not Greek they show that they, too, are infected with what we may call the Kosovo Syndrome. It is no accident that the Greeks have been the main supporters of the Serbs in their revanchist dreams (although, ironically, many Serbs regard Macedonia as, not Greek, but Serbian, as it was before 1941!)...

Revanchism is a very problematic issue from an Orthodox point of view. On the one hand, it is perfectly natural and right that Christians should long for the return of territories that were once Christian but are now occupied by unbelievers or heretics, especially if they contain holy objects and churches that are in danger of desecration or True Christians in need of protection. Indeed, *not* to want the return of Christian lands to truly Christian rulers must be counted a sin. On the other hand, as often as not, the Christians that wish to carry out this reconquest are not True Christians. Thus

the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, the first Christian to lead a crusade to the Holy Land, was a Monothelite heretic; the medieval Crusaders were Roman Catholics; and many of the leaders of the Whites in the Russian Civil War were Masons who had taken part in the overthrow of the Tsar. All these revanchist “crusades” ended in failure and vast loss of innocent life.

The danger of revanchism is that its motivation is very rarely truly Christian zeal, but hatred compounded by fear and adorned with religious symbolism but having nothing to do with true religion. Moreover, in the fire of this “religious” passion, the laws of morality are soon trampled underfoot. But the means do not justify the end; the aims of Christian love cannot be attained through hatred.

As for the Serbs, they had fallen away from true Orthodoxy already in the 1960s, so that their claim to fight in the name of Orthodoxy was hypocrisy. Nor was the defence of Orthodoxy their real motivation, but rather national self-assertion, that collective pride of which Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of New York said: “The nation, this collective organism, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows in this case in the same progression, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls.”⁴³⁶ Fittingly, therefore, the Serbs chose to follow, not an Orthodox leader, but Milošević, an atheist and former leader of the communist party, who was using the nationalism of the Serbs in a purely opportunistic manner in order to retain his power over them. If the Serbs had really wanted to fight for Orthodoxy, they should have turned against him first of all. That would have been a truly pious crusade!

In any case, the ends do not justify the means, and the means are always evil if the motivation is hatred. Revenge, both personal and national, is forbidden by the God Who says: “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay” (Deuteronomy 32.35). The Orthodox Church blesses wars that are genuinely defensive – that is, in defence of the Orthodox Faith and People. She does not bless the killing of innocent women and children, nor the theft or destruction of others’ property, nor the mass execution of “terrorists” (their own fellow-citizens) whose guilt is not proven in any court of law. It should be remembered that St. Basil the Great imposed penances even on soldiers who kill during a just war because of the near-impossibility that their killing should be without passionate hatred of the enemy...

The Serbs were warned against this hatred by the Serbian lay prophet, Mitar Tarabić (1829-1899), who spoke of a nation on the Serbs’ borders that could only be the Albanians: “On our borders and over them a new nation will appear. They will grow like grass after a deluge, they will be good and honest, and they will answer our hatred with reason. They will take care of each other like brothers. And we, because of our madness we shall think that we know everything and that we can do anything, and we shall baptize them with some new fate of ours, but all that will be in vain. Because they will believe only in themselves and in nobody else. Big trouble will come

⁴³⁶ Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of New York, *Besedy s sobstvennym serdtsem* (Conversations with my own heart), Jordanville, 1998, p. 33.

of it, because this nation will be brave. Many summers this trouble will last, and nobody will be able to stop it, because that nation will grow like grass..."

Again, another great Serb, Bishop Nikolai Velimirović (+1956) warned his people against perpetuating racial hatred: "We sin if we see it as an obligation to hate those whom our relatives hate. This hatred passes into us like a family disease."⁴³⁷ Unfortunately, the nation as a whole paid no heed to his words...

The Serbs claim exclusive ownership of Kosovo because they were there, supposedly, before the Albanians. But this claim is as baseless as the Greeks' claim to Macedonia on the grounds that Alexander the Great ruled it once. Whatever the truth about the Albanians' origins, one thing is clear: they have been in Kosovo for a very long time. And if the Nemanja kings were able to live in peace with them, there is no reason why modern Serbs cannot do so.

Of course, between the Nemanja kings and the present day came the 500-year Turkish occupation, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that the causes of the Kosovo syndrome lie, at least in part, in the effects of the Turkish occupation... Let us explore this possibility in the context of the well-known psychological law that if you refuse to forgive your enemies, and continue to hate them, you become like them. George Orwell pointed to this law at the end of his novel, *Animal Farm*, when the men and animals (capitalists and communists) come to look like each other. Again, Vasily Grossman, in his novel *Life and Fate*, emphasizes the similarities between Soviet Communism and German Nazism created by their mutual hatred. In one scene an SS officer is talking to his prisoner, an old Bolshevik. "When we look at one another in the face, we're neither of us just looking at a face we hate – no, we are gazing into a mirror. That's the tragedy of our age. Do you really not recognise yourself in us; yourselves and the strength of your will?... You may think you hate us, but what you really hate is yourselves in us... Our victory will be your victory... And if you should conquer, then we shall perish only to live in your victory."⁴³⁸

Now we see this law in operation in real life in the later stage of the Turkish yoke, and not only among the Serbs, but also among the Greeks and the Bulgarians. Although both the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Russian Tsar considered the Ottoman Sultan to be a lawful political authority, the Balkan peoples on the whole did not obey their Orthodox leaders and protectors, and rebelled against the Sultan with a cruelty that fully matched his. We see this especially in the terrible atrocities committed on all sides during the Balkan revolutions of the nineteenth century, the Macedonian conflict after 1878 and the Balkan wars of 1912-13. And the Albanians, being Muslims, were labelled as, and treated as, "Turks", and even exported to Turkey... Thus does hatred breed hatred, making oppressors and victims spiritually and psychologically similar...

437 Velimirović, *Okhridski Prolog*, Shabats-Valjevo, 2009, June 9, p. 476. The Serbian reads: "Mi greshimo ako smatramo za dužnost da mrzimo one koje i nashi strodnitsi mrze. Ta mrzhn'ia prelazi na nas kao familijarna bolest."

438 Grossman, in Arkady Ostrovsky, "Flirting with Stalin", *Prospect*, September, 2008, p. 33.

Of course, there are holy objects which the Orthodox will seek to preserve from desecration. Serbs regard the whole of Kosovo as one such holy object, since it has been sanctified by the blood of the martyrs of Kosovo. But is the land of Kosovo preserved from desecration by acts of murder and pillage such as the Serbs have committed against the Albanians? Is it not the case rather that what the martyrs of Kosovo sanctified by their blood, more recent generations of Serbs have defiled and desecrated? In any case, almost every part of Europe has had its martyrs: does that mean that the Orthodox are justified in going to war for every land now in the possession of non-Orthodox in which Christian blood has been shed?! Still worse is the saying: "where there is one Serb, there is Serbia". Taken to its logical conclusion in political action, such a claim undermines the foundations of states and leads to perpetual war that is profoundly contrary to the other-worldly aims of Orthodoxy.

Since much – especially the true faith – has been given to us Orthodox, much will be demanded of us – much more than is demanded of unbelievers. The possession of the true faith imposes, not privileges, but obligations, obligations that are summed up in the Lord's words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5.16). But if the unbelievers see, not light but darkness, not love but hatred, how can they come to the true faith and glorify God? Is it not the case here that "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Ezekiel 16.27), that those to whom we should be preaching the true faith are repelled from it because of our evil works?

History shows that there have been successful multi-national Orthodox states in which the Orthodox, by practising Christian love and justice in relation to their non-Orthodox subject nations, have even brought them to salvation in the Orthodox faith. We do not see this in Serbian policy towards Kosovo over the years, but rather such cruelty as must inevitably drive them away from Orthodoxy... This is not to say that all the evil has been on one side, nor that the Serbs do not have legitimate grievances. Since 1999 Orthodox churches have been destroyed by Albanians in Kosovo, and grievous crimes have been committed against local Serbs. And it is legitimate to wonder whether the part played by the West in Kosovo has been entirely even-handed or disinterested... However, if we weigh these considerations against the last 150 years of Serbian persecution of Albanians there can be no question about it: the balance of evil is overwhelmingly on the Serbian side...

In conclusion, let us turn to the Gospel... Once when the Lord was passing through Samaria, the Apostles James and John wanted to command fire to come down from heaven because they thought the Samaritans, whom the Jews traditionally despised and hated (for they were heretics, who mixed Judaism with pagan elements), had not received Him correctly. But the Lord rebuked them, saying: "*You know not of what spirit you are. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them*" (Luke 9.55-56). There is a clear parallel between the Jews and the Serbs, on the one hand, who know not of what spirit they are, and the Samaritans and the Albanians, on the other...⁴³⁹

439 Later, having received a different Spirit, the apostles had considerable success in converting the Samaritans (John 4; Acts 9).

Again, after the Lord's Resurrection, His disciples, still thinking in Jewish revanchist terms, asked: "Lord wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The Lord gently turned them away from such earthly dreams: "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own power" (Acts 1.6, 7). It is not that all revanchist dreams are evil. Nor is it never the Lord's will that they be realized. But it is not the violent, but the meek, who will inherit the earth. And all earthly dreams must be strictly subordinated to the quest for the Heavenly Kingdom – as the angel taught St. Lazar on the field of Kosovo...

25. AN ANALYSIS OF THE GREEK TOC' ENCYCLICAL OF AUGUST 9/22, 2011

The events surrounding the consecration of Bishop Akakije of Serbia by bishops of the Russian True Orthodox Church in August, 2011 are complex, and their canonical evaluation – difficult. The reason for this is simple: the body of Orthodox canon law as contained in *The Rudder* was completed over twelve centuries ago, and did not envisage the creation of new autocephalous Churches, still less the *re-creation* or *resurrection* of autocephalous Churches after their fall into heresy. At the same time, I believe that there is sufficient evidence to be found in the holy canons, the writings of the Holy Fathers and the history of the Church to come to the firm conclusion that the consecration of Bishop Akakije was valid, and his condemnation as a “schismatic” by the True Orthodox Church of Greece – unjust. However, there are still many who believe that Bishop Akakije is a schismatic; so the purpose of this article is to revisit this controversy now that, as we may hope, the dust has settled after the battle of 2011. As a framework for the discussion, I propose to analyse the encyclical of August 9/22, 2011 signed by all the hierarchs of the True Orthodox Church of Greece headed by Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens.⁴⁴⁰

The encyclical is addressed to “*the Sacred Clergy and Faithful of the Church of the GOC of Serbia*”... This in itself is a fact of the greatest importance. For the whole argument in the recent years between Fr. Akakije and his supporters, on the one hand, and Archbishop Kallinikos and his supporters, on the other, has revolved around the question: does a Genuine Orthodox Church of Serbia truly exist, parallel with and independent of the other True Orthodox Churches, such as those of Russia and Greece? Or are there only Serbian Orthodox Christians belonging to the True Orthodox Church of Greece but living on Serbian territory? The fact that the encyclical was addressed to “the Sacred Clergy and Faithful of the Church of the GOC of Serbia” can only mean that the signatories accept that the True Orthodox Church of Serbia does truly exist independently of the Greek Church. Of course, the signatories were not addressing Bishop Akakije and his supporters (several hundred people), but the small group (about 50 people) of his opponents and enemies in Serbia. But the basic principle has been conceded to the supporters of Bishop Akakije: there *is* such an independent, autocephalous Church of Serbia in True Orthodoxy. The only argument is over which body of believers constitutes it...

Do all the signatories of the encyclical sincerely believe this? Almost certainly not. For both before and after the consecration Archbishop Kallinikos and his supporters were asserting precisely the opposite. Only recently one leading Greek said that before 1995, when Fr. Akakije came to Serbia from Mount Athos, there were precisely *zero* truly Orthodox Christians in Serbia; so the Autocephaly of the Serbian Church *no longer exists*. Serbia is now “missionary territory”, he asserted, like the missionary territories of Western Europe or North America...

440 <http://www.ecclesiagoc.gr/en/announcements/166-synodiki-egkyklios-1489-serbia>

To the claim that Serbia is now “missionary territory” which has to be re-evangelized by the Greeks, Bishop Akakije replied: “We wonder, with what right do they claim this, even if we accept the absurdity that once again the Greeks are enlightening the Serbian people? What Greek missionary came and labored in the vineyard of the Serbian Church over the past fifteen years? What Greek took even one step among the Serbs and for the Serbs? Who suffered the humiliations from the Belgrade Patriarchate? We know that for eleven years no one from the Greek GOC synod visited the suffering believers in Serbia!

“Financial help from Greece - which is loudly spoken about and put forward as one argument why we Serbs are dependent on the Greeks and have no right to leave their administrative rule - has been truly inconsequential considering in what conditions the Serbian TOC actually exists. This financial help has arrived in the same quantities from other jurisdictions and even from individuals in World Orthodoxy. Involuntarily the question arises: did the Greeks help the Serbian Church only in order for her to be under their rule? The New Calendar Greek Church constantly gives financial help to the Belgrade Patriarchate without demanding its submission to her rule. Is this submission a criterion for one church to help another or not?”⁴⁴¹

The concept of “missionary territory” applies to pagan territories that have not been evangelized by the Christian Gospel. In no way can this be said of Serbia, which under the name of “Illyrium” was evangelized by the Apostle Paul, which had Local Saints and Local Church Councils held on its territory in the first millennium, and which from 1219 was recognized as an independent autocephalous Church with its own native hierarchy. In the twentieth century the notorious Patriarch Meletius Metaxakis of Constantinople took large chunks out of the Russian and Serbian patriarchates and made them into “autonomous” Churches - of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Baltic States, etc. - dependent on Constantinople. These illegal acts were never recognized by the true Churches of Russia and Serbia. It would be sad indeed if the present-day Church of Greece centred in Athens (which in any case is not, of course, Constantinople) were to imitate the ecclesiastical imperialism of the notorious heretic Metaxakis... As for the fact that the Serbian Church has been in heresy since the 1960s, this is no excuse for denying it its ancient status as an autocephalous Church. Old Rome fell away from the faith in 1054, and there were no True Christians on its territory after about 1100. And yet the Eastern Patriarchates did not deny it the status of a (fallen) patriarchate right up to the Council of Florence in 1438-39. If Rome had officially repented of its heresy in that period, there is every reason to believe that the status of Orthodox patriarchate would have been restored to it automatically. Or shall we say that Constantinople is no longer an autocephalous patriarchate because there are no true Christians left in the City?...

The encyclical continues: *“What they [the supporters of Bishop Akakije] desired is good. Yet the way that they chose to achieve this was wrong. In Orthodoxy the end does not justify the means. This was the motto of the Jesuits. In Orthodoxy the words of Saint John Chrysostom*

441 Bishop Akakije, “The Serbian Church, Serbian People, True Orthodoxy, and the Greeks”. This article was placed on the website of the Serbian True Orthodox Church. However, hackers from the Serbian patriarchate have made it impossible to read it there at the moment.

apply: "The good thing is not good if it is not done rightly." The intention to restore the self-governance of the Serbian Church is good, while the manner of its achievement is evil, when it is accomplished through an unilateral decision of an elite group of clergy and laity that represent none but themselves. In past eras, unilateral and arbitrary decisions led to schisms and anathemas and other ills in the body of the Church of Christ. Let us call to mind two examples from among the many: the arbitrary pronouncement of the Archbishop of Serbia as Patriarch in 1346 and the arbitrary pronouncement of the Autocephalous Church of Greece in 1833. In the first case, the result was that the Church of Serbia was placed under anathema for 20 years; in the second case, the Church of Greece was pronounced schismatic for 17 years. Both of these cases were, however, the result of pressures from political leaders who took advantage of the Church in order to obtain their objectives. Today, we Genuine Orthodox Christians are disengaged from local political powers. Political leaders [today] do not drag along ecclesiastical leaders who create similar situations – which would be a mitigating factor..."

Let us separate the wheat from the chaff in this paragraph. First, the signatories assert that Bishop Akakije and his supporters tried to achieve their good aim "through a unilateral decision of an elite group of clergy and laity that represent none but themselves". Now an elite is by definition a minority group constituting the best or in some sense higher part of a larger group. Thus we talk about an "aristocratic elite" as opposed to the plebeian people, where the Greek word "aristocratic" means "rule by the better". But Fr. Akakije and his supporters, while they might indeed have been "better" than their opponents in general, were not a minority nor an elite. Certainly, they represented only themselves – that is, the majority of the True Orthodox Christians of Serbia. Who else were they meant to represent? Who else could they represent?

Turning to the historical examples, it is certainly true that the Archbishop of Serbia's giving himself the title of "patriarch" in 1346 was arbitrary – the bestowal of this title should have been agreed with the other patriarchs. Nevertheless, since the Serbian Church was already autocephalous (since 1219), it made no essential difference to its status. From a dogmatic or ecclesiological point of view it was much less significant than, for example, the Patriarch of Constantinople's according himself the title of "Ecumenical" in the sixth century. That step was opposed in the strongest possible terms by St. Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, because it implied that he had jurisdiction over the whole "inhabited world" (*oikoumene*)... Again, the Church of Greece's pronouncement of its autocephaly from the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1833 was indeed arbitrary and wrong. But it is quite wrong to compare this to the situation in Serbia in 2011. For there is no question that Greece was part of the canonical territory of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1833, whereas Serbia has *never* been the canonical territory of the Church of Greece!

The encyclical continues: *"There were good examples to follow, such as the declaration in a canonical way of the autocephaly of the Church of Serbia by Saint Sabbas, the First Archbishop of Serbia."*

The declaration of the Serbian Church's autocephaly in 1219 by St. Savva is indeed interesting and instructive – but it by no means proves what the Greeks want it to

prove. For what did St. Savva actually do? Knowing that his bishop and canonical superior, Archbishop Demetrios Chomatianos of the Autonomous Church of Ochrid, would never grant the Serbian Church autocephaly, St. Savva “changed jurisdictions”, as we would say today (the Greek Church was divided into four main “jurisdictions” at that time), and received autocephaly from another “jurisdiction” – that of the Nicaean patriarch and emperor. If we follow the iron logic of the encyclical’s ecclesiology, then St. Savva’s action was not only *not* a “good example to follow”, but blatantly schismatic! For after all, he disobeyed his bishop and even broke communion with him – a bishop, moreover, who even now is considered by the Greeks to be (with Balsamon and Aristides) one of the three great experts on canon law of the medieval period! Fr. Akakije’s action was in fact very similar to that of St. Savva – but *less* bold. For while St. Savva was forced to “change jurisdictions” in order that the autocephaly of the Serbian Church should be *created*, Fr. Akakije only acted to *restore* or *reactivate* that autocephaly – a very different, and far less ambitious project.

As for the Serbian True Orthodox people, their “sin” was to believe that the best candidate for the bishop of the resurrected Church of Serbia was not a Greek bishop living a thousand kilometres away, who neither lived in Serbia nor spoke Serbian nor showed any knowledge of Serbian problems, but rather the man who had already built up the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Serbia from scratch with his own sweat, blood and tears, who was the spiritual father to most of the clergy and monastics (including those who led the opposition against him). Did they have the right to express such an opinion? *Undoubtedly*. In fact, according to the Holy Fathers, they had the right to decide this question themselves without the “veto” of any foreign authorities; for, as St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, said: “You know, even if very few remain in Orthodoxy and piety, then it is precisely these that are the Church, and the authority and leadership of the ecclesiastical institutions remains with them.”⁴⁴² This being the case, the most that a foreign bishop of Synod could have done in Serbia was agree to help, or refuse to help (if they found the candidate unworthy), the Serbians in their choice: what they could not do was act “as lords over those entrusted to them” (I Peter 5.3) and impose their own will and their own candidates (i.e. themselves) upon them.

In fact, this very important principle is enshrined in the eighth canon of the Third Ecumenical Council: “The same rule shall be observed in the other dioceses and provinces everywhere, so that none of the God-beloved Bishops shall assume control of any province which has not heretofore, from the very beginning, been under his own hand or that of his predecessors. But if anyone has violently taken and subjected [a province], he shall give it up; lest the canons of the Fathers be transgressed; or the vanities of worldly honor be brought in under pretext of sacred office; or we lose, without knowing it, little by little, the liberty which Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Deliverer of all men, hath given us by His own Blood.”⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² St. Nicephorus, *Apologeticus Minor*, 8, P.G. 100, 844 D.

⁴⁴³ This canon was invoked in 1928 by St. Joseph in Petrograd, when Metropolitan Sergius tried to remove him from his diocese. And yet St. Joseph and Sergius belonged to the same Local Church. How much more justly can the canon be invoked in the present case, when one Local Church is claiming jurisdiction over another!

"From this," writes Bishop Akakije, "it is already clear the Greek GOC does not have the canonical right to take over the territory of the Serbian Church, much less such moral rights before the Serbian Church and people. On the basis of our petition for help, the Greek Church had the right *only* to set up a temporary governance over our widowed Serbian Church and to ensure the establishment of a Serbian bishop for the Serbian people as soon as possible. Unfortunately, this did not happen..."⁴⁴⁴

Against this, the opponents of Bishop Akakije say that the situation in Serbia is different, because the True Orthodox Christians had voluntarily accepted to be under the *omophorion* of Archbishop Kallinikos. This is true, and acknowledged by the Serbs. But they argue that they sought the *temporary* episcopal supervision of a bishop of the Greek Church only until their own hierarchy could be re-established: they remained the True Orthodox Church of Serbia, and never became part of any other Local Church. There was not, and could not be, any *permanent engulfment* of the Serbian Church within the Greek Church. For, as the canon says, "none of the God-beloved Bishops shall assume control of any province which has not heretofore, from the very beginning, been under his own hand or that of his predecessors" – and there is no question about it: at no time has Serbia been under the hand of any Archbishop of Athens. The boundaries of the archdiocese of Athens could be redrawn to include the whole of Serbia only with the consent of the other Local Churches - and, first and foremost, with the consent of the Serbian people.

In fact, the "temporary governance" of the Greeks over the Serbs continued for *fifteen years*, directly violating another of the Holy Canons, the 74th of the Council of Carthage: "It is hereby declared that it will not be permitted to any temporarily governing bishop to keep for himself the altar that was entrusted to him for his temporary governance, because of differences and quarrels among the people: but he must strive to elect a bishop for it in the course of a year. But if he is lazy about this, then at the end of the year let another temporary bishop be elected."⁴⁴⁵

After citing this canon, Bishop Akakije quotes from the commentary on it by the famous Serbian canonist, Bishop Nikodim Milash of Istria, who died a martyr's death in an Austrian prison: "It has happened that those bishops who should have maintained love among the people and cooperated in the election of a new bishop have themselves, for the sake of their own personal interests, encouraged disorders and stirred up disagreements with the aim of leaving the Church longer without a permanent bishop and of having the opportunity of carrying out the duties of governing bishop in it for a more prolonged period. So as to hinder such an abuse, the Carthaginian Fathers forbid a bishop to remain governing a widowed Church for longer than one year, and, if in the course of this time he has not succeeded in doing everything necessary in order that a new bishop should be installed, then, as the canon decrees, such a bishop should be deprived of the governance, and it should be transferred to a newly elected governor."⁴⁴⁶ Bishop Akakije points out that the fears

⁴⁴⁴ Bishop Akakije, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴⁵ Bishop Akakije, *op. cit.* Cf. Apostolic canon 36; Fourth Ecumenical Council, canon 25; Council in Trullo, canon 35.

⁴⁴⁶ Bishop Nikodim, *The Canons of the Orthodox Church*, originally published in Serbian in Novi Sad, 1896. We quote here from the Russian translation published in St. Petersburg, 1912, volume II, p. 226.

of the Carthaginian Fathers have actually been fulfilled in the case of contemporary Serbia, since the Greek leadership “very subtly but steadily reduced the authority of the first struggler for the renewal of True Orthodoxy in Serbia, Fr. Akakije, along with his co-strugglers on the battlefield for the rebirth of the Serbian Church and her interests”.

The encyclical continues: *“Furthermore, when the independence of the Church of Serbia was abolished because of political reasons, it was recovered gradually and harmoniously initially with autonomy in 1831 and then with full autocephaly in 1879 through a consensus among the Mother and Daughter Churches.”*

The encyclical is here referring to the Greek Church’s “abolition” of the Serbian and Bulgarian Patriarchates in 1766-67. With the single word “political” it covers up, and attempts to mitigate, a most serious historical sin which is directly relevant to the present situation. “The Bulgarians and the Serbs,” writes Sir Steven Runciman, an historian highly respected by the Greeks, “had no intention of becoming Graecized. They protested to some effect against the appointment of Greek metropolitans. For a while the Serbian Patriarchate of Peč was reconstituted, from 1557 to 1755. The Phanariots demanded tighter control. In 1766 the autonomous Metropolitanate of Peč was suppressed and in 1767 the Metropolitanate of Ochrid. The Serbian and Bulgarian Churches were each put under an exarch appointed by the Patriarch. This was the work of the Patriarch Samuel Hantcherli, a member of an upstart Phanariot family, whose brother Constantine was for a while Prince of Wallachia until his financial extortions alarmed not only the tax-payers but also his ministers, and he was deposed and executed by the Sultan’s orders. The exarchs did their best to impose Greek bishops on the Balkan Churches, to the growing anger of both Serbs and Bulgarians. The Serbs recovered their religious autonomy early in the nineteenth century when they won political autonomy from the Turks. The Bulgarian Church had to wait till 1870 before it could throw off the Greek yoke. The policy defeated its own ends. It caused so much resentment that when the time came neither the Serbs nor the Bulgarians would cooperate in any Greek-directed move towards independence; and even the Roumanians held back. None of them had any wish to substitute Greek for Turkish political rule, having experienced Greek religious rule....”⁴⁴⁷

447 Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 377-380. Thus, as J. Frazee writes, “the first Greek had been appointed to the patriarchate of Peč in 1737 at the insistence of the Dragoman Alexandros Mavrokordatos on the plea that the Serbs could not be trusted. The Phanariots began a policy which led to the exclusion of any Serbian nationals in the episcopacy” (*The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece, 1821-1853*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 7, note 1). Again, Noel Malcolm writes: “By 1760, according to a Catholic report, the Patriarch in Peč was paying 10,000 scudi per annum to the Greek Patriarch. In 1766, pleading the burden of the payments they had to make under this system, the bishops of many Serbian sees, including Skopje, Niš and Belgrade, together with the Greek-born Patriarch of Peč himself, sent a petition asking the Sultan to close down the Serbian Patriarchate and place the whole Church directly under Constantinople... The primary cause of this event was not the attitude of the Ottoman state (harsh though that was at times) but the financial oppression of the Greek hierarchy. In the Hapsburg domains, meanwhile, the Serbian Church based in Karlovci continued to operate, keeping up its de facto autonomy.” (*Kosovo*, London: Papermac, 1998, p. 171). Again, Stanoe Stanoevich writes: “The Patriarchate of Constantinople was aspiring to increase its power over all the Serbian lands in the hope that in this venture the Greek hierarchy and Greek priesthood would abundantly increase their parishes. The intrigues which were conducted for years because of this in Constantinople produced fruit. By a firman of the Sultan dated

So this is what “Greek religious rule” meant for the Serbs in the past: financial extortion, the removal of their own hierarchy, and the attempt to Hellenize their people. In spite of that, the Serbs in the twenty-first century, hoping that times had changed, asked for help from the Greeks and were sincerely grateful for what they received. It was only when this help turned into a variety of obstacles and hindrances, and the attempt to deny them their own native bishop, that they realized: tout ça change, tout c’est la même chose...

The encyclical continues: *“Why do our separated brethren prefer to imitate those examples that are to be avoided instead of those that should be imitated? By using as their excuse various irregularities of the past they wish to justify their illicit acts. Their unfortunate attempt elicits a simple question: Does one irregularity from the past justify its repetition?”*

This is a perverse way of looking at the present situation! The truth is quite the opposite: the “irregularity” of past Greek behavior – the abolition of the Serbian patriarchate in 1766 – is being repeated, albeit on a smaller scale, today. This became obvious when, in June, 2011 the Serbs received a letter from a senior bishop of the Greek Church in which it was proclaimed with all seriousness that Archbishop Kallinikos was “the acting locum tenens of the Serbian patriarchal throne”!

Let us conduct a thought experiment and imagine that Patriarch Irenaeus of Serbia and all his bishops, priests and laity – or, at any rate, a significant part of them – repented of their heresy and proclaimed that they wished to be united to the True Orthodox Church. What would the Greeks do then? Would they say: “You are no longer an Autocephalous Church, but must submit to the authority of Archbishop of Kallinikos of Athens, who is now the first hierarch or Archbishop (or even patriarchal locum tenens!) of all Greece and Serbia”? Of course not – and yet that is the logic of the Greek position! For this canonical nonsense – or should we call it megalomania? – implies that the Church of Serbia has now been annexed to the Church of Greece without any conciliar decision and without the knowledge or agreement of any Serbs except their 50-strong “Greek Serb” group!

September 13, 1766, the Peć patriarchate was annulled, and all the Serbian lands in Turkey were subject to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Immediately after this the Greek hierarchy, which looked on the Serbian people only as an object for material exploitation, began a struggle against the Serbian priesthood and against the Serbian people” (*Istoria Sprskogo Naroda* (History of the Serbian People), Belgrade, 1910, p. 249 (in Serbian)). Again, Mark Mazower writes: “A saying common among the Greek peasants, according to a British traveller, was that ‘the country labours under three curses, the priests, the cogia bashis [local Christian notables] and the Turks, always placing the plagues in this order.’ In nineteenth-century Bosnia, ‘the Greek Patriarch takes good care that these eparchies shall be filled by none but Fanariots, and thus it happens that the... Orthodox Christians of Bosnia, who form the majority of the population, are subject to ecclesiastics alien in blood, in language, in sympathies, who oppress them hand in hand with the Turkish officials and set them, often, an even worse example of moral depravity.’ The reason was clear: ‘They have to send enormous bribes yearly to the fountainhead.’ This story of extortion and corruption spelled the end of the old Orthodox ecumenicism, created bitterness between the Church and its flock, and – where the peasants were not Greek speakers – provoked a sense of their exploitation by the ‘Greek’ Church which paved the way for Balkan nationalism.” (*The Balkans*, London: Phoenix, 2000, pp. 61-62)

"As we said above," continues the encyclical, "for political reasons many times autocephalous Churches lost this status, while other autocephalous Churches were created. We must remember that the Church is one; the Dioceses, Metropolises, Patriarchates, Autocephalous, Autonomous and Semi-autonomous Churches are administrative divisions, which do not affect the essence of the Church and which change according the political circumstances of each era and the shifting of borders according to the maxim, "it is customary for the ecclesiastical to change together with the political." An example of this is the Russian Empire's absorption of the Georgian Kingdom in 1801 and the subsequent abolition of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, whose autocephaly was restored again in 1917."

For accuracy's sake, it should be pointed out that the Georgian State headed by the king *asked* to be subsumed into the Russian empire to avoid being swallowed up by the Muslim Persians. In other words, it was done *voluntarily* – which can said of *none* of the instances in which the Byzantines or Greeks deprived Slavs or Arabs of their ecclesiastical independence. Moreover, the threat of Muslim conquest was indeed a good political reason for temporarily abolishing state independence, if not Church autocephaly.

In any case, the maxim "it is customary for the ecclesiastical to change together with the political" was never enshrined in canon law, was not recognized outside Constantinople, and became the cause of innumerable very damaging quarrels between Constantinople and the other Orthodox Churches. For autocephaly is, or should be, granted for purely *pastoral, ecclesiastical* reasons, because in order that a newly evangelized people should be strengthened in the faith they should have their own native hierarchy serving in their own native language. Why should that pastoral need change because of purely *political* reasons, because the people in question has involuntarily come under the yoke of another Christian nation?

Take the case of Bulgaria. After Constantinople very reluctantly gave the newly Christianized nation autocephaly, the faith spread strongly in Bulgaria, and she was soon producing native saints of her own – kings (St. Boris-Michael), hermits (St. John of Rila) and hierarchs and evangelists (SS. Naum and Clement of Ohrid). However, after the death of King Peter, in about 971, the Bulgarian kingdom was conquered by the Byzantines, as a consequence of which the local Bulgarian Church was again subjected to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. There was a resurgence of Bulgarian power under Tsar Samuel, who established his capital and patriarchate in Ohrid. But this did not last long. In 1014 the Bulgarian armies were decisively defeated by Emperor Basil I, "the Bulgar-slayer". This led to the temporary dissolution of the Bulgarian kingdom and its absorption into the Roman Empire.

The Byzantines continued to recognize the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church centred in Ohrid, but it was demoted from a patriarchate to an archbishopric. And further encroachments on Bulgarian ecclesiastical independence continued. This elicited a firm rebuke from St. Theophlact, Archbishop of Ohrid in the late eleventh century. Although a refined Greek, he defended the rights of his adopted Church. Thus he stopped a monk from founding a stavropegial monastery subject directly to Constantinople, since it was "in accordance with neither the sacred canons nor the laws of the kingdom. I forbid him, for what relations are there between the Church of

Bulgaria and the Patriarch of Constantinople? *None at all.* Constantinople possesses neither the right of ordination, nor any other rights, in Bulgaria. Bulgaria recognizes only its own archbishop as its head."⁴⁴⁸

Constantinople made two further attempts to abolish Bulgarian autocephaly, the first in the period of the Byzantine empire and the second in the period of the Turkish yoke. And yet who can doubt that the Bulgarian Church remained essentially unchanged in the whole of that time? And even now, when Bulgaria has succumbed to the ecumenist heresy, she remains an independent Church in law...

The encyclical continues: *"The group of estranged brethren declared that in coming into communion with the Russian Synod of Bishops under Archbishop Tikhon (with whom we are not in communion) they desired to maintain communion simultaneously with us as well. This is incongruous and they wrote it rhetorically: in order to claim that they did not break communion with us but that we cut them off. Furthermore, they claim that they do not desire that their rebellion result in the disruption of the rapprochement between the Church of the GOC of Greece and the Russian Synod of Bishops under Archbishop Tikhon. This is incongruous too, because they knew from the beginning that Archbishop Tikhon's support of their rebellion would result in the breakdown of this rapprochement, which indeed happened. The saboteurs that blew up the bridge claim that they did not desire the break in traffic between the two banks! The Holy Synod now finds itself in the unpleasant position of discovering that the group of separated brethren in this way rendered itself schismatic, transgressing Canon 31 of the Holy Apostles."*

Once again we see here muddled logic and a mixture of truth and falsehood. It is true that Bishop Akakije, before his consecration, asked for administrative independence for the Serbian Church from the Greeks without any Eucharistic break in communion. Was that a crime?! Was that undesirable?! Does not the encyclical itself say that "the Dioceses, Metropolises, Patriarchates, Autocephalous, Autonomous and Semi-autonomous Churches are administrative divisions, which do not affect the essence of the Church"? If the administrative division between the Greek and the Serbian Churches, which was established eight centuries ago, did not affect the essence of the Church, and created no real schism within it, why did the Greeks not consent to its continuation? Because that would have slightly diminished the size of Archbishop Kallinikos' ecclesiastical empire (which already encompasses Greece, Europe, Australia and scattered parishes in Russia and Georgia!)? Yes, almost certainly that was one reason. Because he would have done anything to stop the promotion of Fr. Akakije, whom he suspected – rightly – of not wishing to put the interests of the Greek Church above those of Serbia? Yes, that was another reason. Because he feared the creeping influence of the Russians in the "lost territories of the Byzantine empire" in the Balkans – the so-called "Panslavist" bogey which the nineteenth-century Phanariots so feared? Yes, that was yet another reason.

Is it true that "the saboteurs that blew up the bridge claim that they did not desire the break in traffic between the two banks"? Yes, it is. But who are the real saboteurs?

448 Quoted in the translators' introduction to Blessed Theophylact's *Explanation of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*, House Springs, Mo.: Chrysostom Press, 2011, pp. xvii-xviii.

In order to answer that question, we must look more closely at the historical context. To do that, we shall elaborate the metaphor a little...

The Russian and the Greek Churches are like opposite banks of a river in the middle of which there is a large island – the Serbian Church. (The Serbs are indeed mediators between the Russians and the Greeks in a certain sense, having cultural, linguistic, racial and historical links to both nations.) Both sides wanted to build a bridge from one bank to the other. But the Greeks wanted to build a long bridge direct from bank to bank, bypassing the Serbian island in the middle, which they considered part of their territory and to which they had already built a smaller bridge. The Serbs, languishing under Greek rule, were all in favour of the Greco-Russian union, believing that they would benefit from closer relations with the Russians; for if the larger, bank-to-bank bridge were built, they thought another short bridge from them to the Russian bank would surely be built at some time. The Russians also went along with the Greek plan at first; while sympathizing with the Serbs, they did not want to build a small bridge to the Serbian island which the Greeks would interpret as invasion of their territory; they were prepared to treat the island as Greek territory for the sake of the general increase in trade that would result from the building of the big bridge.

However, then the Russians ran into trouble with the Greeks. In 2009 the Greeks refused to sign the contract for the big bridge because they thought – falsely – that the Russians were deceiving them. The real problem was the Greek governor of the Serbian island, who was determined, not only that no bridge should be built between the island and the Russian bank, but also that the big bridge linking the Greek and Russian banks should be built entirely to his specification and by his contractors. (This was the attempt of the Greeks led by Kallinikos to impose on the Russians their view of how akriveia and oikonomia should be applied in the reception of converts from the Moscow Patriarchate.)

Although disappointed, the Russians persevered, and eventually, in 2011, an agreement on the building of the bridge – that is, on the correct use of oikonomia in receiving people from the Moscow Patriarchate in Russia – was reached. Meanwhile, however, two important events had taken place. First, the leader of the Greek trade and construction corporation (Archbishop Chrysostomos) died in 2010, and was replaced by the governor of the Serbian island (Archbishop Kallinikos). And secondly, the conflict between the Serbs and the Greeks for possession of Serb island intensified. Gradually, the Russians became convinced that the Serbs' case was just, and their pastoral needs great, and that they had a moral obligation to help them by building a small bridge from the Russian bank to the island and installing the Serb leader as governor of the island. They realized that this would jeopardize the big bridge project, but so be it. They offered to the Greeks that both bridges, big and small, should be built together, and that they should cooperate with them in installing a new governor of the island. But the Greeks refused and retreated from the island, blowing up the bridge from their bank and leaving behind a small group of saboteurs (all former officials of the new governor) who continue to snipe at the lawful governor of the island...

Did the Serbs violate Apostolic Canon 31, as the encyclical asserts?... Apostolic Canon 31 declares that a priest cannot break from his bishop except for reasons of “piety” (*blagochestie*) or “justice” (*pravda*). “Piety” is usually taken to mean “dogmatic truth”. The definition of “justice” is less clear.

What is clear is that it does not include the moral behavior of the bishop, as St. John Chrysostom explains: “Anarchy is altogether an evil, the occasion of many calamities, and the source of disorder and confusion... However, the disobedience of those who are ruled is no less an evil... But perhaps someone will say, there is also a third evil, when the ruler is bad. I myself, too, know it, and it is no small evil, but a far worse evil even than anarchy. For it is better to be led by no one than to be led by one who is evil. For the former indeed are often saved, and often in peril, but the latter will be altogether in peril, being led into the pit of perdition. How, then, does Paul say, ‘Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves’? Having said above, ‘whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,’ he then said, ‘Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves.’ ‘What then,’ you say, ‘when he is wicked, should we not obey?’ Wicked? In what sense? If in regard to faith, flee and avoid him, not only if he is a man, but even if he is an angel come down from heaven; but if in regard to life, do not be over-curious...”⁴⁴⁹ This is not to say that a bishop cannot or should not be brought to trial and defrocked for immoral behavior, but only that a priest cannot break with him by reason of his immoral behavior before he has been canonically defrocked.

If we look at the practice of the saints, then “justice” must include serious canonical transgressions, for there are many cases of Orthodox breaking communion with their superiors, not for reasons of heresy, but because of serious canonical transgressions. The writings and actions of St. Theodore the Studite in relation to SS. Tarasius and Nicephorus of Constantinople are obvious examples. But there are many more.

A particularly interesting example can be found in the *Life* of St. Meletius of Antioch. St. Dmitri of Rostov writes that the Christians of Antioch were angry with their bishop, Eudoxius, because he “paid little attention to his duties. This infuriated the Antiochians, who expelled him from their city... Then the Antiocheans assembled to decide who would succeed Eudoxius... Saint Meletius was chosen by general acclamation.”⁴⁵⁰

Now Eudoxius was an Arian. But it is significant that he was not expelled “for reasons of piety”, or heresy, but “for reasons of justice”, that is, his failure to carry out his canonical duties... Of course, it is always preferable that a bishop who does not carry out his duties should be removed by his fellow bishops in a canonical trial. However, very often in antiquity, and even more often in modern times, either because of persecutions or because bishops do not have the courage or will to investigate each other, appeals to the Synod are ignored and even despised. In such cases, we recall the words of the Eastern Patriarchs in their famous *Epistle* of 1848: “The protector of religion is the very body of the Church, even the people themselves”

⁴⁴⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 34 on Hebrews*, 1.

⁴⁵⁰ St. Dmitri of Rostov, *Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, February 12.

(17). Orthodoxy does not believe in the infallibility of any one man or Synod; and in cases when bishops and Synods do not do their duty, it is the duty of the people, the last earthly resort of truth and justice, to act for the good of the Church. This is not anarchy, or rebellion, or Protestantism. It is *Orthodoxy*.

Two modern examples will clarify what breaking communion “for reasons of justice” means. In 1928 St. Joseph of Petrograd refused to obey his canonical superior, Metropolitan Sergius, not for reason of heresy, or even for a clearly defined canonical transgression, but simply because he felt that his translation from the diocese of Petrograd was caused by an intrigue against the Church initiated by the Bolsheviks and supported by Sergius. And he said: “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 Sergius may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in view 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?” In another place, St. Joseph points out that there were no priests or bishops at the foot of the Cross, but only laymen and women...

The second example concerns Archbishop Kallinikos himself. In 1979, he, as an archimandrite, broke with his canonical superior, Archbishop Auxentios, and was ordained to the episcopate by Metropolitan Kallistos of Corinth and another bishop. This new group, called the “Kallistites”, said that their actions were “a temporary and curable deviation from the canonical order” whose aim was the cleansing of the Church from moral vices, especially sodomy, since “men have been raised to the priesthood who are both unworthy and incapable.” Of course, it is possible to sympathize with the “Kallistites”, whose aim of cleansing the Church of homosexuals was certainly laudable. Nevertheless, as they themselves admit, it was uncanonical. For one cannot break with one's canonical superior for reason of immoral acts, but only for reasons of heresy or major canonical transgressions. At most, they could have withdrawn from the Synod in order “not to take part in other men's sins” (I Timothy 5.22). That is what, for example, Metropolitan Chrysostomos (Kioussis), the future archbishop, did. But the Kallistites created a new Synod, with new bishops, thereby creating serious long-term difficulties for the Greek Church.

However, let us suppose for one moment that Kallinikos' consecration to the episcopate in 1979 without the blessing of his archbishop could be justified on the grounds of “justice” or “the cleansing of the Church”. And let us compare his motives with those of the future Bishop Akakije. Was Bishop Akakije proposed for consecration by his flock “in order to cleanse the Church of unworthy and incapable priests”?

No, he was not. Their motivation in proposing him, and his motivation in accepting, was much simpler, much closer to home: the salvation of the maximum number of Serbs; for they knew that very few Serbs would agree to come under a non-Serb bishop who belonged to another, non-Serb Local Church. They knew that they

were in desperate need, not of a bishop living many hundreds of miles away, knowing next to nothing about Serbia and visiting it just once in over ten years, but of a native Serb who spoke their language, lived their life, knew their enemies and fought their battles. It is of such men that the Apostle says: "If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work" (I Timothy 3.1)...

"What is more," continues the encyclical, "in the document of their rebellion the severed brethren express their gratitude in words for everything that the Church of the GOC of Greece has provided them. But because we did not ordain for them as bishop the one whom a small group desired at the time that that group demanded, they decided to appeal to the Russians. What a concept of gratitude and obedience. They pay no heed to the bishops that ordained them because they will not promote a specific person among them. They set fire to their mother's house and harm their brethren who remain faithful to her and then they utter into their mother's ear, "thank you"."

This is really rather spiteful. So an expression of gratitude is considered sinful! Would they have preferred ingratitude?! Bishop Akakije announces administrative separation from the Greek Church – that is, the return to the canonical order of the last 800 years, – while expressing the desire to remain in eucharistic communion – that is, rejecting any thought of essential schism – and expressing gratitude for services rendered. What a sin! What profound evil!

Bishop Akakije himself is described as "the one whom a small group desired at the time". But they were not a small group in the context of the Serbian TOC: they were *the majority*, headed by *the senior priest and rebuilder of the Serbian Church*, and consisting of *the majority of the monastics and laity*. Nor did they desire his consecration only "at the time": they had desired it for at least five years and sent numerous appeals for his consecration in the name of the Administrative Council of the Serbian True Orthodox Church to the Greek Holy Synod. They included believers from the north, south, east, west and centre of Serbia.

The Greeks are obsessed with the smallness of the Serbian flock in absolute terms. But let us remind ourselves of the words of St. Nicephorus quoted above: "You know, even if very few remain in Orthodoxy and piety, then it is precisely these that are the Church, and the authority and leadership of the ecclesiastical institutions remains with them." After all, mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow...

Besides, there is no minimum number of people required for the formation of a diocese. When St. Gregory of Neocaesarea came to his diocese for the first time there were only 17 Christians in the city (when he died there were only 17 people who were *not* Christians). In North Africa in the early centuries, almost every village had its own bishop. In the Irish Church most abbots of monasteries were also bishops. The criterion is not the size of the existing community, but its spiritual needs. And if the community grows with the blessing of God, then its needs will increase proportionately. So it is not only the present, but also the future needs of the flock that must be measured. In order to satisfy these needs, God is willing to multiply the bishops of the Church indefinitely, for He wishes that *all* men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. There is no need for the Church hierarchy to be parsimonious

in the provision of bishops – provided, of course, that the candidates are worthy men. Thus the Prophet Moses once exclaimed: “Oh, that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11.29). Again, the holy Patriarch Tikhon once cried out to Archbishop Andrew of Ufa from his captivity: “Vladyko, consecrate more bishops, as many as possible!” And he did (about forty in all)... And yet the demand still outstripped the supply. And today who can say that the True Russian Church has too many bishops?

As for Serbia, who can claim that the several hundreds of True Orthodox Christians, and the many millions of potential converts from the patriarchate, do not need even one true Serbian bishop?! In view of this manifest need, what can be the motivation of a bishop who, living in Athens but already utterly unable to supply the needs of his already vast territories (Greece, Europe, Australia and scattered parishes in other lands), refuses to consecrate the man who has already worked for many years in Serbia, building up the flock from zero to several hundreds in spite of huge obstacles created from both within and outside the Church? If this man had canonical obstacles to his consecration, the delay would be understandable. But the Greeks have not been able to cite any such obstacles...

Later in their encyclical, the Greek bishops appear to accept that size of the flock is not an important factor, but instead attack the “democracy” of Fr. Akakije’s administration: *“We too desire the rebirth of Orthodoxy in Serbia and the restoration of the autocephalous local Church of Serbia, understood in the genuine Orthodox sense. As we have declared in the past in writing, we have no plan to absorb the local Genuine Orthodox Church of Serbia. Moreover, in the memorandum our currently separated brethren submitted to us this past January, we did not set the small size of population as an impediment for the ordination of a bishop, but merely specified [as a condition] the better organization of the community of GOC of Serbia through the implementation of a Governing Council in which would be heard all views and which would truly express your voices. The separated brethren did not agree. They did not desire to have dissenters with them in this body. Why not, if they represented the majority? How would it have mattered, if there were a minority view? Did they fear that they really represented a minority view rather than the view of the majority? This is what in the end proved to be true. The system of sending away dissenters and of establishing deliberative bodies that prove to be merely cheerleaders of a leader suggests the totalitarian regimes of the past.”*

Coming from the pen of Archbishop Kallinikos, this is not only false, but deeply hypocritical. Kallinikos’ own treatment of the Serbian Church has been dictatorial and divisive. While repeatedly refusing the petition of the majority, - whose fulfilment, as we have seen, was actually *demand*ed by the Holy Canons, - he has encouraged the minority to rebel against their spiritual father, spread foul slanders with impunity and generally make his already very difficult task even more difficult.

This is confirmed if we look at a short account of events in the STOC in the years 2006-2011. The divisions began towards the end of 2006, when the majority of believers began to murmur at the fact that no Greek hierarch had visited them in the last ten years. They concluded that they had been patient enough with this spiritual negligence and it was time for them to have a bishop of their own, or at least they

should write to the GOC Synod and ask for Metropolitan Kallinikos' replacement as Exarch for Serbia. Another problem was his tendency to give "double blessings" – that is, one person would come to Corinth, give his view of the situation, and receive one blessing; then another person would come, give his view of the situation and receive a different blessing contradictory to the first. Long distance from Serbia, and the metropolitan's long absence from the country, created the mess.

At the end of 2006, the Administrative Council of STOC gathered together for the last time in its fullness. All the clergy were present, and all signed a document passed by a majority of votes in which the GOC Synod was requested to consecrate a bishop from the Serbian clergy. However, knowing that the GOC were constantly repeating that the STOC was too small and immature to have its own bishop, the signatories offered an alternative solution: the replacement of Metropolitan Kallinikos by another Greek bishop. The STOC Administrative Council also decided to deliver this request personally to Archbishop Chrysostomos during the next GOC Synod meeting, and organized preparations for a trip to Corinth and Athens.

Then Fr. Athanasius, who was the only one among the Administrative Council clergy who had opposed this request (although he signed the conciliar decision), together with a few of his followers, organized a shameful and disgusting propaganda campaign among the faithful. They made copies of an audio cassette on which the Athonite monk Fr. Danilo, who was a member neither of the GOC of Greece nor of the STOC at this time, used his authority and respect among some of the faithful to slander Fr. Akakije, attacking him in a vulgar and insulting manner. Of course, they used and manipulated Fr. Danilo's words, because, at the same time Fr. Danilo used even more vulgar and rude words about Metropolitan Kallinikos and the Greek Florinites, but they didn't spread those because it would have harmed their goal of slandering the supporters of the Metropolitan's dismissal from the post of Serbian Exarch.

Then Fr. Athanasius organized some of the faithful, gathered their signatures, and without informing the STOC Administrative Council, secretly sent a counter-document to Metropolitan Kallinikos. In time, this secret counter-document became the main counter-argument in the fight between the fraction of Fr. Athanasius and those clergy and laymen who were loyal to the STOC Administrative Council.

Now let us return to the journey of the delegation of the STOC Administrative Council to Greece. The delegation first went to Corinth to inform Metropolitan Kallinikos about the STOC's request for his replacement. He listened to it and kindly accepted it, without saying that he had a secret counter-petition in his pocket, which had arrived earlier. The delegation agreed with Metropolitan Kallinikos that they would go together to the GOC Synod meeting. The evening before the departure for Athens, the metropolitan said that the delegation should go first while he would come soon after them.

In Athens, the delegation was received by Archbishop Chrysostomos and all the bishops. The request was formally handed in, and after receiving a short explanation of its content, Archbishop Chrysostomos asked: "Where is bishop Kallinikos? Without him, this topic cannot be discussed. We will solve that when he shows up."

But he did not show up... Sadly, the STOC delegation had been cunningly out-maoeuvred by the Metropolitan. They realized too late that their delegation has been deceived, and that their time, effort and money had been wasted because of the Metropolitan's deliberate refusal to show up at the Synodal meeting.

The delegation went back to Serbia, completely demoralized. But there was more to come. After several requests to be informed by the Synod about what had been decided, the answer finally came back from Greece. The Administrative Council of STOC discovered for the first time that the Metropolitan had brought the counter-petition to the Synod. And because of it and "Serbian discord", the request for the Metropolitan's replacement was rejected.⁴⁵¹

After this sad development, the reputation of the Administrative Council of STOC was ruined, its members were demoralized and the divisions deepened, especially because Fr. Athanasius' group started to rejoice, openly glorifying their "victory", and continuing their campaign of slander and gossip. For this reason, although there was still some communion between the two groups, the Akakians and anti-Akakians, it was very one-sided: some Akakians would commune in Fr. Athanasius' parish for the sake of restoring good relations within the STOC, but the 'triumphant' minority of anti-Akakians did not reciprocate...

At the same time, Metropolitan Kallinikos began shamelessly and publicly to accuse his senior priest in Serbia, Hieromonk Akakije, of being power-hungry, full of pride, spiritually deluded, etc. He sadly abused his Metropolitan authority, because some people began to change their attitude towards Fr. Akakije, trusting that a Metropolitan would have to be telling the truth. In Serbia, meanwhile, the relentless propaganda coming from sources close to Fr. Athanasius reached its highest peak, with new kinds of defamation and lies against Fr. Akakije. This joint venture between Metropolitan Kallinikos and his supporters in Serbia caused some believers to waver in their belief that Fr. Akakije was worthy of becoming their first Serbian bishop, forgetting how much he had done for the sake of the development of the STOC. It was from this time that some became so deeply influenced by the lies preached by Kallinikos and his followers that they came to believe that the Serbian Church *did not exist*, that the National Serbian Church was an historical mistake, that it was just a small part of the Greek Church, that it is was not only unnecessary to fight for an independent Serbian Church but wrong, being a manifestation of ambition and ingratitude on the Serbian side...

"Our separated brethren and children attempt to make a parallel between their case and the case of the Greek GOC, when they found themselves without bishops in 1955. This parallel is incongruous. In 1955, the Church of the GOC of Greece was fully organized and formed as an organization and the 66 priests (with all of those able present) elected a twelve-member Council (Governing Ecclesiastical Council) through a transparent democratic process for their administration until they found Bishops. The term of office of the members of the Council was

⁴⁵¹ This account has been gathered from Akakian sources, but is confirmed in all essentials by an anti-Akakian source.

renewed every year by election. They chose their Episcopal candidates through an absolutely transparent process and secret ballot."

"Our separated brethren" – it sounds very much like the condescending language of the Second Vatican Council when talking about the Orthodox Church... As for the exemplary democracy of the Greek TOC in the 1950s, that is all very well and is not in dispute. But the encyclical fails to say what happened next... For just as Archbishop Kallinikos likes to overlook his own unconventional path to the episcopate, so the writer of the encyclical here overlooks the uncanonical way in which the Greeks originally acquired their episcopate from the Russian Church Abroad in the 1960s. Did the Greeks present a petition to the Russian Synod and then wait for the whole Synod to come to a "democratic" decision? By no means! They hid the matter from Metropolitan Anastasy, and secretly - "through the back door" and in violation of Apostolic Canon 34 - obtained the consecrations they desired from other bishops of his Synod. At the same time, the democratically elected future Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kiouisis) was rejected in favour of the unelected, and disastrous, Archbishop Auxentius. However, the next metropolitan, St. Philaret, decided, for the sake of the unity of the Church and the good of the Greek nation, to regularize the uncanonical consecrations in 1969.

And how did the Greeks repay the Russians for their literally priceless gift – the gift of a hierarchy? By gross interference in the canonical rights of the Russian Church! First, in 1978 their new archbishop, Auxentius, took a clergyman of the Russian Church, John Rocha, baptized him (on the grounds that he had not had a canonical baptism) and reordained him, before raising him to the episcopate of "the Autonomous Church of Portugal", where he distinguished himself by becoming an extreme ecumenist heretic! Naturally, this stopped Eucharistic communion with the Russian Church Abroad. However, the Russians carefully refrained from calling the Greeks "schismatics", but simply decreed that they would not unite with any single Greek jurisdiction until the Greeks had all united amongst themselves.

Then, in September, 2009, after the fall of the major part of the Russian Church Abroad, when the remnant of the faithful Russians under Archbishop Tikhon came to Athens seeking to renew Eucharistic communion, the Greeks at first agreed, and even appointed a date for the first concelebration, but then, in October reversed their original decision on the grounds that they "did not trust" the Russians.⁴⁵² This was because Metropolitan Kallinikos, arriving, as so often, late on the scene, threatened to leave the Synod or at least retire... The Greeks' official explanation, however, was that at their first meeting, on September 13 in Megara, the Russians had promised that they now had no priests with a defective baptism. However, the Russians have strongly denied this, saying that they *never* asserted that all their clergy had been baptized through triple immersion. On the contrary, assert the Russians, they readily admitted that many of their clergy and laity had been baptized in an irregular manner, and that these people had been serving and/or receiving Holy Communion for decades. Furthermore, based upon the most recent past practice of the Russian Church, and the oikonomia that had had to be used during the Soviet persecutions, they said that they

452 Letter of the Greek TOC Synod to Archbishop Tikhon, December 8/21, 2009.

would not be able to rebaptize everyone in the Russian Church who had had an irregular baptism. And as an independent Local Church, they asserted their right to apply oikonomia in this matter as their Synod deemed it necessary. The Greeks said that their confidence had been undermined when the Russian Bishop Germogen – boldly and honestly, as the Greeks admitted – confessed to having “baptized himself” to correct his irregular baptism shortly before coming to Athens. However, the Russians replied that they had deceived nobody; Bishop Germogen’s confession had been as much a surprise and a shock to themselves as it had been to the Greeks. And their sincerity in this is proved by the fact that they have recently, in their Synodal meeting of December, 2012, removed Bishop Germogen from the Holy Synod precisely because of his “self-baptism” – a decision that Bishop Germogen humbly accepted...⁴⁵³

Even if we were to suppose (which I do not) that the Russians deceived the Greeks in this matter, the fact remains that for the second time in just over thirty years communion between the Russian and Greek True Orthodox Churches had been broken because the Greeks insisted on imposing their conception of permissible oikonomia on the Russians. The first time, in 1978, they went further by “stealing” a Russian clergyman and rebaptizing and reordaining him. The second time, in 2009, this did not happen. But the end result was the same: a break in communion or reversal of a decision to enter into communion. The Greeks seem unable to understand that Athens is not the centre of the Orthodox world, and that they do not have the right to impose their conception of oikonomia on other Local Churches.

In September, 2010, Archbishop Chrysostomos, a sincere proponent of union between the Greek and the Russian Churches, died. To the surprise and shock of many, his elected successor was – Metropolitan Kallinikos! (Junior bishops were not allowed to vote, and Kallinikos won a majority only on the second round, when Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica withdrew his candidature and his supporters transferred their votes to Kallinikos). Some (on both sides) saw this, correctly, as the end of any real hope of union. However, the Russians decided to persevere, and they agreed to the Greek offer, made in 2009, that the two Churches send delegations to Odessa to attempt to come to an agreement on the issue of oikonomia and akriveia.

However, by this time the Serbian problem was reaching a climax. At the beginning of 2011 a Serbian delegation went to Athens and handed in another, final petition, which they hoped would be answered by Pentecost. So when the Greek delegation, containing some non-Greek opponents of Fr. Akakije, arrived in Odessa in February, and began raising the Serbian question, the Russians responded cautiously. On the one hand, they defended the Akakian position, insisting that the autocephaly of the Serbian Church could not be denied, and that the Serbian TOC would benefit from the consecration of native bishops. On the other hand, not knowing what the Greek answer to the final Serbian petition would be, and not wishing to endanger the outcome of their own union talks with the Greeks, they did not deny the Greeks’ claim that this was their own internal problem.

453 <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1897>

In spite of some ups and downs, the two delegations reached agreement at Odessa on oïkonomia; and when the Greek delegation reported back to their Synod in Athens, the Synod welcomed the agreement. At the same time, however, they said that, in order to give their own people time to digest the prospect, and in accordance with the Russians' own request, the union would not be put into effect for another two years. The Russians were surprised by this – they had not asked for any two-year postponement! This may have been a genuine misunderstanding. But after the “misunderstandings” of 2009, some began to suspect that the Greek leadership was reluctant about union and were playing for time...

But time was running out. For although the Serbian petition had been rejected orally by the Greeks in Athens, no formal written reply had been received by Pentecost. So the Serbs decided to make a formal petition to the Russians to consecrate Fr. Akakije for them. The leaders of the Serbs and the Russians met in Odessa late in June, 2011, in order to discuss the petition. After a long and thorough discussion, the Russian Synod decided that the Serbs' petition was justified (especially in view of the schismatic Bishop Artemije's inroads into the flock), and that they, the Russians, had the canonical right and moral obligation to help them. A date for Fr. Akakije's consecration was appointed for August 12 (new style) in the Russian monastery of Lesna in France...

A last-ditch attempt to salvage the Greco-Russian union was made. On the Russian side, Protopresbyter Victor Melehov suggested that *both* Greek *and* Russian hierarchs take part in the consecration of Fr. Akakije. This idea was enthusiastically accepted by Bishop Photius, secretary of the Greek Synod. And he suggested that the union of the Greeks and Russians – a necessary condition of a joint consecration - could be brought forward to November, 2011. However, the idea must have received a cold reception from Archbishop Kallinikos. For when the Russians, postponing the consecration for three days, sent a delegation to Athens on August 11, and again put forward the idea, the Greeks rejected it outright...

At that meeting the gist of the Russian argument, which was expounded by Bishop Germogen, was as follows: "We consider Serbia to be a Local Church regardless of its numbers. A Local Church may not be subject to another Local Church. Serbia first appealed to Greece for help, and then later to us. We, of course, recognize the GOC's ability and right to help the Serbian Church, but this in no way stops the Russian Church from helping also." He gave the analogy of a ship in distress. Just because one country begins to help, this does not preclude another from helping also. "The Serbs asked us to ordain them a bishop. As brothers in Christ, we have to let you know that we intend to do so. We do not wish to do so secretly in the night, but with your knowledge, and hopefully your participation."

The response of Archbishop Kallinikos was violent. He shouted, pounded his fist on the table, stood up and leaned over the table to Bishop Germogen. At one point he asked him: "How well do you know these people? Have you ever even visited them? We know them for a decade." Bishop Germogen responded calmly, saying that they knew those who had come to them rather well.

At that point Protopresbyter Victor Melehov could not resist, and interjected: "Despota, you know the Serbs have been with the GOC for so many years, and you were assigned as their ruling bishop. How many times have you visited them over the past decade? Do you know them at all?" Of course, everybody knew the answer to that. Archbishop Kallinikos was momentarily speechless, and Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica hastily changed the subject...

"This action of our estranged brethren is even more condemnable in that they knew that on the agenda of the Synodal Meeting of August 3rd was a proposal for the Synod to adopt a time table for the ordination of a bishop of your choosing and the reorganization of the Serbian Church of the GOC immediately after the union with the Russian Synod under Archbishop Tikhon, with, moreover, the cooperation of Greek and Russian bishops. They did not await at all the result of the Synod, but the eve of August 3rd they ran to make their plan a fait accompli through their coup. The Holy Synod will not abandon the faithful children of the Church that remain in canonical order and will move forward with the reorganization of the Serbian Church of the GOC."

"The ordination of a bishop of *your* choosing" – that is, a bishop elected by the small minority of anti-Akakians? How could that possibly solve the problem?! And of course the Russians would never have cooperated in that, since they backed Fr. Akakije and the STOC majority.

In any case, what was there for the Russians to wait for? They had already postponed the consecration once in order to travel to Athens and seek a last-minute resolution, but had been greeted by rudeness, violence and the words: "Serbia belongs to the Greek Church, and only the Greek Church has jurisdiction over the Serbian Church's future." They were told that the Greeks were not interested in any joint consecration of a bishop for Serbia, and if the Russian Church did ordain a bishop for Serbia, there would be no possibility for any union between the GTOC and the RTOC. After such a reply, there was no reason for the Russians to believe that any future meeting of the Greek Synod would deliver any other verdict. So they returned to France, and the consecration took place on August 2/15.

"Toward this end the Holy Synod decided to call a Clergy-Laity Conference in Belgrade on Saturday, August 21/September 3, 2011, in the present of His Beatitude Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens and All Greece. All Genuine Orthodox Christians of Serbia that remain in canonical order and recognize the Holy Synod, which from the beginning was responsible for the reorganization of the Serbian Church, will have a right to participate. In this conference, the current situation will be evaluated, you will elect a Governing Council which will truly express your desires, and you will freely address your legitimate hierarchy with your proposals and petitions."

And what has this "reorganization" done for the anti-Akakian Serbs? Very little so far. Their first demand was that Archbishop Kallinikos defrock Bishop Akakije and his fellow clergy. He hasn't done that.

Also, they have not received any bishop of their own. Indeed, it would be naive to expect that the Greeks would keep their promise and "adopt a time table for the

ordination of a bishop of your choosing” when they refused precisely that same request so stubbornly for so many years. Only if there appears a candidate who is willing to submit the interests of Serbia to Greece in a way that Fr. Akakije refused will the Greeks considering ordaining him... But that, of course, would be a terrible betrayal of the interests of the Serbian Church and of Orthodoxy in general...

It seems that what this “reorganization” really means is the continued domination of Metropolitan Kallinikos over a very small and decreasing flock which is already riven by divisions over whether their liturgical language should be Serbian or Church Slavonic. Perhaps, to be consistent, it should be neither Serbian nor Church Slavonic, but Greek... After all, since they had rebelled against their former spiritual father, Fr. Akakije, on the grounds that they wanted to belong to the Greek and not the Serbian Church, then they should learn Greek and serve in Greek, abandoning all claim to being the GOC of Serbia...

Let the last word be with Bishop Akakije: “We have been told that our exit from under Greek administrative rule means the end of friendship and help: ‘You will lose your friends and no one will help you anymore...’ Where is their genuine brotherly love for us, which we True Orthodox Serbs still cherish for them? Does this mean that we Serbs are only their good friends as long as we are submitted to the Greek GOC? Is the progress of the Serbian TOC not also their joy as well as ours? We hope that the irrational resentment exhibited from the side of the Greek GOC is temporary and that their sharp words spoken and shot at our hearts are only an involuntary and short-lived reaction. Although such positions and statements of our Greek brothers, like those of their Serbian followers, have caused much harm and hurt us, we will not harbour hard feelings, but will wait with patience for them to become more sober, praying to the Lord of all to sow brotherhood, mutual love, and understanding between us...”⁴⁵⁴

POSTSCRIPT: For all his fine words here, Bishop Akakije failed to carry them out himself. In 2016 he broke communion with the True Orthodox Russians, without explaining why. In 2021 the Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece defrocked him...

January 6/19, 2022.

⁴⁵⁴ Bishop Akakije, *op. cit.*